

Sudan

Building the foundation for a strong education system

Sudan's education sector has suffered grievously from the country's armed conflicts. But a strong education system can promote peace and help prevent future conflicts. The Government of Sudan, supported by the Global Partnership for Education, has taken decisive steps to ensure that more children get a quality education.



Sudan has been beset by conflict for most of its independent history. Under the terms of a peace agreement in 2005, its southern states seceded, forming the Republic of South Sudan in 2011. Widening inequality and poor infrastructure remain major obstacles to Sudan's socioeconomic development.

Sudan's education challenges

More than 3 million children are not in school in Sudan – one of the highest numbers in the world; and those in school, often do not complete it. Historically, the quality of education was poor, due to a weak system which struggled with a severe shortage of trained teachers, textbooks, learning materials, school buildings and equipment.

GPE support to education in Sudan

Since 2012, GPE has supported the government's efforts to ensure that more children get a quality education. GPE was instrumental in helping Sudan conduct a comprehensive analysis of the country's education system, which was the foundation for the development of the education plan for 2018–2022. This plan, which helps the government prioritize interventions, was developed by working closely with the federal education ministry, state education ministries, and local and international development partners like the World Bank and UNICEF.

GPE also played a key role in coordinating a strong dialogue between education partners by initiating joint sector reviews to monitor progress towards the goals outlined in the education plan. This mechanism has fostered mutual accountability and strong collaboration among all partners and the government.



GPE partner: Since 2012

Challenges addressed:

Low quality of education, shortage of textbooks, poor school infrastructure, inadequate data collection

Key interventions:

Community development approach and school grants

Total grants: US\$77 million (2013–2019)

Grant agent: World Bank

Coordinating agency: UNICEF

Strong education systems begin with reliable and timely data

To strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Education to collect and analyze data for education planning and management, GPE helped build three data systems in Sudan:

- **Teacher database.** Completed in 2016, this has data on qualifications, years of experience, career grades, and teaching assignments. The database was essential for conducting the education sector analysis and for developing the 2018–2022 education plan, supported by a GPE sector plan development grant.
- **National learning assessment.** In 2015, GPE supported the Ministry of Education’s first national assessment of early grade learning. The results were used for a school grants program, an initiative also supported by GPE. An assessment of grades 3 and 6 followed in early 2018 and provides important data for future programs.
- **Rapid education management information system (EMIS).** GPE support enabled this system which provides the most reliable information on basic and secondary education in Sudan to get underway. Data is now regularly collected and data management is improving.

Supporting the most vulnerable children

To make education affordable to the most vulnerable communities, GPE supported a school grants program in 2013, the first of its kind in Sudan. The program makes small grants quickly available to schools to buy uniforms and for other running costs. To date, 5,300 schools in 74 communities have received grants.

To ensure that gains in the education system are sustainable, the government with support from GPE, empowers communities to become involved in the education process by encouraging them to identify their education needs and participate in deciding how resources for education are best mobilized.



In addition, GPE helped built more than 1,600 classrooms, primarily in rural areas with weak learning outcomes, in an effort to improve the learning environment by reducing the number of students per classroom.

More textbooks to improve learning outcomes

To tackle the shortage of textbooks, which was particularly acute in conflict-ridden areas and internally displaced people camps, GPE funded the production and distribution of 22 million textbooks. All students in grades 1–8 now have access to textbooks in mathematics, science, Arabic and English.

“Before, up to four students shared one textbook. Students couldn’t do their homework because they were not able to take books home. Now, all students have a book that they can take home.”

—**Abdirahman Azain**, Headmaster, Umdebekrat Basic School for Boys Nyala South Locality, South Darfur, Sudan.

GPE interventions lead to results

GPE interventions in Sudan are achieving impressive results. Since 2013, education planning has improved, and joint sector reviews have been established to monitor progress and strengthen the dialogue among all partners. The joint sector reviews are the first to be done in Sudan and will require continuous refinement over the coming years.

The preliminary results of the national learning assessment show that schools supported by GPE achieved better learning outcomes than those that did not. This was quite an achievement because the GPE-supported schools were in areas with the weakest education outcomes. In the short period between 2014 and 2017, the percentage of non-readers attending GPE-supported schools fell from 47 percent to 42 percent and the oral reading fluency of students improved from 12 words per minute to 15.5.