

What to prioritize when everything is a priority?

Crisis-sensitive education sector planning in South Sudan

Andrea Diaz-Varela,
Leonora MacEwen,
and Jos Vaessen

South Sudan



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List of abbreviations

AES	alternative education system
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
EDoG	Education Donor Group
EMIS	education management information system
ESA	education sector analysis
ESP	education sector plan
GESS	Girls Education South Sudan
GESP	general education strategy plan
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GUPN	Greater Upper Nile
HE	higher education
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IDP	internally displaced person
IMED	Improve Management of Education Delivery
IMF	International Monetary Fund
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology
MoU	memorandum of understanding
NEF	National Education Forum
NER	net enrolment rate
NGO	non-governmental organization
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PEG	Partners Education Group
PEIC	Protect Education in Insecurity and Conflict
POC	protection of civilians
SPLA/M	Sudan People Liberation Army/Movement
SSP	South Sudanese Pound
SSSAMS	South Sudan School Attendance Monitoring System
TTI	teacher training institutes
TVET	technical and vocational education and training
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Executive summary

As a new country, South Sudan has developed its education sector from the ground up. While meaningful progress has been made, the process has been complicated by a struggling economy, extreme poverty, lack of infrastructure, and renewed conflict. The political strife that flared up within the country in 2013, natural disasters such as seasonal flooding, outbreaks of cholera, and severe food insecurity have all hampered advances in the development of many sectors, including that of education. These realities underline the urgent need to mainstream conflict and disaster risk management into sector analysis and planning processes.

This case study outlines the process of developing an education sector analysis (ESA) and education sector plan (ESP) in risk-prone contexts, with an aim to illustrate the transformational potential of education through long-term prevention measures and preparedness planning. The UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) first provided South Sudan's Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST) with support to help rebuild its education system in 2010, culminating with technical cooperation to develop the country's 2017–2021 ESA and ESP beginning in October 2015. Various actors were involved in the ESA/ESP process, including the UNESCO Office in Juba, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and Protect Education in Insecurity and Conflict (PEIC).

The study examines the ESA/ESP development process used in South Sudan – offering insights into challenges and enabling factors – and concludes with a set of key lessons learned. Interviews with representatives from the MoEST, partner organizations, and donors conducted for the study found that the ESA/ESP process was seen within the country as an important way to secure funding for education, guide a common vision for education, and improve the coordination of education actors.

The ESA/ESP development process itself was seen as an opportunity to strengthen MoEST capacities in education sector analysis and planning, and so relied on a variety of capacity development modalities including technical workshops and advocacy. Participation of all education stakeholders was key, as was MoEST ownership. Representatives from all 10 states participated in the process, alongside representatives from the donor community and civil society. Finally, the availability of education data from the country's education management information system (EMIS), as well as the availability of crisis-related data, greatly facilitated the analysis process.

The most pressing challenges encountered during the process included the relatively short timeline for carrying out the ESA and ESP, and high staff turnover within the MoEST and among humanitarian and development partners. In addition, political instability and limited prospects for lasting peace – coupled with the ongoing economic crisis and limited visibility regarding forthcoming funding for education – further complicated the process.

The following set of lessons learned emerged from the process in South Sudan:

- Government leadership and the strong participation of national authorities reinforce ownership and alignment of partners' efforts.
- Developing capacities for crisis-sensitive education sector planning is a long process that may ultimately be undermined by the crisis itself.
- The planning process can contribute to fostering social cohesion.
- There is a need to build upon the complementarity of different organizations and ensure strong coordination, so as to effectively support ministries of education to develop plans that are crisis-sensitive.

- Bridging the humanitarian–development divide through crisis-sensitive planning requires management of different stakeholder expectations, approaches, and agendas.
- Even in crisis situations, it is feasible to develop an evidence-based and relevant ESP.

Introduction

On 9 July 2011, after nearly four decades of civil war, South Sudan gained independence from Sudan, becoming the world's youngest state. The new country faced massive challenges in its transition to independence. The Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST) began the process of developing the education sector despite the country's struggling economy, extreme poverty, lack of infrastructure, and basic services. Nearly all the education institutions were relatively new, existing only since 2005, and the staff responsible for education policy and planning, while highly motivated, often lacked the necessary training and experience. The renewal of conflict 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 parts of the country. Accordingly, the Ministry¹ must devise and manage an education system that can mitigate the risk of conflict and respond to crises as a matter of urgency.

Box 1. Historical overview of South Sudan

Prior to the period of Anglo-Egyptian rule, which began at the beginning of the 19th 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 the 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 in 2005 between Sudan's government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M). In 2011, a referendum was held in which over 98 per cent of southern Sudanese voters chose secession from northern Sudan. Independence was granted and South Sudan became the world's newest country. The population and its leaders enjoyed a sense of hope accompanied by high expectations, despite the immense challenges.

However, on 15 December 2013 a political power struggle plunged the country into civil war once more, with drastic consequences. This latest conflict has resulted in the death of 10,000 people with 13,000 children recruited into armed groups and more than 1.5 million displaced across Central Equatoria, Jonglei, Unity, and the Upper Nile states. More than 153,000 people have sought shelter in six UN bases (Protection of Civilians camps) across the country since the outbreak of this conflict (UNICEF, 2015b). In August 2015, negotiations led to the signing of a fragile peace agreement. However, conflict persists in many areas of the country, despite the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity in April 2016.

Source: Authors.

Education stakeholders in South Sudan and global development and humanitarian communities increasingly recognize the need to integrate conflict and disaster risk reduction into education sector analysis and planning. In collaboration with partners including UNICEF, the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) has provided practical guidance, technical assistance, and training in this area since 2008, and has become a point of reference for crisis-sensitive education sector planning. IIEP began providing support to MoEST in 2010 with a view to rebuilding South Sudan's education system. Building upon capacity development efforts of UNICEF to provide conflict-sensitive education services, IIEP provided technical assistance and capacity development

1. In May 2016, upon implementation of the Transitional Government of South Sudan, the MoEST became the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI). For the purposes of this study, the authors have maintained the use of MoEST.

for central-level officials, enabling them to develop an education sector plan (ESP). In 2012, with funding from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, IIEP also helped state-level officials develop an education sector analysis (ESA).² Most recently, in October 2015, MoEST called upon IIEP to support the development of their ESA and ESP for 2017–21, with support from partners such as UNICEF and the Protect Education in Insecurity and Conflict (PEIC) programme.

The development of an ESA and ESP are necessary preconditions for a country to be considered for funding from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). Given the particular challenges facing South Sudan as a young nation experiencing a protracted crisis and ongoing instability, the ESA and ESP are being developed through a crisis-sensitive lens. The process itself represents an opportunity to strengthen MoEST's capacities in education sector analysis and planning. The Directorate of Planning and Budget within the Ministry has taken a lead in the process with technical support and guidance from IIEP and the UNESCO Office in Juba.

The purpose of the ESA extends beyond demonstrating progress since the initial sector analysis – it mainstreams risk and crisis sensitivity throughout the process. The South Sudanese ESA is based on ESA methodological guidelines developed by IIEP Pôle de Dakar, UNICEF, GPE, and the World Bank (IIEP Pôle de Dakar *et al.*, 2014). Both the ESA and the ESP also employ planning guidance³ developed by IIEP and PEIC on integrating safety, resilience, and social cohesion into education sector planning.

This case study explores the process used to develop the ESA and ESP with a view to highlighting lessons learned for education sector planning in contexts of volatility and protracted crisis. Its ultimate aim is to strengthen the evidence base on the transformational potential of education for promoting safety, resilience, and social cohesion, based on the implementation of long-term prevention measures and preparedness planning. The data-collection methods for this case study consisted of a desk study, interviews, and workshop observation. Information was sourced from a wide variety of literature, including project document reports⁴ from UNESCO's programme management and monitoring database, project proposals, research reports, grey literature, relevant government policies, sector plans, education management information system (EMIS) data, and humanitarian country strategy documents (see the References for a full list) (MoEST, 2015b). The study is also based on interviews with staff of the UNESCO Office in Juba, 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 1).

The case study begins by outlining the status of education in South Sudan and the capacity challenges and opportunities facing MoEST. It then provides a brief chronology of IIEP's support for capacity development and education sector planning, before discussing the process used to develop the country's crisis-sensitive ESA and ESP by MoEST with the support of IIEP. The following chapters present findings related to the process – including challenges and preconditions valuable to the process. Finally, the case study presents a set of lessons learned in the area of education sector planning in crisis contexts.

2. The ESA at this time was carried out by the World Bank.

3. An advisory group consisting of representatives from the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), the Ministry of Education of Kenya, the Foundation for the Refugee Education Trust (RET), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNICEF, the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), and the World Bank provided significant inputs to this guidance. The booklets are available at: www.education4resilience.iiep.unesco.org

4. These comprise project reports on IIEP support in South Sudan from 2010–16.

Status of education in South Sudan

The decades of civil war prior to independence and the renewed fighting which began in December 2013 (see Box 1) affected all areas of South Sudanese life. This includes education. Today, 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, with seasonal floods rendering 60 per cent of the country inaccessible for six months of the year, and the persistence of armed violence across the country, especially in its three northern states (Upper Nile, Unity, and Jonglei) (OCHA, 2015b). The challenges facing MoEST and all of South Sudan are immense.

This does not mean, however, that meaningful progress has not been made in education service delivery. In spite of these obstacles, South Sudan has made great strides in providing access to education following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005. Parliament passed the 2012 Education Act, which stipulated that primary education must be free and compulsory for all. Over 1 million children enrolled in school following the launch of the government's 'Go-to-School' initiative in 2006, up from 343,000 during wartime (UNICEF, 2008a; 2008b: 10). 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 and remain even today. For example, 2015 data show that over 73 per cent of primary schools do not offer all eight grades of the primary cycle (MoEST, 2015b). Other major issues facing education include the change in language of instruction from Arabic to English following independence, the lack of qualified teachers, high teacher attrition, the dearth of post-primary opportunities, and the high numbers of out-of-school children, especially girls. However, strong demographic pressure renders education more vital than ever, with more than half the population under the age of 18 and 72 per cent under the age of 30 (UNESCO, 2015). Regrettably, the small budget allocation for the sector, which dropped from 7.1 per cent of the government budget in 2009 to 4.8 per cent in 2014/15, leaves little room for investment in education beyond teacher salaries.

The resurgence of violence in December 2013 reversed many of the gains 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. Severe levels of food insecurity affect approximately 4.6 million people, obliging the World Food Programme to spend over \$1.1 million per day to feed communities (OCHA, 2015a: 1). The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates that 2 million children have been affected by the conflict and approximately 13,000 children have been recruited into armed forces and groups to date (OCHA, 2015b). Although estimates vary, thousands of schools have been closed, salaries are not reaching teachers, and more than 90 schools across the country are occupied by fighting forces and internally displaced persons (IDPs) (Lotyam and Arden, 2015). Between 2013 and 2015, nearly 400,000 students dropped out of school in the Greater Upper Nile (GUPN) states (UNESCO, 2015). The present primary net enrolment rate (NER) is 35 per cent, however only 14 per cent of children finish primary school (OCHA, 2015b: 9). Close to 90 per cent of primary students are over age for their grade and the NER for secondary education is only 2 per cent (MoEST, 2015b: 79).⁵ 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 summary, the education needs in the country are staggering.

5. EMIS data is based on seven out of 10 states only, as three states are largely inaccessible.

In addition to immediate needs, long-term educational development remains a major priority for communities, the government, and development partners (Clarke *et al.*, 2015). In February 2014, MoEST convened an emergency meeting attended by state education officials and humanitarian and development partners, which acknowledged that ‘education cannot wait for the war to end’ (Lotyam and Arden, 2015). Education partners continue to operate mainly from Juba, the capital city, and do their best to cover the entire country, including the GUPN region (Education Cluster, 2015). 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. UNHCR and others are supporting education activities in refugee camps (for Sudanese in South Sudan). Progress on major education interventions continues, such as the creation of a large-scale girls’ capitation grant system (funded by the UK Department for International Development, DFID),⁶ and the review and launch of a new curriculum integrating peacebuilding, life skills, and the environment for the first time (funded through the GPE programme)⁷ in September 2015 (MoEST and UNICEF, 2012). Other major donors in the field of education, besides UNICEF and DFID, are the European Union and USAID.

The UNESCO Office in Juba is also actively involved in supporting the education sector. In addition to conducting education analyses and planning support through IIEP, its main education work in recent years includes literacy training for ex-combatants, the development of teacher training materials in psychosocial support and life skills, and pastoralist education in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, FAO. The Office has also partnered with UN Women to implement a peacebuilding and life skills initiative, and with the Forest Whitaker Foundation to deliver activities relating to cinema and sports for peace.

MoEST itself has made significant progress in building an education system from the ground up. Despite its achievements, however, critical gaps remain in terms of technical capacity and core governance functions.

Education planning and management capacity

The signing of the CPA in 2005 was accompanied by the establishment of a new education system for South Sudan. The few schools in operation prior to the CPA, supported by missionaries, community groups, or non-governmental organizations (NGOs), had to be integrated into a single coordinated system with a common curriculum, schooling cycle, and language of instruction (World Bank, 2012). Decades of war had depleted South Sudan’s human resource base and nearly all education institutions had to be built from scratch amid a dearth of physical and financial resources. A willing and committed cadre of MoEST staff initiated education policy and planning processes, but often lacked the necessary training and experience. The UN *Development Assistance Framework* (2012–2013) further described South Sudan as having ‘the largest capacity gap in Africa’ (United Nations, 2012: 6).

A capacity assessment conducted in 2012 prior to the first education strategic plan describes in detail the limits of educational management and planning capacity in the Ministry at independence (MoEST, 2012b). Many of these 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*⁸ levels. Weak accountability mechanisms and financial management systems are insufficient to adequately monitor the use of public resources or to deter the misuse and mismanagement of public resources. In addition, the absence of both normative frameworks for human resource management

6. See: www.girlseducationsouthsudan.org/

7. See: www.globalpartnership.org/blog/south-sudan-celebrates-its-first-comprehensive-curriculum

8. An administrative unit at the sub-district level.

and a viable monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system, as well as capacity to implement decentralization strategies, have impeded effective educational management.

Human resource capacities in MoEST for education planning are generally considered to be weak. The low capacity of many staff to conduct daily activities and tasks has been linked to a lack of resources and understaffing (UNESCO, 2013). Basic administrative and office management skills such as memo writing, filing, and time management, cannot be taken for granted, and individuals that are effective planners tend to be overworked (Sigsgaard, 2013).

South Sudan also has a long history of fragmented development support, even following independence. For decades, there was no coherent government-led policy or strategic framework to guide the work of all education actors. Education interventions, in general, have a short time horizon, offer limited coverage of particular regions or population groups, and are influenced by humanitarian approaches with a focus on addressing immediate needs to the detriment of longer-term development (Lotyam and Arden, 2015). Programmes have largely been donor-driven and, according to South Sudan's Undersecretary of Education, have generated a parallel system and high dependency on external support (Novelli *et al.*, 2015). Recent years have seen increased efforts at coordination, however. A partner coordination manual was created with support from DFID, UNICEF, and UNESCO, following a mapping of all education partners in conjunction with the Partners Education Group (PEG) (MoEST, 2015a). Lotyam and Arden (2015) note that, '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'.

Expectations for the ESA and ESP 2017–2021

Interviews with central and state-level leadership in MoEST, development and humanitarian partners, donors, and local civil society groups paint a different picture of the country's second ESP. Stakeholders viewed the ESA/ESP process as more than just a tool for securing GPE funding. They appreciated the need to aggregate meaningful and reliable⁹ data on the education situation in South Sudan with a view to guiding planning, and saw its potential for improving the coordination of education actors. As with the first ESP, however, the second ESA/ESP process was subjected to immense time pressure.

Securing funding for education

The need to obtain funding is a driving factor for MoEST. South Sudan's second ESP is therefore being prepared with the intention of applying for GPE funding and securing other donor commitments. However, the requirement to integrate crisis sensitivity, as specified by GPE and the Education Donor Group (EDoG), is relatively new to countries such as South Sudan. As a young nation in the depths of a protracted crisis and heavily reliant on oil revenue – which has plummeted in price over the last few months leading to rapid depreciation of the national currency and high inflation – South Sudan is under strong fiscal pressure. The security sector, namely the army, police, and the national security service, receives over 50 per cent of the national budget (Lotyam and Arden, 2015). Meanwhile, the country's national budget allocation to education remains well below the global standard. South Sudan's Education Act stipulates that 10 per cent of the national budget be allocated to education, however only 5 per cent was allotted in 2013/14 (MoEST, 2012a).

9. The availability of data has improved over time and triangulation between data sets is used to improve the reliability of analyses. Nonetheless, some reservations are held about the accuracy of data.

Guiding a common vision

Aside 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 together education stakeholders at national and state levels around a common strategy. According to MoEST, the ESA is vital because it constitutes the first step in ESP development. MoEST is also committed to locating funds for implementation of the ESP, as a complement to GPE funds. The same can be said for state-level ministries where the ESP will serve as the basis for discussions with partners on development support.

MoEST staff explained that the ESP would 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 data 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 awaiting completion of the ESP to finalize the MoEST M&E system, which is currently under development.

The fact that the ESP will embody the government's official strategy and plan is important, but does not guarantee its uptake by external agencies. It is hoped that the new ESP will become an input in their planning. There is also a real push for alignment and harmonization of both humanitarian and development initiatives. UNHCR, for example, posits that government and refugee schools, which are being supported and run by humanitarian and development agencies, are dealing with common issues such as high levels of female dropout. The causes behind this phenomenon are likely to be similar, and UNHCR will look to the ESP for guidance.

Finally, the ESP will be completed using projections that explore the implications of different possible scenarios (supported by a simulation model). This will help ensure that the policy options that are retained are financially and technically sustainable. This expectation contributes to a higher level of confidence in the relevance and applicability of the ESP 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. A source of tension perceived by the MoEST is the lack of accountability on the part of humanitarian and development partners, who take action largely 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.' Various other actors shared this sentiment. As a result in part of political instability, donors are channelling their funds largely towards development and humanitarian partners, rather than providing direct budget support or other types of funding to the government. This contributes to a sense of apprehension in MoEST, and can undermine the Ministry's leadership. MoEST feels it is unable to monitor partners and is concerned that they are not always working in highly vulnerable areas where they are needed most. In turn, development and humanitarian partners have their own reservations regarding MoEST's capacity and policy choices. The lack of overall coordination and availability of adequate programmatic and funding information also renders it difficult to bridge the development and humanitarian divide and ensure that education programming responds to both emergency needs and long-term development.

Existing coordination bodies such as EDoG (which includes representation from the Emergency Education Cluster) and the education NGO development partners (PEG) make up the National Education Forum (NEF). MoEST chairs this forum as part of its aim to strengthen links between the participating organizations and the Ministry. The NEF is part of the country-level governance structure that is required by GPE to endorse the ESP. NEF members also support the development, implementation, and monitoring of an ESP. Several stakeholders have suggested that the NEF is too large for all members to participate equally in decision-making and for the NEF to function adequately, especially as meetings are infrequent and membership is open.

An effort to map all education partners in South Sudan, undertaken by PEG in October 2015, is helping to improve relationships (MoEST, 2015c). Education partners have started to submit reports and work plans to MoEST, and are complying with the instruction to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the government. It is expected that the new ESP will contribute to improving accountability and monitoring of education sector work.

1. The process of crisis-sensitive planning in South Sudan

1.1 Long-standing IIEP cooperation in South Sudan

Before examining the process used for crisis-sensitive planning in South Sudan, it is important to briefly present IIEP's approach to supporting countries during the planning process. There are four key principles to IIEP's overall approach (IIEP-UNESCO and GPE, 2015): (i) planning must be a *country-led* process to ensure that the government makes the final decisions and takes responsibility for committing resources and plan implementation; (ii) planning must be *participatory* to ensure convergence with country priorities; (iii) planning must be a *well-organized* process with clarity regarding the roles and responsibilities of those involved; and (iv) planning must be a *capacity-development* exercise in which Ministry staff gain knowledge or skills through direct experience of carrying out planning work.

These principles guide and shape IIEP's technical cooperation during the planning process. It is also important to note that IIEP encourages the integration of crosscutting themes such as gender, youth, and crisis sensitivity in education sector planning processes.

To the extent possible, the plan preparation process in South Sudan has built on other capacity-development initiatives for educational planning and management in the country. Some of these initiatives are described in Box 2.

Box 2. Capacity-development initiatives for educational planning and management in South Sudan

Capacity-development support to MoEST from other international organizations includes the following initiatives:

- The European Union-funded Improve Management of Education Delivery (IMED) initiative assisted MoEST with making 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 (2014–16).*
- The UNICEF-funded consultancy firm Altai Consulting provides management support to the EMIS directorate within MoEST (2015 and 2016).
- Since 2010, three participants from MoEST including the current Director of Planning and Budgeting have participated in IIEP's nine-month Advanced Training Programme in Educational Planning and Management in Paris. In addition, several MoEST staff members at national and state levels have participated in a variety of specialized courses (including distance courses) organized by IIEP.
- IIEP's nine-week distance course on Educational Planning for Safety, Resilience, and Social Cohesion took place from October to December 2015. State-level teams including six MoEST representatives from both Eastern Equatoria and Warrap participated in the course.

Source: Authors.

*IMED's operations were prematurely finalized in April 2016 as a result of the country's transition from 10 to 28 states (personal communication).

IIEP's support to South Sudan predates the country's independence in 2011, when technical support was provided to MoEST to develop the country's first general education sector plan (GESP) for 2012–17. Four planning workshops with specialists from IIEP took place in Juba from December 2010 to August 2011, and a full-time IIEP advisor was stationed in the

capital from August to November 2011. The process was stimulated by the appointment and involvement of the new Undersecretary for Education in November 2011, and an indication of possible funding support from GPE. In August 2012, the donor group endorsed the GESP. GPE announced an allocation of \$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 provided an additional \$30 million over four years.

In April 2012, with funding from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, IIEP began assisting state-level education authorities to develop state-level education analyses, as a follow-up to the national GESP (IIEP-UNESCO and UNESCO Juba, 2013). A high-level policy seminar was held in Juba in June, and training sessions in planning, budgeting, and monitoring and evaluation were held in three state capitals for clusters of state-level education authorities over 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 2012 in which state-level authorities presented their analyses to a high-level panel. IIEP had committed to a 29-month project, however the development of state-level education plans was interrupted by the resurgence of conflict in December 2013 and the end of funding from the Japanese government. These plans were produced at a later stage by the individual states, with initial support from IIEP, but varied in quality.

1.2 Technical cooperation for ESA and ESP development

In August 2015, GPE allocated funding to the UNESCO Office in Juba to assist MoEST with the preparation of an ESA (from October 2015 to January 2016) and to develop a five-year ESP (from February to June 2016) (IIEP-UNESCO, 2015a). GIZ, the German development agency, PEIC, the UNICEF Eastern and Southern Regional Office (ESARO), the UNESCO Office in Juba, and IIEP also financially supported the process. The second ESP 2017–21 will be considered for endorsement by EDoG in August 2016 and submitted for appraisal and potential GPE funding for implementation in 2017. The ESA/ESP development process has been led by the MoEST Directorate of Planning and Budgeting, and supported by humanitarian and development partners under the overall coordination of EDoG.¹⁰ The external support team comprised six IIEP staff and consultants and an in-country coordinator in the UNESCO Office in Juba with support from an assistant coordinator funded by UNICEF ESARO. The external support team participated in monthly missions and provided distance support to facilitate and guide the process. This involved national stakeholders including MoEST M&E officers, EMIS staff, and finance and budgeting personnel from the central level, as well as planners from all states.¹¹ The following sections describe the process used to develop the crisis-sensitive ESA and ESP.

Awareness raising

Prior to the official start of the ESA process, IIEP implemented a workshop for central and state Ministry officials on integrating safety, resilience, and social cohesion into education sector planning and curriculum (IIEP-UNESCO, 2015b). This awareness-raising workshop held in July 2015 was hosted by MoEST, funded by GIZ, and supported by UNICEF, the UNESCO Office in Juba, PEIC, and IIEP. The workshop participants included 35 officials from MoEST and nine out of 10 state-level education authorities, as well as humanitarian and development partner representatives. The workshop examined how safety, resilience, and social cohesion can be addressed in planning and curriculum development processes. While largely an awareness-raising exercise, it laid the groundwork for attempts to address the crisis within the formal ESA and planning process, which took place from October 2015 to July 2016.

10. EDoG includes the Education Cluster and PEG, which is made up of local education NGOs.

11. As noted previously, South Sudan was still divided into 10 states when the ESA was initiated.

Obtaining data: sources and credibility

Data for the ESA were obtained from a number of sources including EMIS (e.g. annual school census).¹² Although the EMIS has historically had a reputation for disputable data among state-level education authorities, it has improved in recent years and data are generally regarded as more credible.¹³ Interviews with state-level authorities reveal lingering doubts about data quality, but acknowledge efforts made to improve the system.

School census data from 2007 are available in hard copy and from 2008 onwards in soft copy (in Access format). Since its inception in 2007, the EMIS has undergone major improvements and now covers pre-primary to secondary education, including primary and the alternative education system (AES). However, data on technical and vocational education and training (TVET), teacher training institutions (TTIs), and higher education are not available on a yearly basis. Furthermore, school/data coverage from one year to the next is not comprehensive, although improvements have been made. Wide variations in school numbers and enrolment over the years and across states makes it difficult to establish enrolment trends at both state and national levels.

It should also be noted that no EMIS data collection occurred in 2014, as a result of the ongoing conflict and the ensuing lack of funding.

In 2015, the main challenge to data collection was widespread conflict in the GUPN states. This security situation greatly hindered efforts to access, obtain, and validate information. As a result, the 2015 EMIS covers seven out of 10 states in full, but fewer than half of schools in the three GUPN states (Jonglei, Upper Nile, and Unity).¹⁴ Under-reporting is attributed to: (i) counties not being surveyed as a result of insecurity during the census period (10 counties out of 12 in Upper Nile, five out of nine in Unity) and (ii) low response rates from schools in the surveyed counties. In most cases, it was not possible to determine whether the schools not included were actually closed or simply did not respond to the census.

The national team and the external experts agreed to use the existing data, despite major under-reporting of schools in the GUPN region. While this situation may lower overall enrolment and schooling coverage indicators, UNICEF also reported that 70 per cent of schools in GUPN states were non-functional as of May 2015 (UNICEF, 2015a), which lends greater weight to the estimated enrolment and coverage indicators.

The initial plan was to administer a risk assessment questionnaire to assess the effects of conflict and disaster risks in each *payam*, as part of the ESA process. This proved impossible due to time, funding, and capacity constraints. Instead, data from the OCHA risk index used in the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) 2015 were used to examine the effects of crisis on education. This county-level composite risk index is based on the four major drivers of the crisis in South Sudan: (i) conflict-affected civilians; (ii) death, injury, and disease; (iii) food insecurity and livelihoods; and (iv) widespread malnutrition. The composite index highlights the counties most severely affected by the crisis. To ensure that the data collected were consistent with the timing of the data collected for the EMIS and school entry dates, the ESA used the average of the composite indices from both

12. 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 human resource 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.

13. Since 2014, the consulting firm Altai Consulting has provided technical support to the EMIS unit to institutionalize EMIS management and data analysis within MoEST. While the Ministry was formerly dependent on external experts to run the system and produce reports, the EMIS 2015–16 piloted decentralization of data collection in two states (Central Equatoria and Western Bahr el Ghazal). The EMIS unit aims to decentralize data collection to all states by 2018.

14. Limited data on GUPN states are available. See, for example, Altai Consulting (2015), which provides data for approximately 44 per cent of GUPN state counties.

November 2014 and April 2015. This new composite index was then merged with the EMIS database, and education indicators on access, quality, and management of the system were analysed to determine whether counties with the highest severity index indeed performed lowest in education.

Household surveys typically play a central role when analysing equity aspects in education access and retention and the issue of out-of-school children. However, the last national household survey (i.e. the MICS) to be conducted in South Sudan took place in 2010, and the data were considered too old. Instead, the ESA drew upon the 2015 High Frequency Survey (HFS), conducted with the support of the World Bank, and the 2014 Household/Community Survey, supported by Girls Education South Sudan (GESS)/DFID. Although these surveys were not representative at the national level, they covered a sufficient number of states to be considered relevant for the ESA.

Establishment of the national team

Development of the ESA was led by the Directorate of Planning and Budgeting in the MoEST and supported by development partners under the overall coordination of EDoG. The ESA national team included national authorities from both central and state levels, as well as representatives from PEG, donors (UNICEF, UNHCR), and the Education Cluster. Five working groups were set up to analyse each of the major themes discussed in the ESA. In addition, MoEST mobilized an external support team consisting of six UNESCO-IIEP staff, one staff member from the UNESCO Office in Juba, and an in-country coordinator funded by UNICEF.

Table 1 presents the actors that participated in the development of each chapter of the ESA. (Note that both equity and risk issues were mainstreamed throughout the analysis.)

It was also considered important for state-level representatives to attend technical workshops, so as to better understand how to use the data generated in their roles as EMIS or planning officers. This decision reflected the capacity-development approach to planning used throughout the process.

Technical workshops to analyse system performance

Between October and December 2015, the Ministry organized four technical workshops to develop the ESA. During each of these workshops national team members worked to calculate, analyse, and present data on the education system and its performance. The work consisted of data analysis and drafting based on newly updated ESA methodological guidelines and IIEP/PEIC booklets on crisis-sensitive planning. In particular, the work focused on the following themes.

The first theme explored aspects related to the *geographic, political, humanitarian, demographic, social, and macroeconomic context of South Sudan*. Although external to the education system, these aspects significantly influence education demand and supply. The team developed a breakdown of the main risks in South Sudan, based largely on the OCHA HRP and other primary resources. The group also established severity rankings and thresholds for counties throughout the country using OCHA data. These were then used to analyse schooling patterns, quality, and management in areas most severely affected by the crisis.

The team examined *school and enrolment and coverage trends* at both national and state levels for all sub-sectors (pre-primary, primary, secondary, AES, TVET, TTI, and higher education) based mainly on data collected for EMIS statistical yearbooks. *Internal efficiency* indicators were also computed, and estimates on out-of-school children were provided at national and state levels. The team also performed an analysis of supply and demand issues to better understand the reasons for student absenteeism and early dropout. Equity and risk issues were mainstreamed throughout the analysis.

Table 1. Actors involved in developing the ESA

Chapter title	Professional profile	Ministry/ Organization	Level
Chapter 1. Political, humanitarian, social, demographic, and macroeconomic context	Demographer	NBS*	Central
	Macroeconomist/budget	MoFEP**	Central
	Planning and budgeting	MoEST	Central
	External cooperation	MoEST	Central
	Planning and budgeting	MoEST	Central
	Planning and budgeting	MoEST	Central
	Planning – general education with emergency background	MoEST	Central
	Education in emergency specialist	Education Cluster	Central
Chapter 2. Schooling patterns, including internal efficiency	Planning and budgeting	MoEST	Central
	Planning – higher education	MoEST	Central
	Planning	MoEST	State
	Planning	MoEST	State
	Planning	MoEST	State
	Planning	MoEST	State
	EMIS	MoEST	Central
	EMIS	MoEST	State
	Statistician	NBS	Central
	Education specialist	UNHCR	Central
	NGO representative	PEG	State
	NGO representative	PEG	State
Chapter 3. Cost and financing	Planning and budgeting	MoEST	Central
	Planning and budgeting	MoEST	Central
	Planning and budgeting	MoEST	State
	Planning and budgeting	MoEST	State
	Administration and finance	MoEST	State
	Administration and finance	MoEST	State
	Human resource department (HR)	MoEST	Central
	Human resource department (HR)	MoEST	Central
	Payroll	MoEST	State
	Education specialist	UNICEF	Central
	Macroeconomist	MoFEP	Central
	Institutional development	MoLPS***	Central

Chapter title	Professional profile	Ministry/ Organization	Level
Chapter 4. Quality	Human resources – teacher management (recruitment, deployment, training)	MoEST	Central
	Human resources – teacher management (recruitment, deployment, training)	MoEST	State
	EMIS	MoEST	Central
	EMIS	MoEST	State
	Planning	MoEST	State
	Secretariat of Examinations	MoEST	Central
	Curriculum and language of instruction specialist	MoEST	Central
	Curriculum and language of instruction specialist	MoEST	Central
	Education in emergency specialist	Education Cluster	Central
Chapter 5. Management	Planning and budgeting	MoEST	Central
	Planning – higher education	MoEST	Central
	Planning	MoEST	State
	Planning	MoEST	State
	Planning	MoEST	State
	Planning	MoEST	State
	EMIS	MoEST	Central
	EMIS	MoEST	State
	Statistician	NBS	Central
	Education officer	UNHCR	Central
	NGO representative	PEG	State
	NGO representative	PEG	State
	Institutional development	MoLPS	Central

Notes: *National Bureau of Statistics, **Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, ***Ministry of Labour and Public Service.

The *quality* analysis focused on input factors, teaching, and learning processes, as well as learning outcomes.

Inputs examined included classroom conditions, facilities, and meals. The type of classroom was analysed by sub-sector, state, and level of risk. School-level resources or facilities were examined by sub-sector and state, and the distribution of free meals was analysed for the primary level by state and risk index.

The teams discussed several *process factors*: length of the school year, school closure and effective teaching time, teacher and student absenteeism, teacher characteristics, guidance and supervision, curriculum and textbooks, teaching and learning processes, school safety and learning environment, and teacher conduct. As EMIS data on these aspects are limited, discussions were based mainly on the GESS School Survey, GESS Household Survey, and the GESS Payam and County Survey. The national team also explored issues related to supervision/inspection mechanisms from state to school level, based on the findings of the GESS survey conducted in 2013 at county and *payam* levels.

The analysis of *learning outcomes* focused mainly on primary and secondary exam pass rates. However, the absence of national assessments of literacy and numeracy at primary level in South Sudan means that reliable information on learning outcomes is very limited. Accordingly, there are no comparative assessments of learning outcomes and no possibility to measure development over time.

The *management* analysis focused on teacher recruitment and deployment processes, teacher qualification and training, supervision and inspection, and the textbook management process. A central question for the analysis was the extent to which teachers are deployed where they are the most needed (i.e. where there are most students). The analysis relied on two major indicators: pupil-teacher ratios (PTR) and R^2 , the coefficient of determination. It was conducted by school type (government and non-government schools), sub-sector, state, and risk index. The analysis was performed on permanent and other types of teaching staff to assess the extent to which volunteers and part-time teachers help improve (or not) the allocation process. The risk index was also used for this analysis. Given the gender role played by female teachers on female enrolment, the team also conducted an analysis of the share of females by school type, sub-sector, and state.

Mechanisms of teacher recruitment and deployment were examined to better understand the different stages of the process and to help identify more efficient recruitment and deployment procedures.

The share of qualified teachers and pupil to qualified teacher ratios were computed by school type, sub-sector, state, and risk index. TTIs that offer both pre- and in-service training opportunities were also examined.

Issues relating to textbooks including their financing, development, procurement, distribution, and use in school were also discussed as part of the analysis of management of the education system.

National team feedback on ESA technical workshops: an opportunity for capacity development

The monthly workshops took place from October to December 2015, each lasting one or two weeks. Because the process took place over a four-month period, workshops tended to be demanding and fast-paced. In spite of these factors, MoEST officials reported promising outcomes. Prominent features included gains in capacity, ownership of the process, and collaboration, as well as a focus on crisis sensitivity and conflict data analysis.

As mentioned above, planning must be a capacity-development process. In the case of the 2017–21 ESP, capacity development was built into the process through the use of a ‘learning by doing’ approach. However, the limited amount of time available, in particular to conduct the ESA exercise, resulted in less opportunity and time for capacity development than would otherwise have been the case.

Although some Ministry staff work with data on a daily basis, the majority of workshop participants were new to data analysis. However, they reported that the workshops were of good quality and that they were learned a lot, and were able to immediately put their learning to use. Some actors involved explained 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 carried out during the ESA process was considered to be demanding. Although participants were pleased to be learning and were mostly satisfied by the rigour of the data collected, many faced difficulties in grasping all the content and completing the assignments. Many participants lacked basic statistics and software skills, which may have affected 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

shares, averages, and growth rates. Participants – many with considerable experience in the education sector – knew what needed to be done and were learning regardless of the challenges. As one participant noted, ‘I know there are problems but I didn’t know how to use my mind to fix these problems before the workshops.’

Participants reported a high level of satisfaction with the fact that they were asked to work with their own data and come to their own conclusions, rather than being lectured about the state of education in South Sudan. Learning how to manipulate data to convert it into graphs, for example, is practical and of immediate use. Participants favoured such practical approaches to more theoretical ones. 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 contributed to a heightened sense of ownership.

Broadening participation for ESP development

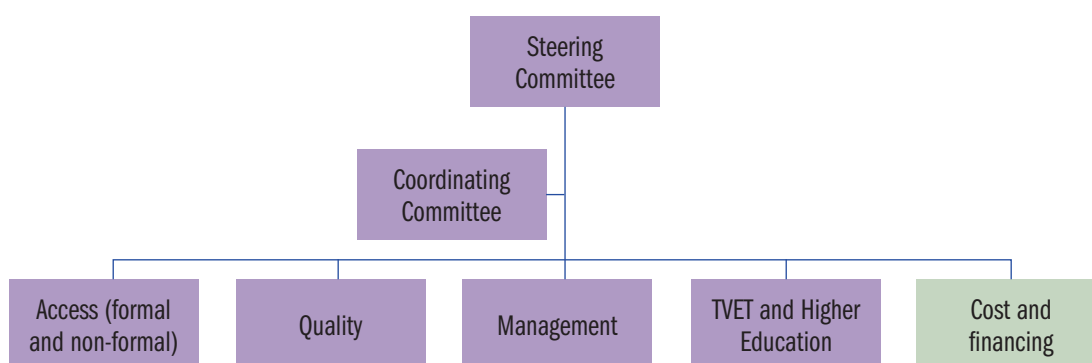
Participation is a central feature of the working approach used in ESP development. Nevertheless, it is important that the process is and remains government-led to ensure that the document reflects the government’s vision. This is a prerequisite for future implementation. Participation in the ESP workshops was therefore expanded to include not only planners and main stakeholders of the education sector in South Sudan, but also representatives of other line ministries (Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Public Service), development partners, NGOs, and civil society).

Another important characteristic of the ESP development process is *organization* (IIEP-UNESCO and GPE, 2015). To this end, MoEST set up the following committees and working groups for the development of the ESP, as reflected in *Figure 1*:

- a Steering Committee,
- a Coordinating Committee,
- ESP working groups: Access, Management, Quality, and TVET/HE.¹⁵

The roles and responsibilities of each of these committees and working groups were clearly defined from the beginning of the process (*Box 3*).

Figure 1. Organization of committees and working groups for development of the ESP



15. The AES was mainstreamed into the access, management, and quality working groups, along with the other general education sub-sectors.

Box 3. Organizational arrangements for ESP development in South Sudan

The Steering Committee was the high-level decision-making group of the process. It was organized and led by MoEST. Its main functions were to:

- provide overall guidance for the preparation of the ESP;
- provide guidance on plan priorities based on the inputs of the ESP working groups in line with available and anticipated resources;
- serve as a linking mechanism between the Ministry and its major development, humanitarian, and civil society partners.

The Steering Committee included the following members:

- Chair, MoEST;
- Undersecretary, MoEST;
- MoEST Directors-General and the Secretary-General for the Examination Secretariat;
- Representative from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning;
- Representative and Head of the UNESCO Office in Juba;
- EDoG Chair;
- Education Cluster Coordinator (or other representative of the humanitarian community);
- Representative of PEG.

The Coordinating Committee was primarily responsible for organizing, developing, and drafting the ESP. It also served as a liaison between the working groups and the Steering Committee and provided guidance to the working group. The Coordinating Committee included the following members:

- Chair, Director for Planning and Budget, MoEST;
- Director for Partners Coordination, MoEST;
- Deputy Director for Planning and Budget, MoEST;
- Education Capacity and Coordination Expert, UNESCO.

The ESP working groups were responsible for the design of the priority programmes. The working groups each consisted of approximately seven members. Representatives were primarily MoEST technical experts from the central level in addition to one or two state-level representatives. The Ministry also invited key education partners to participate in the working groups.

Technical workshops to develop the ESP

The ESA provided a comprehensive, evidence-based picture of South Sudan's education sector in 2015, highlighting its strengths as well as inefficiencies in the allocation and use of resources. The ESA results are the basis for development of the ESP and have been used to identify key areas for reform based on current trends and priorities and building on previous policies.

A series of four technical workshops took place during the ESP development process. The focus of the technical workshop in February 2016 was the development of overarching goals for the sector. This resulted in the selection of the following priority areas: access, quality, management, and cost and financing. The workshop participants identified overarching goals and main objectives for each thematic area, and began to discuss strategies to be used to achieve the objectives.

The second technical workshop took place in March, during which participants reviewed the goals, objectives, and related strategies developed at the first workshop, and reformulated and modified them as necessary. In some cases, targets were revised or identified. The technical working groups also discussed issues of feasibility (both financial

and related to human resources). In specific terms, each of the working groups discussed and developed strategies for the following programme components:

Table 2. Programme components discussed by working groups

Priority programme	Programme components
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECD (early childhood development) • Primary • Secondary • AES
Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the newly adopted curriculum • Professional development of teachers with a focus on upgrading the skills of existing teachers • Inspection, supervision, and school management • Assessing learning outcomes
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human resource management • Financial management • Coordination including external relations and information management
TVET and higher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access and quality in post-primary TVET • Higher education

In the case of higher education, only one representative from the Ministry of Higher Education attended the first three workshops, which made it impossible to develop this programme and component in a consultative fashion. This is due in part to the fact that the Ministry of Higher Education is under-staffed, with many of its senior officials pursuing their studies. Their participation was discussed at multiple Steering Committee meetings, but at the time of writing the issue had not been resolved.

A third technical workshop took place in April and further clarified the contents of the priority programmes. As with the second workshop, participants split into thematic groups to revisit and clarify issues related to the different strategies of the programme components.

Throughout the process, the participants discussed aspects of conflict and disaster risk reduction, together with the provision of quality education for refugees and IDPs. However, due to time and staffing constraints, UNHCR was less involved in the development of the ESP than the ESA process. The same constraints also limited the participation of the Education Cluster.

Discussion of the political and economic crisis was also inevitable throughout the process, although there seemed to be some reluctance to modify ambitions as a result of the effects of these crises. However, as discussed in the next section, the projection model and the different costing scenarios used helped MoEST to prioritize effectively and ensure the feasibility of the different strategic options developed in the plan.

Testing scenarios with a simulation model

The ESP is based on projections using a variety of scenarios and related cost implications. The scenarios will be calculated through the use of a simulation model. At the time of writing, the simulation model is being finalized and the different scenarios will be tested with senior MoEST authorities during June and July 2016. This will facilitate the prioritization of key programmes and activities, as it is unrealistic to expect secured funding for all activities within the next five years. The scenarios will help the government to establish realistic targets, depending on the scenario applied during the lifespan of the plan.

It is expected that the scenarios to be tested will consist of an absolute low-cost scenario (essentially salaries), an optimistic scenario that incorporates many of the activities and targets discussed by the working groups, and a mid-level scenario that will include strictly prioritized activities as agreed by MoEST and partners. The final choice of activities and targets will depend, among other things, on the evolution of the economic and political situation in the country.

Developing a monitoring and evaluation framework

The finalization of the ESP will also involve the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework with key performance indicators for the sector. These will include indicators for conflict and disaster risk reduction activities. This task should be finalized in July 2016.

2. Key challenges to developing a crisis-sensitive ESA and ESP in South Sudan

2.1 Short timeline

An ESA/ESP process can take from six months to two years, depending on the context. In South Sudan, the ESA process took four months and the ESP process took six months. This relatively short time period was respected to keep people engaged and maintain momentum. Furthermore, in a volatile context such as South Sudan, time is critical. There was also a desire on the part of MoEST to meet the September deadline for submission of the ESP to the GPE Secretariat. However, because of this short timeline the process required a substantial investment on the part of participants, often taking them out of their offices for up to two weeks at a time.

2.2 Staff turnover

According to the interviewees, close to half of the MoEST participants in the new ESA/ESP process were involved in developing the first ESP in 2010. To this extent, institutional memory has been retained. However, with regard to the development of technical skills in planning and management, only two individuals (the Director of Planning and Budgeting and the Director of EMIS) attended one or more courses in IIEP's 'Advanced Training Programme in Educational Planning and Management'. Other individuals that participated in the programme have since been appointed to government positions in managing education for South Sudanese who are outside the country.

There is, however, frequent staff turnover among humanitarian and development partners. Ongoing communication with rotating focal points from international organizations and UN agencies has been essential to maintain momentum and support for the process. To this end, the UNESCO Office in Juba has played an important role in providing logistical support and facilitating communication between the different ESA/ESP stakeholders.

Nevertheless, a number of stakeholders have highlighted a persistent lack of clarity regarding expectations for potential contributions from the different national and international education actors.

2.3 Political instability and prospects for lasting peace

The relevance and effectiveness of South Sudan's first GESP were compromised by the resurgence of conflict in December 2013. Political and economic instability will continue to pose challenges to implementation of the ESP and its effectiveness and relevance to the education sector over time. The success of the ESP depends on securing predictable, medium-term financial support from both government and development partners. However, donor commitments will likely be contingent on prospects for stability and lasting peace, while government revenues will depend largely on the evolution of oil prices and production.

2.4 The economic crisis and limited visibility regarding forthcoming funding for education

The critical macroeconomic and humanitarian situation in South Sudan worsened throughout the ESP development process. In February 2016, according to the International

Monetary Fund (IMF),¹⁶ the country was on the verge of bankruptcy. Delays in the lead-up to the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGNU) also created concerns, as its formation was a prerequisite for the resumption of talks with the IMF.¹⁷

Furthermore, inflation has increased, while the South Sudanese Pound (SSP) has lost significant value (falling from SSP15 to SSP35 against the dollar between July 2015 and March 2016). These factors have further depleted the purchasing power of the South Sudanese and exerted additional pressure on many households, which were already struggling with school-related costs, not to mention basic staples.

The economic situation remains very unpredictable at the time of writing and many partners expect the socio-economic situation to remain bleak in the coming years. This has considerable implications for development and implementation of the ESP. In this context, it has proven difficult to gather relevant information on upcoming education funding (or types of support) that may be available from both national and external sources.

The donor community is preparing itself for a major humanitarian crisis, both programmatically and financially, and it is likely that existing donor commitments will change. At the time of writing, a rescue package focused on life-saving support (mainly food) is being discussed. If accepted, donors would be asked to contribute directly to this package by shifting some or all of their funding from development programmes to humanitarian support. This may mean that current development projects are either stopped or not expanded, and that new development programmes are not implemented should the 'disaster scenario' occur. This underlines the importance of ensuring the ESP is a vehicle for aligning both development and humanitarian actions. To the extent possible, the plan should contain both priority humanitarian and development programmes.

16. IMF debrief to donors on Article IV mission, 26 February 2016.

17. The TGNU was eventually formed in May 2016.

3. Preconditions for crisis-sensitive planning in South Sudan

The following chapter provides insights into enabling factors for crisis-sensitive planning in the education sector in South Sudan.

3.1 Ownership and collaboration

There were strong signs of MoEST ownership throughout the ESA/ESP development process in South Sudan. Although transporting participants from across the country can be expensive, interviewees agreed that this was important for ownership of the process. The involvement of all states – a rare occurrence in South Sudan, but in keeping with IIEP’s approach – led participants to report that they felt strong ownership of the plan and the related information.

The ESA/ESP process involved representation from all 10 states, as well as the donor community and civil society. Bringing together education staff from 10 states into one room is no small feat, both logistically and relationally, and takes place only on rare occasions. In interviews, participants noted that the IIEP workshop in July 2015 enabled invitees from different states to get to know one other and laid the foundation for achieving a sense of belonging. One participant explained that 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 common issues such as flooding. Another participant said the roleplay exercises demonstrated that ‘we have problems, but have friends. You get the feeling that you are not alone.’ After the session, many participants gathered together and continued discussing how to solve problems. Actors invited to observe the ESA work also noted that participants showed signs of building relationships and working out differences during the workshops. They also noted a lack of timidity on the part of the participants, who in some cases switched into their own language to speak privately with a fellow participant: ‘People are arguing, almost fighting with each other, then all of a sudden they agree.’

3.2 Meaningful participation

Humanitarian and NGO partners attended both the ESA and ESP workshops and provided significant inputs. The Education Cluster coordinators contributed to drafting the first and second chapter of the ESA and also provided inputs into the ESP. Such participation enhances the process; partners that attend workshops are able to observe where data and explanations for data are absent and have the opportunity to fill in information gaps.

Representatives from the EDoG were kept informed of the ESA and ESP process. However, the invitation to attend workshops as observers was not clearly understood by all partners and some expressed a desire to contribute more at an earlier stage. The overall process had to ensure all relevant actors were included without diminishing government ownership (and avoid overcrowding).

According to most stakeholders, the ESA and ESP development process incorporated all the key actors, with government representatives carrying out analyses in cooperation with humanitarian and NGO partners. Most international partners acted as observers during development of the ESA, but took on a more extensive role in the ESP process.

3.3 Available resources and data for crisis-sensitive planning

Globally, more and more countries and international partners (including UNICEF, GIZ, GPE, and IIEP) are striving to ensure that educational planning is crisis-sensitive.

The ESA brings together available data and conducts additional analyses through a crisis-sensitive lens. A main innovation in developing the South Sudanese crisis-sensitive analysis was the use of the OCHA composite risk indicator. This indicator greatly facilitated the analysis and helped to demonstrate effectively the negative association between conflict and the provision of educational resources, as well as educational outcomes, in spite of the limited availability of education data in the three GUPN states.

As mentioned above, IIEP has developed resources, training, and expertise to ensure that ESAs and ESPs reflect a crisis-sensitive understanding of their context (IIEP-UNESCO, 2010; 2011). These resources are based on technical support provided by IIEP to ministries of education since 2008, with input from key partners including the Global Education Cluster, UNHCR, GIZ, UNICEF, and PEIC. These materials and the wealth of experience accumulated in this area guided the process used to develop the crisis-sensitive ESA and ESP in South Sudan.

Throughout the process a plethora of international partners encouraged the development of a crisis-sensitive sector plan in South Sudan. GIZ, PEIC, and UNICEF provided funding for crisis-sensitive aspects of the ESA and the ESP, while others such as DFID and USAID advocated continuously in-country for the need to address the crisis. These actions contributed to maintaining momentum and helped to shape the agenda.

4. Lessons learned

Government leadership and the strong participation of national authorities reinforce ownership and alignment of partners' efforts.

It is vital to ensure that national authorities lead the planning process. Strong government leadership helps to align partners' initiatives with national priorities and can ultimately facilitate implementation of the plan.

During the ESA and ESP process in South Sudan, the process was led by the Director of Planning and Budgeting and followed closely by the Ministry's Under-Secretary. Consistent participation from both central and state levels ensured adequate representation and also contributed to the relevance of the document. In many cases, state-level representatives were able to provide anecdotal evidence that supported central-level data.

However, in contexts where national capacities are weak and time is short, there is a risk of substitution, which cannot be neglected. Working with national staff in hands-on workshops, demystifying technical work, and facilitating Ministry discussions around the choice of priorities contribute to ensuring government leadership of the process.

Developing capacities for crisis-sensitive education sector planning is a long process that may ultimately be undermined by the crisis itself.

When supporting ministries of education to develop crisis-sensitive ESAs and ESPs, it is important to address individual, organizational, and institutional capacities for planning. Notable capacity-development exercises used in South Sudan included awareness-raising, hands-on learning through participatory workshops, and efforts to strengthen relationships among key actors in ministries of education.

However, aspects of the country context, particularly economic fragility and political instability, pose challenges to planning, as they limit the predictability of financing and programming for both the government and its partners. Furthermore, political and economic instability and uncertain prospects for a lasting peace in the country mean that investment in capacity development may not bear fruit as desired. Development funding may be diverted to humanitarian programming, and if the situation worsens, individuals participating in capacity-development initiatives may seek opportunities elsewhere. The recent administrative changes in the country's structure may also undermine the effects of capacity development, as individuals working on the ESA and ESP may be assigned to new tasks.

The planning process can contribute to fostering social cohesion.

The participatory nature of education sector planning, and in particular crisis-sensitive planning, provides an opportunity for education actors to work together on a regular basis to determine priorities and set the agenda for the sector. In the case of South Sudan where geographic boundaries are often indicative of social and ethnic tensions, bringing together representatives from different states has facilitated awareness of commonalities and provided an opportunity to share experiences, challenges, and solutions across states.

Similarly, there is great value to ensuring all education actors (national authorities, technical and financial partners, and civil society representatives) are on board from the outset. This increases consensus-building, facilitates ownership, and ensures a shared understanding of government priorities.

There is a need to build upon the complementarity of different organizations and ensure strong coordination, so as to effectively support ministries of education to develop plans that are crisis-sensitive.

Working with different ministries at both central and state levels, and with international partners, is vital to the planning process to ensure a holistic understanding of the situation. Bringing together actors that do not typically work together is an occasion to build on the complementarity of perspectives between, for example, humanitarian and development actors and across various ministries (education, finance, and labour and public service).

Given the variety of partners involved in developing an ESP, particularly in crisis situations, logistical and institutional support from an agency resident in the country is key. The presence of a dedicated, full time in-country coordinator can be extremely helpful and effective, as was the case in South Sudan. The coordinator was responsible for moving the process forward, gathering necessary data, sharing information, and keeping partners informed throughout.

Bridging the humanitarian–development divide through crisis-sensitive planning requires management of different stakeholder expectations, approaches, and agendas.

An essential aspect of the crisis-sensitive planning process is the development of partnerships and collaboration with humanitarian partners, such as the Education Cluster, NGO representatives, the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, and OCHA. In the case of South Sudan, their participation throughout the process was key to ensuring ongoing humanitarian work in the country is aligned with government priorities and long-term objectives.

The current economic crisis in South Sudan is likely to result in a further shift in funding from development to humanitarian support. Such a shift risks eroding progress made and retarding the development of the education sector. In this context it is critical that the ESP clearly articulate the humanitarian and development priorities of the education sector, so that all external funding – whether development or humanitarian – is utilized in pursuit of agreed education priorities. Doing so will help maintain the education system and children’s right to education, and allow for development of the sector as the situation stabilizes. Seeking ways to align humanitarian and development responses within a common framework will contribute to bridging the humanitarian–development divide in South Sudan.

Even in crisis situations it is feasible to develop an evidence-based and relevant ESP.

Effective education planning and management demands the existence of reliable data on the state of the education system and the population it serves, and a profound understanding of current system performance and the recent evolution of the system. An ESP needs to be developed around strong and robust evidence-based analysis on the basis of meaningful, reliable information that indicates changes over time, and demonstrates how learning outcomes and disparities vary across the country. However, the costs of extensive data cleaning and/or collecting additional data may not be efficient, in terms of either time or money. Working with and analysing existing data and triangulating data from multiple sources (including minimum levels of cleaning) may be sufficient to portray the emerging or broad trends needed to describe the context.

Interviews and documentary evidence show that the South Sudanese ESA has benefited from recent improvements in the EMIS (school census), captured data on vulnerability and crisis sensitivity (from OCHA), and contributed to developing projections that will remain relevant over time. These three factors have enhanced confidence in the upcoming ESP.

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Annex 1: Interviews

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The paper

A protracted crisis and ongoing instability in South Sudan made clear to education stakeholders the urgent need to mainstream conflict and disaster risk management into sector analysis and planning processes. This case study outlines the process of developing an education sector analysis (ESA) and education sector plan (ESP) in risk-prone contexts, to illustrate the transformational potential of education through long-term prevention measures and preparedness planning. It examines the ESA/ESP development process in South Sudan – which relied on a variety of capacity development modalities, including technical workshops and advocacy – providing insights into both challenges and enabling factors, and concluding with key lessons learned.

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