

ALL IN SCHOOL كلنا في المدرسة  
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA  
OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN INITIATIVE



SUDAN MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

SUMMARY

# SUDAN

COUNTRY REPORT ON OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN

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# Summary

## Country context

The signing of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) put an end to a historical civil war in Sudan and resulted in the country's division: Southern Sudan and the Republic of Sudan (2011). While the cessation was expected to bring peace and stability, there are still many challenges threatening the future prospects of the two countries. For the Republic of Sudan, the war in Darfur, South Kordofan, Blue Nile, and Abyei, and as yet unresolved borders disputes have been negatively impacting the country's stability and development. The economic crisis due to the loss of 75 per cent of oil revenue, coupled with the global economic crisis and the Arab Spring, has narrowed the chances of bringing positive change to the living conditions of 34 million Sudanese. At the administrative level, Sudan is adopting a system of fiscal decentralization aimed at empowering sub-national governments, and thus fostering the appropriate and effective use of resources. This system takes into consideration the wide regional disparities and mitigates the root causes of conflict. The education sector in the country is, therefore, shaped and affected by these major political and administrative changes.

Educational provision in Sudan is guided by global instruments including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), national laws, policies and plans. The interim Poverty Reduction Strategy prioritises education as a key factor in addressing the root causes of poverty and tribal conflict. The strategy recognises that failure to provide greater access to, and improvement of, the quality of education could delay economic reform. Sudan still has a long way to go towards achieving EFA and MDG targets two and three. While there is demand for pre-school education with national enrolments up from 34 per cent in 2010 to 42 per cent in 2012, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in Basic Education (6-13 age group) has declined from 73.2 per cent in 2010 to 69.1 per cent in 2011, and 69.7 per cent in 2012. Significantly, there are still more than 3 million children aged 5-13 years out of school.

The Global Out-of-School Initiative (OOSCI) is a call to bring all out-of-school children to school by 2015. The study findings will help participating countries such as Sudan to provide evidence that will help the government and partners to identify which children are out of school and why they are not in school. Sudan's out-of-school children study was conducted as part of the Global OOSCI initiated by UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) in 2010. The initiative's goal is to make a significant and sustained reduction in the number of children out of school around the world by: (1) developing comprehensive profiles of excluded children based on standardized and innovative statistical methods; (2) linking quantitative data with the socio-cultural barriers and bottlenecks that lead to exclusion; and (3) identifying sound policies that address exclusion from education with a multi-sectoral perspective.

## The purpose of the study

The study undertaken in 2013 is part of a global initiative aimed at:

1. Improvement of the statistical information and research on out-of-school children including the identification of the factors of exclusion from schooling (such as the multiple disparities beyond education), and strengthening institutional capacities for implementing appropriate statistical and monitoring systems.
2. Strengthening analytical policy making that enhances school participation, including scaling up enrolment and sustaining school attendance rates through identifying bottlenecks and developing appropriate, realistic and robust plans with cost-estimates, and financing strategies.

## Conceptual and methodological framework of analysis

The conceptual and methodological framework (CMF) introduces a new model for analysing the problem of out-of-school children through the 'Five Dimensions of Exclusion' (5DE) that capture excluded children from pre-primary (Dimension 1), primary (Dimension 2) and lower secondary (Dimension 3) school age; while Dimensions 4 and 5 cover children who are attending primary or lower secondary school but are at risk of dropping out. It also analyses the various degrees of exposure children have to education, as well as the impact of multiple, intersecting disparities on children's exclusion from education. The CMF supports a more systematic linkage and leveraging between three main components:

- **Profiles** of excluded children, capturing the complexity of the problem of out-of-school children in terms of magnitude, inequalities and multiple disparities around 5DE.
- **Barriers and bottlenecks** to clarify the dynamic and causal processes related to 5DE.
- **Policies and strategies** to address the barriers and bottlenecks related to 5DE within education and beyond (looking at social protection systems).

Administrative data from the Population Census 2008, EMIS, Sudan Household Health Surveys (SHHS) 2006 and 2010 and other relevant research were used to estimate the number and characteristics of out-of-school children as well as to identify major bottlenecks and barriers to school participation.

## Number and profiles of out-of-school children

The concept of out-of-school children implies that there is a group of children that should be in school but are not. Sudan has both the largest number and the highest out-of-school children rate in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The 2010 EMIS data indicates that a total of 3 million children between the ages 5 to 13 are out of school in Sudan. This comprises 490,673 children of pre-primary age (5 years), 1,965,068 children of primary school age (6-11 years) and 641,587 children of lower secondary school age (12-13 years). The proportion of out-of-school girls is higher than boys across Dimensions 1, 2 and 3.

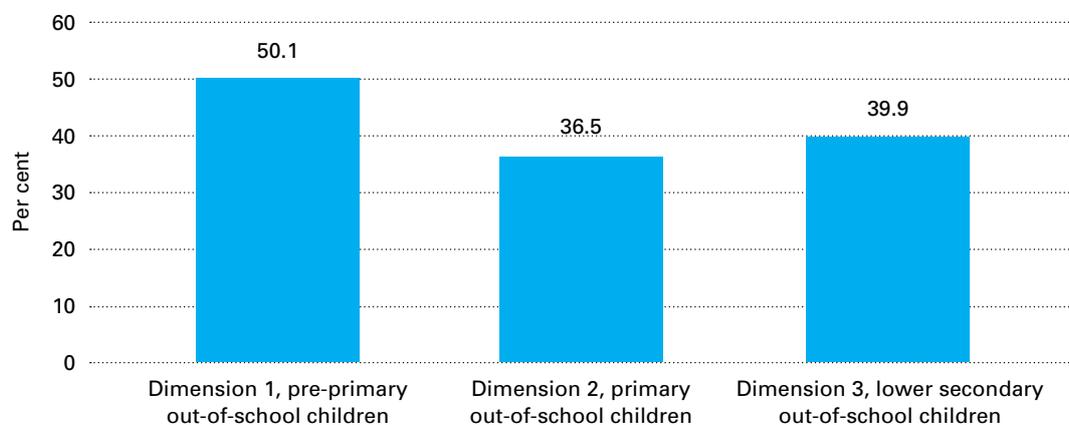
The figure below indicates that pre-primary aged children are most at risk of being out of school, followed by lower secondary and primary school-aged children. It is a challenge estimating an accurate number of out-of-school children in Sudan. There are discrepancies in figures generated from administrative and household survey data due to differences in the definitions and age estimates used. The figures from the different data sources used in this report indicate the range of numbers recorded for out-of-school children in Sudan.

## Summary of out-of-school children through the Five Dimensions of Exclusion

	Girls		Boys		Total	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
<b>Out of school children</b>						
Dimension 1: Children 5 years old (pre-primary)	241,944	50.3	248,729	49.8	490,673	50.1
Dimension 2: Children 6 to 11 years old (primary)	1,040,560	39.6	924,508	33.5	1,965,068	36.5
Dimension 3: Children 12 to 13 years old (lower secondary)	328,946	42.3	312,641	37.7	641,587	39.9
<b>Total out of school children (5-13 years old)</b>	<b>1,611,450</b>		<b>1,485,878</b>		<b>3,097,328</b>	
<b>Children incurring a risk of dropping out</b>						
Dimension 4: Children enrolled in primary	310,086	19.2	220,679	12.0	530,765	15.4
Dimension 5: Children enrolled in lower secondary	7,940	3.9	22,260	8.3	30,200	6.4
<b>Total children at risk of dropping out</b>	<b>318,026</b>		<b>242,939</b>		<b>560,965</b>	

Source: EMIS 2009 and 2010.

The profile of out-of-school children indicates that exclusion from school prevails in rural settings among disadvantaged groups including nomads, war-affected populations and internally displaced persons. Children from poor families and girls remain at risk of leaving school due to economic factors and social norms. Some ethnic and religious communities hold negative perceptions of formal education. Such inequities or disparities often interact to create complex and mutually reinforcing patterns of disadvantage and barriers to schooling. The multidimensional and overlapping nature of disparities and the patterns of exclusion can, therefore, be analysed across the Five Dimensions of Exclusion.



Using SHHS 2010 data to analyse the wealth index, it is clear that the low wealth status of the family negatively correlates with school exclusion across Dimensions 1 through 3. About 77 per cent of the out-of-school children at pre-primary age are from among the poorest households, compared to 18 per cent among the richest households. Similarly, 52.4 per cent of primary school age and 42.2 per cent of lower secondary age out-of-school children are from among the poorest households compared to 3.6 per cent primary and 3.4 per cent lower secondary age out-of-school children among the richest households. Among excluded groups, nomadic communities have the highest proportion of out-of-school children with marked gender and regional disparities. Close to 21 per cent of the total out-of-school children in Sudan aged 6-11 years old are nomadic children. One third of the children currently in primary school are at risk of leaving before reaching the last grade of primary school. Girls who have started primary school are more likely than boys to leave school before reaching the last grade. This is despite the majority of children leaving school reported being boys, simply because there are more boys who enter the system.

## Bottlenecks and barriers

One important contribution of OOSCI rests in identifying and analysing bottlenecks and causes in relation to country context and policies across each of the Five Dimensions of Exclusion. The OOSCI guidance note identified four categories of determinants as a conceptual framework of analysis, known as 'Monitoring Results for Equity Systems' (MoRES): enabling environment, supply, demand and quality. The study's findings indicate that the out-of-school children determinants in Sudan are sociocultural, economic, political, educational and institutional. Based on the literature review, the main bottlenecks of exclusion under an enabling environment are the social norms, traditions and values prevailing among the nomads, pastoralists and conflict-affected communities. The high value that communities attach to herding animals and cattle grazing, as well as widespread poverty, means children engage in family labour rather than going to school. This, along with early marriages and high illiteracy rates in rural areas, act as barriers against children's enrolment and contribute to high dropout rates (particularly amongst girls).

Inadequate financing and implementation of education policies and lack of equitable resource allocation directly contribute to the disparities between states in terms of gross enrolment rates. Some states have more advanced education systems and higher enrolment rates, while others are far behind in terms of enrolling children in basic school, especially the war-affected Darfur states, Blue Nile and South Kordofan.

The indirect costs of education, including the payment of school fees, was the most common reason cited for non-enrolment and non-attendance in pre-education, primary and lower secondary education. There are also other direct and indirect costs incurred by parents such as transportation, exercise books and pencils, food, and sanitary materials for girls. These costs increase as children progress to higher levels of education.

The study shows that without reliable information and an effective monitoring system, adopting evidence-based policies/strategies and introducing results-based programming will be a difficult task. Increasing the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Education (MoE) in information management, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), policy analysis and programming regarding out-of-school children is probably the most effective way to address exclusion, disparities and discrimination. The lack of effective protection systems for targeting vulnerable, needy and poor families contributes to children leaving school and deters out-of-school children who have never attended school from enrolling. Child labour is also a significant cause for children being out of school.

Supply-side obstacles that keep children from attending and staying in school include limited infrastructure, poor school environments and a shortage of educational materials. Inequitable distribution of financial resources for education in Sudan is a barrier for out-of-school children across all Five Dimensions. The limited investment in the education sector has resulted in poor infrastructure, lack of textbooks, education supplies and proper seating, inadequate water and sanitation facilities, and lack of trained teachers. The supply-side barriers affecting Dimensions 1 and 2 are mainly related to distance to school, lack of school infrastructure and the lack of trained teachers.

The conflict in Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan is a major factor in contributing to out-of-school children across the Five Dimensions. The bottlenecks in conflict-affected areas are many and include lack of access due to inadequate infrastructure, lack of security, poor school environment and costs that are too high for poor parents.

The free education policy declared by a presidential decree is not being implemented and in most cases parents are still paying, in one way or another, fees at different rates. Some customs attribute a low value to education, which deters parents from sending their children to school. Girls in rural and nomadic areas are particularly at risk of dropping out due to early marriages, traditions and community perceptions.

## Policies and strategies

The Interim National Constitution (INC) 2005 recognized that achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's), including Education for All (EFA) targets, is a prerequisite for achieving socio-economic stability in Sudan. The INC stipulates that education is a right of every citizen and requires the State to guarantee access to free basic education, without discrimination on the basis of gender, religion, race, ethnicity or disability. The Education Sector Strategy Plan for 2012-2016 expresses the country's commitment to the EFA goals and outlines activities to meet the MDG education targets.

Long-term strategies appear to be the most effective in addressing the sociocultural bottlenecks that require behavioural change. Community mobilization and enrolment campaigns have been partly successful in fostering positive attitudes towards education, changing sociocultural norms and generating educational demand in low-enrolment localities, including nomadic settlement areas. Initiatives such as construction of classrooms, provision of education materials and community empowerment introduced to meet the increasing demand, have proved to be effective and need to be strengthened.

The Interim Basic Education Strategy provides a framework for coordination and coherence of sector financing and support among the key partners (government, donors, multilaterals and civil society). It also provides a results-based planning and monitoring framework for significant and measurable progress towards 'access for all' to quality basic education and the improvement of secondary, vocational and informal education. These all need to be supported by a strengthened education system.

The Federal Ministry of General Education (FMoGE) developed and adopted a number of national sub-strategies and frameworks aimed at increasing access to education for marginalized children. They include strategies for education of nomadic groups, girls, and children with disabilities. Moreover, the government adopted the 'Child-Friendly School' concept to improve education quality and learning achievement. Implementation of these strategies has shown some positive results, but generally, they have not been sufficient to reduce the number of out-of-school children, especially among the most vulnerable children and communities.

The MoE's National Council for Literacy and Adult Education has been implementing the Alternative Learning Program (ALP) for out-of-school children who have never attended school, left school or who cannot be mainstreamed into the formal education system without catch-up lessons. ALP is focused on numeracy and literacy to enable children's re-integration into the appropriate level of the formal system. In addition, life-skills and vocational training are provided to out-of-school children and youth.

The Education Management Information System (EMIS) is a prime source of administrative data for the Ministry of Education. It has played a critical role in capturing disaggregated educational input and output data. EMIS data has been used much in this study report. However, the system is still not fully operational and needs to be upgraded to produce quality data. In addition, documentation on state-level education spending remains an issue that needs to be addressed more broadly in order to improve the public financial management system within the Ministry of Finance and National Economy.

## Key recommendations

The OOSCI study provides much information about the characteristics of the excluded groups of children, the barriers they face in attending school and the major gaps in current education policy. Based on the findings, the study came up with the following key recommendations for policy action and intervention to address the barriers to school participation and to strengthen the existing opportunities.

- 1. Increase public spending on basic education and pre-school.** The government needs to ensure a sustainable increase in financing basic education, as current public spending is not sufficient to undertake the interventions needed to address out-of-school children. Monitoring processes need to be established to ensure that transfers of resources to the education sector within government accurately reflect the planned budgetary allocations and that basic education financing and expenditure data are collected and analysed regularly.
- 2. Strengthen the institutional capacity of localities in planning, management and implementation of education programmes.** Localities have to be supported financially and technically to develop evidence-based education plans that will provide increased education opportunities for out-of-school children. Such plans should promote explicit objectives, practical strategies, coordinated action and large-scale integrated programming and financing mechanisms.
- 3. Improve EMIS.** Upgrade the existing EMIS and add indicators that enable monitoring of out-of-school children as well as education quality. Consider using other sources that provide data on school participation and exclusion to complement EMIS administrative data.
- 4. Bridge the gap between policy formulation and implementation, and establish follow-up mechanisms.** Effective implementation of education policies and guidelines is constrained by lack of resources. It is recommended that the MoE develops a policy on resource mobilization and regularly monitors and evaluates implementation of education policies.
- 5. Reduce and gradually eliminate high school costs/education fees.** The government, in particular the MoE, should explore innovative ways and use other countries' experiences to more effectively implement the free education policy. Allocating a small budget to schools to meet daily needs may be explored, drawing upon current experience of Global Partnership for Education (GPE)-funded school grants across Sudan. Support to school communities and parent-teacher associations (PTAs) through micro-credit schemes to start income-generating activities is another option.
- 6. Continue constructing and opening new schools with pre-school facilities in localities with low enrolments as a strategy to invest in excluded children.** Based on school mapping and school improvement plans, increase the number of schools, improve the quality of school infrastructure and scale up the implementation of CFS. This includes opening additional ALP centres.
- 7. Improve teachers' remuneration policy.** Improving the teachers' management system in terms of recruitment, deployment, utilization, remuneration and supervision is critical to the efficiency and performance of the education sector. This could be done through mapping human resources and the school needs of teachers with special focus on nomadic, rural schools and ALP centres.
- 8. Promote community involvement and participation in school activities.** Encourage schools to adopt an 'open-door' policy that would allow and encourage parents to visit the school as often as they wish to discuss their children's progress. Parents with the ability to help their children in their studies should be encouraged to do so, especially at home with guidance from the school. Give higher priority to interventions mitigating sociocultural barriers to schooling with community participation.







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