



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



EVALUATION OF  
UNESCO'S ROLE  
IN EDUCATION IN  
EMERGENCIES AND  
PROTRACTED CRISES

CASE STUDY

2

**Crisis-Sensitive  
Education  
Sector Planning:  
UNESCO-IIEP  
Support in  
South Sudan**



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# ABSTRACT

This case study is part of an evaluation of UNESCO's role in education in emergencies and protracted crises. It aims to analyze UNESCO's strategic positioning and its participation in system-wide humanitarian response in South Sudan's education sector. More specifically, it focuses on exploring the significance of the process used to develop the country's Education Sector Analysis and Plan and the role and contribution of UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning (UNESCO-IIEP) therein. The Institute has been supporting South Sudan's Ministry of Education, Science and Technology since 2012 and, more recently, has supported the Ministry in developing an Education Sector Plan for 2017-2021. The process has developed government capacities at the federal and state levels and built national ownership of the Education Sector Analysis and Plan through a collaborative hands-on approach. Challenges along the way include ensuring the meaningful participation of ministry staff as well as that of humanitarian/development partners, managing divergent stakeholder expectations and, dealing with the ongoing political and economic stability in the country. Overall, the work by UNESCO-IIEP is seen by many partners as a major contribution to the development of South Sudan's education sector.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Director, IOS

# ACRONYMS

<b>CPA</b>	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development
<b>EdoG</b>	Education Donor Group
<b>EMIS</b>	Education Management Information System
<b>ESA</b>	Education Sector Analysis
<b>ESP</b>	Education Sector Plan
<b>GESP</b>	General Education Strategy Plan
<b>GPE</b>	Global Partnership for Education
<b>GUN</b>	Greater Upper Nile region
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>IMED</b>	Improve Management of Education Delivery
<b>LEG</b>	Local Education Group
<b>LSS</b>	Local Services Support
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>MoEST</b>	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
<b>MoGEI</b>	Ministry of General Education and Instruction
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>NER</b>	Net Enrolment Rate
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>OCHA</b>	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>PEG</b>	Partners Education Group
<b>PEIC</b>	Protect Education in Insecurity and Conflict
<b>POC</b>	Protection of Civilian
<b>SPLA/M</b>	Sudan People Liberation Army/Movement
<b>SSSAMS</b>	South Sudan School Attendance Monitoring System
<b>UNESCO-IIEP</b>	UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF-ESARO</b>	UNICEF-Eastern and Southern Africa
<b>UNICEF-WCARO</b>	UNICEF-West and Central Africa
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>WoS</b>	Whole of Syria Approach
<b>YES</b>	Youth Education for Stability

# 1. INTRODUCTION

On 9 July 2011, after nearly four decades of civil war, South Sudan gained independence from Sudan and became the world's youngest state. The new country faced massive challenges in its transition to independence. The newly formed Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) began the process of developing its education sector despite the country's struggling economy, extreme poverty, lack of infrastructure and basic services. Nearly all education institutions had to be built from scratch, and education policy and planning to be undertaken by a motivated staff that often lacked the necessary training. Renewed conflict, which broke out in December 2013, further exacerbated the challenges facing education in South Sudan. A peace deal was brokered in August 2015 between the government and opposition groups. However, it was signed under intense pressure from the international community, and attacks from both sides persist in many areas across the country. The need for the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI)<sup>1</sup> to plan and manage an education system that can mitigate the risk of conflict and respond to crises is more urgent than ever.

Education stakeholders in South Sudan and the global development community increasingly recognize the need to integrate conflict and disaster risk reduction in education sector analysis and planning. UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning (UNESCO-IIEP) has provided practical guidance, technical assistance and training in this area since 2008, and has become a name of reference in the field of crisis-sensitive education sector planning. UNESCO-IIEP began supporting MoEST in rebuilding South Sudan's education system as early as 2010.

Funded by UNICEF, the Institute has been a critical actor in providing technical assistance and supporting capacity development for central and state-level officials to develop their education sector analysis (ESA)<sup>2</sup> and education sector plan (ESP) in 2012. Most recently, in October 2015, UNESCO-IIEP began supporting MoEST to conduct an ESA and develop its forthcoming Education Sector Plan for the next five years (ESP 2017-21).

The ESA and ESP are necessary conditions for the country to be considered for funding from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). Given the particular challenges facing South Sudan as a young nation and in a situation of protracted crisis and on-going instability, the ESA and ESP are being conducted with a crisis-sensitive lens. The process itself is also an opportunity to strengthen MoEST's capacities in education sector analysis and planning. MoEST and, in particular the Directorate of Planning and Budget, is leading the process with technical support and guidance from UNESCO-IIEP and the UNESCO Office in Juba. In addition, the ESA itself is more than just an update for demonstrating progress since the first sector analysis (prepared by the World Bank in 2010), as it mainstreams risk and crisis sensitivity throughout the process. The South Sudanese ESA is based on the ESA methodological guidelines, developed by UNESCO-IIEP-Pôle de Dakar, UNICEF, GPE and the World Bank. Both the ESA and the ESP also utilize planning guidance<sup>3</sup> developed by UNESCO-IIEP and the Protect Education in Insecurity and Conflict (PEIC) programme on integrating safety, resilience, and social cohesion into education sector planning.

<sup>1</sup> In May 2016, upon implementation of the Transitional Government of South Sudan, the MoEST became the MoGEI. For the purposes of this study, we have maintained the use of MoEST.

<sup>2</sup> The ESA at that time was carried out by the World Bank.

<sup>3</sup> An advisory group consisting of representatives from UNICEF, UNHCR, UNRWA, Ministry of Education of Kenya, INEE, RET, and the World Bank provided significant inputs to this guidance.



This case study explores the significance of the process used to develop the education sector analysis and plan as well as UNESCO-IIEP's contribution therein. It seeks to uncover lessons for education sector planning in the context of volatility and protracted crisis, and to assess to what extent crisis-sensitive education sector planning work is a niche area for UNESCO.

This case study is part of a broader evaluation of UNESCO's role in education in emergencies and protracted crises. The evaluation involves a mapping and analysis of UNESCO's strategic positioning, its emergency response frameworks, and its participation in international coordination mechanisms in the field of education. Four case studies have been prepared for more in depth illustration of these three dimensions. This case study, on UNESCO-IIEP's support to South Sudan, is aligned with Dimension 1 (strategic positioning), and to a lesser extent Dimension 3 (participation in system-wide humanitarian response).

Both the broader evaluation and this case study aim to inform UNESCO's future work in education in emergencies and its participation in joint UN mechanisms in view of the Education 2030 development agenda.

## 1.1 KEY QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The key questions guiding the case study are as follows:

- 1 In general, what is the role of the ESA/ESP process in South Sudan?
- 2 What is the potential role of the 2015-2016 ESA/ESP process in the development of the country's education system, education policy, and MoEST capacity?
- 3 To what extent is UNESCO well positioned to support education sector analysis and planning processes in crisis situations such as South Sudan?



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## METHODOLOGY

The data collection methods for this exercise consisted of a desk study, interviews, and workshop observation. Information was sourced from a wide variety of literature, including project documents and SISTER report<sup>4</sup> from UNESCO's programme management and monitoring database, project proposals, research reports, grey literature, relevant government policies, sector plans and Education Management Information System (EMIS) data,<sup>5</sup> and humanitarian country strategy documents (see Annex A for a list of references). A mission to Juba in early December 2015 allowed for interviews with the UNESCO Juba Office staff, education specialists, and external partners and stakeholders, including government officials, representatives of the main international mechanisms that respond to emergencies and crises, and beneficiaries (see Annex B for the list of people interviewed). The mission also allowed for observation of an ESA workshop run by UNESCO-IIEP.

This case study begins with an outline of the state of education in South Sudan, as well as the capacity challenges and opportunities facing MoEST. It then

provides a brief chronology of UNESCO-IIEP's support for capacity development and education sector planning, before discussing the ESA and planning activities currently being undertaken by MoEST with UNESCO-IIEP's support. Further, an intervention logic is proposed. Findings related to the value of the ESA/ESP for stakeholders - its opportunities and challenges - are presented next. Finally, the case study presents a set of lessons learned in the area of education sector planning in crisis contexts, particularly for UNESCO's work in this area.

It is important to note that research for this case study was conducted at a critical juncture in the ESA/ESP process. In the period when this study was conducted (end of 2015, beginning of 2016), the ESA was ongoing, and the ESP development had not yet begun.

<sup>4</sup> System of Information on Strategies, Tasks and the Evaluation of Results (SISTER) reports provide information on programming, management, and monitoring of projects and programmes in UNESCO. For this evaluation, SISTER reports on UNESCO-IIEP's support in South Sudan from 2012-2016 along with associated project documents were consulted.

<sup>5</sup> MoEST 2015b.

## 2. BACKGROUND

### 2.1 EDUCATION CHALLENGES IN SOUTH SUDAN

#### Status of education in South Sudan

The decades of civil war prior to independence, and the renewed fighting that began in December 2013 (see Box 1), have affected all areas of South Sudanese life. This includes education. Today, the provision of education opportunities in South Sudan takes place against a backdrop of political instability, a struggling economy, extreme poverty, food insecurity and lingering social tensions over land, borders, and oil. A lack of basic infrastructure across much of the country, such as an electrical grid or paved roads, impedes development progress. The delivery of education services and humanitarian aid is also severely challenged by climate change and armed violence—seasonal flooding renders 60 percent of the country inaccessible for six months of the year,<sup>6</sup> and armed violence persists across the country and especially in its three northern states (Upper Nile, Unity and Jonglei). The challenges facing MoEST, and all South Sudanese, are immense.

This does not mean however, that South Sudan has not made meaningful progress in education service delivery. In spite of these obstacles, great strides were made in providing access to education following the signing of the CPA in 2005. Parliament passed the 2012 Education Act, which stipulated that primary education be free and compulsory for all. Over one million children enrolled in school following the launch of the government's Go-to-School initiative in 2006,<sup>7</sup> up from just 343,000 during wartime.<sup>8</sup> However, the education system struggled to keep pace with the increase in student enrolment, and critical gaps in school construction, teacher training, and monitoring systems slowed progress then and remain even today. For example, 2015 data shows that over 73 percent of primary schools do not offer all eight grades of the primary cycle.<sup>9</sup> Other major issues facing education are the change in language of instruction from Arabic

<sup>6</sup> OCHA 2015b.

<sup>7</sup> UNICEF 2008a.

<sup>8</sup> UNICEF 2008b, pp. 10.

<sup>9</sup> UNESCO / MoEST 2015.

#### BOX 1. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF SOUTH SUDAN

Prior to the period of Anglo-Egyptian rule that began at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Sudan was a collection of autonomous kingdoms and tribal communities. In 1956, the country was granted independence as a single unified nation that included present South Sudan. Decades of civil war followed with a brief interlude of peace between 1972 and 1983, until the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 between Sudan's government and the Sudan People Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M). In 2011, a referendum was held in which over 98 percent of southern Sudanese voted in favor of secession from northern Sudan. Independence was granted and South Sudan became the world's youngest country. The population and its leaders buzzed with a renewed sense of hope, but also with high expectations, despite the immense challenges that remained and were to come. Just two years later, on 15 December 2013, a political power struggle between the country's leadership plunged the country into civil war yet again, with drastic consequences. A fragile peace was negotiated with the signing of a peace agreement in August 2015. However, at the time of writing, conflict persists in many areas across the country and the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity is still to come.

*Source:* Authors

to English following independence, the dearth of post-primary opportunities, and the high numbers of out-of-school children, especially girls. Regrettably, the small budget allocation for the sector, 5.5 percent of the government's budget, leaves little room for investment in education beyond teacher salaries. Strong demographic pressure renders education more vital than ever, with more than half the population under the age of 18, and 72 percent under the age of 30.<sup>10</sup>

The resurgence of violence in December 2013 reversed many of the gains that had been made in education service delivery since 2006, and further exacerbated the vulnerability of large swathes of the population. Close to 2.2 million people have been displaced, and estimates of the death toll are in the tens of thousands. Approximately 4.6 million people are affected by severe levels of food

<sup>10</sup> UNESCO / MoEST 2015.

insecurity, obliging the World Food Programme to spend over USD 1.1 million per day to feed communities.<sup>11</sup> The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates that two million children have been affected by the conflict and approximately 13,000 children have been recruited into armed forces and groups to date.<sup>12</sup> Even though estimates vary, thousands of schools have been closed, salaries are not reaching teachers in northern states or with long delays,<sup>13</sup> and more than 90 schools across the country are occupied by fighting forces and internally displaced persons (IDPs).<sup>14</sup> Nearly 400,000 students have dropped out of school over 2013-2015 in the Greater Upper Nile (GUN) states.<sup>15</sup> The primary net enrolment rate (NER) is 35 percent; however, only 14 percent of children actually finish primary school.<sup>16</sup> Close to 90 percent of primary students are over age for their grade, and the secondary NER is only 2 percent.<sup>17</sup> Only two in three teachers are in permanent positions, and close to one in three schools operate in the open air, in a tent or under a roof (with no walls). In sum, the education needs in the country are staggering.

In addition to immediate needs, long-term educational development remains a major priority for communities,<sup>18</sup> the government and development partners. In February 2014, MoEST convened an emergency meeting attended by state education officials and humanitarian and development partners, which resolved that “education cannot wait for the war to end”.<sup>19</sup> Education partners continue to operate mainly from Juba, the capital city, and do their best to cover the entire country, including the Greater Upper Nile (GUN) region.<sup>20</sup> Under the ‘Back to Learning’ initiative led by UNICEF, members of the Education Cluster are providing schooling in Protection of Civilian (POC) camps and temporary shelters. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and others are supporting education activities in refugee camps (of Sudanese in South Sudan). Progress on major education interventions continues, such as a large-scale

girls’ capitation grant system (funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID)),<sup>21</sup> and the review and launch of a new curriculum integrating peacebuilding, life skills and environment for the first time (funded through the GPE programme)<sup>22</sup> in September 2015. Besides UNICEF and DFID, other major donors in the field of education are USAID and the European Union.

The UNESCO Office in Juba is also actively involved in supporting the education sector, albeit with more modest resources than the previously mentioned organizations. In addition to its education analysis and planning support through UNESCO-IIEP, UNESCO Juba’s major education sector work in recent years includes literacy trainings for ex-combatants, the development of teacher training materials in psychosocial support and life skills, and pastoralist education in partnership with FAO. The Office also partners with UN Women on a peacebuilding and life skills initiative, and with the Forest Whitaker Foundation to deliver activities relating to cinema and sports for peace.

MoEST itself, a relatively new institution, has come a long way in building an education system from the ground up. Despite its achievements, however, critical gaps remain in its technical capacity and core governance functions.

### Ministry of Education planning and management capacity

The signing of the CPA in 2005 also came with the establishment of a new education system for South Sudan. The few schools that had been operating prior to the CPA, by missionaries, community groups, or non-governmental organizations (NGOs), had to be brought into one coordinated system—under a common curriculum, schooling cycle, and language of instruction.<sup>23</sup> Decades of war had depleted South Sudan’s human resource base, and nearly all education institutions themselves had to be built from scratch with a dearth of physical and financial resources. A willing and committed cadre of MoEST staff initiated education policy and planning, but often lacked the necessary training. The UN Development Assistance Framework (2012-13) described South

11 OCHA 2015a, pp. 1.

12 OCHA 2015b.

13 INEE 2014.

14 Lotyam and Arden 2015.

15 UNESCO / MoEST 2015.

16 OCHA 2015b, pp. 9.

17 MoEST 2015b, pp 79. Note: EMIS data is based on 7 out of 10 states only as 3 states are largely inaccessible.

18 Clarke et al. 2015.

19 Lotyam and Arden 2015.

20 Education Cluster 2015.

21 See: <http://www.girlseducationsouthsudan.org/>

22 See: <http://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/south-sudan-celebrates-its-first-comprehensive-curriculum> and MoEST / UNICEF 2012.

23 World Bank 2012.



Sudan as having “the largest capacity gap in Africa”.<sup>24</sup>

A capacity assessment conducted in 2012 prior to the first education strategic plan describes in detail the limits of the educational management and planning capacity in MoEST at independence.<sup>25</sup> Many of the same issues remain pertinent today. Regarding education management, there is an absence of a comprehensive planning and budgeting system operating from the central level down to payam<sup>26</sup> levels.<sup>27</sup> Weak accountability mechanisms and financial management systems are insufficient to adequately monitor the use of public resources or deter the misuse and mismanagement of public resources. The lack of normative frameworks for human resource management, a viable monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system, and capacity to implement decentralization strategies are also working against effective educational management.

Human resource capacities for education planning in MoEST are generally considered to be weak. The capacity of many staff to conduct daily activities and tasks is low and partly caused by the lack of resources and understaffing.<sup>28</sup> Basic administrative and office management skills such as memo writing, filing, and time management, cannot be taken for granted, and while there are some individuals that are effective planners, they tend to be overworked.<sup>29</sup>

South Sudan also has a long history of fragmented development support, even following independence. For decades, there has been no coherent government-led policy or strategic framework to guide the work of all the education actors. Most education interventions have a short time horizon, offer limited coverage of particular regions or population groups and are influenced by humanitarian approaches.<sup>30</sup> Programmes have largely been donor-driven, and this, according to South Sudan’s Undersecretary of Education, has generated a parallel system with high dependency on external support.<sup>31</sup> In recent years, there has been an increased effort at coordination. For example, a partner coordination manual was created with UNESCO support following a mapping of all

education partners in conjunction with the Partners Education Group (PEG).<sup>32</sup> However, as Lotyam and Arden (2015) state, “the first major change to this ‘patchwork quilt’ approach and donor dependency came with the development of the first South Sudan sector plan, the General Education Strategic Plan 2012- 2017”.<sup>33</sup>

## 2.2 UNESCO-IIEP MANDATE AND EXPERTISE

### Background on UNESCO-IIEP

As a UNESCO Category I Institute, UNESCO-IIEP has a specialized mandate for strengthening the capacities of Member States to plan and manage their education systems. It has a strong global reputation for its fields of expertise.<sup>34</sup> Established in 1963, its work encompasses activities in the areas of research, capacity development, and policy advice. Capacity development includes technical assistance and training in education planning and management. Training is offered through a variety of modalities, including full-year training courses, short intensive courses, as well as distance and blended education including tailored, in-country training. The courses are designed specifically for technical staff and policy makers of ministries of education who are directly involved in education sector planning and management. With regard to technical assistance, three key principles underpin UNESCO-IIEP’s overall line of action: (i) a participatory approach to planning, in order to ensure convergence with country priorities, (ii) “learning by doing”, in which Ministry staff gain knowledge or skills through the direct experience of carrying out planning work, and (iii) the integration of cross-cutting themes, such as gender, youth, and crisis sensitivity.

With a growing number of out-of-school children and youth living in conflict zones, and the widespread recognition of the fact that education programmes and policies can both exacerbate and protect children from conflict<sup>35</sup>, UNESCO-IIEP is increasingly called upon to provide guidance on crisis-sensitive education planning. Around the world, the majority of education policy, planning, programming, and strategy documents only minimally address crisis and conflict. An

24 United Nations 2012, pp. 6.

25 MoEST 2012b.

26 An administrative unit at the sub-district level.

27 With the transition from 10 to 28 states, decentralized education capacities have come under additional pressure.

28 UNESCO 2013a.

29 Sigsgaard 2013.

30 Lotyam and Arden 2015.

31 See also Novelli et al. 2015.

32 See MoEST 2015a.

33 Lotyam and Arden 2015.

34 See UNESCO 2013b.

35 See Bush & Saltarelli 2000, Mundy & Peterson 2011, and UNESCO 2011.

assessment of 75 ESPs published between 2008 and 2013 found that 67 percent of all plans make no mention of either natural disaster or conflict, and only 17 plans mention the latter.<sup>36</sup> The majority of reports that refer to conflict do so only minimally.

UNESCO-IIEP has developed resources, training programmes and in-house expertise on this topic to ensure that ESAs and ESPs reflect a crisis-sensitive understanding of education systems and their contexts.<sup>37</sup> Among UNESCO-IIEP's many tools, its *Guidance Notes for Educational Planners: Integrating Conflict and Disaster Risk Reduction into Education Sector Planning* constitutes a seminal text. It was published in 2011 in collaboration with UNICEF-West and Central Africa (WCARO) and the Global Education Cluster. New guidance on the subject, published in 2014, mainstreams crisis sensitivity throughout the planning cycle. The *Education System Analysis Methodological Guidelines* (Volumes 1 and 2) are the product of a collaboration between UNESCO-IIEP's Pôle de Dakar, the World Bank, GPE and UNICEF. UNESCO-IIEP has supported ministries of education to integrate crisis sensitivity and conflict and disaster risk reduction in planning and policy development processes since 2008, including among others a ten-year ESP in Burkina Faso, a three-year medium-term plan in Chad, and District Development Plans in Uganda.<sup>38</sup> <sup>39</sup> A series of booklets on educational planning and curriculum on *Safety, Resilience and Social Cohesion*, were designed as part of such capacity development processes.<sup>40</sup>

**Chronology of UNESCO-IIEP technical cooperation in South Sudan since 2010**

In preparation for independence, the UNICEF Juba Office contracted UNESCO-IIEP to support MoEST in developing the country's first education sector plan (General Education Strategy Plan, or GESP 2012-17). Prior to this, the World Bank had conducted South Sudan's first ESA. From December 2010 to August 2011, four planning workshops took place in Juba with specialists from UNESCO-IIEP, and a full-time UNESCO-IIEP advisor was stationed in Juba from August to November 2011. The process was stimulated by

the appointment and involvement of the new Undersecretary for Education in November 2011, and indication of possible funding support from GPE. In August 2012, the Local Education Group (a local coordination mechanism led by MoEST and made up of donors, partners and government; LEG) endorsed the GESP. GPE then announced an allocation of USD 36 million for implementation from April 2013 to April 2016, and UNICEF became the Managing Entity of the GPE programme, while UNESCO held the position of Coordinating Agency for one year. USAID topped up the GPE funding with an additional USD 30 million over four years.

In April 2012, UNESCO-IIEP began supporting state-level education authorities to develop state-level education analyses as a follow up to the national ESP.<sup>41</sup> A high-level policy seminar was held in Juba in June of the same year, and training in planning, budgeting, and M&E took place in the then three state capitals for clusters of state-level education authorities in subsequent months. In all, approximately 130 Ministry officials were trained. Practical assignments and follow-up visits to each state preceded a final consolidation workshop in Juba in November at which state-level authorities presented their analyses to a high-level panel. UNESCO-IIEP had committed to a 29-month project; however, continuity of support to develop state-level plans was interrupted because of the resurgence of conflict in December 2013. State-level education plans were later developed by states, with initial support from UNESCO-IIEP, but varied in quality.

UNESCO-IIEP technical cooperation did not resume until 2015. A technical workshop for central and state Ministry officials on integrating safety, resilience and social cohesion into education sector planning and curriculum was held in July 2015.<sup>42</sup> The workshop was hosted by MoEST, funded by GIZ and supported by UNICEF, UNESCO Juba, PEIC, and UNESCO-IIEP. It set the groundwork for the formal ESA and planning process currently being undertaken by MoEST with UNESCO-IIEP's technical assistance. Thirty-five participants from MoEST and nine out of ten state-level education authorities, as well as humanitarian and development partner representatives took part in the first two days, which examined how safety, resilience and social cohesion can be addressed in planning and curriculum development processes. This was largely a sensitization or awareness-raising

36 Winthrop and Matsui 2013.

37 See for example, UNESCO-IIEP 2010 and UNESCO-IIEP 2011.

38 UNESCO-IIEP 2014-2015.

39 The Pôle de Dakar, which is now part of UNESCO-IIEP, has a lot of experience with ESA/ESP support in Francophone Africa.

40 The booklet series was developed in collaborative partnership by UNESCO-IIEP, UNESCO-IBE, and PEIC, a programme of Education Above All, in 2014. For more information and resources, see <http://education4resilience.iiep.unesco.org>.

41 UNESCO-IIEP / UNESCO Juba 2013.

42 UNESCO-IIEP 2015b.

exercise. Nineteen participants remained for three more days for further in-depth training on the subject. The PEIC planning and curriculum booklets were used for this component of the workshop.

### **Current UNESCO-IIEP support to Ministry of Education, Science and Technology**

GPE allocated funding to UNESCO Juba (implemented by UNESCO-IIEP in collaboration with UNESCO Juba) to support MoEST in the ESA (from October 2015 to January 2016), and to develop a 5-year ESP (from February to June 2016).<sup>43</sup> GIZ and UNICEF-Eastern and Southern Africa (ESARO) also contributed to support the process. The ESP 2017-21 will be considered for endorsement by the Education Donor Group (EDoG) in July 2016 and will be submitted for appraisal and potential funding by GPE in 2017. The ESA/ESP development is led by MoEST Directorate of Planning and Budgeting, and supported by humanitarian and development partners under the overall coordination of the EDoG.<sup>44</sup> The external support team is composed of five UNESCO-IIEP staff and consultants and an in-country coordinator in the UNESCO Juba Office. Through monthly missions and distance support, the external support team facilitates and guides the process that involves national stakeholders made up of MoEST authorities from the central level including, M&E officers, EMIS staff, finance and budgeting personnel, and planners from all 10 states.<sup>45</sup> According to most stakeholders, the ESA development has included the right stakeholders. Capacity development is built into the process using a “learning by doing” approach. However, the limited amount of time available to conduct the present ESA (four months instead of the nine months usually used to conduct such an exercise), means that there is less time for capacity development.

The ESA aims to offer a comprehensive, evidence-based picture of South Sudan’s education sector in 2015, highlighting the strengths as well as inefficiencies in the allocation and use of resources. The analysis process is looking at all aspects of the system, such as school enrollment, internal efficiency, management and quality, through a conflict and disaster risk lens. Existing data has come from multiple sources, including: EMIS, macroeconomic data and financial statistics from

the Ministry of Finance, payroll and manpower data from MoEST and the Ministry of Public Service, the National Bureau of Statistics, OCHA and Education Cluster data, and major donor reports and surveys.

The ESP will draw from the ESA results to identify key areas for reform based on current trends and priorities, and build on previous policy documents. To ensure relevance and feasibility, projections will be used to test different costing scenarios. This will inform the ESP and help the government establish realistic targets, depending on which scenario is applicable during the lifespan of the plan. Among other things, this will depend on the evolution of the security situation in the country. The ESP will also develop a monitoring and evaluation framework with key performance indicators for the sector, including resilience indicators. All 10 states and humanitarian and development partners will be invited to contribute at this stage.

### **BOX 2. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT TO MOEST BY OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

- ▶ European Union-funded Improve Management of Education Delivery (IMED; March 2014-16) supports MoEST to make structural changes in financial management, EMIS data collection and analysis, and human resources, in the form of policy development and dissemination, and capacity strengthening in four states.<sup>46</sup>
- ▶ The World Bank-supported Local Services Support (LSS, 2013-2018) programme focuses on strengthening local government service delivery, transferring development grants for local projects, such as school construction, directly to county governments.
- ▶ UNICEF-funded Consultancy firm Altai Consulting provides management support to the EMIS directorate within MoEST (2015 and 2016).

*Source:* Authors

<sup>43</sup> UNESCO-IIEP 2015a.

<sup>44</sup> The EdoG includes the Education Cluster and PEG, made up of local education NGOs.

<sup>45</sup> As indicated previously, when the ESA was initiated, South Sudan was still divided into 10 states.

<sup>46</sup> IMED’s operations were prematurely finalized as a result of the country’s transition from 10 to 28 states (personal communication).

### 3. PERSPECTIVES ON THE RELEVANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF UNESCO-IIEP’S SUPPORT TO EDUCATION SECTOR PLANNING IN SOUTH SUDAN

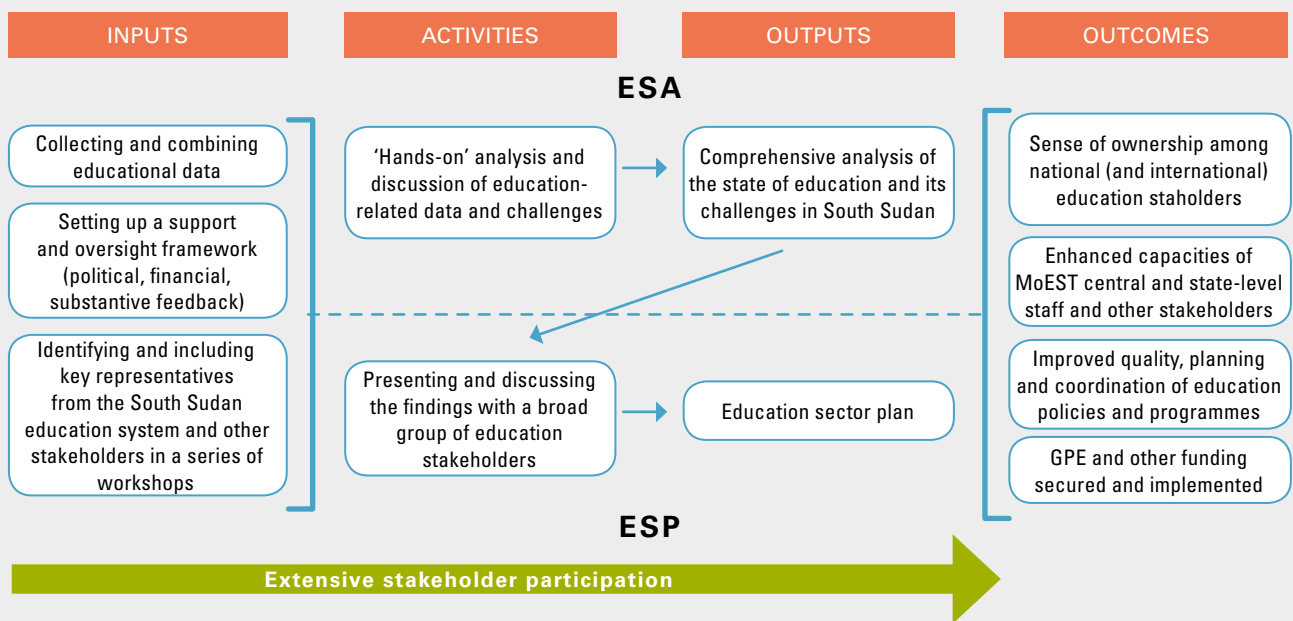
Research for this case study was conducted at a critical juncture in the ESA/ESP process. The ESA was ongoing at the time, and the ESP not yet begun (due to start in February 2016). The government stakeholders in the team were engaged in carrying out the analysis work, together with humanitarian and NGO actors. Most international partners were, at this stage, only observers of the work.

This section begins with a brief explanation of how South Sudan’s current ESP (GESP 2012-17) is being used and how it affects the priorities and plans of education stakeholders. Subsequently, it discusses the likely or possible role of the second ESP (ESP 2017-21).

This includes a reflection on the significance of the ESA process so far for MoEST, ESA participants and the humanitarian and development community in South Sudan, bringing to light key opportunities and challenges for education sector development.

In order to develop an incipient assessment<sup>47</sup> of the relevance and effectiveness of the ESA/ESP process and UNESCO-IIEP’s role therein, it is useful to articulate the main inputs, activities, outputs and expected outcomes of the process. Figure 1 below proposes an intervention logic for UNESCO-IIEP’s ESA/ESP support to MoEST.

**FIGURE 1. INTERVENTION LOGIC OF UNESCO-IIEP’S SUPPORT TO THE ESA AND ESP PROCESS**



Source: Authors

<sup>47</sup> Note the exercise is ongoing.

### 3.1 UTILIZATION OF GENERAL EDUCATION STRATEGY PLAN 2012-17

South Sudan's first ESP was formally endorsed by the LEG in 2012. While the LEG found the GESP satisfactory overall, its appraisal identified several challenges which remained relevant throughout the lifespan of the plan. Unrealistic timelines, a lack of clear alignment with action plan objectives, and financing gaps were identified as key challenges and continue to limit GESP implementation.<sup>48</sup> The GESP did not translate into a tangible workplan because its accompanying Action Plan was unclear and not aligned to the plan itself, and because the needs on the ground changed dramatically following the resurgence of violence in December 2013. A five-year plan in a volatile political context runs the risk of becoming outdated, and today the GESP is not a relevant planning tool for development and humanitarian partners.

Issues of ownership also hindered MoEST's commitment and confidence in the plan. The GESP was ambitious in its aims and expectations for the sector, which was reflective of the hopeful climate surrounding MoEST at the time of independence. It was also driven by the possibility of funding from GPE. Pressure to complete the GESP before independence and in time for GPE submission meant the process was rushed and did not allow for elaborate stakeholder consultation. As a result, the plan was not internalized or appropriated by state-level education authorities.<sup>49</sup> Interviewees expressed concerns about the participatory nature of the ESA, conducted by the World Bank, on which the GESP was based. Longstanding mistrust from state-level authorities over the management of EMIS, a critical source of data for the GESP, also worked against credibility of the plan.<sup>50</sup> As a consequence, the GESP in some ways lacked ownership and commitment by MoEST, and lost a lot of its potential to influence actual planning and decision-making on education in the country.

48 LEG 2012

49 UNESCO-IIEP 2015b.

50 Sigsgaard 2013.

### 3.2 EXPECTATIONS FOR THE EDUCATION SECTOR ANALYSIS AND EDUCATION SECTOR PLAN 2017-21

Interviews with central and state-level leadership in MoEST, development and humanitarian partners, donors, and local civil society groups paint a very different picture of the country's second ESP. Stakeholders view the ESA/ESP process as more than just a tool for securing GPE funding. They also appreciate the aim to aggregate meaningful, reliable<sup>51</sup> data on the education situation of South Sudan to guide planning, and see its potential in improving the coordination of education actors. Not unlike the process governing the first plan, however, this ESA/ESP process is also under immense time pressure.

#### Improving understanding of the state of education

As an input to effective education planning and management, the ESP needs to be developed on the basis of a strong and robust evidence-based analysis. This should rely on meaningful and reliable information on changes over time: how learning outcomes and equity disparities vary across the country, and how the system compares with its neighbors or other countries facing similar contextual challenges. Interviews and documentary evidence show that the ongoing ESA has benefited from recent improvements in the EMIS (school census), which captures data on vulnerability and crisis sensitivity, and contributes to developing projections to remain relevant over time. These three factors enhance confidence in the upcoming ESP.

Data for the ESA is sourced from a number of places, including EMIS (e.g., annual school census).<sup>52</sup> Historically, among state-level education authorities, this system has had a reputation for disputable data, but it has improved in recent years and data are

51 The availability of data has improved over time and triangulation between data sets is used to improve the reliability of analyses. Some reservations are held about the accuracy of data, however, and are detailed below.

52 Sources include EMIS, related MoEST reports, South Sudan School Attendance Monitoring System (SSSAMS) data, macroeconomic data and governance finance statistics from the Ministry of Finance, payroll and manpower data from MoEST and the Ministry of Public Service, population projections and household surveys from the National Bureau of Statistics, OCHA, the Education Cluster, the two Joint Sector Education Reviews conducted since independence, and other development and humanitarian partner reports.

generally regarded as more credible.<sup>53</sup> Interviews with state-level authorities reveal lingering doubt about the quality of the data, but they acknowledge the efforts to improve the system.

Obtaining data from conflict areas (GUN states) constitutes a major challenge, and validating and accessing information is difficult. EMIS itself comprehensively covers seven out of ten states, with more limited data on the remaining three (GUN) states.<sup>54</sup> A focus on equity is mainstreamed in all analyses of schooling patterns and internal efficiency, quality, management, and costing and financing.<sup>55</sup> The ESA also measures the effects of crisis on education system performance, and the extent to which education exacerbates or mitigates the effects of conflict. The original plan to administer a risk assessment questionnaire to assess the level of conflict and disaster risks in each payam as part of the ESA process proved impossible due to time, funding and capacity constraints. Instead, data from the OCHA vulnerability index<sup>56</sup> in the Humanitarian Response Plan 2015<sup>57</sup> are used to examine crisis impacts on education at county level. To this end, the OCHA vulnerability index, available at county level, was merged with the EMIS database. Education indicators on access, quality and management of the system were analyzed to determine if the counties “at risk” (based on the OCHA vulnerability index) were indeed the least performing in education terms.

**Securing funding for education**

There is no doubt that the possibility of obtaining funding is a driving factor for MoEST. Like South Sudan’s first ESP (GESP), the second ESP is prepared with the aim of applying for GPE funding. For a country like South Sudan, integrating crisis sensitivity into the ESP is a new requirement from GPE. As a young nation in a context of protracted crisis, heavily reliant on oil revenue which has plummeted in price over the last few months, South Sudan is under fiscal pressure. The security sector, namely

the army, police and the national security service, receives over 50 percent of the national budget.<sup>58</sup> Meanwhile, South Sudan’s Education Act stipulates that just 15 percent of the national budget be allocated to education. In reality, only 5.5 percent was allocated to education for 2013/14.<sup>59</sup>

**Guiding planning**

Apart from securing both national and external funding, including from the GPE, MoEST leadership recognizes that the ESP can determine priorities for the Ministry, donors and partners, and bring education stakeholders at national and state levels together around a common strategy. According to MoEST, the ESA is of major importance, as it forms the initial step for ESP development. MoEST is also committed to finding its own funding for the ESP to complement that of the GPE. The same can be said for the state-level Ministries where the ESP will serve as the basis for discussions with their partners for development support.

Ministry staff explained that in MoEST, the ESP will influence several internal frameworks and processes such as EMIS management, M&E, and policy-making. Regarding EMIS, new indicators will be added or existing ones modified which will then reflect priority areas within the plan. The EMIS unit will adjust its own plans in order to collect the data that is required to monitor implementation and create projections used for planning. Members of the M&E Technical Working Group, formed as a part of the current GPE programme, explained that they are waiting for the ESP in order to finalize the MoEST M&E system currently under design.

The fact that the ESP will embody the government’s official strategy and plan is important, but does not guarantee its uptake by agencies outside the government. Interviews with development and humanitarian partners and donors revealed that contrary to the first GESP, which they have not used in a meaningful way, the new ESP is expected to become an input to their planning. UNHCR, for example, posits that government and refugee schools are dealing with common issues such as high levels of female dropouts. The causes behind this phenomenon are likely similar, and UNHCR will look to the ESP for guidance.

Finally, the ESP will include an element of projection, which explores the implications of different possible scenarios (supported by a simulation model). The

53 Since 2014, the NGO Altai has been providing technical support to the EMIS unit to institutionalize EMIS management and data analysis within MoEST. Formerly MoEST was dependent on external experts to run the system and produce reports. For EMIS 2015, decentralization of data collection was piloted in two states (Central Equatoria and Western Bahr el Ghazal states), and the EMIS unit aims to decentralize data collection to all states by 2018.

54 Limited data on the GUN states are available. See for example Altai Consulting (2015), which provides data for approximately 44% of GUN state counties.

55 This more comprehensive attention to equity is remarkable as equity analysis often relates to equitable access only.

56 Based on 4 triggers, relying on a series of indicators related to conflict, death, injury and disease, food insecurity and livelihoods, and widespread malnutrition.

57 OCHA 2015b.

58 Lotyam and Arden 2015.

59 MoEST 2012a. Actual outturns are even lower.

aim of this type of analysis is to ensure that the policy options to be retained are financially and technically sustainable. This expectation contributes to a higher level of confidence in the ESP's relevance and applicability over time.

### Improving coordination

Stakeholders, primarily from MoEST, are also viewing the current ESA/ESP process as an opportunity to improve the coordination of education actors. One source of tension is the perceived lack of accountability on the part of humanitarian and development partners, that largely "do their own thing" without consulting MoEST. A state-level MoEST participant in the ESA noted that: "Partners think their programmes are secret, not accountable to us. They don't reveal their plans to us. They have a fixed place in mind where they want to work, and it's hard to convince them to work somewhere else." This sentiment was confirmed by various sources. Partly due to political instability, donors are largely channeling their funds to development and humanitarian partners rather than providing direct budget support to the government. This contributes to a sense of apprehension in the ministry, as it feels it is unable to monitor partners and is concerned that they are not always working in the most vulnerable areas where they are most needed. In turn, development and humanitarian partners have their own reservations of MoEST's capacities and policy choices. The lack of overall coordination and availability of adequate programmatic and funding information also makes it more difficult to bridge the development and humanitarian divide.

Existing coordination bodies, such as the EDoG, which includes the Emergency Education Cluster representation as well as a new education NGO development forum (PEG), make up the LEG or National Education Forum. It is chaired by MoEST as part of its aim is to strengthen the links between the participating organizations and the ministry. The LEG is part of the GPE country-level governance structure. LEG members support the development, implementation, and monitoring of the ESP and are also required by GPE to endorse the ESP. Several stakeholders suggested that the LEG is too big a forum for all members to participate equally in decision-making as meetings are infrequent and membership is quite open. Interviewees suggested that in theory MoEST leads the forum, but this is not always achieved in a meaningful way.

A mapping of all education partners in South Sudan, produced by the PEG in October 2015,<sup>60</sup> is helping to improve relationships among education partners. These have started to send their reports and workplans to MoEST and are complying with the instruction to sign memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with the government. It is expected that the new ESP will contribute to improving accountability and monitoring of education sector work.

## 3.3 OUTCOMES TO DATE AND THE UNESCO-IIEP APPROACH

The ESA/ESP process constitutes a substantial investment of time and effort. The monthly workshops from October to June, lasting between one and two weeks each, involve bringing together UNESCO-IIEP specialists from Paris and state-level education authorities from state capitals to Juba. As the process is condensed, workshops tend to be demanding and fast-paced. Nevertheless, stakeholders already report promising outcomes emerging in terms of: capacity gains, enhanced stakeholder collaboration and ownership of the process, and new insights on crisis sensitivity and conflict data analysis.

### Capacity development

Though some Ministry staff work with data on a daily basis, the majority of participants in the ESA workshops are being asked to carry out data analysis for the first time. They report that the workshops are of good quality, that they are 'learning a lot' and are able to immediately put their learning to use. The workshop approach is one of 'learning by doing' and is different from that of 2012 when UNESCO-IIEP supported the development of MoEST state-level education analyses, or from 2010 when the World Bank supported the first ESA. Some actors involved express that the ongoing capacity development process is actually more important than the end product: "It's much better to build capacity than to produce documents."

Overall, the work that is carried out in the framework of the ESA is considered to be demanding. Though participants are pleased to be learning, and are mostly satisfied by the rigor of the data collected, many face difficulties in grasping all the content and completing the assignments. Many participants still lack basic statistics and software skills, which may

<sup>60</sup> See MoEST 2015c.

affect their ability to participate in and learn from the process. When asked for examples of a new skill they were pleased to have learned, participants mentioned the ability to convert a statistic into a meaningful statement, and the capacity to calculate the amount of teacher salaries distributed versus the target total. Many participants have considerable experience in the education sector, they know what needs to be done and are learning regardless of the challenges: “I knew there are problems but I didn’t know how to use my mind to fix these problems before the workshops.” Given the highly structured nature of the process, because of tight deadlines for GPE submission, and due to the need to obtain high quality data, there is little space for developing more basic skills.

Participants report a high level of satisfaction with the fact that, instead of being lectured about the state of education in South Sudan, they are asked to work with their own data and come to conclusions themselves. Learning how to manipulate the data, for example by converting it into graphs, is practical and immediately useful. Participants favor this practical approach to a theoretical one. As one participant suggested, “I’m used to receiving statistics, but this is empowering for state [actors] and I also learn something.” The ability to manipulate raw data and draw their own conclusions also contributes to a heightened sense of ownership.

It should be noted that the capacity development of MoEST staff in the ESA/ESP process takes place in a broader framework of capacity development support from UNESCO-IIEP. Since 2010, three of the current participants from MoEST, including the current Director of Planning and Budgeting, have participated in UNESCO-IIEP’s nine-month Advanced Training Programme in Educational Planning and Management in Paris. In addition, several MoEST staff at national and state levels have participated in a variety of specialized courses (including distance courses) organized by UNESCO-IIEP. This does not only strengthen the credibility of UNESCO-IIEP as a partner of MoEST, but also enhances the prospects of MoEST ownership of the process, as well as the impact of the ESA/ESP development process on ESP implementation and education sector planning in general.

### Ownership and collaboration

Contrary to the first ESA, the present ESA so far is showing strong signs of MoEST ownership. Though flying in participants from across the country can be expensive, interviewees agree that this is important

for ownership of the process. Because all states are involved, a rare occurrence in South Sudan, but in keeping with UNESCO-IIEP’s approach, participants report they feel strong ownership of the document and emerging information therein.

As mentioned above, the ESA/ESP process involves representation from all 10 states. This was also the case for the UNESCO-IIEP workshop in July 2015. Bringing together education staff from the 10 states into one room is no small feat, both logistically and relationally, which is why it rarely happens. The UNESCO-IIEP workshop in July 2015 allowed participants across different states to get to know each other and laid the foundation for achieving a sense of belonging among the group. In interviews, participants described how the exercises and discussions brought people together: “I changed my way of doing things. People here wake up angry. Now I don’t do things the way I used to.” When asked to map the challenges in each state, they discovered they have common ones such as flooding. The role-play games showed that, “we have problems, but have friends. You get the feeling that you are not alone.” After the session many participants would gather together and continue discussing how to solve common problems.<sup>61</sup>

### Crisis sensitivity and conflict data

The ESA brings together available data and conducts additional analyses through a crisis-sensitive lens. Though less education data are available for the three GUN states, the negative association between the occurrence of conflict and the provision of educational resources as well as educational outcomes is clear. Inequalities persist across states as well. The subsequent ESP development phase is expected to use these observations and take them into account to develop the education strategic plan and key programme priorities for the sector.

<sup>61</sup> Actors invited to observe the ESA work also brought up how participants show signs of building relationships and working out their differences in the workshops. They report that participants are not shy, and are known to switch into their own language when discussing with a fellow participant to speak privately. “People are arguing, almost fighting with each other, then all of a sudden they agree.”



## 3.4 KEY CHALLENGES FACING THE EDUCATION SECTOR ANALYSIS / EDUCATION SECTOR PLAN

### Meaningful participation

A typical ESA/ESP process normally requires two years. In South Sudan, the ESA process has been condensed from nine to four months, and the ESP process from one year to six months, in order to meet the deadline for submission of the ESP to the GPE Secretariat. As a result, the ESA requires a substantial investment in time on the part of participants over a shorter period, especially as they require extra time and effort to make up for a lack of training, prior knowledge and basic skills. There is pressure from donors to shorten the process even further. UNESCO-IIEP maintains that the benefits to MoEST would be compromised if the process were further condensed.

Humanitarian and NGO partners also attended the ESA workshops and provided significant inputs. Education Cluster coordinators are contributing to drafting the first and second chapter of the ESA. By sitting in workshops and observing where data and explanations for data are missing, partners have the opportunity to fill in information gaps where they can. Representatives from the EDoG were kept informed of the ESA process and results, and at the time of writing, these partners expect to play a more prominent role when the ESP process begins. Not all partners are clear however that they are welcome to attend workshops as observers, and some have expressed the desire to contribute more at an earlier stage. Including all relevant actors in the process without overcrowding it, and without diminishing government ownership, has been a major challenge.

### Managing divergent stakeholder expectations

The importance of reliable, credible data is undisputable. In the context of the protracted crisis in South Sudan, data collection has been challenging and the existence of multiple fragmented data sets poses challenges for triangulation and synthesis of data. However, some planners are satisfied with imperfect data that show broad or emerging trends over time, while others insist that the data should be as clean

and accurate as possible for more robust analysis. This is a longstanding debate which trainers and participants must negotiate every day, both between and among themselves.

UNESCO Juba's provision of logistical support and facilitation of communication between the different ESA/ESP stakeholders has been very useful. However, concerns about communication in a context of many stakeholders and rapid staff turnover persist. A number of stakeholders indicated that there is still a lack of clarity regarding the expectations for potential contributions coming from the different national and international education actors.

### Staff turnover

According to the interviewees, close to half of MoEST participants in the ESA/ESP were involved in developing the first ESP in 2010. To this extent, institutional memory has been retained. However, there is frequent staff turnover among humanitarian and development partners. Continuous communication with rotating focal points from international organizations and UN agencies has been essential in order to keep the momentum and support for the process going.

### Political stability and prospects for lasting peace

The relevance and effectiveness of South Sudan's first GESP were compromised due to the resurgence of conflict in December 2013. A medium-term planning horizon necessitates the crisis-sensitive lens employed by the current ESA/ESP process. Political and economic instability will continue to pose challenges to the implementation of the ESP and its relevance to the education sector over time. The conflict will continue to test the relevance and effectiveness of the new ESP. The success of the ESP depends on securing predictable, medium-term financial support from development partners, whereas donor commitment may be contingent on the prospects for stability and lasting peace.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

As a functionally autonomous UNESCO Category I Institute, UNESCO-IIEP has developed a strong international reputation in education sector analysis and planning. The Institute is well-positioned in South Sudan. It is developing MoEST capacities, building national ownership of the ESA/ESP process, amassing critical conflict data and employing a crisis-sensitive lens. Through its support to the ESA/ESP process as well as its other capacity development activities involving MoEST staff, the Institute is seen as providing a major contribution to education sector development. So far its work points to good prospects for: contributing to an improved understanding of the state of education in South Sudan; securing national and external funding (including from the GPE for ESP implementation); guiding education planning, and; improving the overall coordination of education development partners.

Major challenges facing UNESCO-IIEP's work in the framework of the ESA/ESP process in South Sudan include the following: ensuring the meaningful participation of MoEST and humanitarian/development partners in the process; managing divergent stakeholder expectations; dealing with rapid staff turnover, and; political and economic stability that affects the prospects for lasting peace in the country.

In order to be successful in crisis situations, UNESCO-IIEP ideally requires the (logistical and institutional) support from an agency that is physically present in the country. Prior to the establishment of the UNESCO Office in South Sudan, UNICEF provided such support. The fact that UNESCO-IIEP's services are in strong demand, including in countries in crisis where UNESCO is not a resident agency, can be regarded as positive. On the other hand, it also raises questions about the positioning of UNESCO as a whole and of UNESCO-IIEP in particular in crisis situations, including on the development of partnerships with organizations such as UNICEF, which often call upon the Institute's services in the field of education sector analysis and planning.

## 5. ANNEXES

### ANNEX A: REFERENCES

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## ANNEX B: INTERVIEWS

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**Phuong Nguyen**, Chief of Education, UNICEF

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