



Girls' Education Strategy for South Sudan

2015-2017



Foreword

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and Ministries of Education in all ten states are committed to address the issues of gender equality in the education system. Girls' Education has been given priority by the government of South Sudan. The General Education Strategic Plan (2012-2017) highlights the importance of gender equality in the education system.

This past year, MoEST has partnered with UNICEF and all key education stakeholders to develop the Girls' Education Strategy for South Sudan for the planning period of 2015-2017. Contributors to the process include various government ministries of South Sudan, education stakeholders and Non-Governmental Organizations. The first National Gender Conference on Gender in Education in South Sudan has made recommendations to review the existing policies and develop new strategies that may guide a gender mainstreaming process in the education sector.

Major efforts have been made to ensure that key stakeholders such as state governors, ministers, commissioners, *payam* administrators, community chiefs as well as parents and children, were consulted and will be called upon to sensitize and promote girl child education at all levels. For South Sudan, education remains an important factor in national self-development. "Vision 2040", "Education Act" and "The General Education Strategic Plan" strategies all call for gender equality in the curriculum. One of the most promising approaches towards creating gender equality has been the development and subsequent implementation of the national Girl's Education Strategy.

It is our great pleasure to thank all those who have worked tirelessly to produce this national document. The implementation of the strategy will address the gender gaps in our education system.



Hon. John Gai Yoh
Minister
Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AES	Alternative Education Systems
ALP	Accelerated Learning Program
BTL	Back-to-Learning
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CFS	Child Friendly Schools
COMOCS	Concern for Mothers and Children in Sudan
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
DfID	Department for International Development
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems
FAWESS	Forum for African Women Educationalists South Sudan
FHI 360	Family Health International 360
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GEM	Girls' Education Movement
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GESP	General Education Strategic Plan, (2012-2017)
GESS	Girls' Education South Sudan
GOSS	Government of South Sudan
GPI	Gender Parity Index
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GtS	Go to School
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IMED	Improved Management of Education Delivery
INEE	International Network for Education in Emergencies
JDT	Joint Donor Team
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MoGCSW/D	Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare/Development
NBeG	Northern Bahr El Ghazal State
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
PAGE	Promotion and Advocacy for Girls' Education
PTA	Parents Teacher Association
PTR	Pupil Teacher Ratio
RSS	Republic of South Sudan
RtL	Room to Learn
SAT	Social Advocacy Teams
SMOE	State Ministry of Education
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SSSAMS	South Sudan School Attendance and Monitoring System
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNWFP	United Nations World Food Programme
UNWWA	Upper Nile Women Welfare Association
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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Acknowledgement

There are several contributors who led the initiative of the National Girls' Education Strategy (2015-2017), particularly the leadership in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), the State Ministries of Education in all ten states, the then Ministry of Higher Education Science and Technology and the management and staff at UNICEF South Sudan. Other key contributors were the United Nations World Food Programme (UN WFP), Department for International Development (DfID), Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development – Canada, The Government of Netherlands, Food for the Hungry (FH), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and UN-WOMEN. Furthermore, Family Health International 360 (FHI 360), Confident Children out of Conflict (CCC) and Upper Nile Women Welfare Association (UNWWA) are also contributors to the development of the strategy.

The various contributors provided the technical knowledge and experience from the field. As part of the development process, a national committee was comprised to oversee that the issues raised were factored within the National Girls' Education Strategy document and would reflect the diverse cultural and social representation within the context of the Republic of South Sudan. Moreover, significant contribution for the completion of the strategy came from several teachers, parents and students. Several key research reports were extremely valuable in providing historical background, contemporary research findings and major recommendations on the issue of Girl's Education in South Sudan. These documents have been extensively quoted due to their relevancy to the strategy. Also, the current national policies have provided a bench marking platform as well as a legal framework towards the provision of key recommendations for the Girls' Education Strategy.



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Executive Summary

The National Girls' Education Strategy provides a framework for removing the barriers preventing girls in South Sudan from obtaining an education. It also promotes a holistic response to achieve this vision, with the support and full participation of all key education stakeholders.

To promote Girls' Education, eight key strategies have been identified with suggested key activities to strengthen Advocacy, Leadership, Institutional Support, Enhancement of Service Delivery, Partnerships and Response to Education in Emergencies. The eight strategies are as following:

1. Advocacy for affordable education;
2. Social sensitization and mobilization/Advocacy for action to promote Girls' Education;
3. Gender sensitive curriculum, inclusive of child-centred learning, life skills and peace education;
4. Professional development of teachers;
5. Improvement of Child-Friendly School (CFS) standards through building capacity of teachers and school managers;
6. Policy development and strengthening of legal framework;
7. Capacity building at all levels for education planning, supervising, service delivery and monitoring; and
8. Partnerships.

Each strategy includes monitoring and evaluation. As part of any project cycle, this Girls' Education strategy recommends routine monitoring with an evaluation to be carried out at the end of every year to ensure whether higher rates of enrolment, retention and academic achievement in girl's education in South Sudan are achieved as per set target.

1.0 Background and Rationale

The General Education Act 2012 of the Republic of South Sudan works toward education that is gender-equal and free from discrimination or indoctrination. The Education Act of South Sudan promotes gender equality throughout all school levels and promotes the protection of children from abuse, violation and exploitation. Guided by the Millennium Development Goals, the General Education Act of 2012 and the Child Act of 2008, South Sudan is committed to ensure that both girls and boys fulfil their right to education.

To ensure universal access to education which is included in the Millennium Development Goals, MoEST, civil society and all education stakeholders have joined efforts to accelerate robust service delivery; improved quality, advocacy, and the development of a supportive policy framework. This has resulted in the significant increase in enrolment from 782,715 pupils (Girls: 265,833; Boys: 516,882) in 2006 to 1,311,467 (Girls: 510,599; Boys: 800,868) in 2013. Since 2006, the enrolment rate of girls has nearly doubled. However, detailed data on access to education and attainment shows that girls continue to face challenges, as compared to boys. The challenges are even more so for girls with disabilities and living in rural area.

Figure 1.1

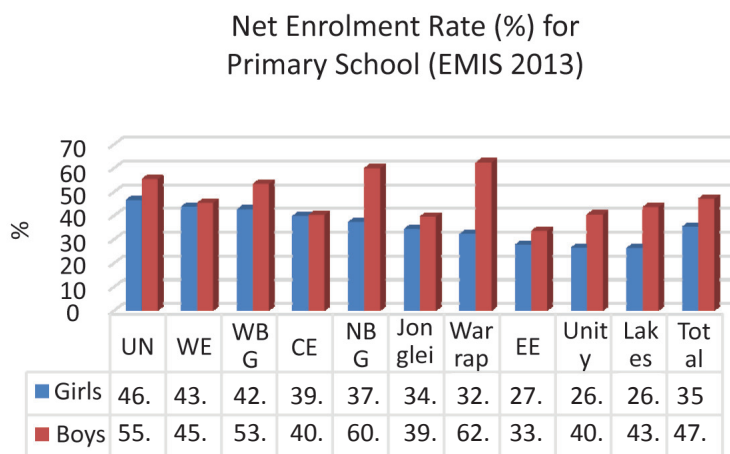
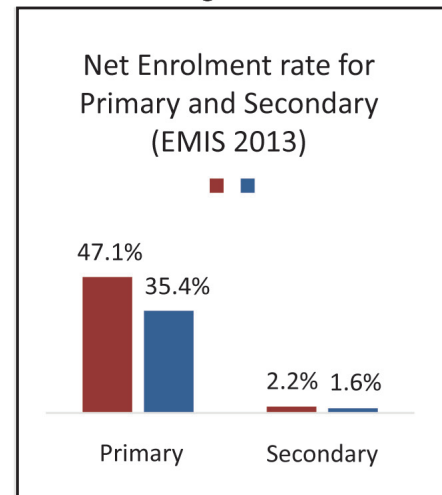


Figure 1.2



In South Sudan, the adult literacy rate is 27 per cent. In younger children (under 18), literacy rate for girls is 40 per cent 60 per cent for boys¹. Regionally, the average female net enrolment rate in primary

¹World Bank (2012)

school in Sub-Saharan Africa is at 75 per cent, while that of South Sudan is 36 per cent². Education for girls is essential for the stability, security and survival at both individual and family levels. This particularly applies to those girls who have been displaced and affected by conflict. High quality basic education will provide girls with the knowledge and skills needed to make informed choices for their future. It will aid them in adopting healthy behaviours, and motivate them to take an active role in the social, economic and political decision making process of their community. Studies have associated Girl's Education with lower child mortality, lower rates of HIV/AIDS; higher levels of education for the next generation, improved stability, health and peace; all of which contributes to national development. A World Bank study has demonstrated that increasing the secondary education in girls just by 1 per cent resulted in an annual income increase of 0.3 per cent per capita.³

The core objective of the General Education Strategic Plan (GESP) 2012-2017 is “*to eliminate barriers in Girl's Education and promote gender equality throughout the education system*”. To achieve equality and access to education, the government of South Sudan will take a leading role in advocating Girls' Education. Since 2011, various consultations have taken place, which include high-level meetings with the National MoEST, discussions with all State MoEs, discussions with female lecturers, and ministers and members of the Parliament. In addition, validation meetings with state partners and the Gender Technical Working Group have laid the foundation for this strategy.

1.1. Overall Objective

The overall objective for this strategy is to develop a model that will help reduce the barriers in education for girls, enhance gender equality and create positive learning environment for both girls and boys.

1.2. Specific Objectives

- Increase the net enrolment rate for girls by 2017;
- Sensitize the community on the importance of Girls' Education;
- Ensure progressive cultural revolution in knowledge, attitudes and practices for communities, and parents towards the values of educating girls;

¹UIS (2012), EMIS (2012)

²“The World Bank Human Development Network Children and Youth Unit & Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network Gender Unit”, World Bank, August 2011

- Improve the quality of learning and performance and to reduce the dropout rates;
- Increase the number of qualified female teachers and education managers; and
- Document evidence and good practices that can improve Girls' Education in South Sudan.

2.0 Major Barriers to Girls' Education in South Sudan

This section provides an overview of barriers that girls face in South Sudan. The following barriers are explained in the section below to better understand and effectively respond to them and to develop quality education and positive environment for girls and boys.

2.1 Household and Community-level Barriers

Direct and Indirect Costs of Schooling

The higher the poverty level in a household, the higher the likelihood that the girl child will not go to school due to the high cost of school fees, uniforms, exercise books and other learning materials. In many parts of South Sudan girls are often regarded as an opportunity to increase family wealth through marriage; bringing in resources like cattle or money as a form of marriage dowry. About 40 per cent of girls between ages 15-19 are married with some as young as 12 years⁴. Some parents feel that the girls need “protection” from unwanted pregnancy as it determines family honour and the amount of dowry a family can receive. As a result, girls are not able to go to school as the family fear the girls will get pregnant while in school.

The financial conditions lead to the prioritization of boys over girls when the family needs to select which child will go to school. Economic need drives family to engage girls with household chores such as cooking, fetching water, collecting firewood, helping to take care of younger siblings or selling vegetables in the market to contribute towards the family's overall income. Girls spend longer hours helping with chores and end up either never attending school, missing classes, performing poorly at school or dropping out of school.

Gender Norms

Traditionally, both families and the communities consider girls only as wives, and mothers. Girls are raised and socialized to also view themselves in this light.⁵ The practice of girl child marriage, and the strong

¹Household Survey (2010)

²MoGEI and UNICEF p. 33 (2008)

obligations to the family and society often deny girls their right to education. Customs and behaviours are enforced by male community leaders, elders, fathers, uncles, brothers, as well as mothers and aunts. In the South Sudanese patriarchal society, young girls are often marginalized from any decision-making processes, and sometimes even used as a token to resolve community issues. For example, in some states of Greater Equatoria, as a means to resolve conflicts between families particularly there is a custom of “blood compensation”, where girls are handed over to the family of a victim to compensate for the loss of life. This perpetuates mental, physical and sexual violence against girls and women and is a clear violation of human rights. On 2nd July 2015 the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted a resolution to strengthen efforts to prevent and eliminate child early and forced marriage. The resolution is the first substantive resolution on child marriage adopted by the Council.

Peer Influence

Peer influence is a factor in teaching and learning. Teachers, education managers and some out-of-school youth have indicated that peer influence can play a major role in deciding whether the students will remain or leave school. They stated that students’ experience with negative learning environment and poor teaching quality strongly affect their decision to either stay or leave school.⁶

2.2 School-Based Barrier

Language of Instruction and Curriculum

Cultural and gender norms can be reinforced through curriculum and textbooks, which depict women and girls in their traditional stereotypical roles. According to UNICEF, a number of existing textbooks reviewed during the study showed females depicted as inferior to males. The first ever National Curriculum has incorporated gender-sensitivity in its overall framework and syllabi. The critical components of life skills and peacebuilding are also being highlighted in the new curriculum.

Based on the discussions during Language Conference in Juba (2012), there are more than 70 languages spoken in South Sudan.⁷ The government has decided that Primary grades 1-3 shall be taught in the mother tongue, followed by English as the main language of instruction. There is a limited number of

¹MoGEI and UNICEF p. 36 (2008)

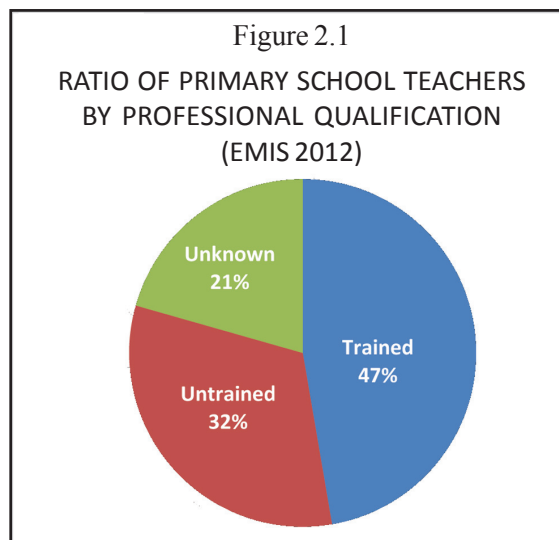
²UNICEF South Sudan (2012)

textbooks in the mother tongue throughout the country and English is still a fairly new language of instruction. These barriers pose challenges in the classroom for both students and teachers.

Lack of Female Teachers and Role Models

In South Sudan, there is a prominent disparity between female and male teachers. Only 13 per cent of all teachers in South Sudan are female. With the exception of Central Equatoria State, 80 per cent of teachers are male in primary schools, with Unity State reaching 95 per cent.

Having female teachers in the educational system is a positive psychological and social guidance for students, especially girls. Female teachers can be role models for young girls outside the family environment.



The quality of teacher training is another determining factor that affects the value of education. Overall, there is an insufficient number of trained teachers in the country. Only 47 per cent of teachers are properly trained in South Sudan; and of these 47 percent only 6 percent of the trained teachers are female. It is imperative to increase the number of trained female teachers by strengthening pre-service and in-service training at Teacher Training Institutes (TTI), County Education Centres (CEC) and universities. Some states do not have TTIs or CECs, and some women interested in pursuing teaching profession have expressed reluctance to move away from family to study. The shortage of TTIs and CECs therefore is another challenge that needs to be addressed.

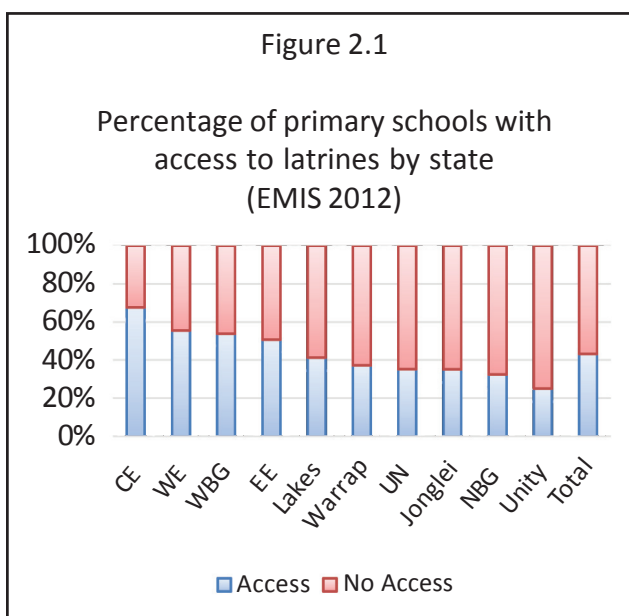
Low Child-Friendly School (CFS) Standards

There are barriers pertinent to both boys and girls. The lack of adequate learning spaces is one of them. Almost half of the schools in South Sudan are without permanent or semi-permanent classrooms.⁸ As 87

¹ EMIS (2012)

per cent of primary school students (girls: 87 per cent; boys 88 per cent) are over-aged, challenges are high with regards to students' discipline and class management by teachers, leading to possible drop-outs. While the provision of meals at schools can be a great motivation for students to enrol and continue coming to school, only 35 per cent of school-going children have access to school meals in South Sudan.⁹ Additionally, infrastructural barriers, such as lack of access to clean water, health facilities and fences surrounding school grounds to ensure safety while learning, also hamper conducive learning of children in South Sudan. Shortage of learning materials, textbooks and standardized curriculum all affect learning outcomes. Moreover, 2 per cent of learners have special needs such as learning disability, partial deafness and physical impairments.

Identifying different learning needs and approaches is a skill required in teachers, education inspectors and managers though the majority do not have this skill. Additionally, distance is also cited as one of the main barriers to continuing education. Harsh terrain in South Sudan makes roads and paths sometimes impassable during the rainy season which may last as long as six months per year. Distance can delay arrival to school and students are at times punished for being late, which may discourage them to continue attending classes.



WASH Facilities at Schools

In South Sudan, 57 per cent of schools have no access to latrines¹⁰. In most cases, the number of latrines is not sufficient to cater to all learners, resulting in poor conditions. Female students reaching puberty feel that the latrine spacing and condition of most of the facilities do not afford them the privacy

¹⁰WFP, 2012

they require. During menstruation, the lack of adequate sanitation facilities and feeling of shame can make girls shy away from attending schools, resulting in missing classes for 4 school days a month and increasing chances of drop-out. Additionally, many girls cannot afford sanitary pads. While there have been various initiatives to either distribute or locally produce reusable/washable sanitary pads and comfort kits the efforts have not yet to reach the large number of female students throughout the country.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Gender-based violence against girls and women is a prevalent issue across South Sudan. One fifth of women in the country are affected by GBV.¹¹ Forced sexual intercourse and girl child marriage are also forms of violence. The safety of girls is further undermined by long distance to school and during emergencies. Due to conflict and displacement, girls both within and out of displacement sites, and in as well out of school due to insecurity continue facing increased vulnerability to further sexual violence.

Sexual harassment can be defined as uncalled for or unwelcome verbal and physical behaviour against a person of the opposite sex. Boys have been reported for making snide remarks against girls in schools.¹² Both male students and teachers can be the perpetrators of this form of violence at school. There are limited reports and evidence on school-based GBV due to the lack of reporting and response. Acceptance of GBV is also high; 79 per cent of women in South Sudan feel that a husband has a right to hit or beat his wife¹³. These statistics indicate that many female students, who face GBV at school, stay silent. Corporal punishment is another prevalent form of violence against children in many parts of the country. Article 20 of Education Action reads: "*Corporal punishment is prohibited and that any teacher who contravenes subsection above, shall be guilty of the offence and liable for punishment by law.*" While this is part of the law, the legal framework to report the offence is still weak, leaving the students unprotected in many cases.

GBV in school is an extremely important issue that needs more research, and in-depth analysis to ensure that no physical and psychological violence and harassment against girls takes place at school. Life skills

¹SSHS (2010)

²UNICEF (2008)

³SSHS (2010)

programmes, peace education, and ensuring that teachers understand and comply with the Teacher Code of Conduct are some of the areas that need to be addressed and strengthened.

2.3 Policy and System Level Barriers

The education sector already has a number of policies in place: the Child Act of 2008, Education Act (2012), the National Gender Policy of 2008, the GESP (2012-2017), and the Teacher Code of Conduct, which capture national interest on education from different perspectives. In addition, national and state level consultations took place to develop the following strategies: the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The policies of South Sudan highlight that rights of the girl child are entrenched in the constitution of the Republic of South Sudan and they need to be defended.¹⁴ GESP 2012-2017 sets clear goals necessary to improve all sectors of education. GESP is a solid guiding tool for implementation; calling for funding and technical assistance from donors and the international communities, as well as requiring an unwavering commitment from the Ministry of Education at national and state levels. While these policies do provide legal foundation for progress, the challenges with policy implementation remain. GESP 2012-2017 also articulates that the Government of South Sudan shall aim to increase the national budget for Education up to 10 per cent during the period of GESP. However, limited national education budget, austerity measures and the crises since December 2013, have posed further challenges for equitable resource allocation necessary for the education sector.

There are a number of policies and thematic areas that can be strengthened through capacity building, advocacy, print production, creation of manuals, among other activities. Strengthening the overall policy implementation is vital in addressing the household and community level barriers and the school level barriers mentioned above.

3.0 Key Strategies for Girls' Education

This section will focus on the key strategies and possible activities to promote Girl's Education in the context of South Sudan. Based on the barrier analysis eight broad strategies will address the following issues.

¹⁴UNICEF (2012)

Household and Social Barriers

- Advocacy for affordable education; and
- Social sensitization and mobilization/advocacy for action to promote Girls' Education.

School-based Barriers

- Gender-sensitive curriculum, inclusive education, life skills and peace education;
- Professional development of teachers;
- Improvement of CFS standards through building capacity of teachers and school managers

Policy and System-Level Barriers

- Policy development and strengthening of legal framework;
- Strengthen capacity in education planning, supervising, service delivery and monitoring; and
- Partnerships.

3.1 Advocacy for Affordable Education

Advocacy for affordable education remains key for girls to enrol, transition, complete primary education and continue on to secondary school. The government of South Sudan is the ultimate duty bearer to ensure that compulsory and free basic education is available for all children. However, under the current situation in the education sector, funds are not standardized beyond the state conditional grants and vary according to state or county policy. As a result, the income needs to be sourced from either state revenue or schools themselves.

A capitation grant is a great example that has been introduced through GESS programme to remove registration fees for students and parents; reducing the cost of education will encourage families to send their children to school. Cash transfers and scholarships increase enrolment, particularly for girls. World Food Programme (WFP), through the *Food for Education* initiative encourages high attendance levels through the school feeding programme or the Girls' Incentive take home food rations. Continuous advocacy for affordable education will continue through commitment by the MoEST and the development partners.

Suggested Activities

- Training of school managers and Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) to endorse advocacy for the implementation of Education Act 2012; free and compulsory education and ensuring equitable resource allocation for schools;
- Expansion of cash transfer, capitation grant, scholarships, school feeding and food ration provisions, particularly targeted towards girls;
- Advocacy to strengthen state level (including county and *payam*) capacity for planning and budgeting of education sector, based on education census data and research;
- Ministry, in collaboration with the development partners to revisit policy around standardization of education funds for the states; addressing discrepancies between the states per spending on schools/child.

3.2 Social Sensitization and Mobilization of Communities to Send Girls to School

Community sensitization programmes can alter the attitudes and practices that hinder Girls' Education within a community or a household. Social mobilization can motivate a range of partners at local and national levels to raise awareness and demand for Girls' Education. Traditional leaders, chiefs, women/mothers' groups, church groups and elders can be mobilized to identify and address the barriers to Girls' Education through participatory learning and community action; allowing the communities to identify the obstacles through social mappings, problem trees and design programmes suitable to the specific context.

Through the Back-to-Learning (BTL) Initiative UNICEF and partners support state MoEST to mobilize children, particularly girls, through out South Sudan to enrol, stay and compete schooling. Additionally, rights-based approach needs to be introduced to show that girl child marriage is a type of violence against children and imposing household work on girls hinders them to go to school, violating their rights to education. Community mobilization needs to highlight harmful practices of blood compensation of girls to settle family disputes and physical and sexual abuse.

Social mobilization work through various means such as interactive drama and music, posters, videos, theatre, cartoons, public debates and rallies. For example, "*Our School*" radio programme produced by BBC Media Action as the behavioural change component of GESS programme follows the lives of girls

and their families as they struggle to resolve the challenges of going to school. In the sensitization process, it is critical for children themselves, both girls and boys to participate, identify key issues, consider possible solutions and to advocate for their own rights. As peer influence can work both positively and negatively, those in school could play a key role in encouraging other peers to continue learning, as well as to promote the rights of Girls' Education.

Suggested activities

- Organize community dialogue by targeting religious leaders, fathers, uncles, brothers mothers, elders and other community members to create awareness on Girls' Education through consultative and participatory process;
- Develop "edutainment programme" (mix of education and entertainment) to sensitize the community, such as community theatre, dance, drama, radio talk shows;
- Systematic commemoration of key events such as International Day of the Girl Child, Day of the African child, anniversary of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, International Teachers' Day throughout the country to promote Girls' Education;
- Identify role-models to promote Girls' Education within a *payam*, county or state;
- Produce promotional materials to ensure girls are sent to school, such as banners, posters and leaflets;
- Design Communication for Development (C4D) programme to sensitize a community to advocate for the Girls' Education;
- Explore innovative approaches to reach the community with key messages; use of SMS in urban areas, radio talk shows or community theatre in rural areas;and
- Implement the Communicative Strategy on Child Marriage developed by MOGCSW in collaboration with UNICEF in all 10 states to discourage school dropouts due to early marriages, forced marriages and teenage pregnancies.

3.3 Gender-sensitive Curriculum Reform, Inclusive Education, Life Skills and Peace Education

Curriculum reform is one strategy to increase gender-neutrality and promote the value of girls. This includes revising how girls and boys, men and women are depicted in the curriculum and including curriculum components that promote lifeskills and peace education. The GESP 2012-2017 articulates the need for “life skills and learner support services” as one of the key strategic objectives in achieving quality education. Learner support services instil a deep-seated culture of peace using a conflict-sensitive approach, hence life skills and peace education are imperative learning experiences. Life skills that promote Girls’ Education need to broaden the scope for tolerance, compassion, respect for self and other and resilience for girls to rise above as agents of change in peacebuilding. A range of other support services will include guidance counselling, career guidance, peer counselling, conflict resolution and stress management to support purposeful mind-set that is geared towards transformational change.

Transformational change for the girlchild using lifeskills and peace education will enable them to develop self-awareness, assertiveness, confidence in their sexuality and positive self-esteem. Career guidance helps them to know that they have the ability to choose any career and to challenge gender stereotypic fixations inherent in the society. The teaching and learning approach for behaviour change for girls as well as boys requires participatory, reflective and experiential approaches where girls can recognize and respect themselves and others. This requires mainstreaming in the curriculum, co-curricular, psycho-educational teaching as well as counselling to address trauma and psycho-social needs within and out of the school community. Needless to say, the importance for girls to feel safe and secure in accessing these supportive services in and out of school is imperative.

Additionally, the importance of mother-tongue education to improve learning outcomes, particularly in the early years of learning, is an important consideration in strengthening quality education for girls and boys. This needs to be widely implemented, through the local production of language textbooks besides training teachers to instruct using young student’s mother tongue. A specialized committee has been established by MoEST to review the curriculum and other learning materials, including mother tongue textbooks to make sure that the curriculum is gender-sensitive and that all aspects of curriculum design and development have an equity marker.

Suggested activities

- Establish a committee to review the curriculum with focus on gender-sensitivity;
- Career guidance activities and career day in schools;
- Expansion of mentoring activities in schools;
- Training teachers on peace education, life skills and inclusive education;
- Training teachers on counselling and the role of learners support services that are conflict and peacebuilding-sensitive;
- Training of teachers on gender and gender-sensitive classroom management;
- Develop stories and role play on gender;
- Training on teaching about reproductive health and comprehensive sexuality education;
- Strengthening of reproductive health and family life education in the school curriculum; and
- Production of mother tongue materials.

3.4 Professional Development of Teachers, Particularly on Gender Equality

The extremely low number of female teachers in South Sudan needs to be addressed through the rigorous enrolment and provision of both pre-service and in-service trainings of teachers. More emphasis need to be put on encouraging female teachers into the profession by providing special scholarships. Both male and female teachers must take training on gender awareness, gender sensitivity in classrooms and the child right principles in the teacher professional development courses through Teacher Training Institutes, County Education Centres (CEC) and tertiary education institute courses across the country. Innovative approach to the professional development programmes can encourage both female and male teachers to continue with professional development on gender sensitivity. For example, in some parts of Eastern Equatoria the use of computer tablets has been introduced as a new tool for training teachers and education supervisors, encouraging them to expand knowledge and skills through various digital contents uploaded on to the computers. These technological tools help teachers-in-training who may be residing in remote areas with little or no access to TTI or CECs. Combining traditional teacher training methods with innovative practices to attract young teachers-to-be, in particular female teachers, is something to worth exploring.

Suggested activities

- Systematic training of teachers on gender equity, both in-service and pre-service;
- Expansion of pre-service training course at universities and encouraging more female students to take the courses;
- Developing institutional capacity of TTIs and County Education Centers;
- Establish more TTIs and CECs in the areas where it does not currently exist;
- Use of innovative tools for teacher professional development training;
- Provision of English language training for teachers of Arabic language background;
- Promote capacity building of teachers on life skills and peacebuilding and how to teach these subjects; and how to support children with special learning needs;
- Training of teachers on sign languages; and
- Provision of scholarships for female teachers.

3.5. Improvement of Child-Friendly School and Education Facilities

Child-Friendly School (CFS) is a school where the physical, social, psychological, spiritual and intellectual needs of the child are met. The key principle of a CFS is the provision of child-centred teaching and learning in a safe and protective learning environment. A number of barriers identified can be directly addressed applying CFS standards for improvement. For example, it is desirable to have 30-36 students per teacher, provision of adequate water and separate sanitation facilities for girls and boys, and support for student health and nutrition, i.e., through school-feeding mechanism to ensure the good nutrition status of learners. CFS standards also focus on the inclusion of girls and suggest alternative learning approaches for girls who may have dropped out due to pregnancy or early marriage. Taking steps to facilitate them to come back to school after delivery and establishing community girls' schools is one example to develop alternative education pathways, i.e., accelerated learning programmes. The introduction of Early Childhood Development is an integral part of the education system, nurturing physical, emotional and mental development of children from an early age. Support for ECD is an area requiring further strengthening to ensure both girls and boys have equal starting point in education.

Wider awareness and trainings for CFS standards can greatly enhance the understanding of education stakeholders on minimum standards expected for quality learning, physical environment, school management, inclusion and protection. Monitoring of the implementation of CFS standards is a vital component articulated in the recently developed CFS manual.

In the current context of South Sudan, the strategy also focuses upon the importance of education during emergencies for both girls and boys. Education for girls needs to be mainstreamed within the disaster preparedness and response. The Minimum Standard for Education by International Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) sets out standards and approaches for recovery of quality education that provides physical, psychosocial and cognitive protection for children in emergencies. During emergencies, whether human made or natural disaster, continued education can reduce the psychosocial impact of conflict on children by giving them a sense of normalcy and hope for the future.

The Inter-Agency Rapid Needs Assessment (IRNA) in emergency-stricken locations provides an opportunity to obtain gender-disaggregate data to better develop the emergency response plan for education. It is important to ensure that girls affected by acute emergencies have access to safe and protective temporary learning spaces, established using tents or locally available materials. During acute emergencies girls are often vulnerable to sexual violence whereas boys are also at risk of being recruited by armed groups. In places where people may have been displaced, schools destroyed or occupied by armed groups and there is often a lack of security. Therefore, the establishment of temporary learning spaces in safe locations are essential to ensure the housing to enable the continuation of learning. Organizing training for Education in Emergencies, INEE standards, and principles of CFS, life skills, peacebuilding for teachers, education personnel and PTA members, and the provision of key education supplies in emergency are fundamental in ensuring continuous education and protection of girls in emergency.

Suggested activities

- Standardization and adoption of key CFS principles; training for education by key stakeholders;
- Publication and wide circulation of CFS manuals;
- Training of teachers on CFS, INEE and CFS standards;
- Promotion of mobile schools in pastoralist states where conflicts are prevalent;
- Strengthening the reporting of gender-based violence within the school system and outside it by utilizing the Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS);
- Integration of education in emergencies to address components of the national Girls' Education strategy;
- Supporting schools to form links with existing emergency educational cluster teams to support vulnerable children during and after emergencies;

- Conduct community-based trainings on emergency preparedness initiatives as well as conduct training in communication skills, financial literacy, HIV/AIDS awareness, leadership development and conflict mediation;
- Promoting the continuation of Education for All, even during emergencies;
- Formation of community-based activists groups to discourage early marriages and prevent and respond to GBV;
- Establishment of staff development in emergency context with special support services to protect staff and students;
- Provision of psychosocial support for girls and documentation of good practices; and
- Establishment of clubs such as those for Inclusive Education, Reproductive Health, Peace Education, WASH, Girls' Education Movement (GEM), Social Advocacy Teams (SAT) and Promotion and Advocacy for Girls Education (PAGE) at school.

3.6 Policy Development and Strengthening Legal and Structural Framework for Inclusive Education

The GESP 2012-2017 indicates that gaps between policy formulation and implementation are a major barrier to Girls' Education. Policy development and strengthening of legal and structural framework is vital. Education Bill of 2012, South Sudan Development Plan (2011) and the Child Act of 2008 will remain critical in ensuring girls go to school and remain in school. Continuous advocacy to ensure allocation of 10 per cent of national budget to Education would greatly improve the education sector, and achieve a goal set out under GESP 2012-2017.

To further dissect the policy gaps identified within GESP 2012-2017 and to guide the actual implementation of policy at all levels, evidence-based education data is critical. Improved Education Information Management System (EMIS) can provide gender-segregated data that supports effective decision-making process through budgeting and planning of the education sector. Decentralization of EMIS would also allow more contextualized, sound analysis of school-based data to ensure equitable resource allocation and utilization at state, county, *payam* and school levels. Critical analysis of the education data would further identify the policy gap and help with formulating new education policy. South Sudan School Attendance and Monitoring Systems (SSSAMS) is an innovative component of GESS Programme, where SMS are introduced to enable real-time monitoring of teacher and student attendance. Gender-based violence at schools is another area that requires more research to implement measures ensuring of girls in school. While MoEST continues to endeavor policy implementation, all development partners need to continue providing technical assistance to design and implement these policies and to make sure that legislative measures are in place.

Suggested Activities

- MOEST together with partners should provide technical support and leadership to implement the strategy through advocacy and dialogue;
- Convene a legal team to revisit existing policies and harmonize legal documents related to girl child education;
- Dissemination of existing policies to all levels of governance;
- Training for various education stakeholders on national and state-level government on Education Bill 2012, CRC, Child Act 2008, 2011 South Sudan Development Plan;
- Trainings of teachers on Teacher Code of Conduct and inclusive education for example sign language and Braille;
- Formation of women and gender forums at all levels of governance;
- Improve EMIS at all levels;
- Collection of data and its analysis to identify policy gaps; strengthen partnerships and collaboration, including with research institutions;
- Establish girls' parliament in schools to discuss policies and legislation;
- Lobby other ministries to support MoEST and SMoE to adopt and implement the national Girls' Education strategy over the next five years; and
- Establish technical working groups or thematic working groups led by the Ministry to identify policy gaps and formulation.

3.7 Capacity Strengthening at All Levels for Education Planning, Supervising, Service Delivery and Monitoring.

Gender equality agenda needs to be mainstreamed across sectors through capacity strengthening at all levels of governance and through different institutions where the implementation of the various priorities is identified. Officials both at central and state level must be responsible to monitor and ensure equitable resource allocation and setting milestones... Institutionalization and decentralization of EMIS, particularly ensuring the availability of gender-segregated data, would enhance the capacity of the planning and budgeting at all levels of education sector, ultimately contributing to the improvement of the education sector.

It is vital that County Education Directors and *payam* education supervisors are well versed with varying policies such as Education Act, so they could effectively monitor and work with teachers and school governing bodies. Strengthening national support to County Education Centres as well as TTIs would facilitate the capacity development of the education stakeholders. The MoEST through the GESS, GPE and *Room to Learn* (RtL) projects will directly support the training of school-governing bodies, including the parents and guardians. Additionally, these projects will support various aspects of school development and management and work towards mainstreaming gender in various trainings at grass-roots level. Student can become leaders at the school level by monitoring service delivery. Awareness programme on their rights to education, health, protection from harm taught through life skills and peace education will enhance their ability to advocate for their own rights.

Suggested activities

- Training of gender officials, School Management Committee (SMC) and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) on the importance of Girls' Education, CFS standards, CRC, Teacher Code of Conduct, Education Bill 2012;
- Enhancing the capacity of TTI and CECs to provide training to teachers and *payam* education directors and county education supervisors;
- Establish female teacher forums;
- Capacity development of central EMIS unit and state-level EMIS implementation; and
- Increase education budget and allocations to build more schools with suitable WASH facilities, i.e., separate girls' and boys' latrines, and train more teachers, especially female teachers.

3.8 Partnership

Integrated partnership for Girls' Education is essential for understanding and overcoming the barriers at all levels— household, community, school and policy levels. The existing partnerships that have been exemplary alliances in building key strategies for education in South Sudan need to be strengthened to address existing gender inequality. All partners will be involved in the process of breaking down the

barriers in education for girls. Key Ministries and partners include the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, Ministry of Sports, Youth and Culture, National Bureau of Statistics, bi-lateral and multi-lateral governments from overseas, National Education Forum, Joint Sector Meetings, NGOs, FBOs, and CBOs; UN agencies such as UNICEF, UNESCO, UNFPA, and UN Women, UNGEI; schools, teachers, PTAs, parents and children themselves are the basis for developing this strategy.

Joint sector meetings for GESS, RtL, IMED and GPE are ideal platforms to share the improvements, lessons learned and challenges of the various education programmes. Local and international research institutions can play the key role in research, and by collecting vital data and evidence, and provide recommendations for the strategy. Additionally, private sectors and companies are encouraged to provide contribution in education sector through innovative approaches such as providing scholarships, opportunities for girls' vocational studies and training; distance learning, introduction of new technology to facilitate learning, or simply promoting education through publicity.

Developing a Gender Thematic Working group (GTG) at national, State, County, *Payam* and school levels where necessary will strengthen the cause for Girls' Education. Membership to this group will be open to all those interested in supporting and promoting Girls' Education and in protecting the girl child.

Suggested activities

- Active engagement of all partners, including community leaders, private sector and academic institutes;
- Continuous commitment for Joint sector group meeting (GESS, GPE, GESS, RtL) through donor and partner engagement;
- Strengthening the gender thematic forums and thematic working groups;
- Inter-sectoral planning meetings; and
- Establish task force to identify policy gap around Girls' Education.

4 Monitoring and Evaluation

The key objective for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is providing information that helps assess if the strategy is being realised through an agreed set of performance indicators. Stakeholders from all levels of local government structures will be involved in the monitoring process of Girls' Education through critical events such as Gender Forums, Girls' Parliament sessions, Inclusive Education forums, monthly and quarterly review meetings at school; *boma, payam*, county, state and at the national levels. The M&E activities related to the strategy will be mainstreamed to eliminate the possibility of creating gaps in the overall National M&E strategy. However, special monthly and quarterly reports on the progress of Girls' Education will be produced and crucially reviewed in the aforementioned critical events.

MoEST, through the Directorate of Gender, will be responsible for the monitoring process at all levels and will be tasked to report the achievements and challenges on the implementation of the strategy. In terms of the evaluating the strategy plan, a baseline assessment in 2015, a mid-term assessment in 2016 and a final evaluation in 2018 will be carried out to assess effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and coordination of the proposed strategies. The evaluation results will be used to demonstrate and account for planned results and determine the corrective actions that need to be taken to ensure necessary changes within the strategy are made beyond 2018.

A national report for the Girls' Education strategy will be developed that will be expected to be presented at the Annual Joint Sector Reviews to ensure due consideration for the implementation of Girls' Education strategy are incorporated in the broader issues of the Education Sector.

Conclusion

The National Girls' Education Strategy is a road map for improving girls' enrolment, retention and completion of education in South Sudan. The strategy has provided the background and rationale, discussed the major barriers that affect Girls' Education, and identified the key strategies, including the following;

- Advocacy for affordable education;
- Social sensitization and mobilization/Advocacy for action to promote Girls' Education;
- Development of gender sensitive curriculum, inclusive of child-centred learning, life skills and peace education;
- Professional development of teachers;
- Improvement of CFS standards through building capacity of teachers and school managers;
- Policy development and strengthening of legal framework in support of Girls' Education;
- Capacity building at all levels for education planning, budgeting and allocation, supervising, service delivery, and monitoring and evaluation; and
- Partnerships.

All the identified strategies were discussed in-depth to promote a holistic response to achieve the vision for gender equality in education. Involvement of all partners undertaking Girls' Education led by the Gender Equity and Inclusive Directorate in MoEST is key for the implementation of the strategy. Participation of all education partners will ensure both girls and boys are able to access quality education in the in the Republic of South Sudan.

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