

Education for All South Sudan (EFASS) programme summary 2024 – 2029

Context

South Sudan ranks among the four most fragile countries in the world and is on the frontline of the climate crisis. As a consequence of contextual, systemic, and historical factors, and at the heart of the global learning crisis. The context has grave impacts on education service delivery. Instability has resulted in occupation of school infrastructure by armed groups and IDPs, preventing government funded education services from reaching communities and forcing children away from their homes. Violence and extreme weather events damage and destroy schools, force them to close, and/or prevent children and teachers from reaching them. Food insecurity has a deep impact on learning, with around 1.4 million children under 5 acutely malnourished as a result of climate shocks, conflict and poverty. Structural gender inequality and unequal gender power relationships result in women and girls experiencing high levels of gender-based violence and child marriage, resulting in even lower rates of access to education.

Despite a constitutional right to free primary and secondary education, the majority of government schools have been forced to charge fees in recent years as a result of low teacher salary payments, a need to support unsalaried 'volunteer' teachers who make up a significant proportion of the workforce, and government failure to disburse required funding for school running costs. Approximately 60% of school aged children (3 to 17 years) are not in school, with girls and children living with disabilities disproportionality impacted. An estimated 3.4m children require education support. Of these, 2.8m are out of school, with the rest enrolled but facing severe access issues including lack of qualified teachers and learning materials. Various compounding barriers prevent children, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, accessing school and attending regularly. Even those children who are in school are likely not learning or at the very least have fallen behind expected learning levels for their age.

Intended UK bilateral response

Quality education is critical to the future economic development of South Sudan. Without an educated working-age population and full participation from women alongside men, will struggle to realise this potential. EFASS aims to support children, especially girls and those living with disability, to safely access 12 years of quality education. EFASS will directly support 350,000 girls and children with disabilities nationwide to access education through cash transfers, whilst investment in behaviour change, in-service teacher training, and catch-up classes will improve both access and learning for many more nationwide. Systems strengthening and incentivising greater ownership of, and investment in, the education sector by the Government of the Republic of South Sudan will help strengthen the social contract and build functioning education institutions to enable future development. Geographically targeted pilots, including an innovative health co-investment, will support life skills development, address additional barriers faced by children with disabilities, enable improved resilience (including to climate shocks), and support peacebuilding, including to help prevent drop-out. EFASS aims to build on the exiting success of the multi-donor platform which was established under our Girls' Education South Sudan Programme to continue current coordinated donor investment in our shared sectoral priorities.

The programme's approach will build on lessons learned from a decade of GESS implementation to maximise the impact of our investment. EFASS will also work to enhance linkages with other UK efforts, for example through our investments in Education Cannot Wait and the Global Partnership for Education, including via technical leadership within the sector.