



# TEACHERS FOR CHANGE:

SUPPORTING TEACHERS FOR  
GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION IN  
SOUTH SUDAN

Education can be a powerful tool to transform harmful gender norms and stereotypes and address sexual and gender-based violence. Yet, in South Sudan women, men, girls and boys all face distinct challenges in accessing quality education. This report argues for increase investment in education in South Sudan, particularly focused on supporting, reinforcing and harnessing its potential to promote gender equality. As teachers are the most important school-level factor for improving learning, supporting their wellbeing and investing in their training and resources – working closely with communities – can have powerful transformative impacts for communities.

© Oxfam International December 2019

This paper was written by Elysia Buchanan with support from Kathryn Achilles, Rhea Catada, Irene Fredriksson, Else Østergaard, Charlotte Beyer, Martin Lubajo, Rose Diko and other colleagues from Oxfam IBIS and the Oxfam South Sudan programme. It is part of a series of papers written to inform public debate on development and humanitarian policy issues. This report was made possible thanks to funding from the EU and DANIDA. Oxfam South Sudan would also like to thank colleagues from the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (Directorate of Gender and Inclusive Education), Young Women's Christian Association, Nile Hope, the National Education Coalition, the National Teachers' Union, UNICEF and Teachers College, Columbia University who provided knowledge and input towards the drafting of this brief, and all others who also offered their support. This support does not constitute endorsement of the brief's findings or recommendations, which are the Oxfam's alone.

For further information on the issues raised in this paper please email [advocacy@oxfaminternational.org](mailto:advocacy@oxfaminternational.org)

This publication is copyright, but the text may be used free of charge for the purposes of advocacy, campaigning, education, and research, provided that the source is acknowledged in full. The copyright holder requests that all such use be registered with them for impact assessment purposes. For copying in any other circumstances, or for re-use in other publications, or for translation or adaptation, permission must be secured, and a fee may be charged. E-mail [policyandpractice@oxfam.org.uk](mailto:policyandpractice@oxfam.org.uk).

The information in this publication is correct at the time of going to press.

Published by Oxfam GB for Oxfam International  
Oxfam GB, Oxfam House, John Smith Drive, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 2JY, UK.

Cover photo: Illustration by Abigail Montana-Santillan/Oxfam

# 1 INTRODUCTION

South Sudan is an extremely challenging place to get an education, particularly for female learners. The ongoing conflict has had a significant, negative impact on the education system; widespread displacement has interrupted schooling, many schools are no longer functional, and some are still occupied by armed actors. The economic impact of the conflict also means that for many families, education is a luxury they cannot afford and that teacher salaries are low and slow – insufficient to cover essential expenses and often delayed months at a time.

Harmful gender norms and stereotypes continue to cause immense harm to women, girls, men and boys in South Sudan. For example, research has found that up to 65% of South Sudanese women will experience either sexual or physical violence in their lifetime, double the global average and among the highest levels of violence against women in the world.<sup>1</sup> Addressing the impact of these norms and stereotypes is critical to ending poverty and building a more just, peaceful and equitable society.

Research has proven that quality education is one of the most effective tools to effectuate this change. This rationale builds on the understanding that education is never neutral; it is political, and a powerful instrument to create exclusion and oppression or promote positive change – including promoting gender equality. Yet the critical intersection of gender, education and emergencies is both under-researched and under-resourced.

## **Defining Gender-Transformative Education<sup>2</sup>**

Gender-transformative education refers to the system of designing, delivering and monitoring education in a way that empowers communities to question and challenge social structures and norms, particularly harmful gender stereotypes and unequal gender and power relations. This approach to education builds on an understanding that education has a transformative potential to contribute specifically to gender justice and women's leadership, which in turn helps tackle the root causes of gender inequality and decrease sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

Seeking to increase the transformative power of education can seem an insurmountable task in an environment where basic access to education is already extremely challenging. But supporting, reinforcing and harnessing the potential of education to transform gender disparities in the country has to start somewhere. This briefing seeks to further explore how this can be done. It first examines some of the gender dynamics currently at play in the education system in South Sudan, including the particular challenges faced by female learners and teachers. It then explores some of the ways the education can be harnessed to challenge harmful gender norms and stereotypes in South Sudan, concluding with specific recommendations for the Government, humanitarian and development agencies and donors. It is important to note that as an overview, this briefing does not adequately reflect the intersectionality of vulnerability and inequality with other facets



of identities, such as age, ability, ethnicity, sexuality and religion. Further research and analysis exploring these intersections will be critical to effective gender-transformative education programming.

## 2 CONTEXT

South Sudan is one of the most challenging places in the world to access education. More than 2.2 million children are out-of-school, and less than half of women and men are literate – both among the highest rates in the world.<sup>3</sup> The education system has not been spared the effects of the conflict – economic downturn means the cost of going to school continues to rise, as families must choose between feeding their children and ensuring they get an education. Nearly one-third of schools have been attacked, and dozens have been occupied by armed groups.<sup>4</sup> Continued and protracted displacement has disrupted the education of thousands of South Sudanese children.

Even prior to the current conflict, accessing education in South Sudan was extremely difficult. Today, the extended impact of years of conflict means many South Sudanese have missed out, or will miss out, on education. Additionally, teachers and learners may have distinct psychosocial needs resulting from their experiences. The recent signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) offers hope for the future of education in the young country. Yet, public investment in education remains low. While the Government of South Sudan has pledged to invest 10% of the national budget to education, in the 2019/2020 budget it committed only 5.5%. This is much lower than security and defence spending, and is also much lower than the recommended 15-20% international benchmark.<sup>5</sup> It is also important to note that trends from previous years indicated that actual spending on education tends to be lower than budget commitments.<sup>6</sup>

Yet, education is a powerful tool for change – including in eliminating gender inequality, reducing poverty and fostering peace. It is important to note that South Sudanese of all ages – children, youth and adults – have the right to education. Therefore, this report refers to education broadly – including formal and informal services.

## GENDER AND EDUCATION IN SOUTH SUDAN

Women, men, girls and boys face different challenges in accessing quality education in South Sudan. While there continues to be significant gender inequalities in education, it is important to recognize policy and strategy action which have been initiated and which reflect an intention to address the continuing significant gender inequalities in education. These include

*“The Ministry of General Education and Instruction is committed to its overarching objective to promote gender equality and equity in all its programmes... The right to education for all citizens of South Sudan, regardless of gender [or] disability is enshrined in Article 29 of the Transitional Constitution. However, many girls have not been able to realize this essential right.”*

South Sudan Girls' Education Strategy (2018-2022).

the Gender Education Act (2012), the National Gender Policy (2012) and the Girls' Education Strategy (2018-2022), all of which specifically commit to reducing gender inequality in the sector. The General Education Strategic Plan (2017-2022) and the National Strategic Action Plan on Eliminating Child Marriage (2017-2030) also include specific priorities and interventions related to this. But while overall there is an enabling legal and policy environment, these provisions remain largely unimplemented.

These efforts come alongside a multitude of interventions supported by donors and delivered by the UN and international and national NGOs. For example, Girls Education South Sudan (GESS) – an initiative of the Ministry of General Education and Instruction, supported by DFID and implemented by partner NGOs – provides cash-transfers to girls enrolled in Primary 5 to Senior 4 to support their access to education. Overall, while there is still a long way to go, progress has been made in reducing gender gaps in enrolment in the last few years.

## **South Sudan is one of the most difficult places in the world for girls to go to school.**

An adolescent girl in South Sudan is three times more likely to die in childbirth than to complete primary school.<sup>7</sup> South Sudan has the lowest proportion of female learners enrolled in primary school in sub-Saharan Africa, and the second lowest at the secondary level.<sup>8</sup> While it varies by region, female learners generally have lower rates of enrolment, higher rates of drop-out, and lower levels of attainment than boys.

Harmful gender norms and stereotypes play a large role in perpetuating gender inequality in education. In many communities in South Sudan, there is a perception that women and girls are 'born to be married and give birth to children'.<sup>10</sup> This belief often places restrictions on women and girls' educational attainment, as parents perceive their education of little value as girls will soon be married off or worry the girls will become 'spoiled'. Child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) is also one of the main reasons South Sudanese girls drop out of school.<sup>11</sup> Around half of girls in South Sudan are married before the age of 18, though the rate of CEFM is likely much higher in many areas.<sup>12</sup> Evidence also shows that the practice is being perpetuated by the compounding effects of the conflict, with girls being married young so that families can use the dowry to cope with rising poverty and food insecurity.

Pregnancy is also one of the key reasons girls drop out of school, and often leads to CEFM. Pregnancy, like marriage, often means the end of a girl's education – either because she is no longer permitted to attend school or because the burden of care for her child – including breastfeeding – effectively bars her attendance. Parents may also stop girls from attending school for fear she may become pregnant, which is often perceived as shameful. These dynamics are compounded by a context in which any discussion of sexual and reproductive health is extremely sensitive, including in learning environments.

The burden of domestic duties also particularly impacts the education of

*“Girls who receive an education are less likely to marry young and more likely to lead healthy, productive lives. They earn higher incomes, participate in the decisions that most affect them, and build better futures for themselves and their families.”*

UNICEF, Girls' Education: Gender equality in education benefits every child.<sup>9</sup>

female learners, as they are generally the ones responsible for household chores. This is heightened in times of crisis, when the burden of duties and the time taken to accomplish them increases. These tasks include cleaning, fetching water, collecting and preparing food, participating in income-generating activities and taking care of young, sick and elderly member of a family. The time and energy burden of these duties can lead female learners to miss school, drop out or otherwise affect their schooling.

Additionally, every month many female learners miss out on education because of menstruation, leading to them being absent for up to 10-20% of school days. This is due to shame/stigma, lack of access to sanitary products, or lack of access to/limited knowledge about proper hygiene management practices. For example, only 32% of schools have latrines, a third of which are not functioning and less than half are segregated by gender.<sup>13</sup> Missing school due to domestic duties or menstruation means that female learners miss critical lessons and can fall behind.

SGBV has increased as a result of the conflict and is now at 'endemic' levels in South Sudan, affecting every sphere of women and girls' lives – including their education.<sup>14</sup> Yet, school-related SGBV is not systematically assessed, understood, or addressed. For example, research suggests over a quarter of Head Teachers would only give a warning in the case of an inappropriate relationship between a student and teacher.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, as women and girls are known to face risks travelling long distances, including of abduction and sexual violence, it is logical that these risks would also be present in travel to and from school. SGBV can have profound consequences in learners' lives, including physical harm, severe impacts on wellbeing, social stigma, pregnancy, fear and impacts on mental health. This violence also has impacts on educational outcomes, including lack of concentration, learners avoiding school or dropping out completely.

This is not to say that male learners do not also face particular challenges in South Sudan – indeed, in some regions the rate of drop-out for male learners is higher than for female learners. Men and boys can miss out on school due to obligations relating to cattle rearing, recruitment into armed groups, or seeking employment to help support themselves and their families. These distinct experiences and challenges must be reflected and addressed in programming if South Sudan is to achieve universal quality education.

## TEACHING IN CRISIS

South Sudan is not an easy place for the teachers either. One of the most pressing challenges is the low and often delayed salary; the SSP 2,600 (around US\$10) salary that teachers receive every month is not nearly enough to cover basic living costs. This payment is also often delayed by several months, putting further pressure on teachers and their families. This, for obvious reasons, contributes to high levels of teacher absenteeism, and low levels of teacher retention. According to the UN, around one-third of teachers have abandoned their posts.<sup>16</sup> Teachers – like learners – have also experienced attacks and displacement over the course

of the conflict.

Teachers also work in an extremely challenging teaching environment. While the Government has set a teacher-student ratio at 1:44, the reality is that it is as high as 1:106 in some parts of the country. Access to basic materials, supplies and infrastructure to create an enabling learning environment are also challenge. Permanent and semi-permanent classrooms only account for slightly over half of classrooms in South Sudan, and the lack of learning materials/supplies is a major reason for school closures across the country.<sup>17</sup>

Teacher capacity and the quality of teaching also remains a challenge. Less than half of South Sudan's teachers have received formal teacher training, making the national ratio of qualified teachers to pupils 1:1,171.<sup>18</sup> Of the country's seven teacher training colleges, only three are currently operational, with programmes that are heavily reliant on humanitarian and development partners. Training opportunities are also often centred in 'safe zones' or urban areas, leaving some of the most disadvantaged parts of the country – including hard to reach and conflict-affected areas – with few to no teacher training options. Additionally, the opportunities that do exist are frequently one-offs or short-term, not sustainable, and only partly coordinated between partners.<sup>19</sup> There is therefore a need to bring actors together towards harmonizing approaches, striving for continuous teacher support, training and mentoring.

## **Women teachers in South Sudan face challenges too.**

The challenges female learners face in pursuing an education also impact the chances of women becoming teachers – fewer female learners completing their education also means fewer who are qualified to become teachers. And these challenges do not disappear once female learners graduate. Indeed, many of the challenges faced by female students and teachers are similar, including protection risks travelling to and from school, harmful gender stereotypes and norms, and challenges in menstrual hygiene management (MHM). For example, the average cost of a pack of sanitary pads in the capital city, Juba, is equal to almost three days of a teacher's pay. Overall, only 16% of teachers in South Sudan are women.<sup>20</sup> This ratio has barely changed since 2011 and becomes even smaller at the secondary level and is especially low among Head Teachers.<sup>21</sup>

Most female teachers in South Sudan are doing two jobs – their jobs as teachers and their domestic duties. Teaching is a profession which already requires a person to invest time and energy outside of their normal working hours, including for lesson prep and record keeping. A heavy burden of domestic duties – for which women are overwhelmingly responsible – are added in addition to this. On top of this, it is important to note that many teachers seek additional income-generating opportunities to supplement their small and frequently delayed salaries. This is compounded by the fact that very few measures are in place to support female teachers with breastfeeding or childcare in the school premises. Domestic duties therefore constitute a barrier for women to join teaching or progress in their

*“It is well documented that in many developing countries, female students stay in school and complete their education often because of the influence of female role models in school... However, in South Sudan, the current number of female teachers does not reflect the importance of females working in the field of education.”*

South Sudan Female Teachers' Affirmative Action Policy (2014-2018)

profession – including pursuing further training opportunities. This is especially true if the distance to the school or training opportunity is far and makes it difficult for women to resettle far from their homes for opportunities, either for training, as teachers or to work in school leadership.

### **Mary's\* story**

Mary is a teacher with an Oxfam supported accelerated learning programme in Juba. She's been teaching for more than 10 years. She loves teaching but says that no one does it for the money: "you don't teach because you get money, you teach because you want learners to know what's in the world." She sells charcoal on the side, to supplement the small teaching salary she receives from the Government, which is often delayed by several months.

Mary is one of few female teachers in the country. She thinks that's because, so few women have had the opportunity to go to school, and because in many communities girls are most valued as someone who brings income through dowry at their marriage: "parents worry girls will become 'spoiled'". That's why she believes it's so important more women join the profession – to encourage girls to go to school and help change mindsets. Female teachers, she says, "are like mothers to the learners." They help handle academic and personal challenges, they encourage and support.

For example, Mary tells the story of a young girl who became pregnant and was going to be forced into marriage. Because of this, her education was going to come to an end – her father was even preventing her from sitting her exams that year. But Mary spoke to the girl's father, telling him why – based on her experience – educating girls was so important. Finally, he allowed the girl to sit her exams – and she was among the best in her class. After that, the girl's father and husband allowed her to continue going to school.

For those women who become teachers, gender power dynamics are often replicated in their work. Harmful gender stereotypes prevalent in many South Sudanese communities can lead to a lack of respect for their authority, including by students and colleagues, and limit their progression to more senior roles and school management. Some male colleagues may also create an 'unfriendly' environment for female teachers. Additionally, because female teachers can face additional challenges in accessing the levels of education and training required to improve the quality of teaching – including English-language skills – they can lack skills compared to their male counterparts, which may impact their progression, the respect they receive from other teachers and school management and the behaviour and attitudes of students.

---

\* Name changed for anonymity



# 3 WAYS FORWARD

While increasing the number of female teachers and learners is undoubtedly important, improving the gender responsiveness of education must not end here. In practice, this means integrating gender throughout the education system, including dedicated interventions aimed at addressing harmful gender stereotypes and norms and promoting women’s empowerment and building the capacity of relevant actors.

*“Gaining knowledge and foundational skills such as reading, writing and mathematics is essential, but education should not stop there. Education should also integrate the values and attitudes of learners in order to unlock its transformational power.”*

Oxfam IBIS (2017), Concept Paper: Transformative Education.

## The Girl Who Fought for Freedom and Other Stories of Courage

Studies have shown that the lack of representation of powerful female role models in media and stories means that girls are less likely to feel brave, confident and heard compared to their male counterparts.<sup>22</sup> Conversely, showcasing strong female role models can help bridge this confidence gap and change attitudes relating to gender roles. In recognition of this – and the powerful contributions South Sudanese women make to their communities – Oxfam, with funding from DANIDA, has produced a storybook showcasing powerful stories of South Sudanese women leaders. The storybook, titled *The Girl Who Fought for Freedom and Other Stories of Courage*, is written by South Sudanese poet and writer Bigoa Chuol.

Among the stories of a radio host, an advocate, a basketball coach, a humanitarian and a fashion designer, the book includes the story of Poni Hellen, a girl who escaped a forced marriage, fought to complete her education and is now studying to be a lawyer. It also highlights the story of Juan Cicily Wurube, a teacher who – as the storybook puts it – is ‘teaching other girls to dream’. These storybooks will be distributed in schools, to be used as material for gender transformative teaching.

In a context as challenging as that of South Sudan, seeking to increase the transformative power of education can seem daunting. However, action needs to start somewhere – while South Sudan has relatively progressive policies in relation to this, including those mentioned above, they urgently need to be effectively implemented. Harmful gender norms and stereotypes cause immense harm to women, girls, men and boys, and these will never shift without special attention. Research has demonstrated that quality education is one of the most effective tools to effectuate this change.<sup>23</sup> In addition, emergencies – such as conflict – can reinforce these stereotypes and norms or create ‘windows of opportunities’ to generate long-term change as gender roles, relations and identities often shift during these periods. For example, evidence suggests that in South Sudan more women are engaging in income-generating opportunities since the start of the conflict to cope with rising poverty and food insecurity.<sup>24</sup>

## Why prioritize teachers?

The role a teacher plays in the lives of their students cannot be underestimated. Indeed, research shows that teachers are the most important school-level factor for improving student learning.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the way a teacher imparts knowledge can have powerful transformative impacts for

learners and communities or can conversely perpetuate ideas and practices that contribute to conflict and inequality, including harmful gender stereotypes and norms.<sup>26</sup>

Teachers therefore play a critical role in ensuring education is transformative, but they need training and support to realize this. This requires specific modules and ongoing support to equip teachers to recognize gender-biases in the curriculum and their teaching practices and support them with strategies and teaching practices that support quality, gender-sensitive learning for all their students. This should also include training on how to recognize and safely respond to SGBV, and non-violent forms of punishment; for example, in one study by GESS, over half of learners reported beatings as a form of punishment, which adds to other forms of violence learners – especially women and girls – may already be facing.<sup>27</sup> Additionally, girls in Pibor, former Jonglei state, have reported that they are beaten by teachers when they are late for school as a result of their domestic responsibilities, which shows a lack of sensitivity and training on how to respond to gender dynamics related to education and lack of knowledge of positive discipline strategies.<sup>28</sup> It is important to stress that in order to be effective, the facilitators of these trainings must be properly capacitated both through teacher training and continuous support and mentoring.

Teachers must also be supported with the proper materials and curriculum to deliver gender transformative teaching. While there is an overall shortage of teaching materials in the country, those in circulation should be reviewed to remove any gender bias and promote gender equality. Education actors should explore ways to promote the creation of more gender transformative materials that can be distributed in schools and support teaching. Teachers should equally be supported to implement the newly developed curriculums in ways that are more inclusive and gender-transformative, which can include small practical changes in response to immediate needs such as community-relevant examples responding to the experiences of male and female learners.<sup>29</sup>

Additionally, Codes of Conduct for teachers can be powerful advocacy tools for more gender sensitive educational systems, when combined with strengthening their dissemination and the supervisory system. While South Sudan has Codes of Conducts for teachers which address the prevention of gender discrimination and promoting the equal participation of boys and girls in learning, these are not well known or enforced. These Codes of Conduct should be reviewed and, where relevant, strengthened to further promote gender transformative educational environments, in close consultation with communities and the teacher union so that they are contextually relevant, and parents and community members are aware of their contents and more engaged in monitoring.

These efforts must come alongside broader initiatives to improve the wellbeing and retention of teachers, and the quality of teaching – with emphasis on proper remuneration. While there are several ways this could be done, education actors could particularly explore opportunities to capacitate the teachers' union – including organizational capacity. While the union is still nascent, their eventual role as effective advocates for the wellbeing of teachers and quality of education could support broader

*“Gender-responsive teacher training covers gender-responsive pedagogy and teaching methodologies that can be used across subject areas, positive discipline and classroom management, participatory approaches to ensure active engagement of female and male learners, and inclusive planning and assessment.”*

INEE and UNGEI (2019),  
Guidance Note on Gender.

change, especially if they are effectively supported to be inclusive and gender transformative. As teachers should be meaningfully consulted in the strategies outlined in this sector, a strong union could also support the mobilization of teachers and the incorporation of their voices in strategies to improve the quality and transformative power of education.

## **There is an urgent need to increase the number of female teachers.**

Proactive strategies are needed to increase the number of female teachers, as a key strategy to promoting gender equality and the gender sensitivity of education. While female teachers may not necessarily be more gender sensitive than their male counterparts, research demonstrates that there is a correlation between the number of women teachers in schools and girls' enrolment.<sup>30</sup> Female teachers may also be more sensitive to the particular challenges that female learners face and serve as their confidants and role models encouraging them to complete their studies – maybe even become teachers themselves.<sup>31</sup> These strategies could include, for example, providing bursaries and other incentives for women to attend teacher training or for their travel and lodging and/or explore the possibilities of quality child-care in or near the school. As far as possible, this should also include ensuring there are safe spaces for female teachers to congregate together and engage female learners including, where relevant, with women representatives in parent-teachers associations (PTAs) and women's rights actors.

Although a long-term effort is having more women teacher's in schools, in instances where female teachers cannot be immediately recruited, interim measures should be explored and have proven effective in other contexts.<sup>32</sup> This could include female community members serving as mentors to female learners and teachers, promoting women as classroom assistants and expanding the establishment of mothers' groups and female teacher circles/school exchanges. This could also include strategies to increase the number of women on PTAs and school management committees (SMCs). While such efforts are underway in many areas in South Sudan, they should be stepped up to ensure women's more active participation in the education system across the country.

Gender issues should not be limited to women – it is equally important to engage men in transformative strategies. This could include engaging men as the spouses of female teachers to, for example, encourage them to take a greater share of the domestic duties or otherwise support their partner's profession. Equally, there is a need to engage male teachers in discussions of 'positive masculinity'<sup>33</sup> and their role in promoting this in their communities and learning environments and in their interaction with fellow female teachers. Moreover, in the same as their female counterparts, male teachers can serve as confidants and role models for male learners and may be particularly sensitive to the distinct challenges they face.

## Transformative education is a community effort.

Teachers cannot be solely responsible for transformative education; to be effective, it requires a holistic approach that transforms the education system and engages the entire community. In addition to overall efforts to improve the quality of and equal access to education, this could include interventions across sectors aimed at supporting education – for example: income-generating opportunities for families to address financial barriers to access to education; water, sanitation and hygiene interventions – including sensitization on MHM – to help prevent female learners missing school when they are menstruating; and, sensitization efforts to address harmful gender stereotypes and norms impacting learners and teachers. These efforts should be specifically oriented towards supporting the local education environment; for example, the Young Women’s Christian Association, a national NGO working on education, have had significant success in the retention of female learners with this holistic approach to supporting a primary school in Maridi, former Western Equatoria state.

As these efforts are often sensitive, communities should be closely consulted and engaged in all efforts to address harmful gender stereotypes and norms and support the transformative power of education. This supports broader buy-in and minimizes the risk of backlash as well as promotes the engagement of key stakeholders to promoting broader, more long-term change.<sup>34</sup> It also helps ensure that interventions are context-specific, given that realities and challenges – including gender dynamics – vary greatly across regions in South Sudan. A ‘whole school approach’ – which takes into account the interconnectedness of schools, communities, and families – not only improves the gender sensitivity of education, but equally helps address SGBV and its drivers.<sup>35</sup>

As far as possible, these efforts should build on initiatives already underway in communities for gender transformation. In particular, education actors should explore ways to work closely with and build the capacity of civil society, including women’s rights organizations (WROs), women’s groups and men’s groups. These actors are often already undertaking community-based efforts in their communities to bring about change, and can be powerful allies for advocacy, mentoring and training. This approach also supports more sustainable change, as initiatives are more likely to continue after the end of the programme cycle.

Education actors should equally coordinate with parents and community leaders so they are engaged in the development of curriculums, materials and teaching methods and understand and accept their content, particularly working through and capacitating PTAs and SMCs as critical links between the school and the community. Indeed, in many areas these groups are already actively engaging learners and parents, including advocating for access to education for young mothers and pregnant women and engaging young male learners against participating in inter-communal conflicts which could disrupt their education. In light of this, the critical role that PTAs and SMCs play in ensuring education is gender transformative should be further analysed and explored.

*“Community engagement is critical to challenging and shifting harmful social norms that drive violence against women and children... Including parents, youth groups, private sector representatives, religious leaders, and other formal and informal leaders of the community helps ensure that the values children learn at school are reflected and reinforced in the home and the community.”*

UNGEI. A Whole School Approach to Preventing School-Related GBV: Minimum Standards and Monitoring.

## The #BornToLead Campaign

#BornToLead is a campaign driven by a Steering Committee of eight South Sudanese women's rights organizations and actors. The campaign advocates for the protection of the rights of women and girls and for their greater role and influence in decision-making at all levels. As part of its activities, the Steering Committee conducted mentorship with girls from a school in Rumbek on leadership – what is leadership, what is their role, and what are their dreams for the future? Many of them said they dreamed of being leaders in their communities, and of their country.

After the session, the girls requested more such activities. It provided a safe space for them to just talk and share their personal stories. For example, one girl shared how she had not gone home in three years, since she was scared if she returned she would be married off. She said that she felt more supported after the session, since she realized there were others who were going through the same and they were building a 'sisterhood'. At the end of the session, the Steering Committee members who participated said they noticed the girls seemed more confident; many who had not been speaking out in the beginning were now active participants. The girls also called for the creation of Born to Lead clubs, and it is important to note that similar girls' clubs in schools have proved effective in transformative harmful gender norms in other contexts.<sup>36</sup> This demonstrates the potential of more closely engaging WROs in education to support the retention of girls in school and gender transformative activities.

This should include efforts to increase awareness of existing education policies and teacher codes of conduct. Dedicated efforts, including community-based campaigning and protection interventions, should also be undertaken to address some of the main barriers of women and girls learning and roles as teachers including preventing CEFM, more equitable sharing of domestic burdens, and addressing SGBV. For example, GESS' radio programme – 'Our School' – has reached nearly two million people and contributed to significant belief and behavioural change: regular audiences were more knowledgeable about the education system; had a better understanding of the benefits of girls' education; and took a more active interest in their child's education by, for example, helping with homework.<sup>37</sup>

Overall, communities should be actively engaged in the development, implementation and monitoring of education programming. This is essential not only for the success of such interventions, but also as in the South Sudan context, parents and community members are already actively involved in local education systems, including contributing financially and fundraising to supplement the schools' income from other sources, which is often insufficient to meet needs. This kind of engagement helps ensure that their participation is meaningfully channelled towards the quality of education, including activating for its gender transformative power.



# 4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Harmful gender norms and stereotypes are symptomatic of many South Sudanese communities and affect all facets of society – including education systems. Yet, education – if harnessed for transformative change – is a powerful tool for change, including promoting women’s leadership and combating SGBV.

It’s important to note that social gender-norm change is a complex, non-linear and long-term process. In addition to taking a holistic and community-driven approach to gender transformative education, stakeholders should recognize that this will require concerted prioritization and investment over years. Change is often slow, and not easy to measure, but no less impactful. Innovative, transformative approaches to education can have powerful impacts for communities, including in tackling gender inequalities that have severe consequences on the lives of women, girls, men and boys.

An overall reduction in clashes between parties since the signing of the R-ARCSS has given South Sudanese hope for a more lasting peace that will support the recovery and development of their communities. This includes accelerating progress on access to quality education for women, men, girls and boys. Parties to the agreement should compromise and collaborate to effectively implement benchmarks to ensure they deliver long-term and sustainable peace to South Sudanese communities. Sustainable peace is a necessity for the realization of the right to education for all South Sudanese.

## **Alongside broader efforts to improve access to and quality of education, the Government of South Sudan, should:**

- Ensure the timely payment of salaries to all active ministry staff, including teachers and review teacher salary scales to ensure they meet requirements for an adequate standard of living.
- Invest in bringing non-functional teacher training colleges to working level and re-establish county education centers for short-course teacher training, with a focus on gender transformative education. These efforts should also focus on innovative approaches to reaching under-served areas where access to quality education is often most challenging, particularly conflict-affected and hard-to-reach areas.
- Urgently update and approve the Female Teachers’ Affirmative Action Policy (2014-2018), and work to sensitize communities on its contents.
- In ongoing efforts to review curriculums, education materials and ensure strategies are mainstreamed to promote gender equality and improve the gender sensitivity of teaching strategies.
- Proactively recruit and retain women teachers, including for example gender quotas for enrolment in teacher training institutes, incentives for female teachers and childcare. Where possible, this should include efforts to ensure that women teachers are placed in high status positions, including as Head Teachers.

- Provide improved, sustained pre-service and ongoing learning opportunities for teachers. Working with education partners, ensure that such opportunities are equally available to female and male teachers and effectively integrate gender in design, content and approach.
- Working with other education partners – particularly the teachers' union – systematize, disseminate and promote understanding of teacher codes of conduct, with emphasis on provisions relating to gender-equality and the prevention of SGBV.
- Working with other education partners, explore ways to systematize interim methods to increase women's participation in education, including at all levels of decision-making. Where possible, explore longer-term measures to provide opportunities to female learners to continue their education and, eventually, access teacher training.
- Working closely with education and protection partners, ensure effective and gender-sensitive mechanisms are in place to report and respond to abuse against and protection threats facing teachers and students, including SGBV. This should include ensuring the required protection referral mechanisms are in place in every school as well as increased efforts toward dissemination, understand and monitoring of Codes of Conduct. Working with education partners, assess the extent to which these exist and identify gaps and ways forward.

## **Humanitarian and development partners should:**

- Include dedicated activities aimed at challenging harmful gender stereotypes and norms and promoting women's leadership in their programming. This should include indicators and realistic objectives and with particular emphasis on continuous teacher training and support. This should be done in close consultation with communities and build on effective community-based initiatives they may already have in place.
- Undertake a comprehensive review of existing laws, policies, codes of conduct, programme evaluations and other literature to identify gaps, best practices and opportunities to advance gender transformative education in South Sudan.
- Undertake more systematic assessments of the gendered scale of needs, including school-related SGBV. This could perhaps be done as part of annual education cluster assessment, in close coordination with GBV and child protection partners, including WROs. This should also include systematizing gender and conflict analysis and ensuring recommendations are effectively implemented.
- Strengthen linkages between civil society, WROs and local women's and men's groups for training, advocacy and awareness raising.
- Undertake dedicated activities to engage communities on improving the gender transformative impact of education, including capacity building for PTAs and SMCs and supporting community-led advocacy, awareness-raising and engagement aimed at challenging harmful gender norms and stereotypes.
- Work with WASH actors to rapidly scale up the provision of adequate, gender segregated toilet facilities and MHM supplies in learning environments.

## **Donors should:**

- Ensure dedicated funding for gender activities in education programming which challenge harmful gender norms and promote women and girls' leadership, including through gender transformative teacher training and support programmes. This should include a dedicated fund for sustained stand-alone gender-transformative programming.
- Ensure the interventions they fund are gender and context sensitive and informed by relevant analysis.
- Ensure funding is long-term and flexible to changes in context and emerging opportunities and work closely with education partners and the Government to ensure support is sustainable beyond programme life-cycles.
- Engage the Government of South Sudan to advocate for the regular and increased remuneration of teachers.

# NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> International Rescue Committee (IRC), CARE and George Washington University. (2017). No Safe Place: A Lifetime of Violence for Conflict-Affected Women and Girls in South Sudan. <https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/document/2294/southsudanlgsummaryreportonline.pdf>
- <sup>2</sup> This definition is based on: Oxfam IBIS. (2017). Concept Note: Transformative education. [https://oxfamibis.dk/sites/default/files/media/pdf\\_global/ny\\_transformative\\_education\\_oxfam\\_ibis\\_concept\\_paper\\_en\\_g.pdf](https://oxfamibis.dk/sites/default/files/media/pdf_global/ny_transformative_education_oxfam_ibis_concept_paper_en_g.pdf)
- <sup>3</sup> UNESCO. (2019). 'South Sudan'. <http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/ss>
- <sup>4</sup> South Sudan Education Cluster, Save the Children and UNICEF. (October 2018). Education Cluster Assessment South Sudan. [https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/assessments/ssec-nation\\_wide\\_assessment\\_report-2018-10.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/assessments/ssec-nation_wide_assessment_report-2018-10.pdf)
- <sup>5</sup> UNESCO. (2015). Education for All 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000232205>
- <sup>6</sup> UNICEF. (2019). Education Budget Brief: South Sudan. <https://www.unicef.org/southsudan/media/2186/file/UNICEF-South-Sudan-2019-Education-Budget-Brief.pdf>
- <sup>7</sup> OCHA. (January 2016). South Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview. <https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/2016-south-sudan-humanitarian-needs-overview>
- <sup>8</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). (2018). <http://data.uis.unesco.org/>
- <sup>9</sup> UNICEF. (N/A). Girls' Education: Gender equality benefits every child. <https://www.unicef.org/education/girls-education>
- <sup>10</sup> Oxfam. (February 2018). 'Born to be Married': Addressing Child, Early and Forced Marriage in Nyal, South Sudan. <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/born-be-married-addressing-child-early-and-forced-marriage-nyal-south-sudan>
- <sup>11</sup> South Sudan Education Cluster, Save the Children and UNICEF. (October 2018). Education Cluster Assessment South Sudan. [https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/assessments/ssec-nation\\_wide\\_assessment\\_report-2018-10.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/assessments/ssec-nation_wide_assessment_report-2018-10.pdf)
- <sup>12</sup> Oxfam. (February 2018). 'Born to be Married': Addressing Child, Early and Forced Marriage in Nyal, South Sudan. <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/born-be-married-addressing-child-early-and-forced-marriage-nyal-south-sudan>
- <sup>13</sup> South Sudan Education Cluster, Save the Children and UNICEF. (October 2018). Education Cluster Assessment South Sudan. [https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/assessments/ssec-nation\\_wide\\_assessment\\_report-2018-10.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/assessments/ssec-nation_wide_assessment_report-2018-10.pdf)
- <sup>14</sup> IOM. (November 2017). 'IOM undertakes survey to improve prevention and response to gender-based violence in South Sudan'. <https://www.iom.int/news/iom-undertakes-survey-improve-prevention-and-response-gender-based-violence-south-sudan>; Wahba, Mourad. (September 2019). 'Women and Girls in Crisis in DRC and South Sudan: Remarks at side event on "Sharing experiences in addressing gender-based violence"'. UNDP. <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/news-centre/speeches/2019/women-and-girls-in-crisis-in-drc-and-south-sudan.html>; UN Human Rights Council. (2019). 'Prosecuting sexual and gender-based crimes in South Sudan challenging but essential for peace'. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=24261&LangID=E>
- <sup>15</sup> GESS, Ministry of General Education and Instruction, UK AID. (August 2018). Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS): Endline School Survey, including annual School Sample Survey. <http://girlseducationsouthsudan.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Endline-School-Survey-Report.pdf>
- <sup>16</sup> Dumo, Denis. (February 28 2018). 'School restarts in South Sudan, in theory'. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southsudan-education/school-restarts-in-south-sudan-in-theory-idUSKCN1GC1DB>
- <sup>17</sup> South Sudan Education Cluster, Save the Children and UNICEF. (October 2018). Education Cluster Assessment South Sudan. [https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/assessments/ssec-nation\\_wide\\_assessment\\_report-2018-10.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/assessments/ssec-nation_wide_assessment_report-2018-10.pdf)
- <sup>18</sup> UNESCO. (May 2018). Global Initiative on out-of-school-children: South Sudan country study. <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/global-initiative-out-of-school-children-south-sudan-country-study.pdf>
- <sup>19</sup> Cambridge Education. (April 6 2018). Evaluation of Global Partnership for Education Programme in South Sudan – Final Report. <https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/SouthSudan-FinalReport-2018-001.pdf>
- <sup>20</sup> South Sudan Education Cluster, Save the Children and UNICEF. (October 2018). Education Cluster Assessment South Sudan. [https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/assessments/ssec-nation\\_wide\\_assessment\\_report-2018-10.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/assessments/ssec-nation_wide_assessment_report-2018-10.pdf)
- <sup>21</sup> Universalia, Results for Development and Itad. (May 2019). Summative GPE Country Program Evaluation, Republic of South Sudan – Final Evaluation Report. <https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/2019-07-summative-gpe-country-program-evaluation-south-sudan.pdf>
- <sup>22</sup> Women's Media Centre. (October 2018). 'SuperPowering girls: Female representation in the sci-fi/superhero

genre'. <http://www.womensmediacenter.com/reports/bbca-wmc-superpowering-girls-infographic>

<sup>23</sup> Council of Europe. (January 2015). Conference on "Combating gender stereotypes in and through education" Helsinki, 9-10 October 2014 – Report. <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680590ff0>

<sup>24</sup> Oxfam. (March 2017). 'South Sudan Gender Analysis: A snapshot situation analysis of the differential impact of the humanitarian crisis on women, girls, men and boys in South Sudan March-July 2016'. <https://oxfamlibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620207/rr-south-sudan-gender-analysis-060317-en.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> OECD. (2005). Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers – Final Report: Teachers Matter. <http://www.oecd.org/education/school/attractingdevelopingandretainingeffectiveteachers-finalreportteachersmatter.htm>

<sup>26</sup> INEE. (2013). Guidance Note on Conflict Sensitive Education. [https://www.edulinks.org/sites/default/files/media/file/INEE\\_GN\\_on\\_Conflict\\_Sensitive\\_Education\\_1\\_.pdf](https://www.edulinks.org/sites/default/files/media/file/INEE_GN_on_Conflict_Sensitive_Education_1_.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> GESS, Ministry of General Education and Instruction, UK AID. (August 2018). Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS): Endline School Survey, including annual School Sample Survey. <http://girlseducationsouthsudan.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Endline-School-Survey-Report.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> Toma, Iulia. (April 2019). Education Focused Gender Analysis Case Studies: Pibor and Juba, South Sudan. Oxfam. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/rr-south-sudan-education-gender-analysis-260319-en.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> INEE and UNGEI. (2019). Guidance Note on Gender: Gender equality in and through education. [https://www.youthpower.org/sites/default/files/YouthPower/files/resources/INEE\\_Guidance%20Note%20on%20Gender\\_2019\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.youthpower.org/sites/default/files/YouthPower/files/resources/INEE_Guidance%20Note%20on%20Gender_2019_ENG.pdf); INEE. (2010). Guidance Notes on Teaching and Learning. <http://education4resilience.iiep.unesco.org/en/node/543>; UNESCO. (2014). 'Safety, resilience and social cohesion: Guidance for education sector planners and curriculum developers. <http://education4resilience.iiep.unesco.org/en/node/2>.

<sup>30</sup> UNESCO. (2006). The Impact of Women Teachers on Girls' Education: Advocacy Brief. <https://www.genreenaction.net/IMG/pdf/145990e.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> Kirk, Jackie, Dembélé, Martial and Sandra Baxter. (September 2013). More and Better Teachers for Quality Education for All: Identity and Motivation, Systems and Support. [https://moreandbetterteachers.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/more-and-better-teaching\\_september-2013.pdf](https://moreandbetterteachers.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/more-and-better-teaching_september-2013.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> INEE Gender Task Team. (N/A). Preventing and Responding to Gender Based Violence in and through Education. [https://inee.org/resources/gender\\_strategies\\_in\\_emergencies\\_chronic\\_crises\\_and\\_early\\_reconstruction](https://inee.org/resources/gender_strategies_in_emergencies_chronic_crises_and_early_reconstruction); INEE Gender Task Team. (2010). Recruiting and Supporting Women Teachers. [https://archive.ineesite.org/en/resources/gender\\_strategies\\_in\\_emergencies\\_chronic\\_crises\\_and\\_early\\_reconstruction\\_co](https://archive.ineesite.org/en/resources/gender_strategies_in_emergencies_chronic_crises_and_early_reconstruction_co)

<sup>33</sup> Positive masculinity is a concept that refers to challenging aspects of traditional manhood that can result in harm or violence, focusing instead on beliefs and behaviours that contribute to positive change for self and others.

<sup>34</sup> In Pibor, former Jonglei State, a number of NGOs have held sensitization sessions on the importance of education. There have been reports that such activities have resulted in hostilities towards staff. This reinforces the importance of context-sensitivity in addressing gender issues. Toma, Iulia. (April 2019). Education Focused Gender Analysis Case Studies: Pibor and Juba, South Sudan. Oxfam. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/rr-south-sudan-education-gender-analysis-260319-en.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> UNGEI. (2019). A Whole of School Approach to Prevent School-Related Gender-Based Violence: Minimum standards and monitoring framework for a whole of school approach to prevent school-related gender-based violence. <http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/Whole-School-Approach-to-Prevent-SRGBV-Minimum-Standards-Framework-UNGEI.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> ODI. (September 2015). Girls' clubs and empowerment programmes. <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9810.pdf>

<sup>37</sup> GESS. (2018). Research brief: Social and behavioral change quantitative survey. <http://girlseducationsouthsudan.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Output-1-18-1.pdf>



## OXFAM

Oxfam is an international confederation of 19 organizations networked together in more than 90 countries, as part of a global movement for change, to build a future free from the injustice of poverty. Please write to any of the agencies for further information, or visit [www.oxfam.org](http://www.oxfam.org)

Oxfam America ([www.oxfamamerica.org](http://www.oxfamamerica.org))  
Oxfam Australia ([www.oxfam.org.au](http://www.oxfam.org.au))  
Oxfam-in-Belgium ([www.oxfamsol.be](http://www.oxfamsol.be))  
Oxfam Brasil ([www.oxfam.org.br](http://www.oxfam.org.br))  
Oxfam Canada ([www.oxfam.ca](http://www.oxfam.ca))  
Oxfam France ([www.oxfamfrance.org](http://www.oxfamfrance.org))  
Oxfam Germany ([www.oxfam.de](http://www.oxfam.de))  
Oxfam GB ([www.oxfam.org.uk](http://www.oxfam.org.uk))  
Oxfam Hong Kong ([www.oxfam.org.hk](http://www.oxfam.org.hk))  
Oxfam IBIS (Denmark) ([www.oxfamibis.dk](http://www.oxfamibis.dk))

Oxfam India ([www.oxfamindia.org](http://www.oxfamindia.org))  
Oxfam Intermón (Spain)  
([www.oxfamintermon.org](http://www.oxfamintermon.org))  
Oxfam Ireland ([www.oxfamireland.org](http://www.oxfamireland.org))  
Oxfam Italy ([www.oxfamitalia.org](http://www.oxfamitalia.org))  
Oxfam Mexico ([www.oxfammexico.org](http://www.oxfammexico.org))  
Oxfam New Zealand ([www.oxfam.org.nz](http://www.oxfam.org.nz))  
Oxfam Novib (Netherlands)  
([www.oxfamnovib.nl](http://www.oxfamnovib.nl))  
Oxfam Québec ([www.oxfam.qc.ca](http://www.oxfam.qc.ca))  
Oxfam South Africa ([www.oxfam.org.za](http://www.oxfam.org.za))

Observer:  
KEDV (Oxfam Turkey)



**MINISTRY OF  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
OF DENMARK**  
*Danida*



**OXFAM**