

South Sudan

General Education Sector Plan 2023-2027

2023



Contents

Figures	iv
Tables	v
Acronyms and Abbreviations.....	vii
Foreword	viii
Executive Summary	x
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Development context	1
1.1.1 Geography and administration	1
1.1.2 Politico-institutional context.....	1
1.1.3 Demographic context.....	2
1.1.4 Sociocultural context.....	3
1.1.5 Macroeconomic context	4
1.2 Country risk context.....	4
1.2.1 Main climate change stressors.....	5
1.2.2 Impacts of conflict and disasters on education.....	5
1.2.3 Capacity to mitigate the effects of disasters and conflicts on education	6
1.3 Rationale for the General Education Sector Plan and methodology in the preparation.....	6
2. Context and situation of the general education sector	8
2.1 Education policy framework.....	8
2.2 Structure of the general education system.....	8
2.2.1 Formal education	8
2.2.2 Non-formal education.....	9
2.2.3 Technical vocational education and training	10
2.3 Key issues and challenges in general education.....	10
2.3.1 Access to and equity in education.....	10
2.3.2 Quality of education and management of resources.....	13
2.3.3 Education financing and governance	14
2.3.4 Technical vocational education and training and linkages with the labour market	17
3. Policy issues, goals, objectives, and strategies	21
3.1 Access to and equity in education	22
3.2 Quality of education and management of resources	23
3.3 Education financing and governance	26

4.	Strategic interventions and activities	28
4.1	Access to and equity in education	28
4.1.1	Policy Goal 1: Increase access to equitable and safer education at all levels of general education, including TVET	28
4.1.2	Policy Goal 2: Increase retention of learners in primary and secondary cycles.....	36
4.2	Quality of education and management of resources	40
4.2.1	Policy Goal 3: Improve the quality and retention of the teaching workforce.....	40
4.2.2	Policy Goal 4: Enhance curriculum development and implementation, including strengthening the assessment system	44
4.2.3	Policy Goal 5: Streamline and strengthen the assessment system.....	46
4.2.4	Policy Goal 6: Improve the teaching and learning environment as well as the physical and psychological well-being of learners, teachers, and school staff	49
4.2.5	Policy Goal 7: Improve labour market relevance of TVET	52
4.3	Education financing and governance	55
4.3.1	Policy Goal 8: Increase domestic public financing to education	55
4.3.2	Policy Goal 9: Improve planning and effective coordination practices.....	62
4.3.3	Policy Goal 10: Strengthen and unify TVET system governance	69
5.	Cost of implementing GESP and financing	71
5.1	Future economic outlook	71
5.2	Costing of the GESP	72
5.3	Cost of implementing the GESP.....	73
5.4	Financing the implementation of the GESP.....	75
6.	GESP implementation, monitoring and evaluation framework.....	78
6.1	Implementation arrangement.....	78
6.1.1	Policy direction and safeguarding level.....	79
6.1.2	Technical and strategy level	80
6.1.3	Thematic clusters and technical working groups	81
6.1.4	State, administrative area, and county-level coordination for the implementation of the GESP	81
6.2	Implementation monitoring and evaluation.....	81
6.2.1	Performance monitoring.....	82
6.2.2	Evaluation of the GESP	83
6.2.3	Sources of data for monitoring and evaluation	84
6.2.4	Key performance indicators	84
References		88

Figures

Figure 1: Iterative process of education sector planning.....	7
Figure 2: Projected access rates by grade, 2021/22 versus 2027/28.....	75
Figure 3: General Education Coordination Framework	78

Tables

Table 1: Summary of the components of the formal education system in South Sudan	9
Table 2: Policy issue: Low and inequitable access to education	22
Table 3: Policy issue: Low retention of learners in general education.....	23
Table 4: Policy issue: Inadequate qualified teaching workforce	24
Table 5: Policy issue: Incomplete curriculum development and implementation.....	24
Table 6: Policy issue: Misaligned and fragmented assessment system	25
Table 7: Policy issue: Unconducive teaching and learning environment for learners, teachers, and school staff	25
Table 8: Policy issue: Low external efficiency of TVET in relation to the labour market	26
Table 9 Policy issue: Low and inequitable domestic financing to education	26
Table 10: Policy issue: Ineffective planning and coordination practices	27
Table 11: Policy issue: Weak and fragmented TVET system governance	27
Table 12: Strategy 1.1: Improve the enrolment capacity of pre-primary education across the country	28
Table 13: Strategy 1.2: Increase the supply of primary schools.....	29
Table 14: Strategy 1.3: Enhance the enrolment capacity of government secondary schools	30
Table 15: Strategy 1.4: Expand the offer of the AES	31
Table 16: Strategy 1.5: Expand access to TVET, especially in underserved areas.....	32
Table 17: Strategy 1.6: Improve access to equitable education	33
Table 18: Strategy 1.7: Expand mobilization activities at the community level to provide access to education for all school-aged children.....	34
Table 19: Strategy 1.8: Increase awareness on gender equity and inclusion of children disabilities in education	35
Table 20: Strategy 1.9: Intensify publicity and community engagement to improve the image of TVET.....	36
Table 21: Strategy 2.1: Ensure that prioritized government primary schools have full cycles	37
Table 22: Strategy 2.2: Strengthen the resilience of the system for continuous learning during crises	38
Table 23: Strategy 2.3: Reduce indirect cost of education for families	39
Table 24: Strategy 3.1: Enhance the framework and environment for management of teachers	40
Table 25: Strategy 3.2: Motivate the teaching workforce, focusing on teacher well-being, gender equity and risk-affected areas	41
Table 26: Strategy 3.3: Expand the preservice teacher and in-service training programme, including on disaster risk reduction and climate change issues	42
Table 27: Strategy 3.4: Recruit additional teachers, giving special considerations to qualified volunteers	43
Table 28: Strategy 4.1: Complete the development of curriculum materials such as missing subjects and inclusive education material.....	45
Table 29: Strategy 4.2: Ensure full implementation of the curriculum.....	46
Table 30: Strategy 4.3: Upgrade and strengthen the four national centres (NCDC, TDMS, NFLC, NEC).....	46
Table 31: Strategy 5.1: Set up a comprehensive institutional inspection and supervision system	47
Table 32: Strategy 5.2: Expand national examination and assessment systems	48

Table 33: Strategy 6.1: Promote policies that make the school environment conducive for learning.....	50
Table 34: Strategy 6.2: Provide support for minimum school requirements.....	50
Table 35: Strategy 6.3: Provide emotional and mental well-being support for learners and staff and promote co-curricular activities for peaceful coexistence.....	51
Table 36: Strategy 7.1: Increase the capacity of TVET trainers.....	53
Table 37: Strategy 7.2: Promote the development and roll-out of the training CBC in key employment-generating trades in cooperation with the private sector	53
Table 38: Strategy 7.3: Improve TVET linkages with the labour market.....	54
Table 39: Strategy 8.1: Strengthen cooperation between education and legislative structures of the government..	57
Table 40: Strategy 8.2: Review the distribution of funds for general education	58
Table 41: Strategy 8.3: Strengthen financial cooperation and coordination between MoGEI, MoFP, and Public Service.....	59
Table 42: Strategy 8.4: Strengthen financial accountability and public fiscal management systems.....	61
Table 43: Strategy 9.1: Enhance the capacity of the ministries in data analysis and planning including crisis sensitivity	62
Table 44: Strategy 9.2: Improve monitoring and evaluation of schools and sector policies and plans including disaster risk reduction.....	64
Table 45: Strategy 9.3: Enhance and strengthen national and sub-national research and statistical capacities	66
Table 46: Strategy 9.4: Enhance the capacity of the ministry(s) in communication and coordination	67
Table 47: Strategy 9.5: Strengthen internal governance and communication structures.....	68
Table 48: Strategy 10.1: Improve the policy and regulatory landscape of TVET including assessment and certification	69
Table 49: Macroeconomic outlook, 2021/22–2027/28	72
Table 50: Projected cost of GESP implementation by type, 2023/24–2027/28 (million SSP).....	74
Table 51: Summary of schools and classrooms to be constructed	74
Table 52: Cost of expanding existing programmes and strengthening the system, 2023–2027	75
Table 53: Estimated resources likely to be available for implementation of the plan (million SSP).....	76
Table 54: Indicative commitment from education development partners (Mn US\$)	76
Table 55: Estimated funding gap, 2023/24–2027/28	77
Table 56: KPIs for GESP (2023–2027).....	84

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AES	Alternative Education System
CBC	Competency-Based Curriculum
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EGMA	Early Grade Mathematics Assessment
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESA	Education Sector Analysis
ETMC	Education Transfer Monitoring Committee
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEAR	General Education Annual Review
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GESP	General Education Sector Plan
GPI	Gender Parity Index
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MIS	Management Information System
MoFP	Ministry of Finance and Planning
MoGEI	Ministry of General Education and Instruction
MoHADMD	Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs And Disaster Management
MoPS	Ministry of Public Service
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
NEC	National Examination Council
NEF	National Education Forum
NFLC	National Foreign Language Centre
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OOSC	Out-of-School Children
P	Primary, for example, Primary 8 is P8
R-ACASS	Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan
S	Secondary, for example, Secondary 1 is S1
SMoE	State Ministry of Education
SMoGEI	State Ministry of General Education and Instruction
SSP	South Sudanese Pound
SSSAMS	South Sudan Schools' Attendance Monitoring System
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
TBD	To be Determined
TDMS	Teachers Development Management Service
TTI	Teacher Training Institute
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar

Foreword

It is my great pleasure to approach 2024 by giving you the 2023-2027 strategic sector plan for the Ministry of General Education and Instruction Republic of South Sudan. Indeed, 2023 had been a hectic year for all of us because it turned out to be an endline year for evaluating our education sector wide performance. We had thoroughly evaluated 2017-2022 sector plan performances and accentuated the findings in the Education Sector Analysis (ESA) report. The findings were quite disturbing in almost all components vital for education service delivery.

Albeit our successes on increasing remunerations, bridging gender gaps as well as modest improvement on transparency and accountability yet the aforementioned gains are overshadowed by low performances on other critical areas. We could hardly achieve our intended targets in most of the three components: namely Access, Quality and Efficiency. Our enrollment for school aged children is around 50% i.e. extremely low, we have not achieved our target for reducing the number of pupils in a permanent classroom from estimated 173 to at least 50 i.e. ECD, AES and Primary classes and the number of pupils per a trained teachers from 73 to 42 the same ECD, AES & Primary schools. Furthermore, our budget allocation and execution remains the lowest by international standard. This means that gigantic task is yet ahead of us.

With these few synopses, my fellow education actors, the strategic Plan for education 2023-2027 was developed within this context and within a sphere where about 50 percent of our eligible children are out of schools and even those in school are enduring learning poverty. Yet our constitution stated very clearly that “Education is a right for every citizen and all levels of government shall provide access to education without discrimination” and that All levels of government shall promote education at all levels and shall ensure free and compulsory education at both primary and secondary levels; they shall also provide free illiteracy eradication programmes”.

My fellow partners in education, in retrospect and with respect to our zeal and aspiration when liberating this country, we would have done much better than where we stand today. However, in spite of that, I am humbly pleading to all of us to translate this exasperation into waging a war for battling illiteracy. We must fight harder in order to avail proper teaching and learning spaces as well as qualified teachers to all children mandated to progressively pursue their right to learning. Many costed and measurable interventions are clearly spelt in this strategy. It is therefore incumbent for us to work an extra mile with our government, our donors and our communities so that by the end of 2027, we will arise to announce and celebrate an outstanding performance of this five-year plan. I know that together we will succeed.

Allow me to conclude by expressing my sincere thanks and appreciation to those who laboriously worked in order to deliver this plan. Thanks to you all our Development Partners that have contributed their technical expertise to assist the Directorate of Planning in particular and Ministry technical team in general in this noble task for knitting together all the findings so that the plan is sharpened. I will also have to extend my warm gratitude to UNESCO Juba and IIEP Dakar for not only managing the financial and technical aspect of the Plan well but equally by embroidering the plan with the best international practices.

I also believed that this plan would not have transpired if not because of our able Undersecretary relentless effort to leverage.

Wishing you success in your endeavor and hoping to celebrate together in 2027.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, enclosed in a blue oval. The signature appears to read "Deng Acuil".

Hon. Awut Deng Acuil

Minister of General Education and Instruction

Executive Summary

The General Education Sector Plan (GESP) 2023–2027 has been developed through a consultative process involving the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI), state ministries of education (SMoEs), and local and international development partners. The plan covers the development of the country risk contexts; trends from the Education Sector Analysis (ESA); education policy issues, goals, and objectives; strategic interventions and activities; cost of implementing the GESP; financing; and the GESP implementation, monitoring and evaluation framework.

The current development context of South Sudan, comprising the geographic, sociodemographic, and macroeconomic environments, has been heavily influenced by its history, including years of conflict, elevated levels of inflation, and vulnerabilities to climate-related shocks. Despite the country's diverse ecology that includes grasslands, wetlands, and rainforests, the agricultural sector accounts for less than 15 per cent of the total gross domestic product (GDP).

Administratively, South Sudan functions under a decentralized governance system, with responsibilities divided between the national, state, and local levels after the adoption of the Interim Constitution of 2011. States exercise power over social welfare, including state pensions, state civil service, as well as preschool, primary and secondary education, while both national and state governments are responsible for tertiary education and scientific research. However, the political system of South Sudan is in transition and remains fragile due to the country's risks related to climate change shocks such as drought, flooding, and conflicts. This is further complicated by the weak capacity to mitigate the effects of disasters and conflicts, including on education.

The sociodemographic outlook shows that the population of South Sudan was projected to increase from 8.4 million in 2008 to 12.4 million by 2022. The population is under pressure from various migration patterns, including external migration, internal displacement, and the return of previously displaced populations. In 2018, 63 per cent of people aged 15 to 24 years were literate. Other challenges comprise early marriage, high poverty rates, limited access to sanitation services, severe food insecurity, and the need for humanitarian assistance for millions.

The South Sudanese economy benefits from petroleum reserves, which is reflected in the macroeconomic outlook. The GDP showed signs of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021 with additional growth in 2022 and 2023. The government is spending less on social services such as education and health, while public administration and infrastructure development is dominating intersectoral spending patterns. These challenges have had a significant impact on the education policy framework and general education.

The education system in South Sudan is guided by a series of laws and policy documents that have been adopted since its independence. The Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan 2011 is the highest law and policy framework, and guarantees every citizen the right to education that is compulsory and free at the primary level. The General Education Act 2012 defines the guiding principles and goals for the education system, and provides a general framework for its efficient functioning. The National Inclusive Education Policy 2020 defines strategic elements to guarantee access to education and establish

an enabling environment for all people. The South Sudan Development Strategy 2021–2024 identifies education as a key component of Cluster 3 on services (social development). The strategy prioritizes the following key interventions for education: (i) national capacity assessment and surveys; (ii) infrastructure and equipment; and (iii) teachers' education and training curricula.

The GESP identifies access to and equity in education as a key challenge in general education in South Sudan. Between 2015 and 2021, the total number of schools increased at all levels of formal education, reaching 5,784 in 2021. Of these, 73 per cent provide primary education, 18 per cent pre-primary education, and 9 per cent secondary education. However, the relative proportion of government schools has decreased across all levels during the same period, with the greatest decreases seen at the secondary level. Additionally, the gross enrolment rate of South Sudan is below average. In 2021, the overall primary retention rate was 22 per cent, while the dropout was reported at 47 per cent in pre-primary, 31 per cent in primary, and 38 per cent in secondary education. Notably, about 94 per cent of all children aged 3 to 5 years old are out of school. It is also noted that the South Sudanese skills development system is largely supply-driven rather than being based on the skills needs of the private sector.

Another key challenge is the quality of education and management of resources. Only three public teacher training institutes (TTIs) are currently operational, which is insufficient to meet the demand for teachers in general education. In addition to a short supply of learning materials across all levels of general education and alternative education systems, there is also an acute shortage of qualified teachers in general education. Further, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) centres do not provide job counselling and orientation services to students. This, coupled with the lack of dialogue and partnership with private sector actors, undermines the very objectives of skills training at all levels of governance. Other documented challenges in the TVET system include insufficient TVET trainer remuneration, poor systems of preservice and in-service training, poor infrastructure endowment of TVET centres, and insufficient focus on science, technology, engineering, and mathematic disciplines.

Finally, education financing and governance is acknowledged as another key challenge in education in South Sudan. Despite growing government allocations to education in recent years reaching 17 per cent of total government expenditure in 2021/22, education expenditure as a proportion of total government expenditure remains low, accounting for 5 per cent or less than 1 per cent of GDP. Almost all expenditure by MoGEI in recent years has been dedicated to recurrent spending with development expenditure representing only 7 per cent of total expenditure. Civil servants, including teachers and education administrators, are severely underpaid. Besides expenditure on salaries, the majority (58 per cent) of MoGEI recurrent expenditure was allocated to operating transfers and school feeding activities, such as feeding allowances (28 per cent). While primary education received the bulk (84 per cent of recurrent expenditure) of funding in 2021/22, TTIs and TVET received the smallest (less than 1 per cent proportion of expenditure). Despite the policy change in which SMOEs became the direct recipient of funds from MoGEI, accountability for these transfers is hampered by the weak capacity of financial systems. Additionally, transfers to states and counties are allocated according to the number of counties and schools, rather than the number of learners or areas of greatest need. Development partners contribute to education by providing off-budget financing for interventions such as the Girls' Education South Sudan

programme. However, the existence of many direct and indirect payments that are expected from parents of children at fee-free primary education is another key issue related to the challenge of education financing and governance. Specific to governance, out of the total 219 TVET centres mapped out in South Sudan, only 62 centres (28 per cent) were functional in 2021 with an overall constant decline in student enrolment.

The GESP 2023–2027 presents a set of policy priorities and interventions that address the issues and challenges identified through the ESA. The GESP identifies 10 policy goals with objectives that it aims to achieve across the three policy issues domains. Under the Access to and Equity in Education issue, the GESP aims to increase access to equitable and safe education at all levels of general education, including TVET, and to increase retention of learners in primary and secondary cycles. On the issue of Quality of Education and Management of Resources, the GESP aims to improve the quality and retention of the teaching workforce; enhance curriculum development and implementation, including strengthening the assessment system; streamline and strengthen the assessment system; improve the teaching and learning environment, as well as the physical and psychological well-being of learners, teachers, and school staff; and improve the labour market relevance of TVET. Finally, to address the issue of Education Financing and Governance, the GESP targets increased domestic public financing for education; improved planning and effective coordination practices; and strengthened and unified TVET system governance. These policy goals are to be achieved through various strategic interventions.

The GESP identifies specific strategic interventions it seeks to pursue in order to achieve its goals across the three education policy domains. In terms of the Access to and Equity in Education interventions, the GESP seeks to improve the enrolment capacity across all education levels; create awareness and mobilize communities about gender equity and inclusion of all children; and strengthen the resilience of the system for continuous learning during crises. In terms of Quality of Education and Management of Resources intervention, the GESP seeks to enhance the framework and environment for management of teachers. This includes recruiting additional teachers across all educational levels and developing capacity; completing the development of curriculum materials; upgrading and strengthening the four national centres (National Curriculum Development Centre, Teachers Development Management Service, National Foreign Language Centre, and National Examination Council), including national examination and assessment systems; and promoting policies that make the school environment conducive for learning and linking TVET with the labour market. Finally, in terms of Education Financing and Governance intervention, the GESP aims to strengthen financial cooperation and coordination among all education stakeholders, including public fiscal management systems.

The GESP also seeks to enhance the monitoring and evaluation capacity of MoGEI at national, state, and county levels, and improve the policy and regulatory landscape of TVET, including assessment and certification. The strategic interventions have been costed over a plan period of five years, beginning in 2023 and ending in 2027.

The cost of implementing the GESP is composed of two facets: the costs associated with the new activities and the costs of running and expanding the existing system. Considering both facets, GESP 2023–2027 is projected to cost around South Sudanese pounds (SSP) 701.1 billion over the five-year period. This

comprises SSP 505.4 billion in recurrent costs and SSP 195.7 billion in capital costs. To finance the GESP, there is an anticipated SSP 664.5 billion that is likely to be available to the education sector, including SSP 277.1 billion from the government and SSP 387.4 billion from development partners and donors. The expected funding gap is estimated to be SSP 36,639 billion.

Lastly, the GESP implementation framework is based on the revised General Education Coordination Framework, which aims to streamline education activities in the country along the GESP. The framework consists of three levels: (i) Policy Direction and Safeguarding, which is responsible for high-level policy development, backstopping, and monitoring; (ii) Technical and Strategy, which is responsible for implementation and accountability; and (iii) Clusters, which is responsible for specific implementation tasks under the three GESP programme areas. The implementation of the GESP will be monitored and evaluated through both continuous monitoring activities and periodic evaluations. The GESP identifies the data sources for all output and strategic outcome indicators.

1. Introduction

1.1 Development context

The current development context of South Sudan has been heavily influenced by its history, which includes years of conflict and elevated levels of inflation. Additionally, its geography makes it vulnerable to environmental shocks. Although the country achieved stability in terms of national-level conflict in 2018, sub-national conflict and the political legacies of previous violence continue to affect governance. South Sudan faces a multitude of demographic pressures arising from a fast-growing population, internal displacement, the influx of refugees, and the return of refugees from neighbouring countries. In terms of its economy, South Sudan has faced extreme levels of inflation and currency devaluation in recent years, stalling economic growth. The education system is subsequently affected by these contextual factors.

1.1.1 Geography and administration

South Sudan has a diverse ecology, which includes grasslands, wetlands, and rainforests with its climate characterized by a wet and dry season. This diversity creates favourable conditions for agricultural and animal rearing practices with 95 per cent of the South Sudanese population relying on farming, herding, or fishing as their main sources of income (OCHA, 2022d). Much of this sector remains subsistence-based, meaning that, despite the substantial proportion of the population engaged in agriculture, the sector accounts for less than 15 per cent of the total gross domestic product (GDP) (UNDP, 2021).

Climate change is threatening the way of life and main source of income for many rural South Sudanese people. According to the Global Climate Risk Index (Eckstein, 2021), South Sudan was one of the 10 countries globally most affected by climate change in 2019. These negative effects have intensified in recent years, with flooding reportedly affecting over 1 million people in 36 counties across the country in 2022 (OCHA, 2022d). Flooding has compounded an already dire humanitarian situation in the country, waterlogging large areas of arable land, washing away crops, contaminating water sources, and forcing hundreds of thousands of people to migrate (UNICEF, 2021a). Flooding is considered a driver of sub-national conflict as pastoralists and cattle herders are left to compete for the increasingly smaller tracts of usable land (UNICEF, 2021a).

1.1.2 Politico-institutional context

South Sudan functions under a decentralized governance system, with responsibilities divided between the national, state, and local levels. This system was adopted in the Interim Constitution of 2011 with the aim of accommodating the ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious, and racial diversity of the South Sudanese people, promoting political pluralism and maintaining peace (South Sudan, 2011). The key responsibilities of the central government include the maintenance of peace and security, reconstruction and development, and the promotion of good governance. The central government exercises power over critical aspects that include national defence and security, foreign affairs, and the judiciary (South Sudan, 2011). States, on the other hand, exercise power over social welfare, including administering state pensions, state civil service, and preschool, primary and secondary education (South Sudan, 2011). Both

national and state governments are responsible for tertiary education and scientific research (South Sudan, 2011).

After more than 10 years since gaining independence, the country has experienced two prolonged periods of violence, with the most recent conflict occurring from 2016 to 2018, resulting in an estimated 380,000 deaths (OCHA, 2020). The conflict officially ended in 2018 with the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ACASS). The implementation thereof began in 2020 with the return to the 10-state model, including the appointment of state governors. This was followed by the establishment of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (Human Rights Watch, 2022). Another major milestone in R-ACASS implementation was achieved in 2022 when the first batch of former rebel rights was integrated into the unified national command. Despite this progress, it was agreed in August 2022 that it would be impossible to fully implement the deal by the February 2023 deadline. The President, along with four other political groups, agreed to extend the agreement by 24 months (International Crisis Group, 2022). The extension included a detailed implementation road map for the two-year period, culminating in the organization of the country's first elections, which are scheduled to take place in 2024 (United Nations Security Council, 2023).

Although the R-ACASS has ended much national conflict, there is still political unrest, intercommunal conflict, and localized conflict that continue to fuel violence at the sub-national level. In 2022, these types of violence intensified, leading to more than 300,000 people being displaced. More than 80 per cent of civilian deaths were attributed to sub-national violence and the activities of community-based militias in the same year. Sub-national conflict takes various forms, including armed clashes, killings, sexual violence, abductions, the destruction of property, and cattle raiding (OCHA, 2021d). Multiple and deeply interconnected drivers fuel this conflict, including environmental shocks such as flooding that is seen, among other impacts, to drive forced migration. This movement of populations can change the ethnic composition of areas, leading to localized inter-ethnic conflict (OHCHR, 2022).

South Sudan is still recovering from a long period of violence and conflict. As a result, the political system is in transition and remains fragile. The current number of states was only established in 2020, and governors were appointed in the same year. As a result, state-level administrative functions are still developing and institution-building is ongoing. County- and payam-level¹ structures, in particular, have inadequate resources and limited administrative capacity and skilled personnel. This makes it difficult for decisions made at the central level to be implemented at the local level (BTI, 2022). However, the peace established in 2018 and the associated demarcation of internal boundaries are already having a positive effect on providing the stability necessary to strengthen the decentralized administrative structure (BTI, 2022).

1.1.3 Demographic context

In 2008, the population of South Sudan was 8.4 million. By 2022, the population was projected to increase to 12.4 million, which is an increase of almost 6 million inhabitants or 69 per cent in 14 years. The

¹ Administrative division below the county level.

population growth rate averaged 2.9 per cent between 2015 and 2023. The overall population growth has been paralleled by the growth in the school-age population, which has grown by over 1 million between 2016 and 2022. In 2022, nearly half (49 per cent) of the population was under the age of 14, with a median age of 18 years. The youth of the country is further reflected in its dependency ratio of over 100 per cent, indicating the important levels of pressure such a young population exerts on the resources produced by the working population. This demographic pressure indicates the need for the education system to expand to meet the needs of its growing young population.

The South Sudanese population is facing pressure from various patterns of migration, including external migration, internal displacement, and the return of previously displaced populations. New internal displacements have intensified in recent years, with over 550,000 of the 2 million internally displaced persons in the past four years having been displaced in 2021 alone (OCHA, 2021). Of the total projected population of 12.4 million in 2022, 2.2 million or 18 per cent were internally displaced, of which over 537,000 lived in displacement sites (OCHA, 2022e). Since 2018, over 600,000 refugees have returned from abroad, while 2.3 million continue to reside in neighbouring countries (OCHA, 2022e). Additionally, South Sudan is hosting more than 337,000 refugees, mostly from the Republic of Sudan (OCHA, 2022e).

1.1.4 Sociocultural context

In 2016, about 43 per cent of the population of South Sudan aged 15 years and above were literate. This percentage increased to 63 per cent among those aged 15 to 24 years (World Bank, 2018). Literacy rates were higher among urban and male populations, with the highest rate of 82 per cent in urban areas among individuals aged 15 to 24 years. The greatest difference between those aged 15 years and older and those in the 15–24 years age group is observed among females at 30 per cent, indicating that young women have significantly more opportunities to access education than their predecessors.

Early marriage is widespread in the country. As of 2010, 52 per cent of South Sudanese girls aged between 15 and 18 years were married, with some marrying as young as 12 (Ministry of Health, 2010). This contributes to the high adolescent birth rate observed in the country, with one-third of women aged 15–19 years in 2018 already having begun childbearing (WHO, 2019). The high rates of early marriage and childbearing contribute to girls dropping out of school, which in turn contributes to overall lower levels of education as reflected in the literacy rates.

South Sudan is in the midst of a humanitarian crisis. In 2022, an estimated 8.9 million people out of a population of 12.4 million needed humanitarian assistance (OCHA, 2022e). Living conditions have deteriorated, with the proportion of the population living in poverty increasing from 51 per cent in 2009 to 82 per cent in 2017. Rural households have a poverty rate of 85 per cent, which is higher than the 65 per cent for urban households. Rates among internally displaced persons are even higher at 91 per cent. Elevated levels of poverty are reflected in low levels of access to key infrastructure at the household level. In 2016, 67 per cent of the population was reported to have access to improved water sources, ranging from 64 per cent in rural areas to 76 per cent in urban areas. Access to sanitation facilities is more limited, with only 7 per cent of those in the poorest wealth quintile and 12 per cent of those living in rural areas having access to these facilities. Furthermore, 61 per cent of the population practices open defecation,

reaching 88 per cent among the poorest wealth quintiles, which increases exposure to risks of communicable diseases.

Food insecurity is another dimension of the humanitarian context. Between October and November 2022, 6.6 million people faced severe food insecurity due to external pressures, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the crisis in Ukraine, which increased the cost of staple cereals. Additionally, internal violence has displaced populations from agricultural lands and limited consistent access to food sources. In recent years, flooding has decreased the total cereal production in the country, limiting the supply of food internally. High food insecurity has contributed to high levels of malnutrition, with an estimated 1.4 million children under the age of 5 expected to suffer from malnutrition between July 2022 and June 2023 (IPC, 2022).

1.1.5 Macroeconomic context

The South Sudanese economy benefits from having one of the largest reserves of petroleum in sub-Saharan Africa. At the same time, this increases economic vulnerability, as it renders South Sudan heavily dependent on the international price of oil. In recent years, the extremes of this vulnerability were seen with the drop in oil prices during the COVID-19 pandemic leading to a contraction of the country's economy. However, the 2022 war in Ukraine and the associated increase in the price of oil is expected to have positive effects on economic recovery. The GDP in 2021 showed signs of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic with further growth in 2022 and 2023.

Total government expenditure reached over South Sudanese pounds (SSP) 700 billion in 2021/22, a 50 per cent increase compared to the previous year. Most of the expenditure (62 per cent) was allocated to goods and services, followed by 22 per cent for salaries, and 11 per cent for transfers and grants. In addition to regular expenditure, the Government of South Sudan had mandatory expenditures related to oil extraction, including transfers to oil-producing states, communities, and the nationally owned oil company. As part of the Petroleum Revenue Management Act and the Transitional Financing Agreement signed with Sudan in 2012, South Sudan is committed to pay part of its oil revenues to the Government of Sudan. These mandatory transfers totalled more than 47 per cent of gross oil revenue in 2021/22. However, the mandatory lump-sum payment to Sudan expired in the 2021/22 fiscal year, opening a significant fiscal space (World Bank, 2022) that could be channelled to other social services. In terms of intersectoral spending, public administration and infrastructure development dominated spending patterns, with the government spending less on social services such as education and health. Health represented less than 1 per cent of expenditure in 2021/22, and spending on the education sector has stagnated between 5 per cent and 6 per cent of total expenditure in the last three fiscal years.

1.2 Country risk context

South Sudan is frequently affected by conflict and disasters. This situation is expected to worsen as extreme weather events are becoming the norm rather than the exception (OCHA, 2022a). According to the Global Climate Risk Index (Eckstein, 2021), South Sudan was one of the 10 countries in the world most affected by the impacts of extreme weather events in 2019. Without action, existing vulnerabilities could be exacerbated and the country's coping capacities weakened. Children and youth in South Sudan are

particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Extreme weather events threaten not only their education but also their health and protection (UNICEF, 2021b).

1.2.1 Main climate change stressors

South Sudan is expected to experience increased temperature, incidences of drought, unpredictability of seasonal rains, and intensity of rainfall events (USAID, 2016; 2019). Heavy flooding has also been predicted and South Sudan has experienced more frequent and intense flooding in the last four years. The Unity, Jonglei, and Upper Nile states are frequently and severely affected by flooding. In 2021, 80 per cent of the total number of people affected by floods in South Sudan lived in these states (OCHA, 2021). Flooding has compounded an already dire humanitarian situation in the country, waterlogging large areas of arable land, washing away crops, contaminating water sources, and forcing hundreds of thousands of people to migrate (UNICEF, 2021a). Furthermore, floods have led to food insecurity and conflict. According to the International Crisis Group (2023, para. 20), 'rising waters have sent pastoralists fleeing south, where their presence has increased tensions and contributed to *violence in the Equatoria region*'.

As for drought, weather conditions in recent years in the Western and Central Equatoria states have been the driest on record since 1981, especially in the counties located on the border between these two states. This situation is likely to have a negative impact on crop production and, therefore, on food security (WFP, 2022).

1.2.2 Impacts of conflict and disasters on education

Several schools in South Sudan are located in areas prone to conflict, drought, and floods, with weak infrastructure and a lack of disaster risk reduction measures and contingency plans. This often leads to school closures for days or months, negatively affecting children's learning. The unprecedented floods of the last four years have severely damaged school infrastructure, with 893 schools affected by floods in 2022, 'a 20% increase of the number of schools affected by flooding in 2021, disrupting the education of some 381,495 children' (OCHA, 2022d, p. 21). Even if schools are not destroyed or damaged, children may not be able to attend because schools are occupied by people who have been forced to leave their homes (OCHA, 2022e). In 2021, 17 schools were used as temporary shelters (OCHA, 2022c).

While conflicts and disasters have the potential to affect children's education indirectly, measuring these effects is more complex and less developed. South Sudan relies heavily on rain-fed agriculture. This, coupled with high levels of poverty and food insecurity and a lack of effective climate change adaptation strategies and risk reduction measures, makes the country vulnerable to climate-related environmental changes. As families' main source of income is significantly affected, long-term investments such as those made in education may be cut first (PASEC, 2017). In the short term, this situation will push affected families to look for other sources of income, including by migrating. Food insecurity has also led South Sudanese households to adopt other negative coping mechanisms such as child marriage, child labour, and recruitment into armed groups or gangs, which affect school enrolment and attendance (OCHA, 2022d).

1.2.3 Capacity to mitigate the effects of disasters and conflicts on education

Disaster risk management efforts in South Sudan have been focused on disaster response and early recovery, but the emergency response has been minimal and insufficient compared to the needs (OCHA, 2022b). If long-term responses that address the root causes of the education system's vulnerability to climate change are not implemented, these needs are expected to increase. In terms of data, much of the information available in South Sudan focuses on response and recovery and less on prevention preparedness and mitigation, which increases the barriers to implementing effective crisis-sensitive educational planning.

The lack of interministerial coordination is further increasing the barriers to implementing effective disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation strategies. There is a lack of coordination between the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI), the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, and the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management (MoHADM). The Ministry of Environment and Forestry is the main agency responsible for addressing the challenges of climate change in the medium and long term. Although early warning systems are in place to identify a hazard three months in advance, and regular meetings are held to address the impacts of these identified hazards, MoGEI is not part of these discussions, among other factors, because there is no focal person or unit in MoGEI responsible for disaster risk reduction and climate change.

Regarding individual capacities, education has the power to encourage necessary changes in attitudes, practices, and behaviours at institutional, community, and individual levels. Additionally, education has the potential to develop values and enable actions to transition society towards a sustainable future. However, climate change education is only included in the primary school curriculum and there is a lack of in-service and preservice training as well as teaching materials on disaster risk reduction and climate change issues.

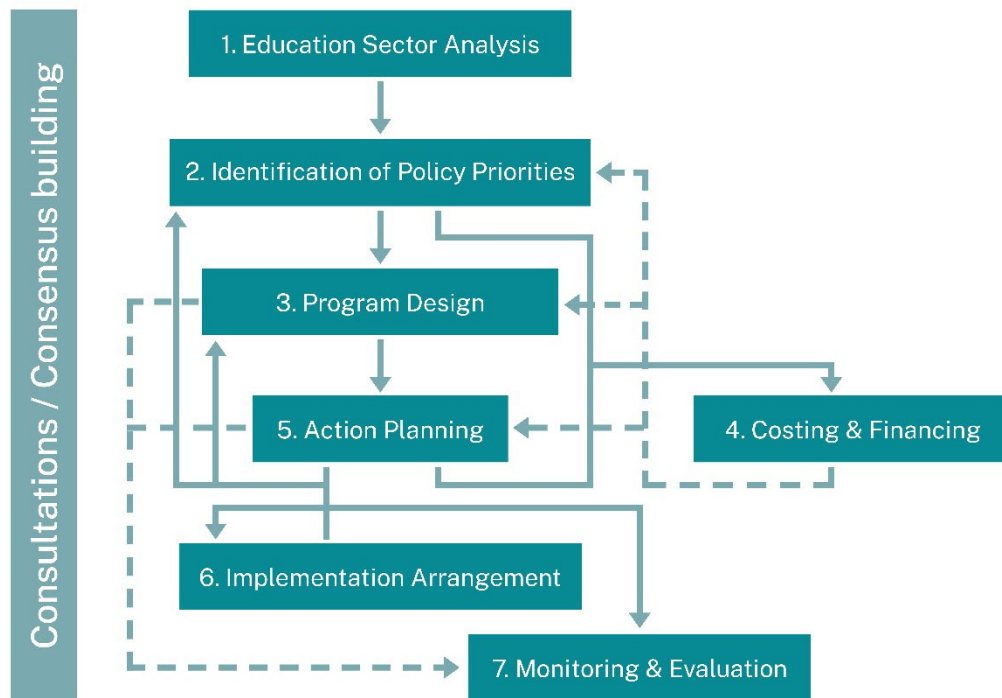
1.3 Rationale for the General Education Sector Plan and methodology in the preparation

The General Education Sector Plan (GESP) for 2023–2027 presents a set of policy priorities and associated interventions to address the issues and challenges identified in the Education Sector Analysis (ESA) (International Institute for Educational Planning, 2023). These interventions aim to consolidate the little gains the sector has made to date and set the stage for future transformation. The plan proposes interventions that are based on the country's development and risk context, as well as the sector's urgent needs to expand to accommodate the millions of children who are out of school. Having reflected on the developmental challenges in South Sudan, the plan offers an opportunity for all stakeholders, including government officials at both central and decentralized levels, as well as development partners outside government, to work together to implement the identified priorities.

This plan was developed through the consultative process as outlined in *Figure 1*, with participation from MoGEI, state ministries of education (SMoEs), as well as local and international development partners. The policy priorities, objectives, strategies, and interventions identified during the consultative process were found to be the most appropriate response to the issues and challenges established during the

general ESA. The interventions underwent a series of reviews and validation with the officials responsible for implementation. The plan also received support from various stakeholders in general education, including local and international development partners. Some partners were consistently represented on the national technical team.

Figure 1: Iterative process of education sector planning



2. Context and situation of the general education sector

2.1 Education policy framework

The education system in South Sudan is guided by a series of laws and policy documents that have been adopted since the country gained independence. Of these, the Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan 2011 is the most important. It states that education is a right of every citizen, and that primary education is compulsory and free of charge. The Constitution requires that all levels of government promote education without discrimination based on religion, ethnicity, gender, disability, or any other individual characteristic (South Sudan, 2011).

The General Education Act 2012 defines the guiding principles and goals for the education system, and provides the general framework for its efficient functioning. The act incorporates 12 guiding principles, such as providing free and compulsory primary education to all citizens without discrimination; promoting gender equity throughout its various levels of education; offering alternative ways of learning; and fostering development through integration, peace, self-reliance, patriotism, and respect for other cultures (National Legislative Assembly, 2012). On more cross-cutting issues, the National Inclusive Education Policy 2020 defines strategic elements for guaranteeing access to education and creating an enabling environment for *all* people.

The policy framework in the country is outlined in the national development strategies and policies. For instance, in the South Sudan Development Strategy 2021–2024, education is a key component of Cluster 3 on services (social development). The goal of this cluster is to ‘increase support to the social sector for human capital development and protect the vulnerable population, to leave no one behind’ (National Legislative Assembly, 2012). The National Development Strategy for 2021–2024 prioritizes the following key interventions for education: (i) national capacity assessment and surveys; (ii) infrastructure and equipment; and (iii) teachers’ education and training curricula.

2.2 Structure of the general education system

The general education system comprises formal and non-formal education. Each sector is further divided into various levels of education or programmes, which address different target groups and educational challenges. All levels share the common objective of fulfilling the commitment of providing access to education and instruction to the eligible population. MoGEI and SMoE are responsible for delivering and managing the education system.

2.2.1 Formal education

The formal education system functions under a two–eight–four system: two years of pre-primary education, eight years of primary education, and four years of secondary education. Upon completion, learners are expected to have knowledge and a series of skills that allow them to continue to higher education and, most importantly, access opportunities for their development.

The first step on the ladder is preschool or pre-primary education, whose objective is to provide instruction to develop children’s school readiness for primary education. According to the Constitution and the

General Education Act 2012, pre-primary education targets children aged 3 to 5 years for a total of two years. The Education Census included three levels of learning in past data-collection processes: baby class, middle class, and top class. After completing pre-primary education, children are expected to progress to primary education. However, finishing preschool is not a requirement for enrolling in primary school.

Primary education constitutes the basic cycle of formal education and, according to the General Education Act 2012, covers eight years from Primary 1 to Primary 8 (P1–P8), targeting children aged 6 to 13. By the end of the primary cycle, learners write the P8 Leaving Examination, which allows them to earn the necessary certificate to enrol in secondary education level.

Secondary education, which is the final level of formal education in general education, is aimed at learners aged 14 to 17 years old. Formal secondary education is delivered in two types of institution: academic schools and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) centres. Upon completing the four years of secondary instruction from Secondary 1 to Secondary 4 (S1–S4), learners sit the Unified South Sudan Secondary School Certificate examination, which allows them to proceed to post-secondary education.

Table 1: Summary of the components of the formal education system in South Sudan

Level of Education	Target Population	Years of Instruction	Condition for Completion
Preschool (pre-primary, early childhood education [ECE], and others)	Population aged 3 to 5	Two	–
Primary education	Population aged 6 to 13	Eight	P8 Leaving Certificate examination
Secondary education	Population aged 14 to 17	Four	Unified South Sudan Secondary School Certificate examination

Source: Author's elaboration from the General Education Act 2021 and the Constitution 2011.

2.2.2 Non-formal education

The alternative education system (AES) provides flexible education programmes to various population groups who cannot access the formal education system because of conflict, natural hazards, lack of formal schools, poverty, and other constraints. This is known as non-formal education. AES addresses the diverse challenges of providing education to out-of-school children (OOSC) and youth, overaged children in primary schools, and illiterate adults. Additionally, AES provides opportunities for pastoralist communities (National Legislative Assembly, 2012). According to MoGEI, programmes offered through this system do not require tuition fees, learning materials are provided free of cost to learners, and learners are not required to wear uniforms.

After the formalization of AES in 2002, the range of programmes offered was expanded to provide multiple pathways towards creating a literate and educated society. According to the Directorate of the AES, the following five streams are currently offered, targeting the school-aged population, illiterate adults, pastoralist communities, and current teachers:

- a) **Accelerated Learning Programme:** Condenses eight years of formal primary education into four years. It targets children and youths aged 12 to 18 years who either dropped out from lower primary classes or never accessed education, as well as youths aged 18 to 30 who were part of the armed forces.
- b) **Community-Based Girls Schools Programme:** Targets girls aged 8 to 12 in villages without schools. Additionally, boys are also able to access community-based girls school centres, but their proportion should not exceed 40 per cent of the total enrolment. The programme condenses the first four years of formal primary education into three years.
- c) **Basic Adult Literacy Programme:** Targets the population aged 18 and above who lack opportunities for literacy and numeracy because of conflict and socioeconomic barriers. Over the course of four years, learners develop literacy skills and learn basic livelihood activities.
- d) **Pastoralist Education Programme:** Targets primary-age children in pastoralist communities and provides mobile primary education. In this programme, teachers travel with the community.
- e) **Intensive English Course:** Addresses the needs of the population who lack proficiency in the English language. The target group includes youths and adults who have not had the opportunity to learn English, as well as teachers and government officials who wish to learn or enhance their knowledge of the language. This programme comprises three short courses that aim to enhance English skills, opening opportunities for beneficiaries to integrate into society.

2.2.3 Technical vocational education and training

Currently, TVET is delivered through four modes: formal, non-formal, informal, and the recently established mobile TVET for pastoral communities. Formal TVET is school-based and managed by MoGEI, which oversees six government-owned TVET secondary schools currently operational in the country. Non-formal TVET takes place outside the formal education system, has a shorter duration than formal TVET, and is not certified. Typically, it involves skills development such as internships, short-term skills training by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), on-the-job training in enterprises, and other forms of work-based, hands-on learning with or without classroom-based components. Informal TVET involves on-the-job skills acquisition through formal sector employment or traditional apprenticeship schemes in the informal sector of the economy. It targets primary school dropouts or those who cannot afford secondary school fees. It lacks a curriculum, certification system, and mechanism to recognize prior learning experiences.

2.3 Key issues and challenges in general education

2.3.1 Access to and equity in education

In a context characterized by conflict, natural disasters, a high and growing school-age population, and socioeconomic vulnerability, the education system in South Sudan faces substantial challenges in providing access to education. Challenges include school closures due to a history of conflict and ongoing natural hazards, a large out-of-school population, and overall low levels of enrolment, particularly at the secondary level.

2.3.1.1 Enrolment and system capacity

From 2015 to 2021, the total number of schools increased at all levels of formal education. In 2021, there were 5,784 schools, with 73 per cent providing primary education, 18 per cent providing pre-primary education, and 9 per cent providing secondary education. The largest expansion was observed at the secondary level, with an accumulated growth of 72 per cent in this period, compared to the lowest in pre-primary, which grew by 9 per cent in the same period. In the non-formal system, the number of AES centres decreased by one-third from 1,156 in 2015 to 397 in 2021. Many schools remain closed or non-operational across the country. According to the 2021 Education Census, an average of 12 per cent of pre-primary, 19 per cent of primary, 17 per cent of secondary schools, and 24 per cent of AES centres are closed. Conflict and disasters were the main reasons for the closure of over 30 per cent of non-operational schools in 2021, and were associated with other reasons identified, such as ‘no learners’ and ‘no teachers’.

Public institutions are the main form of institutional ownership at all levels of formal education with the enrolments therein representing 63 per cent of primary schools, 35 per cent of secondary schools, and 28 per cent of pre-primary schools. Community schools are the largest provider of non-public education in pre-primary and primary, representing 26 per cent and 22 per cent of all schools, respectively, while private schools dominate secondary education, representing 26 per cent of all schools. Public centres represented 58 per cent of all alternative education centres, with the Accelerated Learning Programme dominating the alternative offer programme being taught in 85 per cent of all centres in 2021. Despite the dominance of public provision, the relative weight of government schools is seen to have decreased across all levels between 2015 and 2021, with the great decreases seen at the secondary level wherein public schools represented 51 per cent of all schools in 2015, compared to 35 per cent in 2021.

Total enrolment in formal education reached over 2.2 million in 2021, of which 86 per cent of learners were in primary education, 7.7 per cent in pre-primary, and 6.7 per cent in secondary. Excluding the Greater Upper Nile states and administrative areas, secondary education had the largest gains in enrolment, with total enrolment doubling from 2015 to 2021. Increases in pre-primary and primary enrolment were both significant, growing by 39 per cent and 42 per cent, respectively, over the same period.

Despite the growth in the number of schools and enrolment levels, enrolment rates demonstrate that expansion has not kept abreast of population growth. The gross enrolment rates (GERs) for all sub-sectors grew only slightly from 2015 to 2021, increasing from 10 per cent to 12 per cent in pre-primary education, 57 per cent to 59 per cent in primary education, and 7 per cent to 12 per cent in secondary education. Furthermore, when comparing these GERs to other medium-intensity conflict countries according to the World Bank’s classification in 2021, the South Sudan GER is below average and has the second lowest GER for primary and secondary education. In non-formal education, decreases in the total number of AES schools caused enrolment to decline, with total enrolment in 2021 at 40 per cent lower than in 2015.

States most affected by conflict and natural disasters, as measured in the Disaster Fragility Index, have lower levels of enrolment than lesser-affected states. For example, the Jonglei and Unity states had the two lowest GERs in secondary education at 3 per cent, while also being rated high on the Disaster Fragility

Index. Furthermore, the states with the lowest GERs, namely Unity, Jonglei, and Greater Upper Nile, have the largest proportion of closed schools. Gender disparities in educational access are also observed, with the difference being most acute in secondary, where the GER was observed at 13 per cent for males and 10 per cent for females. This represents a difference of 10 per cent and a gender parity index (GPI) of 0.82. Gender disparities are also present in the AES system, although to a lesser extent than in the formal system.

2.3.1.2 Retention and dropout

Universal access to primary education remains a challenge for South Sudan with access to P1 observed at 85 per cent in 2021. In addition, primary retention is low with access dropping to 59 per cent in P4 and 19 per cent in P8. The overall primary retention rate stood at 22 per cent in 2021, meaning that less than a quarter of the learners who start primary education finish the cycle. The transition from primary to secondary was observed at 85 per cent and secondary completion at 54 per cent. This suggests that the greatest concern in terms of retention and dropout is at the primary level, with the highest levels of attrition observed intra- rather than intercycle. Gender inequities are observed in retention and dropout patterns, with the primary intake rate for girls 12 percentage points less than boys. This trend continues until P5 where female access rates surpass males, thereby shifting the trend. It is possible that this change is related to the implementation of cash transfers to girls under the Girls' Education South Sudan programme, which begin in P5.

When comparing the trends for the years 2015 to 2021, access to P1 decreased by 11 percentage points since 2015, depicting a deterioration in access to the first year of primary. However, the 2021 profile depicts better retention of learners between grades, with completion rates in both primary and secondary improving. This suggests that more learners are accessing the first years of primary, with access to P6 seen to increase from 31 per cent in 2015 to 50 per cent in 2021, despite the decrease in the initial access rate to P1. This suggests that while retention in the first years of primary has been improved, work remains to be done in ensuring that all learners have access to primary education, and that they are able to complete this cycle.

Repetition is relatively low with an average share of 3 per cent repeaters in primary and 1 per cent in secondary. Repetition is observed to be higher for females in both levels. Repetition is seen to decrease throughout the primary cycle, beginning at 4 per cent in P1 and decreasing to 2 per cent in P8. The reverse trend is observed in secondary where the share of repeaters is seen to rise slightly within the cycle.

The inability to pay fees was the most cited reason for dropping out of school, representing 47 per cent, 31 per cent, and 38 per cent of dropouts in pre-primary, primary, and secondary education, respectively. This is despite the government's commitment to providing fee-free education, which is further evidence of the continued practice of fee-charging in school, whether for direct costs such as tuition or indirect costs such as transportation or uniforms. The second most reported reason was the long distance to schools, cited by 13 per cent of the dropout cases in pre-primary, 16 per cent in primary, and 5 per cent in secondary. Early marriage was cited by 13 per cent of girls in secondary as the reason for dropping out of school and pregnancy by 11 per cent of girls in the same level secondary. When considering reasons for

female dropout, 40 per cent of girls who dropped out in secondary cited early pregnancy or marriage as the reason.

A child in South Sudan is expected to receive an average of 4.9 years of education, which is below the ideal 12 years of schooling from primary to secondary. There are observable differences between gender and state. As observed in enrolment, the states with the lowest school life expectancy have the highest exposure and vulnerability to hazards and socioeconomic disadvantage and the lowest system capacity. In terms of gender, males are expected to receive 5.0 years of education compared to 4.6 for females. However, these differences are relatively more profound in the Jonglei and Lakes states, with the school life expectancy for girls in Jonglei at 2.2 years.

2.3.1.3 Out-of-school children

Approximately 1.3 million children of pre-primary school age are not in pre-primary or primary school. This represents 94 per cent of all children from 3 to 5 years old. Additionally, over 2 million of children aged 6–13 are out of school. When combined with over half a million OOSC aged 14–17, this raises a total of 2.55 million OOSC, representing 59 per cent of the population aged 6–17. About 53 per cent of the OOSC are in Jonglei, Eastern Equatoria, and Upper Nile. Furthermore, the largest exclusions in primary are in Eastern Equatoria, Unity, and Jonglei, where 83 per cent, 82 per cent, and 81 per cent of 6–13-year-old children are out of school, respectively. Finally, the 2020 Report on National OOSC Catchment Mapping in South Sudan reported that orphaned children constitute the largest number of OOSC, followed by girls facing child and early marriages. Children in pastoralist communities in South Sudan also face challenges in accessing educational opportunities with MoGEI estimates putting the out-of-school population among pastoralist communities at 56 per cent in 2020.

2.3.2 Quality of education and management of resources

A child born in South Sudan today is only 31 per cent as productive in adulthood, according to the Human Capital Index whose three base indicators are drawn from education. Out of a possible 12 years of education, the average schooling years in the country is less than five years, which is reduced to less than three years when considering the amount of learning taking place during this period. The low Human Capital Index is due to weak factors affecting learning, including the level of preparedness of learners, availability and appropriateness of school inputs, the qualification and motivation of teachers, and the organization of school resources.

2.3.2.1 Availability of curriculum for formal and non-formal education

The quality of education in South Sudan is guided by the General Education Law, periodic education sector plans, the competence-based curriculum framework, and a host of operational tools – all of which aim to restore peace in the country through education. The government remains committed to ensuring that the fulfilment of the fundamental right to education for the people of South Sudan remains supreme. The curriculum framework also responds to the independence vision of influencing socioeconomic development in the country and puts the identity of the citizens at its core.

2.3.2.2 Capacity and qualification of teachers

Despite the positive intentions to drive quality education in the country, the first challenge is the limited capacity of the sector to train teachers. The capacity of teacher training institutes (TTIs) is insufficient to meet the need for teachers in general education. There are only three operational public TTIs, and most states and administrative areas do not have any. The operational TTIs enrolled around 1,160 teachers and teacher trainees. The majority of enrolments were for in-service programmes, which are good for refresher training but not adequate for the teacher shortage that is prevalent in the country. Moreover, teacher trainees face several challenges before they can qualify for teaching, including limited government input in financing teacher training, a high rate of dropout from preservice training observed due to insecurity, and long distances to TTIs.

There is an acute shortage of qualified teachers in general education, which is considered to have a negative effect on the quality of instruction in classrooms. Against national teaching practice entry requirements, more than 80 per cent of teachers in pre-primary, 70 per cent in primary, less than half of teachers in secondary, and nearly 75 per cent in alternative education meet the requirements. Moreover, only 11 per cent of teachers in ECE, 8 per cent in primary, and 10 per cent in the AES have short-cycle tertiary education training.

In addition to the lack of qualified teachers, the general education system is suffering from an acute shortage of teachers. This shortage is evident from the high pupil/teacher ratios, averaging 90:1 in ECE, 93:1 in primary, 25:1 in secondary, and 69:1 in AES. To address this challenge, the system has had to turn to volunteer teachers. Up to one-third of teachers in general education are volunteers. There is also a shortage of inspectors, which means that the largely unqualified teachers have difficulty getting external support to improve their teaching.

2.3.2.3 Resources supporting learning

Apart from teachers, learning materials are in short supply, which compounds the learning challenges in general education with learning taking place in crowded classrooms. According to the 2021 Annual School Census, the pupil/textbook ratio in primary is 8:1 in English and mathematics, and 9:1 in science and social studies, which are both significantly above the 1:1 standard recommended by the policy. In secondary, there are better pupil/textbook ratios than in primary schools. There are 80 learners per teacher in public pre-primary schools, 126 in public primary, 45 in public secondary, and 55 in public AES, which makes classrooms difficult to manage and compromises instruction. In addition, one-third of schools do not have access to water, and only a few schools have access to a source of energy (specifically electricity).

2.3.3 Education financing and governance

Governmental commitments to financing education in South Sudan have grown in recent years. However, with the ultimate responsibility for the implementation of education falling on decentralized structures, channelling funding to the school level remains a challenge.

2.3.3.1 Public spending on education

Government allocations to education have grown in recent years, reaching 17 per cent of total government expenditure in 2021/22. However, low levels of budget execution are observed with less than half the allocated education budget expended in the past four fiscal years. As a result, education expenditure as a proportion of total government expenditure accounted for 5 per cent in 2021/22 or less than 1 per cent of GDP, with both figures well below internationally recommended standards of 15–20 per cent and 2–4 per cent, respectively. When compared to other countries similarly affected by conflict, South Sudan has the second lowest levels of education expenditure both in terms of GDP and total government expenditure. Furthermore, of the limited expenditures reaching the education sector, more than half (62 per cent) was expended in the Ministry of Higher Education and Science, with general education (composed of MoGEI and the National Examination Council [NEC]) only receiving 38 per cent.

Over the past seven fiscal years, total expenditure by MoGEI has maintained a steady upward trend in current prices. Despite this positive trend, elevated inflation levels have led to an overall decrease in education expenditure as reflected in constant prices. Education expenditure has been unable to keep up with inflation, particularly the extremely important levels observed from 2015 to 2017. Decreases in the actual value of funding allocated to education are particularly concerning given the high proportion of OOSC observed in the country and the consistent demographic pressures.

Almost all expenditure by MoGEI in recent years has been dedicated to recurrent spending, with development expenditure representing 7 per cent of total expenditure in 2021/22. In terms of recurrent expenditure, wages and salaries dominate spending patterns, representing 75 per cent of total expenditure in 2021/22 compared to 9 per cent allocated to grants and transfers, including capitation grants and operational transfers, and 9 per cent allocated to goods and services. Basic and secondary education has remained the dominant Directorate of MoGEI expenditure since 2015, with this directorate receiving 96 per cent of all MoGEI spending in 2021/22.

Civil servants in South Sudan, including education staff such as teachers and administrators, are severely underpaid according to the current salary scale. Despite efforts to increase salaries, particularly in the last three years, they have been unable to keep up with soaring inflation, resulting in decreased salaries in current prices. For example, the salary of an average secondary teacher decreased from 5.4 times GDP per capita in 2011 to 0.5 times in 2021. Besides expenditure on salaries, the majority (58 per cent) of MoGEI recurrent expenditure was allocated to operating transfers, followed by 28 per cent on feeding allowances covering MoGEI's school feeding activities. As no capitation grants or teacher incentives were paid in 2021/22, all transfers were either for salaries or operations. In these two categories, 89 per cent of expenditure was allocated to salary transfers, while 11 per cent was allocated to operations.

Primary education received the bulk of funding in 2021/22, representing 84 per cent of recurrent expenditure. This is similar to the proportion observed in 2013/14. TTIs and TVET received the smallest proportion of expenditure, with both receiving less than 1 per cent in 2021/22. Estimations indicate that pre-primary education has the lowest unit expenditure among all sub-sectors at less than SSP 6,000 per learner. Conversely, TTIs and TVET have the highest, with costs six and seven times higher than those in

primary, respectively. When comparing per-learner expenditure from the 2013/14 ESA to the 2021/22 ESA in constant 2021 prices, it becomes clear that spending has decreased across most levels. The only exception to this trend is pre-primary, which has experienced a significant increase in funding. This is similar to the global trend of a decrease in financing in constant prices. In comparison to other sub-Saharan African countries, including those similarly affected by conflict, South Sudan exhibits the lowest levels of per-learner expenditure as a proportion of GDP per capita at 3 per cent.

2.3.3.2 Decentralized education expenditure

The South Sudan financing system in education operates under a decentralized system in which funds are transferred to states and administrative areas for the implementation of educational activities, including the payment of teacher salaries. Before January 2022, education funds were transferred from the national Ministry of Finance to MoGEI, who then transferred the funds to the state ministries of finance, who in turn transferred the funds to SMOEs. However, this cascading system proved ineffective and inefficient. The Public Expenditure Tracking Survey found that SMOEs frequently reported receiving less funds than what was due to them in transfers from the state ministries of finance (South Sudan, 2022). For example, according to MoGEI financial documents, operating transfers were paid to all states and administrative areas in 2020/21. However, only five confirmed receiving these transfers from their relevant state ministries of finance in the same fiscal year, and none reported receiving the full amount allocated by MoGEI (South Sudan, 2022). This issue was addressed in 2021 by revising the system to ensure direct transfers from MoGEI to SMOEs, bypassing the state ministries of finance.

Following this policy change, SMOEs became the direct recipient of funds from MoGEI. SMOEs are responsible for distributing the allocated amounts to the county level. However, accountability for these transfers is hampered by the weak capacity of financial systems in South Sudan, particularly in terms of access to banks. For example, the Public Expenditure Tracking Survey 2021 found that only 20 per cent of county education departments have bank accounts. As a result, transfers usually happen in person, with representatives from the states or cash transfer agents travelling to the counties to distribute salaries and funds for operational costs. A similar process is observed at the county level, with payam education officers travelling to county offices to collect salaries before finally delivering them to schools in person. When cash transfer agents are paid, their fee is often deducted from the payment being transferred, meaning that staff, including teachers, receive less than what they are due. Furthermore, the current system of physical payment is unreliable because internal movements are often constrained in South Sudan due to natural disasters and conflicts.

In 2021/22, 82 per cent of MoGEI expenditure was executed at the decentralized levels in the form of transfers. Of this, 75 per cent was allocated to the county level, while 6 per cent was allocated to the state level. Within allocations to states and counties, the largest share was concentrated in salary expenditure, representing 90 per cent at the county level and 99 per cent at the state level in 2021/22. Little was expended to support the functioning of schools and decentralized offices. Only 2 per cent of expenditure in 2021/22 was allocated to operational costs at SMOEs, and no government allocations were made for the operational costs at the school level.

Transfers to states and counties are allocated according to the number of counties and schools, rather than the number of learners or areas of greatest need. As a result, the total amount received per learner fluctuated across states and administrative areas, ranging from a low of SSP 3,143 per learner in Greater Pibor to a high of SSP 13,861 in Central Equatoria in 2021/22. Execution was also a challenge at the state and county level, with an average execution rate of 86–87 per cent for county transfers and 84 per cent for state transfers observed in 2021/22.

2.3.3.3 Private and household expenditure

The Public Expenditure Tracking Survey report gathered data regarding the costs associated with educational attendance in public institutions from head teachers. The results demonstrate that despite the commitment to fee-free primary education as outlined in the Constitution, there are still many direct and indirect payments that parents of children at this level are expected to make. At the primary level, basic school supplies were the costliest expense at United States dollars (USD) 76 per learner per year, while school fees averaged USD 52 and exam fees USD 16. Average school fees were more than 2.5 times higher at the secondary level at USD 140. Considering this in the context of the 2021 GDP per capita of USD 738, total costs for primary educational access represent a fifth of GDP per capita, while secondary costs represent 36 per cent. Given that the average family size in South Sudan is between five and six children, this highlights the impossible decisions families must make in choosing which of their children, if any, they can afford to enrol in school.

Alongside households, development partners contribute to education through off-budget financing. While attempts were made to gather this information from relevant partners in South Sudan, the Girls' Education South Sudan programme, which is the largest intervention in the country in terms of financing and scope, provides an idea of the volume of financing being channelled into education. For example, over 400,000 girls were supported with cash transfers in 2021, with a total value of over SSP 2.5 billion. This represents almost 20 per cent of total MoGEI expenditure in 2021/22 at SSP 13 billion, evidencing the substantial levels of support that development partners provide outside of the government system in supporting the education system in South Sudan.

2.3.4 Technical vocational education and training and linkages with the labour market

In South Sudan, TVET and skills development have been gaining ground as a national priority in the complex state-building process that ensued post-2011. Domestic political will and heightened international donor assistance have led to support interventions aimed at improving the governance and functioning of the TVET system.

2.3.4.1 Key challenges for the TVET system

System fragmentation is one of the key system challenges. Over 30 line ministries offer skills development and TVET-related opportunities in their domains of focus. Coupled with the lack of an overarching regulatory and legislative framework and the absence of a dedicated governing body, this has led to a disjointed TVET offer across states in South Sudan. In practice, each ministry offering vocational training does so according to its own training policies and pedagogical standards. At the central level,

fragmentation manifests in terms of national TVET policies. There are currently three different TVET policies that set out parallel processes for key functions such as curriculum development and assessment. The absence of an entity that steers and manages the TVET system makes it difficult to perform these and other key system functions to transition towards a demand-led model.

The uncontrolled proliferation of testing and certification standards in the same trade weakens the status and portability of diplomas issued by the formal TVET system. In addition to outdated pedagogy and disjointed certification systems, TVET is unable to connect with the world of work through work-based learning schemes and other employment-enabling activities, such as orientation and placement services at the school level. Apprenticeships mainly occur on an informal basis without any connection to the formal education and training system. These elements may have a negative impact on the quality and relevance of TVET training, making TVET less appealing to job seekers and, consequently, fuelling a generally poor public perception of TVET.

The financing of TVET systems is a major issue that is exacerbated by the current fragmentation. Effective TVET systems rely on diverse sources of funding, including most notably the private sector. In South Sudan, TVET is delivered with limited funding from the government to formal TVET through state transfers as well as NGO and donor funding in the context of specific projects. Other documented challenges in South Sudan include insufficient TVET trainer remuneration; inadequate systems of preservice and in-service training; poor infrastructure endowment of TVET centres; and insufficient focus of TVETs offering science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. To turn these challenges into opportunities for system improvement, strong domestic leadership and external intervention through donor support programmes are required. Such programmes can help governments better define and articulate their strategic priorities and provide funding and technical assistance in key areas such as infrastructure, teacher training, curriculum development, and more.

2.3.4.2 TVET system functioning and performance

In terms of MoGEI-related provision for formal and non-formal TVET, a total of 21 operational schools was reported in 2021 in the Education Census report. Six of these schools are governmental (formal) and 15 non-governmental, representing the non-formal provision. The African Development Bank mapping, which has a much broader scope given its focus on TVET provision from all line ministries, found a total of 219 TVET centres, 49 (22 per cent) of which are government-owned (formal) and 170 (78 per cent) belonging to non-formal provision. However, only 62 centres (28 per cent) out of the 219 are operational. The 2022 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) report notes that there are 88 TVET institutions in the country, of which 48 are public, seven private, and 33 non-formal and run by NGOs or faith-based organizations. Out of this set of 88 TVET institutions, the majority (60) are operational, with a little over a third (28) being non-operational at present.

Overall student enrolment has been in constant decline, having decreased by 66 per cent between 2016 and 2021. This declining trend is difficult to explain when measured against the mild decrease in the overall number of schools (a three-unit decrease from 2016 to 2021). Given that TVET is traditionally one of the education cycles with the widest gender gaps in terms of access, it is unsurprising that only 26 per cent of

the student population were girls across formal and non-formal TVET in MoGEL centres in 2021. Education Census data illustrate marked patterns of gender disparities in areas and trades that are considered typically masculine or feminine. Another important equity dimension to gauge whether a skills training system provides equal opportunities to all learners is that of disability. Existing data indicate that there are 28 learners with disabilities across formal and non-formal TVET (slightly more than 1 per cent of the TVET student population). This strikingly small number could potentially be explained by under-reporting of disability by surveyed education staff due to social stigma, major flaws in the identification of students with disability, or an actual pattern of systematic exclusion of students with any form of disability from TVET.

Adequately trained and well-compensated instructors are fundamental to a well-functioning TVET system. However, there is a lack of data on the number of teachers, their level of training, and their working conditions. Preservice and in-service training systems are undeveloped or non-existent. There are no active TTIs for TVET in South Sudan. In practice, TVET instructors do not receive dedicated pedagogical training due to the absence of a dedicated training college. This makes them ill-equipped to transfer their knowledge and skills to trainees. Sound facilities with adequate infrastructure and equipment for skills training are essential to the effective delivery of TVET. This is yet another area where data are scarce, with limited evidence available indicating major deficiencies in infrastructure and a strong need for future investments in essential infrastructure and facilities.

Overall, the South Sudanese TVET system is at an embryonic stage of development due to the impact of conflict and pre-existing challenges. While the Unified National TVET Policy may strengthen the overall system governance and overcome fragmentation, improvements on the normative front will need to be matched by the provision of adequate resources through targeted investments. Planning to allocate more resources to the system appears to be a key priority to make TVET a vehicle for greater youth employment and improved livelihoods across the country at a key juncture.

2.3.4.3 External effectiveness of TVET

Broadly, conflict and instability have affected the economy and labour market significantly in South Sudan over the last decade. The combined impact of war, natural disasters, and the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted labour markets, increasing vulnerability and hardship among South Sudanese. Youth and women are the two main disadvantaged groups in terms of labour market integration. The labour market is highly informal, which is not surprising given the current state of the economy. While the founding objective of the skills development system is to respond to labour demand, decision makers should embrace the fact that under the current economic situation, demand for skilled labour is limited.

Population projections put the figure of labour market entrants in the next few years at 80,000 on an annual basis, which has major implications for planning for TVET system expansion. In addition, the potential return of displaced South Sudanese – a total pool of refugees estimated at 2.3 million – currently in neighbouring countries could create additional demand for skills training.

The scarcity of evidence on the ability of the TVET system to provide job-relevant skills calls for stronger efforts in raising the information base in this domain to inform future policies. Yet, the available evidence seems to indicate that the skills development system in South Sudan is largely supply-driven, rather than being based on the skills needs of the private sector. TVET centres do not provide job counselling and orientation services to students, which coupled with the lack of dialogue and partnership with private sector actors, undermines the very objectives of skills training at the central and state level. It is imperative to change the paradigm of TVET governance, management, and delivery to steer training towards emerging skill needs to strengthen its external effectiveness.

The National Unified TVET Policy can provide a strong impetus to renew the system and lead the way for much-needed expansion of the provision of formal, non-formal, and informal skills training opportunities to meet the growing demand. However, to sustain this momentum, large-scale investments from the government and external partners are essential. If substantial amounts of public resources are not allocated and available donor project funds are not used, recent efforts to revamp the South Sudanese TVET system will be jeopardized. Ultimately, this will undermine youth employability in the medium and long run.

3. Policy issues, goals, objectives, and strategies

This section outlines a set of policy issues derived from the ESA. These issues have been prioritized for targeted interventions. Accompanying these issues are policy objectives and specific goals, complemented by strategies designed to facilitate their attainment. The identified policy issues encompass the following:

- a) The widespread and persistent issues surrounding inadequate access to education across all levels of general education, including TVET, and the presence of significant disparities in access and opportunities.
- b) The noteworthy challenges pertaining to the retention of learners in the general education system, indicating a need for interventions to enhance learner engagement and commitment.
- c) The inadequacy of qualified teaching workforce, emphasizing the importance of strengthening the quality and qualifications of educators.
- d) The incomplete development and implementation of curricula, necessitating a review and enhancement of curriculum frameworks.
- e) The presence of unfavourable conditions in the teaching and learning environment, affecting the experiences of both learners and educators.
- f) The concerns related to the external efficiency of TVET in relation to labour market demands, highlighting the need for alignment between vocational training and employment opportunities.
- g) The existence of disparities in domestic financing for education, coupled with issues of inequity, emphasizing the importance of fair and adequate funding mechanisms.
- h) The ineffectiveness in planning and coordination practices in the education sector, necessitating more streamlined and strategic approaches.
- i) The frail system of governance in the realm of TVET, signalling a requirement for reforms and strengthened governance structures.

To address these multifaceted issues, the strategic targets and their associated strategies have been clustered into three thematic areas:

- a) **Access and equity in education:** Strategies focusing on expanding access to education while addressing disparities in opportunities
- b) **Quality of education and resource management:** Initiatives aimed at enhancing the quality of education and the efficient management of educational resources
- c) **Governance and financing of education:** Efforts to bolster governance structures and financial mechanisms in the education sector.

The subsequent sections elaborate on these strategies, with the aim of addressing the identified policy concerns and working towards the overarching goals of improving the education system.

3.1 Access to and equity in education

Insufficient access to education is a pressing issue as revealed by the ESA 2022 and other pertinent reports. These sources indicate that approximately 60 per cent of the school-aged population remains without access to education. This problem is further compounded by the dual threats of natural disasters and conflicts, which disproportionately affect the most vulnerable regions, consequently resulting in the lowest enrolment rates across all education levels. Furthermore, the ESA 2022 report highlighted disparities in enrolment among disadvantaged groups, with female learners facing barriers to accessing early primary education. Moreover, the representation of children with disabilities in the education system is notably low. Additionally, children in pastoralist communities, orphans, internally displaced persons, and returnees encounter significant obstacles in accessing the education system.

Considering these challenges, the GESP is committed to expanding educational access, including pre-primary, primary, secondary, and alternative education. The GESP aims to ensure equitable and crisis-resilient access by augmenting the availability of educational institutions, fostering community appreciation for education, and providing essential support to marginalized groups. This strategic approach reflects a commitment to addressing the multifaceted barriers to educational access and fostering a more inclusive and resilient education system.

Table 2: Policy issue: Low and inequitable access to education

Policy Issue: Low and inequitable access to education at all levels of general education, including TVET	
Policy Goal 1: Increase access to equitable and safe education at all levels of general education, including TVET	
Policy Objectives	Strategies
Increase the pre-primary GER to 17% by 2027.	1.1. Improve the enrolment capacity of pre-primary education across the country.
Increase the primary GER from 60% to 64%.	1.2. Increase the supply of primary schools.
Increase the secondary gross intake ratio to 30% by 2027.	1.3. Enhance the enrolment capacity of government secondary schools.
Increase enrolment in AES from 683 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2021 to 2,000 in 2027.	1.4. Expand the offer of the AES.
Increase the number of TVET students from 207 per 100,000 inhabitants to 548 by 2027.	1.5. Expand access to TVET, especially in underserved areas.
Increase enrolment of children with disabilities to 2.4% of all learners by 2026.	1.6. Improve access to equitable education.
	1.7. Expand mobilization activities at the community level to provide access to education for all school-aged children.
	1.8. Increase awareness of the importance of education, especially among families with children with disabilities.

Policy Issue: Low and inequitable access to education at all levels of general education, including TVET	
Policy Goal 1: Increase access to equitable and safe education at all levels of general education, including TVET	
Policy Objectives	Strategies
Increase GPI in general education to 1 in pre-primary, primary, and secondary, and 0.7 in TVET by 2027.	1.9. Intensify publicity and community engagement to improve the image of TVET.
Improve local stakeholders knowledge on the value of equitable and resilient education.	

School-aged children encounter persistent obstacles when accessing and staying in school. The ESA 2022 report underscored significant challenges concerning educational retention and dropout rates, notably evident in the primary cycle, where only a 22 per cent completion rate was observed. The retention patterns further highlight disparities based on gender and geographical location. To address these concerns, the strategies set forth aim to alleviate barriers associated with dropout rates, including those stemming from disaster-related risks and financial constraints. Simultaneously, these strategies prioritize targeted support for disadvantaged groups, such as girls and learners with disabilities, to facilitate their continued participation in the educational system.

Table 3: Policy issue: Low retention of learners in general education

Policy Issue: Low retention of learners in general education	
Policy Goal 2: Increase retention of learners in primary and secondary cycles	
Policy Objective	Strategies
Increase retention rate from 22% to 42% in primary and 54% to 57% in secondary by 2027.	1.1. Ensure that prioritized government primary schools have full cycles.
	1.2. Strengthen the resilience of the system for continuous learning during crises.
	1.3. Reduce indirect costs of education.

3.2 Quality of education and management of resources

The quality of education in South Sudan has been scrutinized due to low learning outcomes and limited effectiveness in facilitating successful transitions to the labour market. Several key factors contribute to these issues, including an insufficient quantity of educators in the system and concerns regarding the qualifications of those currently teaching. Moreover, the lack of motivation among teachers has a detrimental impact on their overall service delivery, further exacerbating the problem. Addressing the challenge of low learning outcomes necessitates a holistic approach that begins with enhancing the welfare and working conditions of educators. The strategies outlined in *Table 4* are instrumental in initiating this vital transformation.

Table 4: Policy issue: Inadequate qualified teaching workforce

Policy Issue: Inadequate qualified teaching workforce	
Policy Goal 3: Improve the quality and retention of the teaching workforce	
Policy Objectives	Strategies
Increase teacher retention by 90% of the current qualified teaching workforce by 2027.	3.1. Enhance the framework and environment for the management of teachers.
	3.2. Motivate the teaching workforce, focusing on teacher well-being, gender equity, and risk-affected areas.
	3.3. Expand the in-service and preservice teacher training programme, including on disaster risk reduction and climate change issues.
Increase the rate of qualified teachers to 100% at all levels of education by 2027.	3.4. Recruit additional teachers, giving special consideration to qualified volunteers.

Recently, the education sector has introduced curriculum frameworks for both formal and non-formal general education. However, the effective implementation of these frameworks has encountered obstacles due to the absence of essential curriculum support materials. Additionally, given the nation’s susceptibility to various shocks, it is imperative that contemporary subjects such as climate change be integrated into curricula and accompanying support materials. To facilitate the comprehensive adoption of the curriculum, the proposed plan seeks to establish essential curriculum implementation support structures and develop the requisite materials, addressing these critical needs for a more effective education system.

Table 5: Policy issue: Incomplete curriculum development and implementation

Policy Issue: Incomplete curriculum development and implementation	
Policy Goal 4: Enhance curriculum development and implementation, including strengthening the assessment system	
Policy Objective	Strategies
Develop the curriculum fully and implement it by 2027.	4.1. Complete the development of curriculum materials such as missing subjects and inclusive education material.
	4.2. Ensure provision of appropriate teaching and learning resources.
	4.3. Upgrade and strengthen the four national centres, namely the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), Teachers Development Management Service (TDMS), National Foreign Language Centre (NFLC), and NEC, to support curriculum development and improvement.

The effectiveness of a curriculum is demonstrated through comprehensive feedback mechanisms that allow stakeholders to assess whether the curriculum is fulfilling its intended objectives. Assessment is a crucial part of the evaluation process and plays a pivotal role in determining whether a curriculum is meeting its intended objectives. Notably, although the curriculum has shifted towards a competency-based approach, the assessment framework still predominantly adheres to an objective-oriented

paradigm. This results in a significant misalignment between the curriculum and its assessment methods. Consequently, the proposed plan seeks to rectify this discontinuity by implementing a series of strategic measures aimed at enhancing the synchronization between curriculum delivery and assessment processes.

Table 6: Policy issue: Misaligned and fragmented assessment system

Policy Issue: Misaligned and fragmented assessment system	
Policy Goal 5: Streamline and strengthen the assessment system	
Policy Objective	Strategies
Establish a comprehensive curriculum support and assessment system by 2027.	5.1. Set up a comprehensive institutional inspection system. 5.2. Expand the national examination and assessment systems.

In addition to addressing teacher and curriculum-related issues, the ESA highlighted a critical concern pertaining to the inadequate learning environment prevalent in most schools. The primary cause is the absence of or damage to essential school infrastructure, including water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities. These challenges have arisen due to a protracted period of conflict in the country, recurring natural disasters such as floods, and long-standing neglect in addressing infrastructural requirements. Moreover, there is a growing recognition of the importance of prioritizing the mental health and overall well-being of both learners and staff within the educational context. As such, efforts to address these multifaceted challenges are integral to fostering a learning environment that is conducive and supportive.

Table 7: Policy issue: Unconducive teaching and learning environment for learners, teachers, and school staff

Policy Issue: Unconducive teaching and learning environment for learners, teachers, and school staff	
Policy Goal 6: Improve teaching and learning environment as well as the physical and psychological well-being of learners, teachers, and school staff	
Policy Objectives	Strategies
Increase the number of schools meeting the basic requirements and minimum standards indicators by 50% in 2027. Increase the number of schools that systematically provide emotional and mental well-being support for learners, teachers, and school staff.	6.1. Promote policies that make the school environment conducive to learning. 6.2. Provide support for minimum school requirements. 6.3. Collaborate with key partners to systematically provide emotional and mental well-being support for all learners, teachers, and school staff in crisis-affected areas.

The quality issues that are observed in basic and secondary education are also present in the TVET sector. The sector has inadequate numbers of qualified instructors and insufficient facilities for instructor training. The ESA 2022 report highlighted the lack of a unified curriculum. Currently, only the level 1 competency-based curriculum (CBC) is in development out of the envisioned eight. Furthermore, the sector faces a deficit in crucial data, notably on labour market demands, which is essential for aligning TVET programmes effectively. These challenges underscore the need for comprehensive reforms in TVET to enhance its quality and relevance in meeting labour market requirements.

Table 8: Policy issue: Low external efficiency of TVET in relation to the labour market

Policy Issue: Low external efficiency of TVET in relation to the labour market	
Policy Goal 7: Improve labour market relevance of TVET	
Policy Objective	Strategy
Increase employment rate for TVET graduates to 70% by 2027.	7.1. Increase the capacity of TVET trainers.
	7.2. Promote the development and roll-out of training CBC in key employment-generating trades in cooperation with the private sector.
	7.3. Improve TVET linkages with the labour market.

3.3 Education financing and governance

The ESA highlighted a significant issue: inadequate public financing in the education sector, particularly in general education. In the fiscal year 2021/22, a mere 5 per cent of the total expenditure was allocated to education and, when considering general education exclusively, only 2 per cent was allocated. This inadequacy stems from consistently low budget execution rates, with education budget execution failing to surpass 50 per cent in recent years. Addressing this challenge is paramount for expanding the education system’s capacity to accommodate a substantial number of OOSC while upholding educational quality. Achieving this necessitates several actions, including advocating for a larger share of the total budget allocation, both for education overall and specifically for general education, enhancing communication with key stakeholders responsible for fund disbursement, and bolstering financial transparency practices. These measures are essential to ensure the availability of adequate resources for educational development and improvement.

Table 9 Policy issue: Low and inequitable domestic financing to education

Policy Issue: Low and inequitable domestic financing to education	
Policy Goal 8: Increase domestic public financing to education	
Policy Objectives	Strategies
Increase the proportion of government recurrent expenditure allocated to education to 20% by 2026.	8.1. Strengthen cooperation between education and the legislative structures of government.
	8.2. Review the funding structures for general education.
Increase the execution of general education budget to 100% by 2027.	8.3. Strengthen cooperation and coordination between MoGEI, Ministry of Finance and Planning (MoFP), and Public Service.
	8.4. Strengthen financial accountability structures and public fiscal management systems.

The decentralized nature of educational administration in South Sudan emphasizes the need for effective coordination and robust communication. Unfortunately, the ESA 2022 underscored a significant disconnect between central and decentralized levels, resulting in uneven policy application across the nation. Moreover, the planning process, including crucial financial planning, depends on the availability of high-quality data. The ESA 2022 also highlighted issues concerning data quality, notably in the Annual School Census, as well as a lack of comprehensive monitoring data. To foster collaborative efforts in the

sector, operating under a unified mandate, the GESP is committed to bolstering both capacities and structures. This enhancement aims to facilitate improved communication, planning, coordination, and monitoring, thereby addressing the systemic challenges identified by the ESA.

Table 10: Policy issue: Ineffective planning and coordination practices

Policy Issue: Ineffective planning and coordination practices	
Policy Goal 9: Improve planning and effective coordination practices	
Policy Objectives	Strategies
Ensure that a robust and functional planning and monitoring and evaluation system is in place by 2027.	9.1. Enhance the capacity of ministry(s) in data analysis and crisis-sensitive planning.
	9.2. Improve monitoring and evaluation of schools, sector policies and plans including disaster risk reduction.
	9.3. Expand and strengthen national and sub-national research and statistical capacities.
Ensure that the education coordination framework is fully operational by 2027.	9.4. Enhance the capacity of ministry(s) in communication and coordination.
	9.5. Strengthen internal governance and communication structures.

The fragmented nature of the TVET governance system presents significant challenges to its efficacy due to the involvement of multiple line ministries and a lack of effective communication among them. However, recent initiatives have taken notable steps towards system unification. These include the establishment of the TVET Ad Hoc Working Committee, chaired by MoGEL, and the formulation of a unified TVET policy. These developments lay the groundwork for a cohesive expansion of TVET under GESP. It plans for the creation of a TVET authority responsible for system and qualification regulation, the formulation of comprehensive guidelines for equal opportunity and prior learning, and the establishment of standardized bodies and regulations to oversee the sector aim to further enhance unified TVET governance. The goal of these measures is to bring about a more coordinated and effective TVET framework in South Sudan.

Table 11: Policy issue: Weak and fragmented TVET system governance

Policy Issue: Weak and fragmented TVET system governance	
Policy Goal 10: Strengthen and unify TVET system governance	
Policy Objective	Strategy
Implement the Unified National TVET Policy.	10.1. Improve the policy and regulatory landscape of TVET, including assessment and certification.

4. Strategic interventions and activities

This section outlines the pivotal interventions that put the strategies described in the preceding section into practice. It provides a comprehensive overview of the breadth and depth of the interventions, while also specifying who is responsible for their execution, whether it be the central government or state level. Furthermore, where feasible, this section offers insights into the geographical scope of implementation and identifies the specific beneficiaries who are expected to benefit from these interventions.

4.1 Access to and equity in education

4.1.1 Policy Goal 1: Increase access to equitable and safer education at all levels of general education, including TVET

4.1.1.1 Strategy 1.1: Improve the enrolment capacity of pre-primary education across the country

The availability of pre-primary education in South Sudan is currently limited. The ESA 2022 report indicates that the national GER is only 11 per cent. Despite ongoing efforts to enhance pre-primary education by incorporating dedicated classrooms into primary institutions, a significant shortfall remains evident. In 2021, more than 50 per cent of primary schools still lacked pre-primary facilities. In response, this strategic plan aims to address the shortfall by constructing approximately 510 dedicated pre-primary semi-permanent classrooms in existing primary schools. Counties with particularly low pre-primary GERs will be prioritized, thereby fostering greater equity in access on a national scale.² Furthermore, all 116 new primary schools planned for construction during the plan period will include two dedicated pre-primary classrooms, which will be a pivotal step towards expanding and improving ECE throughout the country. This approach emphasizes the country's commitment to addressing the existing deficiencies and ensuring broader access to quality pre-primary education.

Table 12: Strategy 1.1: Improve the enrolment capacity of pre-primary education across the country

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Construct 481 pre-primary classrooms in government primary schools in underserved counties	Pre-primary GER	12%	17%

4.1.1.2 Strategy 1.2: Increase the supply of primary schools

The ESA 2022 report shows that although primary education enrolment rates are high, progress has stagnated over time, revealing significant regional disparities. This plan aims to address these challenges by implementing targeted initiatives and policies to improve primary school accessibility in regions facing pronounced disadvantages, particularly those vulnerable to conflict and natural disasters, such as the Unity, Eastern Equatoria, Upper Nile, and Jonglei states. These interventions will also prioritize the incorporation of climate-responsive construction standards to ensure that all new schools are hazard-resilient, thereby enhancing the sustainability and safety of the education infrastructure.

² According to the results of the ESA, counties in Jonglei, Unity, Warrap, and Northern Bahr el Ghazal depicted the greatest lack of pre-primary supply.

Before any construction activities can begin, it is critical to review and update the construction standards and guidelines for schools. This will be done in collaboration with a qualified consultant and will involve comprehensive review workshops with national staff. The revised standards will encompass climate-resilient construction methods and materials, with particular emphasis on addressing vulnerabilities in high-risk areas and ensuring the provision of facilities catering to children with disabilities. The standards will provide guidance for permanent and semi-permanent structures, building on the improved designs under the current Education Sector Programme Implementation Grant. This will be particularly important given that 10 per cent of the schools will be permanent, with the balance being delivered as semi-permanent structures.

Based on data from the enhanced Annual School Census, which includes geolocation data, primary schools will be established in regions currently lacking adequate coverage from public educational institutions. These newly constructed primary schools will adhere to the revised standards, ensuring resilience against flooding and climatic challenges. Areas prone to flooding will be prioritized in the construction of permanent schools. Each primary school will have a dedicated classroom for every grade, as well as pre-primary classrooms. Additionally, these facilities will be equipped with gender-specific latrine blocks, inclusive amenities for individuals with disabilities, solar electricity infrastructure, and reliable access to clean drinking water. This approach aligns with the sector’s commitment to providing robust, inclusive, and climate-resilient educational environments.

Table 13: Strategy 1.2: Increase the supply of primary schools

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Review and update the construction standards and guidelines for primary schools	Primary GER	60%	63%
Construct and equip 93 climate-resilient primary schools in underserved states and administrative areas			

4.1.1.3 Strategy 1.3: Enhance the enrolment capacity of government secondary schools

The availability of secondary schools in South Sudan is severely limited. As of 2021, there are only 501 documented secondary schools, of which 35 per cent are public institutions. This glaring scarcity has been identified as a significant impediment to secondary educational access, characterized by a GER of only 12 per cent as observed in the ESA 2022. The plan undertakes to alleviate the supply-side challenges, particularly concerning public secondary schools, by constructing 105 new secondary schools, with a specific focus on areas that are currently underserved by educational facilities. As with new primary schools, 10 per cent of the new secondary schools will be permanent, while the remaining 90 per cent will be semi-permanent.

One of the key aspects of this initiative is the establishment of construction standards and guidelines that are customized to meet the unique needs of secondary education. The guidelines will include a range of essential considerations, from structural integrity to climate resilience, and inclusivity for individuals with disabilities. The plan encompasses comprehensive provisions, including providing teacher accommodation facilities, using climate-resilient materials and construction practices, and incorporating gender-specific

and accessible amenities. These new standards will guide the construction and equipping of secondary schools. Addressing the needs of underserved communities and counties that currently lack access to secondary education will be a priority.

The new secondary schools will adhere to these standards to ensure that at least one classroom per grade level as well as gender-specific and accessible latrine blocks are provided, that solar electricity systems are integrated, and that safe drinking water is available. This approach seeks to transform the secondary education landscape by fostering accessibility and inclusivity, and providing quality education to previously marginalized areas and communities.

Table 14: Strategy 1.3: Enhance the enrolment capacity of government secondary schools

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Develop construction standards and guidelines for secondary schools	Secondary gross intake rate	16%	30%
Construct and furnish 105 secondary schools in counties where one does not currently exist			

4.1.1.4 Strategy 1.4: Expand the offer of the Alternative Education System

AES is important in the country because of the large number of pastoralist and fishing communities who make up a significant portion of OOSC. Furthermore, AES serves as a vital avenue for extending learning opportunities to various vulnerable populations who may be unable to partake in the formal education system or require skill enhancement, notably in areas such as the English language. Nevertheless, there has been a decline in the availability of AES centres in recent years, as per the findings of the ESA 2022, with fewer operational centres in 2021 than 2018. This decline underscores the pressing need for sustained efforts to bolster and expand the AES to ensure continued access to education for marginalized communities.

AES programmes are designed to be adaptable with a primary focus on reaching populations for whom traditional formal education is not conducive, such as pastoralist and fishing communities. The GESP will enhance alternative education opportunities by establishing semi-permanent alternative education centres. The centres will be strategically situated near fishing communities in areas that are not prone to flooding to ensure accessibility for populations with limited mobility. In the case of transhumance pastoralist communities, centres will be strategically located in seasonally relevant areas to facilitate access for three to four months in accordance with seasonal grazing patterns. The construction of these centres will adhere to the established strategy for pastoralist and fishing communities. The centres will implement a condensed curriculum to accommodate the limited time available to children and teenagers in these communities, given the demands of household labour.

In addition to the semi-permanent centres, the plan will introduce mobile Pastoralist Education Programme centres in pastoralist communities. These centres will cater to school-aged children with irregular movement patterns. Provisions, including tents, teachers’ kits, and learning materials, will be supplied. Additionally, three facilitators per centre will receive orientation and stipends, ensuring effective implementation and access to education for this unique demographic.

Moreover, AES initiatives with a school-based focus, such as the Accelerated Learning Programme and the Intensive English Course, will be expanded substantially to include a broader range of schools. The expansion will be facilitated by providing qualified instructors and the necessary teaching and learning materials. Notably, the Intensive English Course will be prioritized to aid the reintegration of the significant influx of returnees from Sudan, many of whom currently lack proficiency in the English language. These programmes will serve as a crucial foundation for the language development of learners, ensuring their readiness for integration into the formal education system. Furthermore, the Accelerated Learning Programme will extend its support to internally displaced individuals who may have experienced disruptions in their education due to migration, thus fostering their educational continuity and opportunities for future success.

Table 15: Strategy 1.4: Expand the offer of the AES

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Build 10 semi-permanent centres for transhumance pastoralist and fishing communities	Number of AES students per 100,000 inhabitants	683	2,000
Establish 25 mobile Pastoralist Education Programme centres in pastoralist communities			
Establish 722 AES programmes in existing primary schools			

4.1.1.5 Strategy 1.5: Expand access to TVET, especially in underserved areas

The ESA findings emphasize the pressing need for an enhanced TVET landscape. Presently, TVET is characterized by low access and fragmentation among various providers. Notably, only two operational TVET centres under MoGEI were identified in the country. In response, the plan aims to bolster TVET accessibility and availability by constructing 11 TVET institutions with strategic locations across the Central Equatoria, Jonglei, Unity, Upper Nile, Western Equatoria, Western Bahr el Ghazal, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Eastern Equatoria, Warrap, and Lakes states, as well as the Greater Pibor, Abyei, and Ruweng administrative areas. The new facilities will accommodate trainees with disabilities, reflecting a commitment to inclusivity. Furthermore, the plan embraces climate-resilient construction methodologies and embeds universal design principles to ensure long-term sustainability. Additionally, disaster risk reduction contingency plans will be a pivotal component of each centre’s development, reinforcing the sector’s commitment to creating a robust and adaptable TVET infrastructure that aligns with evolving needs and challenges.

In addition to physical infrastructure development, the plan includes provisions for establishing an e-learning platform for TVET. The aim is to expand access to training opportunities, particularly for individuals who may face geographical constraints in reaching physical training institutions. The endeavour involves developing and implementing an online platform, complete with a dedicated server and application infrastructure, all centrally managed by MoGEI. The platform will have diverse modules that cater to both learners and instructors, each with distinct user privileges. Instructors will play a pivotal role in developing content and maintaining quality standards through moderation.

The sector plans to deploy 25 mobile TVET units strategically across all 10 states and three administrative areas. A comprehensive county assessment will be conducted to ensure precise targeting and effectiveness in delivering trade-based training services to pastoralist and fishing communities. This approach emphasizes the commitment to enhancing access, flexibility, and the quality of TVET programmes across the region.

Table 16: Strategy 1.5: Expand access to TVET, especially in underserved areas

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Construct 11 TVET schools and centres and embed universal design principles	Number of TVET students per 100,000 inhabitants	207	548
Establish an e-learning platform for TVET			
Establish 25 mobile TVET units for pastoralist and fishing camps/ communities			

4.1.1.6 Strategy 1.6: Improve access to equitable education

Expanding educational opportunities and making them available to all is pivotal for South Sudan to honour its commitment to education for all. The ESA 2022 highlighted significant disparities in access to education, notably affecting disadvantaged groups, including girls and children with disabilities, alongside pronounced regional inequalities. This plan will address these challenges by implementing affirmative action policies, providing assistive devices, and amplifying cash transfer initiatives for learners, thereby mitigating gender- and disability-based barriers to educational access.

The ESA 2022 highlighted significant gender parity challenges, notably in the Greater Upper Nile states, encompassing Jonglei, Lakes, Unity, and Warrap. In response to these regional disparities, a comprehensive study will be conducted during the plan implementation period to identify region-specific factors that perpetuate gender inequality in the education system. The outcomes of this study will be used to formulate a gender affirmative action policy, which will focus on addressing gender disparities starting in the first year of primary education where these inequalities are most pronounced.

Obstacles to educational access for disadvantaged groups extend beyond supply-side challenges and encompass demand-side issues rooted in community perceptions, particularly regarding the education of girls and learners with disabilities. To address these complexities, this plan will engage community leaders through Girls Education Conferences at the state and administrative levels, fostering collaboration among state and county representatives and community leaders. The conferences will serve as forums for government education officials to collaboratively devise strategies to overcome existing barriers to girls' education, while enlisting the support of influential community leaders to advocate for equity. Learners with disabilities will receive customized learning aids and assistive devices based on their specific disability type and individual needs, promoting inclusive and accessible education for all.

The ESA 2022 highlighted a concerning underrepresentation of women and individuals with disabilities in TVET, which limits their access to associated employment opportunities. To address this disparity, the plan

aims to bridge the gap between advantaged and marginalized groups by implementing a series of incentives, including scholarships, start-up grants, and childcare services. These incentives are designed to facilitate the enrolment of marginalized groups, including women and mothers, in TVET programmes.

The plan aims to extend educational opportunities by granting 3,380 scholarships to female individuals and individuals with disabilities, facilitating their access to TVET programmes across the country. The scholarships will cover both direct expenses, such as fees, and indirect expenses, such as materials and transportation required for TVET participation. Furthermore, the plan will provide start-up grants to empower female and disabled TVET students in establishing their desired ventures upon programme completion. This start-up package will include essential tools, microfinance grants and/or loans, and microfinance training to foster entrepreneurship in these demographics. Additionally, female TVET students with children will receive enhanced support through the establishment of childcare facilities in three TVET centres in specific target states, namely Central Equatoria, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, and Upper Nile. The pilot programme aims to evaluate the effectiveness of offering childcare services as an incentive for female enrolment. These facilities will be equipped with suitable play-based materials and will be staffed by trained caregivers.

Table 17: Strategy 1.6: Improve access to equitable education

Activities	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Elaborate a study in Greater Upper Nile state on gender inequality	Primary GPI	0.93	1
Conduct girl education conferences at state level with community leaders regarding barriers to girls' education and their solutions	Secondary GPI	0.82	1
Provide assistive learning devices for learners with disabilities	TVET GPI	0.21	0.7
Provide scholarships to encourage the participation of females and people with disabilities in TVET (focus on STEM)			
Provide start-up grants to support females and people with disabilities enrolled in TVET	Proportion of learners with disabilities as per the total learners population in preschool, primary, and secondary schools	1.2%	2.4%
Establish childcare support facility for TVET female trainees targeting three states (pilot)			

4.1.1.7 Strategy 1.7: Expand mobilization activities at the community level to provide access to education for all school-aged children

GESP consultations have revealed that a persistent obstacle to educational access is a lack of understanding among communities about their role in guaranteeing access to education. This is particularly true when it comes to ensuring the safety of people and building community-based centres. As part of the GESP initiative, the government will actively engage and mobilize communities using diverse advocacy strategies aimed at enhancing awareness, fostering positive perceptions, and garnering stronger community backing for education. Furthermore, the government will leverage its authority to promote a shared responsibility framework regarding access to both formal and non-formal education. This will

involve encouraging and assisting communities in establishing supplementary community institutions, thus promoting a more inclusive and comprehensive educational landscape.

Advocacy in communities will be carried out through a diverse array of strategies, with face-to-face community meetings being the most important. Gatherings will be arranged under the guidance of state-led education officials who will travel to specific regions, using local schools or community facilities as venues. During the meetings, the officials will actively share information regarding the intrinsic value and advantages of education, as well as the various available avenues for access. The primary objective of these meetings is to encourage communities to take initiative to establish their own community schools, thus supplementing the government’s ongoing expansion endeavours. The plan will conduct 20 community meetings annually, thoughtfully distributed across various states and administrative regions. Some meetings will be timed strategically to coincide with the celebration of national and international educational milestones, such as International Literacy Day, National Girl’s Education Day, and the International Day for People with Disabilities.

In-person meetings will be supported by advocacy and awareness campaigns that will leverage media strategies, including using social media; printing relevant materials in newspapers; airing talk shows, jingles, and dramas on the radio; as well as making street announcements containing messages about the value and benefits of education. Communities will be encouraged to construct community schools with a commitment from the government to provide teaching and learning materials. This will decrease the financial burden on communities and act as further encouragement.

Extensive awareness campaigns will be undertaken to reduce disaster risk and address climate change. These efforts will be supported by materials that have been customized for a non-technical audience, meticulously developed by a local consultant. The multi-tiered campaigns will begin with national staff training state and local officials, ensuring that they have the necessary knowledge and competencies to conduct community-level meetings. Additionally, a pivotal stakeholder meeting will be held at the state level, convening pertinent education stakeholders from the capital to impart knowledge on climate change and its implications for education. This initiative aims to raise awareness and garner support for addressing the challenges posed by climate change. Climate change and disaster risk reduction messages will be shared at the grass-roots level through five community meetings per state. The meetings will be led by previously trained state and local officials, with active involvement of community leaders and education stakeholders. The in-person endeavours will be complemented by an integrated media strategy with a strategic focus on conveying messages about disaster risk reduction and climate change.

Table 18: Strategy 1.7: Expand mobilization activities at the community level to provide access to education for all school-aged children

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Conduct mass advocacy and awareness campaigns on the importance of education	Number of new functional resilient community schools established across all sub-sectors	0	865
Conduct community awareness meetings regarding the value and benefits of education and the community’s role in establishing community schools			

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Develop advocacy and awareness campaigns on disaster risk reduction and climate change			
Implement advocacy and awareness campaigns on disaster risk reduction and climate change			
Provide learning materials to community-based schools across all sub-sectors			

4.1.1.8 Strategy 1.8: Increase awareness on gender equity and inclusion of children disabilities in education

During the GESP implementation period, awareness campaigns will be initiated to promote gender equity and address critical issues, including early marriage, gender roles, stereotypes, and the inclusion of children with disabilities in the South Sudanese education system. The campaigns will target all states and consist of state-level education stakeholder meetings, extensive media outreach through live talk shows, street announcements, jingles, radio dramas, newspaper publications, and social media posts. Each state will host five community meetings to share the message of gender and disability inclusion in education with community members, leaders, and education stakeholders. These initiatives reflect a commitment to challenging prevailing prejudices and fostering a more inclusive and equitable educational environment.

In addition to enhancing community awareness, the plan will enhance the capabilities of local and state education stakeholders, empowering them to champion gender equity and inclusivity for children with disabilities in their respective regions. The comprehensive training will include a critical component – raising awareness about the recently formulated Inclusive Education Policy. This equips stakeholders with the requisite knowledge to implement the policy effectively in the mainstream education system. The training initiatives will include workshops conducted at both the state and county levels. National experts will oversee the state-level workshops, while state staff, who have undergone their own training, will facilitate the county-level workshops. The target audience includes state and county-level education ministry personnel, local partners, and school leaders. These vital training sessions will be conducted systematically, with one held in each state and administrative area during the plan period, thereby fostering sustainable change and progress.

Table 19: Strategy 1.8: Increase awareness on gender equity and inclusion of children disabilities in education

Activities	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Implement awareness campaigns on gender equity and inclusion of children with disabilities in education	GPI in primary	0.93	1
	GPI in secondary	0.82	1
	GPI in TVET	0.21	0.7
Train local and state stakeholders on their role in promoting gender equity and inclusion of children with disabilities, including the Inclusive Education Policy	Proportion of learners with disabilities as per the total learner population in preschool, primary, and secondary	1.2%	2.4%

4.1.1.9 Strategy 1.9: Intensify publicity and community engagement to improve the image of TVET

The participation rate in TVET in South Sudan is currently low, primarily due to a limited understanding and appreciation of the sub-sector in the population. To address this issue, it is essential to not only enhance the capacity of TVET centres but also actively engage local communities to encourage enrolment in both newly established and existing centres. The plan proposes to conduct nationwide and state-specific campaigns aimed at promoting employment opportunities provided by TVET programmes. The campaigns will employ a combination of in-person and distance-based strategies, including community meetings and radio broadcasts. The target audience includes unemployed or undereducated youth and the industry itself. The goal is to demonstrate the diverse training and vocational opportunities available.

Annual community meetings will be held in all states and administrative areas. The meetings will be supplemented by quarterly national radio broadcasts that will feature live talk shows and radio dramas, which will convey the significance of TVET programmes. Moreover, the sector plans to use radio platforms to share messages about youth empowerment, including valuable information on microfinance and job prospects for TVET graduates and youth in general. These campaigns will leverage increased collaboration with development partners and the private sector, as envisioned in the Governance Priority Programme, to identify relevant opportunities for the youth.

In addition to the campaigns, the plan advocates for hosting annual exhibitions in Juba to demonstrate products, equipment, and tools locally crafted by TVET students and institutions. The centralized exhibition aims to bolster local community confidence in the South Sudanese TVET offering, highlight programme relevance, and inspire young individuals to view TVET as a valuable avenue for acquiring essential skills customized to the labour market.

Table 20: Strategy 1.9: Intensify publicity and community engagement to improve the image of TVET

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Conduct annual national and state campaigns to improve the public image of TVET	Number of TVET students per 100,000 inhabitants	207	548
Develop and disseminate youth empowerment activities			
Organize annual exhibitions displaying TVET products			

4.1.2 Policy Goal 2: Increase retention of learners in primary and secondary cycles

4.1.2.1 Strategy 2.1 Ensure that prioritized government primary schools have full cycles

The ESA 2022 found that over 60 per cent of primary schools were incomplete and failed to provide all eight required grade levels. This deficiency potentially contributes to high dropout rates, especially after the sixth grade, with 25 per cent of primary schools lacking seventh and eighth grade classes. To address this issue, the GESP will focus on constructing classrooms in incomplete primary schools. Ten per cent of these classrooms will be permanent and will be delivered to areas prone to flooding. The balance of classrooms (2,970) will be delivered in a semi-permanent model. The additional classrooms will enhance

learner retention in the primary education system by enabling learners to complete their respective grade cycles in a single institution, thereby ensuring a more seamless educational experience.

Table 21: Strategy 2.1: Ensure that prioritized government primary schools have full cycles

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Construct 3,303 classrooms in primary schools	Proportion of government primary schools with full cycles	30%	96%

4.1.2.2 Strategy 2.2: Strengthen the resilience of the system for continuous learning during crises

The risk analysis in the ESA 2022 report identified diverse risk factors in South Sudan, spanning natural hazards and conflict. Notably, the Greater Upper Nile region exhibited both elevated risk levels and pronounced dropout rates, indicating a correlation between vulnerable areas and educational retention challenges. To establish a resilient education system, the GESP will prioritize risk adaptation by developing and implementing contingency plans, deploying alternative distance learning approaches, and conducting focused research to enhance support in high-risk regions, ensuring educational continuity during crises.

The South Sudanese education system currently lacks comprehensive contingency plans to guide responses in the event of emergencies. It is essential to formulate contingency plans to provide schools and sub-national administrations with clear protocols for addressing various hazards. This will help mitigate the impact of these hazards on learners and ensure uninterrupted access to education. External consultants will facilitate collaborative workshops at both the state and national levels to develop these plans. Strategies will be included to minimize the use of schools for temporary shelter, including military purposes. School drills will be implemented to ensure learners are well-prepared to respond to immediate threats. Suitable locations for temporary learning facilities will be identified. Furthermore, these plans will be customized to address specific local hazards, prioritizing gender and disability inclusivity to acknowledge the varying vulnerabilities of distinct population groups. The plans will be based on the South Sudan Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies and will be updated periodically to align with the evolving national context, particularly in response to the escalating challenges posed by climate change.

Contingency plans will be developed at the national, state, and school levels through participatory workshops. School-specific planning will be achieved through cluster training sessions under the guidance of tutors from county education centres, with a focus on head teachers as key stakeholders. These sessions will include training of head teachers, emphasizing the significance of contingency plans in the context of disaster prevention, preparedness, and response. The training will draw on insights from comparable county scenarios. Subsequently, the head teachers will be responsible for executing these plans in their respective schools and sharing knowledge with their teaching staff.

In addition to developing contingency plans, state and local stakeholders will be trained to implement the South Sudanese Education in Emergencies Strategy to ensure it is integrated into the national educational programming. This training will be conducted by national staff at the state level, including officials from the counties. It will occur once during the plan period. It will raise awareness of the fundamental principles of the South Sudanese Education in Emergencies Policy and the South Sudan Education Cluster Strategy

to ensure officials are better equipped to respond to crises as they emerge and engage in crisis-prevention activities.

Flooding, conflict, and other natural hazards that are prevalent in South Sudan often leave schools inaccessible for prolonged periods, therefore making in-classroom learning impossible. To ensure that learners do not lose valuable learning time and fall behind in their studies, various distance learning programmes will be developed and implemented during the plan period to allow learners to continue learning from the safety of their homes during times of crises. The first will be radio programming, which was already trialled during the period of school closures because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The materials developed during this time will be built upon to cover the entire primary and secondary curricula. The development process will be supported by teachers who will be responsible for reviewing and updating the scripts developed for their specialized subjects for the COVID-19 continued learning programme. This review and updating process will also be supported by a local consultant. Scripts will be edited and approved before being recorded for broadcast.

Lessons will be broadcast over the two major radio stations in South Sudan, and their implementation will be supported by national-level monitoring. In this way, distance learning programmes will not only support learners who are temporarily out of school due to emergencies but also the wider out-of-school population. In addition to radio learning, take-home learning packages for primary and secondary learners will be developed. These packages should be distributed when news of an impending disaster is communicated through the newly established early warning communication chain (see Governance Priority Programme). This will ensure that learners are able to continue learning at home and do not put themselves in danger by trying to access school.

The risk analysis conducted as part of ESA 2022 revealed a significant misalignment between the prevailing school calendar and the recurring patterns of seasonal flooding. Severe flooding consistently occurs between July and September, when educational activities are in full swing, while floodwaters tend to recede in November and December, coinciding with school holidays. In response to this observation, the plan will support a study to evaluate the feasibility and suitability of realigning the school calendar to better harmonize with seasonal realities. This study will entail engaging with an external consultant and gathering pertinent data from flood-prone regions, ultimately culminating in recommendations for potential calendar adjustments.

Table 22: Strategy 2.2: Strengthen the resilience of the system for continuous learning during crises

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Develop contingency plans at the national and sub-national levels based on local hazards	Proportion of crisis-closed schools implementing continuous learning programmes	N/A	100%
Review and update the South Sudan Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies (Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies) to the current context of South Sudan			
Train state and local stakeholders in the South Sudanese Education in Emergency Strategy			
Review the distance learning through radio programmes			

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Develop and provide home learning packages to complement radio learning during emergencies			
Implement the distance learning through radio programmes			
Conduct a study to assess the appropriateness of the academic calendar to cope with climate hazards			

4.1.2.3 Strategy 2.3: Reduce indirect cost of education for families

According to the 2021 Education Census data, the main cause of learner attrition remains the inability to pay educational fees across all educational levels, despite the government’s constitutional commitment to providing fee-free primary education. This issue stems from insufficient funding at the school level, which is caused by irregular disbursement of capitation grants and the prevalence of volunteer teachers. As a result, families are often required to make financial contributions to cover the costs of learning materials, school maintenance, teacher salaries, and school meal programmes. The issue of non-salary payments and delayed payments has been systematically addressed by the quality programme. This was accomplished by recruiting additional teaching staff and adjusting the salaries of teachers. Under this strategy, the GESP will endeavour to remove financial barriers to educational accessibility through targeted interventions, such as transferring cash directly to marginalized groups, expanding school feeding programmes, and providing dignity kits to adolescent girls in primary and secondary schools to support girls’ education. Dignity kits will ensure that the costs associated with acquiring menstrual hygiene products are not a barrier to female learners remaining in school.

The Girls’ Education South Sudan programme presently facilitates cash transfers for girls starting from Grade 5. The ESA 2022 demonstrated the programme’s positive influence on female enrolment, notably in balancing access rates between males and females from Grade 5 onward. The GESP proposes to continue this strategy, focusing on girls in Grades 7–8 of primary and Secondary 1–4. The programme will provide targeted support to vulnerable groups, such as children living in flood- and conflict-affected regions, those hailing from socio-economically disadvantaged households, children with disabilities, and former child soldiers, including those enrolled in community schools. The specific parameters governing transfers, including eligibility criteria and transfer amounts, will be defined through a comprehensive review of the existing project as envisioned in the framework of the efficiency priority programme.

Table 23: Strategy 2.3: Reduce indirect cost of education for families

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Sustain cash transfers for learners, focusing on disadvantaged girls, children with disabilities, and orphans	Primary retention rate	22%	42%
Provide dignity kits to girls in upper primary and secondary education	Secondary retention rate	54%	57%

4.2 Quality of education and management of resources

4.2.1 Policy Goal 3: Improve the quality and retention of the teaching workforce

4.2.1.1 Strategy 3.1: Enhance the framework and environment for management of teachers

The government has started developing the Teacher Education Policy. The processes for compiling, finalizing, and elaborating the implementation procedures are still pending. The plan aims to expedite the finalization of the policy and its subsequent validation. MoGEI will appoint a 26-member team from the TDMS to oversee the finalization of the policy, closely monitor its implementation, particularly at the decentralized levels, and carry out evaluations. The policy will be evaluated at the end of the implementation period, which is expected to be in 2027/28. The outcomes of the evaluation will provide valuable insights for future adjustments, if necessary, aimed at enhancing the quality of services provided to teachers and by teachers.

To improve the professionalism of teaching, the plan will facilitate the creation of a comprehensive registration and licensing system for teachers. This initiative involves recruiting a technical assistant who will be tasked with developing the registration application and securing crucial validations from key user departments. Additionally, the plan will ensure that key officials from MoGEI are involved to oversee the initial registration of teachers, thus ensuring a seamless implementation. Additionally, as an integral part of this endeavour, provisions will be made to procure essential computing infrastructure and printing equipment, which are crucial components that will underpin the effective establishment of the envisioned teacher registration system.

Table 24: Strategy 3.1: Enhance the framework and environment for management of teachers

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Finalize and disseminate the Teacher Education Policy	Teacher retention rate	To be determined (TBD)	90%
Evaluate the effective implementation of the Teacher Education Policy			
Establish a system for the registration and licensing of teachers			

4.2.1.2 Strategy 3.2: Motivate the teaching workforce, focusing on teacher well-being, gender equity and risk-affected areas

MoGEI is actively engaged in dialogues with key stakeholders, including members of the Parliamentary Specialized Committee on Education, the National Legislature, the Office of the President, and the Cabinet Affairs Committee. The primary aim is to enhance the working conditions of teachers, with a particular focus on remuneration. The proposal to raise teacher salaries to a level equivalent to 3.5 times the GDP per capita is at the heart of these discussions. This benchmark is globally recognized for nations with economic profiles similar to South Sudan. However, the plan incorporates a phased approach, allowing for a progressive increase in salaries. This will ultimately result in a maximum of twice the GDP per capita across all educational levels by the end of the GESP implementation period.

Furthermore, the plan acknowledges that teachers work in diverse and often challenging environments and are exposed to varying degrees of risk. In addition to the across-the-board salary adjustments, the

strategy introduces targeted hardship allowances to incentivize teachers working in challenging areas. Hardship allowances may include provisions for accommodation and mobility benefits, with implementation proposed to commence in the fiscal year 2024/25. The plan outlines the establishment of a technical committee comprising representatives from MoGEI and SMOEs. This committee will be tasked with identifying specific regions in the country where teachers require special allowances. The committee will provide recommendations regarding uniform or differentiated allowance rates based on the distinct characteristics of various states, counties, and payams targeted by the initiative.

Recognizing the substantive numbers of unqualified teachers in the general education system and the limited capacity of national TTIs, the plan will support a revamp of the national TTIs to initially deal with the issue of space. To ensure the sustainable viability of these institutions, the plan advocates for the allocation of scholarships to preservice teacher trainees, with a particular emphasis on fostering gender equity by reserving a minimum of one-fifth of the scholarships for female trainees. This strategic allocation aims to redress the existing gender imbalance among teachers in the general education sector. The ultimate objective is to enhance the quality and equity of teachers from the training stage.

Table 25: Strategy 3.2: Motivate the teaching workforce, focusing on teacher well-being, gender equity and risk-affected areas

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Increase the average teacher salary to two times the GDP/capita	Teacher retention rate	TBD	90%
Provide hardship allowances to all teachers in at-risk or hard-to reach areas			
Provide scholarship opportunities to prospective teachers, especially females			

4.2.1.3 Strategy 3.3: Expand the preservice teacher and in-service training programme, including disaster risk reduction and climate change issues

The provision of teachers in South Sudan is significantly limited by the capacity of the existing national TTIs. Currently, only three national TTIs are operational. This is a stark insufficiency given the demands of the general education system, which is compounded by the vast geographical expanse of the country. To bolster national TTI capacity, the proposed plan entails establishing 11 new national TTIs in states without this essential infrastructure. Given the extensive damage incurred by non-operational TTIs and cost considerations, the plan prioritizes new construction over rehabilitation efforts. To start this process, MoGEI will form a technical working committee. This committee will include representatives from the Directorate of Physical Infrastructure, Procurement, TDMS, and state authorities. The committee will identify suitable sites for national TTI construction, oversee the procurement process, allocate contracts, and monitor the construction progress.

To ensure that both existing and newly established national TTIs operate effectively, the plan will facilitate week-long external annual visits to countries in the region. These visits will allow representatives from each national TTI to gain insights and mentorship from their counterparts abroad. Furthermore, a monitoring team comprising members from the Directorate of TDMS, Planning and Budget, Inspection and Supervision, NCDC, and existing universities will conduct ongoing oversight and assessment of the

institutions’ performance. The team will submit comprehensive monitoring and evaluation reports to various stakeholder forums. These forums include the General Education Annual Review (GEAR), cluster meetings, the Local Education Group, and partner coordination meetings. The reports will serve as the basis for informed decision-making and continuous improvement in the teacher training infrastructure of South Sudan.

In addition to expanding the capacity of national TTIs, the plan will enhance the capacity of county education centres by constructing 10 additional centres in selected counties. These centres, together with those that have been constructed and/or rehabilitated, are instrumental for in-service training and will be useful for implementing the CBC. MoGEI will set up the technical team responsible for identifying counties to be prioritized for new construction. The committee will also provide technical guidance on the elements expected in new centres. Alongside the new county education centres, the plan will facilitate renovation works in 59 existing centres.

The sector has been providing training for unqualified teachers with the ambitious goal of having all teachers qualified to teach. In keeping with this ambition, the plan will facilitate the training of 13,000 teachers across pre-primary, primary, secondary, and alternative education who were identified by the 2021 Annual Schools’ Census as not being qualified. The plan will facilitate a national team to train seven tutors per county, who will in turn train the 13,000 teachers in their respective counties in a cascading fashion.

The strategic initiative extends beyond improving the qualifications of underqualified teachers and includes continuous professional development for existing teaching staff through the county education centres. This targeted approach aims to strengthen teachers’ competencies in crucial areas, including proficiency in national languages, co-curricular activity facilitation, disaster risk reduction, climate change education, inclusive pedagogy, gender-sensitive teaching practices, and proficiency in information and communication technology (ICT). Of particular significance is the emphasis on professional development to enable teachers to effectively deliver an intensive English language curriculum. This effort is essential to accommodate the growing number of returnees lacking English language proficiency. Continuous professional development will ensure that trained teachers can support the returnees by assessing individual language levels, using multilingual resources, promoting immersion and contextual learning, offering small group instruction, encouraging cultural exchange, and adapting the curriculum as needed. Additionally, they will be supported in providing regular assessment and feedback, emphasizing communication skills, practising patience and empathy, and creating a nurturing environment that respects returnees’ unique experiences and backgrounds, all while recognizing that language acquisition is a gradual process with varying individual progress.

Table 26: Strategy 3.3: Expand the preservice teacher and in-service training programme, including on disaster risk reduction and climate change issues

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Construct 11 national TTIs in states without TTIs, and one TTI in each administrative area, ensuring they are climate resilient	Share of qualified teachers in pre-primary schools	80%	100%

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Rehabilitate 59 county education centres in all counties	Share of qualified teachers in primary schools	68%	100%
Conduct external exchange learning visits for all the national TTIs			
Conduct monitoring and evaluation in all national TTIs	Share of qualified teachers in secondary schools	63%	100%
Conduct upgrading of unqualified teachers			
Provide continuous professional development opportunities to serving teachers	Share of qualified teachers in AES	73%	100%

4.2.1.4 Strategy 3.4: Recruit additional teachers, giving special considerations to qualified volunteers

As per the ESA 2022 report, there is a significant shortage of qualified educators in the general education system. This shortage poses substantial challenges to classroom instruction as seen in the elevated pupil/teacher ratios. Currently, these ratios stand at 90:1 in ECE, 93:1 in primary education, 25:1 in secondary education, and 69:1 in AES. As highlighted in the access and equity priority plan, the plan will support the recruitment of approximately 13,800 teachers over the next five years to address the shortages and accommodate the anticipated influx of learners across all education levels. Special emphasis will be placed on including qualified volunteers in the recruitment process. Their deployment will be strategically executed in accordance with the outlined deployment plan. Notably, this initiative involves recruiting nearly 4,400 teachers to facilitate the delivery of non-formal education through the AES framework. MoGEI will lead the recruitment process with the involvement of state authorities and the Ministry of Public Service (MoPS). The aim is to address the prevailing gender imbalances and rectify the uneven distribution of teachers across various counties.

Table 27: Strategy 3.4: Recruit additional teachers, giving special considerations to qualified volunteers

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Recruit 1,100 qualified teachers in pre-primary	Pupil/teacher ratio in pre-primary	42:1	35:1
Recruit 10,300 qualified teachers in primary	Pupil/teacher ratio in primary	42:1	42:1
Recruit 208 qualified teachers in secondary	Pupil/teacher ratio in secondary	20:1	40:1
Facilitate 4,400 teachers to deliver learning in AES centres	Pupil/teacher ratio in AES	29:1	30:1

4.2.2 Policy Goal 4: Enhance curriculum development and implementation, including strengthening the assessment system

4.2.2.1 Strategy 4.1: Complete the development of curriculum materials such as missing subjects and inclusive education material

The curriculum framework for both formal and non-formal education in the country emphasizes the importance of creating suitable educational resources to facilitate effective lesson delivery. The National Learning and Teaching Materials Policy prescribes the language of instruction and is emphatic about the use of national languages in foundational education. The general education sector has undertaken significant initiatives in developing materials and orthography for national languages as well as teacher training programmes to ensure that these languages integrate seamlessly into the curriculum. The Curriculum Foundation will support the Directorate of National and Foreign Languages to expand the pool of materials by developing content for seven additional languages, thereby fostering diversity in the instructional materials used across the curriculum.

Five translators and writers will be identified and supported for each national language, focusing on the pre-primary and lower primary levels (P1–P3). The writers will write and the translators will translate the textbooks. After validation, the textbooks will be printed and distributed to educational institutions. Given the time-intensive nature of developing and translating such resources, as evidenced in previous iterations, the current plan does not include a cost estimate for printing and delivering specific materials. In parallel with the expansion of materials in national languages, the plan highlights the importance of reviewing existing curriculum materials across both formal and non-formal domains to highlight deficiencies and facilitate the development of relevant resources. This will include developing and/or finalizing ECE materials and teacher guides, enhancing the overall quality and relevance of educational resources in the curriculum.

The current teacher training programmes must be updated to align with the CBC framework to ensure that graduates from the national TTIs are well-prepared to deliver CBC effectively. The plan will facilitate the directorates of the NCDC and TDMS to develop or enhance preservice and in-service academic subject syllabi. The revisions will align the training programmes with CBC standards and incorporate specialized modules focused on special needs education. These modules will be designed to equip prospective teachers with the skills needed to instruct learners with disabilities. The upgrade process will entail iterative consultations involving stakeholders from national TTIs, universities, development partners, and members of NCDC and TDMS. It will involve programme development, followed by piloting and validation of the preservice and in-service academic subjects.

Table 28: Strategy 4.1: Complete the development of curriculum materials such as missing subjects and inclusive education material

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Complete development and translation of textbooks for seven national languages with writing system	Basic education curriculum and associated materials are fully developed	Curriculum is incomplete (missing national languages, AES textbooks, and ECE materials)	Basic education curriculum and associated materials are fully developed
Complete development of subject textbook gaps for formal and AES			
Develop and print ECE materials and teachers' guides			
Complete the development of preservice and in-service teacher training programmes at certificate and diploma levels			

4.2.2.2 Strategy 4.2: Ensure full implementation of the curriculum

There is a shortage of learning and teaching materials in general education, which severely compromises the implementation of the curriculum. For instance, the pupil/textbook ratio in primary school is 8:1 in English and mathematics, and 9:1 in science and social studies. These ratios are both significantly above the 1:1 standard recommended by the Learning and Teaching Materials Policy. Although the pupil/textbook ratios are better in secondary schools than primary schools, they are still high. The plan will focus on providing textbooks to learners at all levels of general education and will target a pupil/textbook ratio of 2:1 in primary, secondary and AES. Children with disabilities will receive relevant disability-specific reference materials at a ratio of 1:1 across all levels of education. Due to the large volume of books involved, the plan proposes to replenish books every four years. Therefore, if books are provided to schools in the 2024/25 fiscal year, only a one-time provision will be accommodated during the lifetime of the plan. In addition to textbooks, the plan will provide learner workbooks annually in all the core subjects at a ratio of 1:1. Moreover, the plan will support the supply of teacher guides to teachers across general education in all the core subjects, with one teacher guide shared between two teachers.

The plan additionally proposes the reorientation of 15,000 qualified teachers who will not undergo upgrading. The reorientation process mirrors the approach taken in the training of unqualified teachers and will be facilitated through the county education centres. A specialized national team will oversee the training of 560 tutors who are distributed across all 80 counties. These trained county education centre tutors will subsequently take on the responsibility of imparting CBC orientation to the identified teachers who have yet to undergo this critical curriculum training.

The plan acknowledges that the Learning and Teaching Materials Policy and the National Language Guideline were developed before the CBC and, as such, they have a notable misalignment. In addition to the gaps identified in the policy and the guidelines, the directorates of the NCDC and NFLC have identified key issues in the implementation of the policy, which the plan will address during the implementation period. It includes facilitating the review of the policy through workshops by bringing representatives from MoGEI, universities, and development partners together. For cost purposes, workshops will be conducted in Juba. Alongside the review of the policy, the plan will support the development of relevant guidelines, including the printing of both.

Table 29: Strategy 4.2: Ensure full implementation of the curriculum

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Supply teaching/learning materials to public schools (including textbooks, workbooks, teachers guides, and supplementary learning materials)	Pupil/workbook ratio in pre-primary (core subjects)	N/A	1:1
	Proportion of public schools receiving workbooks for learners		
	Proportion of public schools receiving textbooks		
	Proportion of public schools receiving teachers guides		
Orient teachers on the new CBC and new textbooks	Pupil/textbook ratio in primary (core subjects)	8:1	2:1
Review the South Sudan Textbook Policy and implementation guidelines for national languages	Pupil/textbook ratio in secondary (core subjects)	2:1	2:1

4.2.2.3 Strategy 4.3: Upgrade and strengthen the four national centres (NCDC, TDMS, NFLC, and NEC)

The four directorates and institutions responsible for developing and implementing the curriculum, namely the NCDC, TDMS, NFLC, and NEC, currently face a critical infrastructure challenge. The absence of appropriate premises hampers the effective execution of their duties. To address this issue, the plan will facilitate the acquisition of suitable land and the construction of dedicated headquarters for these organizations. This initiative will involve collaborative efforts between MoGEl and relevant state and administrative entities to identify optimal locations and manage the procurement process, including diligent oversight of construction activities. Additionally, the plan will extend its support to the renovation and equipping of the NFLC in Maridi to ensure it can fulfil its mission effectively.

Table 30: Strategy 4.3: Upgrade and strengthen the four national centres (NCDC, TDMS, NFLC, NEC)

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Construct and equip the TDMS Secretariat	Basic education curriculum and associated materials are fully developed	Curriculum is incomplete (missing national languages, AES textbooks, and ECE materials)	Basic education curriculum and associated materials are fully developed
Construct and equip the NCDC			
Renovate and equip the NFLC			
Construct and equip the NEC centre			

4.2.3 Policy Goal 5: Streamline and strengthen the assessment system

4.2.3.1 Strategy 5.1: Set up a comprehensive institutional inspection and supervision system

To evaluate the progress and challenges in quality education, the plan will facilitate the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards to conduct an annual action research initiative. This action research will be led by a team from MoGEl with the support of a proficient technical research assistant. Furthermore, the plan will facilitate the procurement of the necessary equipment essential for data collection and the production of materials customized for regions where technological accessibility remains limited. The

outcomes of this thorough research will be widely shared and discussed in various dialogue platforms supported by this plan, including the GEAR workshops. The plan proposes that ample time be set aside during the GEAR week to ensure that quality assurance research is given a central position in the dialogue. This strategic approach emphasizes the plan’s commitment to prioritizing the quality of education as one of its primary objectives.

Table 31: Strategy 5.1: Set up a comprehensive institutional inspection and supervision system

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Targets
Conduct research on quality assurance and educational effectiveness	Proportion of teachers applying effective teaching practices	TBD	TBD
Support the roll-out of nationwide institutional inspections and supervision			
Develop inspection framework and guidance for TTIs, TVET, and county education centres	Learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy in lower primary	TBD	TBD
Train 3,334 inspectors and supervisors in inspection and supervision			
Orient 6,287 head teachers in inspection and supervision	Learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy and upper primary	TBD	TBD
Digitalize the inspection and supervision data system			
Conduct comparative study tour to relevant countries on quality of general education	Learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy in secondary	TBD	TBD

In addition to the nationally led research, the plan will support the procurement of equipment to facilitate the mobility of inspectors and supervisors, as well as staff at the headquarters. The procurement process will involve the purchase and distribution of two vehicles, 1,550 motorcycles for supervisors and inspectors at the payams, and three motorboats for areas that are more easily accessible by water. The plan will support the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards to finalize and digitize the inspection framework and guidance for TTIs, TVET, and county education centres. To ensure effective adoption and implementation of the inspection framework, the plan will ensure that more than 3,000 inspectors and supervisors receive training on school supervision. In turn, the inspectors and supervisors will orient more than 6,000 school head teachers on school-based inspection and pedagogical support for teachers. To ensure that all the efforts and reforms in school inspection and pedagogical support are improved continuously, the plan will support study tours by inspectors from MoGEI and state representatives in countries that South Sudan looks up to. The focus of the visits will be for the directorate to observe emerging knowledge and trends during the inspection and how they could improve the management of teaching and learning in South Sudan.

4.2.3.2 Strategy 5.2: Expand the national examination and assessment systems

The NEC is responsible for administering formal education system examinations in South Sudan. The CBC has been extended to encompass the non-formal education sector, and the NEC is responsible for ensuring a CBC in this sector. It is worth noting that this assessment is recommended to adopt a formative approach.

The assessment deviates from traditional summative assessments that are typically conducted at the culmination of the primary and secondary education levels. This shift towards formative assessment necessitates the formulation of a curriculum development policy, laying the groundwork for the incorporation of formative assessment practices. This policy will serve as the precursor to the development of a comprehensive formative assessment policy framework, which will be supplemented by corresponding guidelines.

The plan will facilitate the development of these crucial policies, ensuring that assessments align seamlessly with curriculum delivery and that continuous learning assessments contribute substantively to the eventual educational outcomes achieved by students upon completing an educational cycle. To facilitate formative assessments on a national scale, the plan will enable the establishment of the National Learning Outcomes Assessment System. This system will encompass periodic assessments conducted across various stages of the general education spectrum, which will be carried out on all learners or selectively sampled learners to represent the country or specific regions.

The plan will provide support to the NEC in undertaking the Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA) and Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA). The plan will target specific grades as identified during the implementation phase. These assessments will be extended to measure teacher competency using similar evaluation tools as those used for learners. This undertaking represents a pivotal step in piloting the transition towards the new assessment paradigm, ensuring its effectiveness and alignment with contemporary educational needs and standards.

The NEC has been administering examinations successfully in the formal education stream since its inception. However, operational challenges have garnered significant attention. To enhance its operational capabilities, the plan will allocate resources for equipment upgrades, including the establishment of an official NEC website. Additionally, investments will be made in acquiring multifunctional photocopiers to reduce reliance on external and foreign printing services; procuring desktop computers to support digitalization and automation initiatives; developing and implementing an authentication tracking application for certifications; ensuring stable Internet connectivity; and facilitating the provision of essential office supplies and materials. These strategic measures underscore the commitment to enhancing the council’s efficiency and effectiveness in managing examinations and related functions.

Table 32: Strategy 5.2: Expand national examination and assessment systems

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Develop the National Curriculum Development Policy	Proportion of schools undertaking formative assessment	0%	100%
Develop the National Assessment Policy and Guidelines			
Establish and development the National Learning Outcomes Assessment System			
Conduct EGMAs and EGRAs (including teacher knowledge competence)			

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Equip the Examination Secretariat with the required office equipment and tools, Internet, and stationery (including the inclusive unit)			
Train 100 staff of the Examination Secretariat in examination management processes			
Train 260 examiners in examination management processes			
Train teachers on classroom-based and formative assessments			
Benchmark assessment practices against international and regional practices			

Alongside the establishment of a formative assessment framework and the creation of an operational system for its implementation, the plan will facilitate capacity development initiatives and systematic dissemination of formative assessment practices to educational institutions. The plan will conduct training sessions for 100 staff members from the Examination Secretariat to enhance their proficiency in examination management. This will help drive operational efficiency and achieve the defined objectives. Additionally, 260 examiners will undergo specialized training in formative assessment techniques. This cadre of trained personnel will subsequently teach formative assessment methodologies to teachers at the grass-roots level, ensuring that standardized policies are implemented consistently throughout the country.

4.2.4 Policy Goal 6: Improve the teaching and learning environment as well as the physical and psychological well-being of learners, teachers, and school staff

4.2.4.1 Strategy 6.1: Promote policies that make the school environment conducive for learning

The ESA 2022 highlighted critical deficiencies in the educational landscape across the country. Teaching and learning environments across the various levels of education are in serious need. These challenges are partly due to long-standing standards that have governed the sector for over a decade, and they require adjustments to align with evolving patterns. The plan will support the revision of the basic requirements and minimum standards indicators, with a specific focus on accommodating critical issues such as climate change adaptation and enhancing school resilience, including disaster risk reduction measures in the standards framework. Upon validation, the revised requirements indicators will be printed and distributed to educational institutions nationwide.

The Directorate of Basic and Secondary Education has made significant progress in formulating the Teachers' Code of Conduct. They will now move to the next step of dissemination. The plan will capitalize on existing teacher training platforms, such as curriculum-focused training, teacher upgrading initiatives, or continuous professional development programmes, to ensure widespread dissemination of the Code of Conduct among teachers.

In response to the challenges encountered by the school feeding programme, MoGEI has initiated the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme, which leverages community awareness and sensitization campaigns. This approach encourages schools to grow their own food by obtaining land from local

communities. It reduces their dependence on external entities such as the World Food Programme for food supply. To further reinforce the adoption of this self-sustaining solution, the plan will support a nationwide awareness campaign across all states and administrative areas. The objective is to motivate schools to allocate resources towards establishing school garden programmes, which will help foster self-reliance and sustainability in their food supply systems.

Table 33: Strategy 6.1: Promote policies that make the school environment conducive for learning

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Review the basic requirements and minimum standards indicators	Proportion of schools meeting the basic requirements and minimum standards indicators	TBD	TBD
Support and strengthen implementation of the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme, paying special attention to the most at-risk locations			

4.2.4.2 Strategy 6.2: Provide support for minimum school requirements

The Child-Friendly Environment Tool, developed through a collaborative effort between UNICEF and MoGEI, serves as a valuable instrument for evaluating the learner-centric nature of schools, effectively gauging the overall conduciveness of the learning environment. Based on the findings of the ESA 2022 report, which covers areas such as school infrastructure, access to water, sanitation, electricity, and safety, the plan will support the assessment of schools through the Child-Friendly Environment Tool to assess schools and determine the degree of compliance across educational institutions. The plan will support the enhancement of facilities and amenities in identified schools. This includes making selected schools accessible and accommodating both able and disabled learners, ensuring that the physical infrastructure aligns with the participation needs of all learners. Additionally, the plan will facilitate dialogue with the Education Management Information System (EMIS) unit to explore the integration of schoolchild-friendly assessments into Annual School Census tools, thereby fostering sustainability in the assessment process.

Table 34: Strategy 6.2: Provide support for minimum school requirements

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Rehabilitate and construct water, sanitation, and electricity facilities to ensure that they are climate resilient	Proportion of schools with access to safe water for drinking	68%	77%
	Proportion of schools with a reliable source of electricity	2%	31%
	Proportion of schools with functional sanitation facilities	48%	77%

4.2.4.3 Strategy 6.3: Provide emotional and mental well-being support for learners and staff and promote co-curricular activities for peaceful coexistence

In partnership with the Ministry of Health, the plan will facilitate the development of comprehensive training materials and guidelines for providing assistance to learners and staff affected by mental health challenges and in need of psychosocial support. These guidelines will serve as a foundational resource for

the plan’s initiatives. The plan will also support the training of about 30 Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Cluster members, comprising two representatives from each state/administrative area and four from MoGEI. These trained individuals will subsequently train an estimated 1,500 teachers on the essential aspects of mental health and psychosocial support. As part of a comprehensive strategy, the plan will incorporate mental health and psychosocial support into the curricula of national TTIs and county education centres. This ensures that teachers trained at these institutions will have the necessary competencies to effectively assist learners and staff experiencing mental health challenges.

Recognizing the importance of co-curricular activities in promoting the holistic development and well-being of learners and staff in educational institutions, the plan will champion the development of a comprehensive co-curricular policy. This will include reviewing the current Physical Education and Sports Policy, with the objective of producing a more robust policy framework. The envisaged policy is expected to provide clear directives on the establishment and effective functioning of school clubs. It will give learners a platform to articulate their concerns not only in the educational context but also in their extracurricular lives.

Furthermore, the plan will extend support to schools by providing an inclusive assortment of sports equipment, including items such as sports balls, nets, athletics gear, and ECE kits, among others. In addition to the policy and equipment provisions, the initiative will facilitate the implementation of a one-time school games circuit at the state, national, and regional level. In a conflict context, games not only promote physical health, mental well-being, teamwork, discipline, and character development but also offer a vital platform for peaceful coexistence. By bringing children and youth from diverse backgrounds and conflicting perspectives together, sports encourage mutual understanding, tolerance, and conflict resolution skills, contributing to a more harmonious learning environment, which is the hallmark of the current curriculum for South Sudan.

Table 35: Strategy 6.3: Provide emotional and mental well-being support for learners and staff and promote co-curricular activities for peaceful coexistence

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Train and orient teachers in mental health and primary and secondary psychosocial support services	Percentage of schools with an effective grievance redressal mechanism in place	0%	100%
Develop a co-curricular policy, which includes a review of the Physical Education and Sports Policy, and guidelines for establishing school clubs			
Supply recreational equipment to schools	Percentage of schools reporting reduced cases of school-related violence	N/A	100%
Conduct school games competitions (state, national, and regional levels)			

4.2.5 Policy Goal 7: Improve labour market relevance of TVET

4.2.5.1 Strategy 7.1: Increase the capacity of TVET trainers

The ESA 2022 revealed critical deficiencies in the TVET system, most notably the acute shortage of qualified TVET trainers. This strategy will establish an enabling environment for the preservice training of TVET instructors, thereby strengthening the human resources in the TVET ecosystem. It will also create opportunities for the upskilling of current tutors. A principal component is establishing a training centre in Juba that will provide pedagogical training courses and professional development opportunities for teachers and instructors in the TVET sector. The institution will be structured like a university to ensure that it can effectively execute its pivotal role.

In tandem with the establishment of the training centre for TVET trainers, the plan will provide preservice scholarships to 400 prospective instructors who are pursuing diploma and degree programmes that align with TVET offers in South Sudan. It will not only build capacity of the benefiting instructors but will also be instrumental in pioneering access to the TVET trainer centre. During the initial phases of operation, the country may explore collaboration with neighbouring countries to engage external experts in the initial training processes. This collaborative approach will enrich training programmes and incorporate diverse perspectives into the curriculum.

The plan also emphasizes the significance of continuous capacity development for TVET trainers. It will facilitate regular workshops and seminars to exchange knowledge, with a focus on management, tracer studies, evaluations in TVET, TVET-specific planning, and technological advancements. The plan will further facilitate annual internal knowledge exchange visits, which will enable approximately 60 TVET instructors to engage with their counterparts in their respective TVET colleges. Additionally, it will sponsor learning tours for 30 TVET managers and inspectors to countries renowned for their expertise in TVET, including Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Japan, and Kenya.

The efforts are based on the commitment to improve the skills of human resources in TVET. The plan has an ambitious goal of recruiting nearly 2,200 TVET personnel, with a particular emphasis on inclusion by reserving quotas for female teachers and individuals with disabilities across various training sectors. This approach will address the critical deficiencies in the TVET system.

The ESA 2022 revealed several weaknesses in the TVET system, including the limited availability of TVET trainers. Additionally, many existing trainers are not qualified to the expected levels. The strategy will support the creation of an environment for the preservice training of TVET trainers. This will expand the human resources in the TVET ecosystem and provide opportunities for upgrading/upskilling existing tutors as outlined in the activities in *Table 36*.

Table 36: Strategy 7.1: Increase the capacity of TVET trainers

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Establish a national TVET teacher training centre	Proportion of qualified TVET instructors (according to minimum requirements)	0%	100%
Provide preservice scholarships to prospective TVET instructors			
Organize regular workshops and seminars for knowledge-sharing			
Organize external exchange visits for knowledge-sharing in TVET systems			
Recruit 2,173 TVET trainers to match the expansion of TVET			

4.2.5.2 Strategy 7.2: Promote the development and roll-out of the training CBC in key employment-generating trades in cooperation with the private sector

The sector has successfully developed the training CBC for level 1, which will enable trainees to participate in modularized training. As part of an overarching effort to enhance the TVET landscape in the country while promoting lifelong learning, GESP will facilitate the development of levels 2 to 8 of the training CBC. In addition to trade-specific modules, the plan will prioritize integrating disaster risk reduction approaches into the training CBC. This will ensure the sustainability of measures against challenges such as climate change and conflict. The plan will also expand the TVET curriculum to include trades and sectors such as environment, agriculture and food security, livestock and fisheries, wildlife and tourism, irrigation, water resources, and trade and industry. This will involve training 500 instructors from various TVET sectors to implement the competency-based training framework. To ensure the curriculum is implemented effectively, the plan will provide extensive support, training tools, equipment, and diverse learning materials, including both consumable and non-consumable items, to 17 designated TVET centres and schools distributed across 10 states and three administrative areas.

The transition from education to work in the TVET system of South Sudan has been notably weak. It is evident that the current system is not adequately preparing trainees, particularly youths, for the job opportunities that are available. To address this issue, the plan proposes implementing structured apprenticeship programmes to offer TVET graduates a well-defined path from school to work. Part of this initiative involves the development and dissemination of apprenticeship guidelines. The dissemination will entail publishing and distributing 5,000 copies of guidelines across all 10 states and three administrative areas, as well as involving stakeholders from the National TVET Ad Hoc Coordination Committee. The plan aims to enhance the quality of TVET by developing inspection guidelines and circulating 6,000 copies among various stakeholders in the TVET sector. Furthermore, the plan intends to provide training to 150 inspectors who are specialized in the evaluation of TVET training across diverse sectors.

Table 37: Strategy 7.2: Promote the development and roll-out of the training CBC in key employment-generating trades in cooperation with the private sector

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Finalize the development of the training CBC for levels 2–8 to accommodate lifeline learning	Proportion of TVET centres implementing the training CBC	N/A	100%
Train 500 TVET instructors on the training CBC			
Provide capacity development and upskilling TVET instructors			

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Provide training and learning materials, tools, equipment, and machinery to TVET centres			
Develop and disseminate apprenticeship and training guidelines			
Conduct quality assurance in TVET centres			

4.2.5.3 Strategy 7.3: Improve TVET linkages with the labour market

To ensure that TVET programmes meet the dynamic demands of the labour market, it is imperative to use a comprehensive, data-driven approach. It involves collecting extensive data about the broader labour market landscape and the existing TVET programmes in the system. To facilitate this, a robust solution will be implemented in the form of a national TVET Management Information System (TVET-MIS) seamlessly integrated into the MoGEI EMIS. The TVET-MIS will serve as the central hub for the systematic collection, collation, and analysis of all TVET-related data. As part of this initiative, a statistician will be recruited at the national level. This expert will play a pivotal role in refining data-collection instruments and collaborating closely with relevant authorities in MoGEI to ensure TVET-MIS harmonizes with the existing EMIS infrastructure in basic and secondary education. Recognizing the significance of comprehensive labour market assessments for informed decision-making, the plan will further support a national annual labour market evaluation. This emphasizes the commitment to excellence driven by data, thereby fostering the enhancement of TVET programme quality and labour market relevance.

Additionally, there is a notable absence of linkages between TVET centres and the labour market, particularly in terms of trainee and apprenticeship programmes. To address this issue, the plan will train TVET centre managers on resource mobilization and networking. The training will cover how to establish mutually beneficial partnerships with private centres to create training opportunities and facilitate shared facility usage. This training will be conducted twice at the state level during the duration of the plan. It will equip managers with the capacity to build and maintain partnerships with the private sector.

Table 38: Strategy 7.3: Improve TVET linkages with the labour market

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Establish a national TVET-MIS	Number of TVET annual reports being produced	0	5
Conduct labour market assessments			
Conduct TVET tracer studies and evaluation			
Build capacity of TVET centre managers on partnership building	Proportion of TVET centres with private sector partnerships	0%	85%

4.3 Education financing and governance

4.3.1 Policy Goal 8: Increase domestic public financing to education

4.3.1.1 *Strategy 8.1: Strengthen cooperation between education and legislative structures of the government*

MoGEI will not be able to increase education financing alone. Instead, it will be necessary for the education sector to engage with outside actors. This is especially important for bodies and policies that frame and influence government priorities, including parliament, specifically the Parliamentary Committee on Education, state governors, the private sector, civil society, vice-presidents, and key laws and policies. MoGEI will use its position to advocate with these actors by introducing regular meetings between MoGEI and key actors, increasing lobbying and engagement activities, taking greater advantage of opportunities to present financing challenges in the education sector, and reconsidering the policies and laws that dictate financial commitments to education.

The Parliamentary Committee on Education is made up of parliamentarians. It serves as the key body for advocating the education agenda at the legislative level. Currently, there is no institutionalized communication between the committee and MoGEI. The GESP will facilitate annual meetings between MoGEI and the committee that will allow MoGEI to express any concerns regarding budget allocations during the budget preparation cycle and the timely release of allocated funds. During these conversations, the release of Chapter 3 funds (development expenditure) and EMIS funds will be emphasized. These funds and areas that have previously seen exceptionally low budget execution are priorities for MoGEI. Meetings will be conducted annually and will involve the highest levels of MoGEI leadership, including the undersecretary, the minister, and any other individuals deemed to be relevant for specific meetings.

The Parliamentary Committee on Education is the primary advocate for education at the legislative level. It is crucial that members engage with educational realities to be able to accurately communicate needs to parliament. To strengthen this engagement, committee members will be involved in MoGEI monitoring activities, such as project visits or emergency needs assessments twice per year throughout the plan period. The usefulness of engaging the Parliamentary Committee more closely in MoGEI activities was already demonstrated during the ESA process that involved committee members in the validation of the report. This engagement led to the committee committing to advocating for MoGEI at the parliamentary level and provided them with the appropriate knowledge and facts needed to do so.

Beyond parliament, achieving increased educational financing will require engaging the highest levels of political power, including the President, vice-presidents, and ministers. The GEAR forum is a key tool for officials to evaluate the education sector. It is used to present key statistics and information regarding budget execution and funding gaps. The GEAR is especially useful for engaging the vice-president of the Services Cluster, which includes education. This vice-president can carry influence with the President regarding budget execution and allocation, but MoGEI has limited contact with them otherwise. Conducting a GEAR will provide an opportunity to share information with the vice-president and, subsequently, the President and other high-level political figures about the current state of the education sector and the need for sufficient financing. The national GEAR will be accompanied by an annual state-

level GEAR. This will provide an opportunity for state and administrative areas to express their concerns regarding the timely release of transfer funds.

Although the MoFP controls budget execution, the private sector, civil society, and development partners play a key role in advocating for greater domestic financing for education and improved MoGEI budget execution. The plan intends to leverage the soft power of these organizations and prominent community leaders to put pressure on parliament to ensure that education is prioritized in both budget allocations and executions. MoGEI will be responsible for mobilizing these actors through two meetings per year, which are organized by the Department of Partner Coordination, bringing development partners, the private sector, and civil society together. During these exchanges, MoGEI will provide relevant updates on funding executions and current areas of greatest need. These elements can be used in advocacy efforts by associated organizations and individuals in their communications with government contacts.

The challenge of financing education is not only limited to the national level, but the ESA also identified a lack of financial commitments in the budgets of state and administrative area governments to general education. As a result, the plan will seek to improve engagement with state-level officials regarding their responsibilities in financing education. The Governors' Forum is an annual event where state governors meet with national administrations to discuss important national issues and priorities. This provides a key opportunity for MoGEI to communicate with the highest political leadership at the decentralized level. In previous years, MoGEI has been asked to make presentations that highlight key messages concerning education to be communicated to governors. During the plan period, MoGEI will use this annual meeting with state governors to advocate for increased financial allocations to education at the state level. This will include emphasizing and reiterating state-level responsibilities for financing education as spelled out in the Education Act to ensure that states are contributing their fair share to the financing of the sector.

Finally, advocacy and the message of MoGEI in terms of improving educational financing must be based in law and policy. The Education Act of 2012 is the primary policy guiding the education sector. The act sets a target of 10 per cent of all government expenditure to be allocated to general education. This target is well below internationally recommended standards of 15–20 per cent. To reach the allocation levels targeted under the GESP, the act must first be revised upward to serve as a tool for advocacy. The process of reviewing the act will begin in the ministry itself, which will propose an amendment, specifically referring to Chapter 5. Relevant stakeholders will review this amendment before it is put forward by the Education Committee in parliament for approval by the judiciary. The judiciary will then pass the amendment into law. The review of the act will be prioritized during the first years of the plan to ensure the necessary financial commitments for effective plan implementation are made available as quickly as possible.

Table 39: Strategy 8.1: Strengthen cooperation between education and legislative structures of the government

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Introduce annual meetings between the Parliamentary Committee on Education and MoGEI	Education recurrent expenditure as a proportion of government recurrent expenditure	5%	20%
Conduct joint monitoring activities with the Parliamentary Committee on Education			
Conduct a GEAR			
Lobby and conduct advocacy with parliamentarians in collaborations with civil society, development partners, and the private sector			
Present education financing gaps and responsibilities at the Annual Governors' Forum			
Review and amend the financial allocation target in the Education Act of 2012 to align with international standards			

4.3.1.2 Strategy 8.2: Review the distribution of funds for general education

The ESA report showed that there is an unequal distribution of funds at the decentralized level, with the amount allocated per learner and per school varying greatly between states and administrative areas. This arises due to the nationally led budget development process through which transfers to states are based on the total number of schools and counties. The current transfer formula does not consider the total number of learners enrolled or the unique characteristics of states, such as size, rurality, and risk index. Furthermore, MoGEI financing is concentrated on salary expenditure, with no capitation grants or crisis response and disaster prevention budget present. The GESP will therefore strengthen the provision of educational services by ensuring more equitable funding for decentralized administrations. This will be achieved by reviewing the transfer formula and strengthening their capacities in budget creation, while also considering the expansion of non-salary and disaster risk reduction expenditure.

Addressing the question of the value and method of transfers will be twofold. Firstly, the transfer formula will be reviewed to ensure greater equity. This review will be conducted through a meeting between the Technical Working Group (TWG) on Education Transfer Monitoring Committees, the Budget Technical Workshop Group, and the Ministry of Finance. These bodies will meet before the budget formulation period to consider how the transfer guidelines can be adapted to include additional factors, such as the introduction of a supplementary transfer for the most at-risk states as identified in the ESA. The annual review will ensure that financing is adapted to the most current situation and will be integrated into the currently operational annual review of the transfer policy. In parallel with the review of the transfer formula, states and administrative areas will be capacitated to develop their own budgets so that funding can be better aligned with needs. This will involve training finance staff from all states and administrative areas in how to create budgets according to ceilings (preset by the new transfer formula). This training will be conducted twice during the plan period. The training will further serve as an assessment of whether the conditions are appropriate for programme-based budgeting. If the conditions are deemed to be supportive, training on this aspect will be included as well.

The ESA revealed little MoGEI spending outside of salary expenditure. This included no spending on capitation grants, which are awarded according to a fixed amount per learner and per school depending on the level of education. Under the current system, the Girls’ Education South Sudan programme is responsible for allocating these grants to secondary schools, while the government is responsible for primary schools. During the consultation process for the ESA and GESP, it was determined that capitation grants need to be more adaptable and variable in different contexts. For example, the cost of upgrading school infrastructure is not the same for schools in rural areas as for those in cities. In addition to capitation grants, the Girls’ Education South Sudan programme also distributes cash transfers to girls in P5 onwards. The results of the ESA suggest that these initiatives are having a positive impact on female retention as evidenced by the narrowing of the gender gap in access from P5. The GESP consultation process suggested that it would be beneficial to extend cash transfers to the first grade of primary school. Additionally, it is important to consider whether cash transfers could be integrated into the broader capitation grant structure. For example, schools could receive more funding based on the total number of girls enrolled. To review capitation grants and cash transfer guidelines, meetings will be held with partners and stakeholders. These meetings will consider the most effective method to adjust financing structures, including the introduction of a variable funding mechanism based on school characteristics and the expansion of cash transfers for female learners before P5.

As part of an expansion of non-salary expenditure, South Sudan requires funding that is flexible, adaptable, and quick to deploy to prepare for and respond to the various risks it faces, namely in terms of flooding, drought, and conflict. This is becoming increasingly urgent as the effects of climate change continue to worsen. The current budget structure of MoGEI does not include a specific allocation for disaster prevention, mitigation, response, or recovery. Schools affected by crises rely on their respective states or administrative areas for redistribution efforts or on partners for financial support. To remedy this situation, the GESP intends to create a reserve or contingency budget. The budget can be used to quickly provide funding to states and administrative areas affected by disasters (response and early recovery) as well as to implement climate change adaptation measures (prevention measures). These measures will increase the resilience of the education system and minimize the effects of extreme weather events on education. The MoFP will create this budget line in the annual MoGEI budget. The budget will be submitted to MoFP and reviewed annually in joint meetings.

Table 40: Strategy 8.2: Review the distribution of funds for general education

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Review education transfer formula, including the capitation grant formula to better respond to needs and improve equity	Education recurrent expenditure as a proportion of government recurrent expenditure	15%	20%
Train MoGEI, SMOGEIs, three administrative areas, and county education departments on budget preparation and execution			
Review the cash transfers policy, including the amounts			
Create a reserve/contingency budget for disaster prevention, mitigation, response, and recovery			

4.3.1.3 Strategy 8.3: Strengthen financial cooperation and coordination between MoGEI, MoFP, and MoPS

The ESA identified a key issue regarding education financing: low levels of budget execution, particularly when compared to other sub-sectors and the overall government budget. MoGEI will need to work closely with MoFP and MoPS to improve budget execution as they are ultimately responsible for the timely release of funds. The involvement of MoPS is key to ensuring satisfactory levels of execution of salary funds, particularly in adherence to the new salary scale, while the MoFP is responsible for the execution of all non-salary expenditure. To ensure timely release of funds and overall budget execution, MoGEI will improve coordination and communication with the two key ministries. Additionally, MoGEI will work to build mutual trust through strengthened financial transparency.

Communication and linkages between the financing ministries and MoGEI are sporadic and as such, the GESP will introduce bimonthly financial review meetings between MoGEI, MoFP, and MoPS where progress in terms of budget execution can be reviewed. These meetings are held between high-level stakeholders, including the Undersecretary and the Director General of Finance and Planning in MoGEI. The meetings provide MoGEI with an opportunity to advocate for the timely release of funds from both MoFP and MoPS.

Throughout the GESP consultation process, one of the underlying issues that caused low levels of budget execution in education was the lack of trust that MoFP and MoPS had in MoGEI due to the lack of transparency and accountability. Following the introduction of reforms and capacity-building aimed at increasing accountability, as detailed in Strategy 4, two public expenditure reviews and tracking surveys will be conducted over the plan period to demonstrate the positive effects of reforms on financial transparency. These reviews will help to build trust between MoGEI, MoFP, and MoPS, and increase the likelihood of the timely release of allocated funds.

Table 41: Strategy 8.3: Strengthen financial cooperation and coordination between MoGEI, MoFP, and Public Service

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Introduce bimonthly financial review meetings between MoGEI, MoFP, and MoPS	Improved proportion of salary transfer released on time	25%	100%
Conduct a public education expenditure review every two years	Improved proportion of capitation grants released on time	15%	100%

4.3.1.4 Strategy 8.4: Strengthen financial accountability and public fiscal management systems

The Public Expenditure Tracking Survey on education conducted in 2021 revealed critical issues regarding the accountability of funds and a lack of strong public fiscal management systems. These issues were particularly evident in the process of decentralization to the level of states and administrative areas. Although the ESA analysis confirmed these concerns, data regarding budget execution at the state and administrative area levels remain elusive. The lack of accountability was also observed in teacher salaries, which has caused concerns about transparency throughout the system. The GESP will address these

concerns by strengthening existing financial accountability systems and public fiscal management systems through capacity-building and resource mobilization and introducing a budget performance dashboard.

MoGEI has already started addressing some of the concerns raised by the Public Expenditure Tracking Survey regarding transparency and accountability. This was done by establishing education transfer monitoring committees (ETMCs) at the state level, each consisting of eight members, who are responsible for monitoring the receipt and execution of transfers received from MoGEI. Although state ETMCs have received initial training, it is necessary to provide ongoing training as members change and new systems or policies are introduced, particularly in the event of any changes to the transfer formula as envisioned under Strategy 2. Training sessions will be presented twice during the planning period by staff from the central administration who will travel to states and administrative areas. The GESP consultation revealed that although state ETMCs are in existence in principle in all states, they are not currently functioning as initially envisioned due to a lack of resources and incentives. The GESP will introduce a monthly allowance for each state and administrative area specifically designated for the state ETMCs, which will be provided conditional on the submission of a monthly state ETMC report. This allowance can be used for transportation and other logistical costs related to state ETMCs. This conditional funding, along with continuous training, will facilitate state ETMCs to conduct their tasks efficiently, namely monitoring expenditure at the decentralized level and communicating this information to MoGEI.

To date, ETMCs have only been created at the state level. However, MoGEI has also planned to establish ETMCs at the county level where they will be responsible for conducting parallel functions as they do at the state level. The establishment of county ETMCs under the GESP will involve selecting and training county ETMC members based on the materials and guidelines developed for the state ETMCs. Training sessions will be presented by members of the ETMCs of the respective states, who will also be responsible for conducting oversight. During the first year, two training sessions will be conducted in each county for the county ETMCs to ensure that the members understand their roles and responsibilities. The training will be followed by refresher training once during the plan period. County ETMCs will similarly be allocated a monthly allowance to cover operational costs, including transportation, which will be paid by the relevant SMOGEIs conditional on the submission of a monthly county ETMC report.

In addition to state and county ETMCs, financial transparency and accountability will be improved by harmonizing financial processes and strengthening capacity among state and administrative area MoGEIs and county education departments. This will include providing training on how to use paysheets and create a digital payroll that is aligned with the South Sudan Public Payroll System. Digitizing at the state level will allow for the creation of a unified payroll system, which will also support the teacher management and distribution efforts that were conceptualized under the Quality Priority Programme. Training will be provided on the budget tracking tool, which administrations will use to track their monthly spending. Administration will be responsible for submitting the budget to MoGEI. The training sessions will engage the state or administrative area Director General of MoFP as well as state-level payroll managers and county-level senior inspectors. Training sessions will be held twice throughout the plan period to bring state-level actors together for central MoGEI staff to provide training.

In addition to capacity-building at the decentralized level, yearly training sessions led by external facilitators will be provided to the National Department of Finance, including accountants and auditors, to build capacity on financial accountability and public fiscal management systems. Training will be conducted once during the plan period at the national level and will work to strengthen ongoing public finance management reforms. Furthermore, a digital budget performance dashboard will be created by an external consultant wherein expenditure and allocations from both central and decentralized levels can be presented and updated in real time.

Financial transparency in South Sudan is hampered by its weak banking sector, which suffered significantly during years of conflict. For example, the public expenditure review noted that there were limited bank accounts available among county and payam education departments, schools, and teachers. This led to bottlenecks in the flow of funds. During the GESP consultations, it was revealed that states must pay money transfer service providers to physically deliver salaries to counties. These fees are deducted from the salaries received. To ensure teachers and other education officials at decentralized levels receive their salaries in full, an additional budget line for cash transfer agent fees will be introduced for areas not currently serviced by banks. This fee, which can be as high as 18 per cent of the total amount to be transferred, will be included in budgets so that it is not deducted from the received amount.

Table 42: Strategy 8.4: Strengthen financial accountability and public fiscal management systems

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Provide refresher training to the state ETMCs	Proportion of states and administrative areas with external audit reports	0%	100%
Operationalize and facilitate state ETMCs			
Establish ETMCs in all counties			
Operationalize and facilitate county ETMCs	Proportion of states and administrative areas submitting returns	70%	100%
Build capacity of SMOGEIs, administrative areas, and county education departments on financial reporting including the South Sudan Electronic Payroll System, paysheets, and the budget tracking tool			
Strengthen the capacity of the Department of Finance and key personnel in financial oversight and public fiscal management	Proportion of counties submitting returns	0%	100%
Introduce a budget performance dashboard			
Introduce a budget for cash transfer agent fees for salary payments in non-serviced areas			

4.3.2 Policy Goal 9: Improve planning and effective coordination practices

4.3.2.1 Strategy 9.1: Enhance the capacity of the MoGEI in data analysis and planning, including crisis sensitivity

The ESA identified an underutilization of data to inform strategic planning and a lack of micro-level planning, particularly at the decentralized levels. Additionally, existing plans were seen to lack crisis sensitivity, meaning that activities had inadequate levels of adaptability and flexibility to meet the challenges of conflict and climate change present in South Sudan.³ The GESP will improve the data analysis and crisis-sensitive planning capacities of departments at both central and decentralized levels by building capacity and introducing coordinated planning processes.

Improving planning capacities necessitates the strengthening of data analysis abilities to ensure that plans are evidence-based. Therefore, capacity-building training will be provided to focus on data analysis and the importance of data in planning processes. These training sessions will follow a cascading model. The national team will be trained by external facilitators, who will then share this knowledge through training at the state level. The state-level training will be composed of state and select country representatives. Data analysis and processing training will be conducted on an annual basis to ensure that staff competencies are consistently being developed in line with emerging data quality challenges and new analysis tools.

Training in data analysis will be complemented by training in strategic planning, including crisis-sensitive planning, to ensure that the analysed data translate into actionable plans. Training sessions will be held twice during the plan period following a cascading structure in which international experts will first train national staff on crisis-sensitive educational planning. Thereafter, national staff will travel to the states to conduct training using this knowledge. In addition, national facilitators will deliver capacity-building to states on the development of annual workplans. These events will be held annually to ensure active engagement of state representatives in the design of annual workplans that align with the national workplan, thereby improving coordination and collaboration. Finally, the Directorate of Planning will conduct a study as well as exposure visits abroad to engage in knowledge-sharing with other countries in planning, data analysis, and processing. These visits will be needs-based according to the identified areas and will be conducted once per year within the plan period.

Table 43: Strategy 9.1: Enhance the capacity of the ministries in data analysis and planning including crisis sensitivity

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Strengthen capacity of planning staff at MoGEI, SMOGEIs, and administrative area in data analysis and processing	Execution rate of the budget of general education	46%	100%
Strengthen the capacity of planning staff on strategic planning and management at MoGEI, SMOE, and administrative areas, including crisis-sensitive planning			

³ Crisis-sensitive planning strives to overcome inequity and exclusion in education while encouraging a culture of risk awareness across all levels of the education system, thus ensuring that all education actors can anticipate, prepare for, and adapt to the effects of climate change.

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Build the capacity of MoGEI, SMOGEIs, and administrative areas in annual workplan development, prioritization, and alignment			
Conduct a needs-based study as well as exposure visits for the National Directorate of Planning			

4.3.2.2 Strategy 9.2: Improve monitoring and evaluation of schools and sector policies and plans, including disaster risk reduction

Data processing and analysis as outlined in Strategy 5 requires a basis of high-quality and reliable data with good coverage. The ESA report revealed many issues with the quality and coverage of data of the Annual School Census. Schools in certain counties were not enumerated due to accessibility issues, and questionnaires were missing key indicators, such as those related to disaster risk reduction and climate change. Outside of the Annual School Census, the ESA was unable to gather data from any other continuous monitoring activities that could provide deeper insight into the everyday functioning of schools. The GESP will address questions of quality and coverage through activities targeting the root of challenges, including through producing guidelines, decentralizing data collection, conducting regular school monitoring, and creating a harmonized data platform.

The Annual Education Census is the backbone of most education management information systems. Currently, South Sudan has conducted censuses sporadically, with the most recent one conducted in 2021, preceded by one in 2018. During the plan period, a census will be conducted annually. Additionally, the census will transition to a decentralized system of data collection to improve efficiency and coverage. The new decentralized system of data collection will begin in 2024. It will be implemented by training two state statistics officers per state and one county senior inspector per county to serve as enumerators. Training sessions will teach enumerators how to use the data-collection tool and explain the associated policies. These sessions will be held once per year before the data-collection phase and will be grouped into two regional workshops that will be facilitated by national EMIS staff. State and county enumerators will be supported by national-level staff in a supervisory role, as well as payam education supervisors, who will assist with school location and access throughout the four- to six-week data collection phase. Enumerators will receive appropriate equipment for school visits, including motorcycles, tablets for data collection, power banks, and rain protection.

To support the decentralization of data-collection activities, including the Annual School Census, MoGEI will develop a policy outlining key roles and responsibilities under this new model. The new EMIS policy and strategy will be developed in 2024. It will outline the functioning of the decentralized system and will be accompanied by data-collection guidelines and enumerator manuals. Guidelines will include localized timelines for data collection that will be aligned with the seasonal realities of different regions of the country as well as a protocol for inaccessible schools to ensure higher coverage of schools in the census. The data-collection tools will be reviewed against existing tools, including those of partners, to avoid duplication and to integrate indicators related to disaster risk reduction and prevention.

In addition to national school visits, data will be collected continuously by head teachers. They are responsible for filling out various data-collection tools, including the school performance monitoring tool and the Child-Friendly School Index. Both forms are collected by payam education supervisors and provide information regarding school attendance, learning acquisition, and overall school performance. The GESP consultation identified a need to support head teachers and payam education supervisors in completing these forms and other monitoring tools to ensure that the data received are reliable. Training for head teachers on these tools is currently ongoing and the plan makes provision for follow-up training to be conducted later during the plan period. The training will be conducted in a cascading format, with county education centre tutors receiving training from national staff. These tutors will then provide training to head teachers and payam education supervisors in their respective counties, either at the county education centre or through cluster training conducted in schools.

To ensure the quality of data collected from decentralized offices, monitoring and evaluation representatives from MoGEI will conduct four spot monitoring visits per year in selected schools in each state and administrative area. This will result in 52 total visits per year. The purpose is to assess data-collection practices and accuracy. The monitoring and evaluation department in the national ministry will further be furnished with appropriate materials to produce periodic reports based on these visits regarding the implementation of projects and programmes.

Beyond government activities, partners also conduct large-scale data collection in South Sudan, including the South Sudan Schools' Attendance Monitoring System (SSSAMS). Currently, MoGEI is unable to link different databases due to a lack of a standardized school list and unique school IDs. A need was therefore identified to create a harmonized data system that collates data sources in one platform, including the Annual School Census and SSSAMS. This system will further utilize unique school codes so that data from various sources can be attributed to a single institution. The introduction of a harmonized data platform will be key in supporting the development of evidenced-based policies and will further aid in monitoring implementation. The technical committee for data integration will select an external consultant to develop this platform. The consultant's terms of reference will include training the team on the completed platform. Once the platform has been developed, it can be shared with partners who can then enter their own data using the school codes provided.

Table 44: Strategy 9.2: Improve monitoring and evaluation of schools and sector policies and plans including disaster risk reduction

Activities	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Conduct an Annual Education Census	Proportion of schools covered in the Annual Education Census	75%	100%
Train Annual Education Census enumerators at decentralized levels on data-collection tools			
Equip EMIS units and Annual Education Census enumerators at state, county, administrative area, and central levels with data-collection tools			
Develop an EMIS policy and decentralization strategy including data-collection guidelines and enumerator manuals, and review data-collection tools			

Activities	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Train head teachers and education managers (payam and county) on the use of the school performance monitoring tool and the Child-Friendly School Index			
Conduct oversight monitoring of school/education data			
Produce periodic reports on the implementation of projects and programmes			
Establish a harmonized and integrated data platform (EMIS, SSSAMS, human resources data set, etc.) utilizing unique school codes			

4.3.2.3 Strategy 9.3: Enhance and strengthen national and sub-national research and statistical capacities

The decentralization of the Annual School Census will be accompanied by the decentralization of statistical analysis and research activities. This process will strengthen statistical analyses and provide more opportunities for targeted research to inform evidence-based policy development. Currently, the work of the research and policy development unit in MoGEI is limited to the national level and lacks adequate funding and prioritization. The lack of in-depth research on specific topics was noted through the ESA process, which was largely only able to identify correlation rather than causation. The GESP will seek to strengthen MoGEI’s research and policy development activities by developing a policy and strategy as well as guidelines. The GESP will also ensure adequate financing to conduct qualitative studies and evaluations on various educational challenges. Additionally, the GESP will decentralize statistical analysis and research activities.

The decentralization of the Annual School Census calls for a parallel process of decentralizing research and statistical analysis activities. This will involve the establishment of a research and statistics unit under the Department of Planning and Budgeting at the state and administrative area level. These units, each with one staff member, will be responsible for analysing data collected through the census and identifying areas for further research relevant to their specific context. In addition to decentralization, the national knowledge, evidence, and research TWG and the monitoring and evaluation unit will receive capacity-building to support and supervise the activities of the states and administrative areas. This training will be conducted yearly by an external facilitator during the plan period to solidify the new decentralized structure.

The Department of Research and Policy Development currently does not have a strategy, plan, or guidelines that outline the work and role of the department in the short, medium and long term. The development of these documents will be supported by an external consultant and will undergo a validation process with representatives from the national level and development partners to improve coordination between the ministry and partners on research activities. This document will support the decentralization process and will be developed in 2024.

Under the new strengthened and decentralized system, the national research and policy development unit, in collaboration with the state and administrative areas research and statistics units, will be tasked with conducting at least one study per year aligned with identified research needs. Potential topics for

these studies in the plan period include the impact of capitation grants, curriculum implementation, reasons for female dropout, and community attitudes towards education in the early years, among others.

Table 45: Strategy 9.3: Enhance and strengthen national and sub-national research and statistical capacities

Activities	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Establish research and statistics unit (under planning/budgeting) at decentralized levels	Education coordination framework fully operational	Non-operational	Operational
Strengthen the capacity of the knowledge, evidence and research TWG and the monitoring and evaluation unit			
Develop a national research policy and strategy and guidelines			
Conduct qualitative studies to improve educational planning and practice			

4.3.2.4 Strategy 9.4: Enhance the capacity of the ministry(s) in communication and coordination

The risk analysis chapter of the ESA identified a lack of communication and coordination both within MoGEI and between ministries regarding disaster risk reduction and climate change. An overarching lack of communication between central and decentralized levels was also identified throughout the ESA, particularly in Chapter 4. These challenges were reflected in the uneven application of policies at the state and administrative area levels, including the salary structure and a lack of staffing capacity to carry out coordination tasks. As a result, the plan will strengthen the capacity of existing staff members in communication and coordination while also expanding the number of staff in relevant units.

The current structure of MoGEI focuses on coordinating with development partners and does not have a dedicated person for intra- or interministerial communication. This was attributed as one of the reasons why information rarely trickles down from the central to lower administrative levels. To improve communication and coordination, an individual will be appointed as the internal communication and coordination focal point in the Partners Development Coordination Unit. This person will be responsible for managing communication and coordination between the national MoGEI and their respective states or administrative areas. This individual and the focal person for the Partners Development Coordination Unit will receive training. The role of this individual will then shift to solely focusing on external communications. Training will extend to other representatives from states, administrative areas, counties, and MoGEI on the application of the communication framework, which was deemed non-operational, as well as the use of information and communication technologies.

In addition to regularly communicating key policy messages, South Sudan needs to ensure that it is able to respond to the increasing risk posed by climate change. In doing so, a focal point will be identified in all states and administrative area MoEs as well as the central MoGEI for disaster risk reduction and climate change. This will be accompanied by the establishment of a unit for disaster risk reduction at the central level through the review of the Blue Book to adapt the current organizational structure. The Ministry of Environment and Forestry and MoHADM will provide training to these individuals. The MoGEI focal point will further be included in the National Early Warning Technical Group and Disaster Management

convened by MoHADM and the Ministry of Environment and Forestry to increase knowledge-sharing between the ministries.

Table 46: Strategy 9.4: Enhance the capacity of the ministry(s) in communication and coordination

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Appoint and train a focal person in the office of coordination for disaster risk reduction and climate change in all SMOGEIs, administrative areas, and a unit in MoGEI	Education coordination framework fully operational	Non-operational	Operational
Build capacity of MoGEI, SMOE, administrative area, and county education department personnel in the application of the communication framework and ICT equipment			
Strengthen capacity and expand staffing of the Partners Development Coordination Unit at MoGEI, SMOGEIs, and administrative areas			

4.3.2.5 Strategy 9.5: Strengthen internal governance and communication structures

Communication and coordination challenges were linked to low levels of capacity in the application of frameworks and to an absence of communication tools and institutional systems. This included the absence of ICT tools such as computers and Internet connections as well as frameworks and structures for external coordination, whether this be with partners or other ministries. As a result, the GESP commits to provide ICT tools to decentralized levels, establish an early warning system for disaster risk reduction, and create a centralized donor activity and finance tracking tool.

GESP consultations identified problematic Internet connectivity as a key reason for the lack of communication and coordination between central and decentralized levels. While some states have received satellite Internet from partners, the government has not committed to taking over the costs of subscriptions once the project ends. The GESP commits to sustaining connectivity in offices where it already exists throughout the plan period, as well as establishing or upgrading Internet connectivity in central, state, or administrative areas where it is currently lacking or of low quality.

In addition to providing Internet connectivity, the GESP commits to distributing ICT tools to SMOGEIs, administrative area ministries of education, county education departments, and county education centres. This will include desktop computers for county offices, laptop computers for state offices and the national ministry, solar power electricity systems for all state and county offices, and combined printer copiers for state offices and the national ministry. These tools, supported by solar power systems with the appropriate capacity, will facilitate communication between decentralized offices and the national ministry and improve both coordination and transparency. Furthermore, the supply of ICT tools will be supported by the establishment of an ICT unit and the provision of a server to all states. The unit will be staffed by two ICT specialists who will oversee the maintenance of ICT tools and support staff in their utilization.

The ESA was able to identify many challenges and bottlenecks in the South Sudanese education system from a quantitative standpoint. However, the analysis was unable to consider questions of internal

governance and functional operations through an institutional analysis. The GESP proposes conducting a functional analysis of governance structures, which is particularly relevant for South Sudan since the current decentralized 10-state system has only been established recently. Analysing the system will identify gaps and opportunities, which can be built upon and addressed through a review of the Blue Book. This analysis will be conducted by an external consult who will travel to the states to conduct interviews with key informants. The results of this research will be presented to MoGEI, and will include recommendations on how to review the current structures and systems presented in the Blue Book to ensure greater ministerial efficiency.

Communication and coordination were not only considered internal challenges but also applied to external partners. This was particularly true in terms of financial coordination. While it is known that partners contribute large amounts of off-budget financial support to the education sector in South Sudan, there is a lack of information-sharing regarding financial investments as well as actions of local NGOs at state or county levels. The introduction of a digital tracking system will strengthen the Local Education Group and Education Donors Group. This system will contain information regarding the types of activity being implemented, by what partner, where activities are taking place, and the amount of funding allocated. The system will be developed by the Donor Coordination TWG and will be updated biannually in donor coordination meetings.

As mentioned in the risk analysis in the ESA, a lack of interministerial coordination is increasing the barriers to implementing effective disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation strategies. More specifically, there seems to be a lack of coordination between MoGEI and the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, as well as between MoGEI and MoHADM. Even though there are early warning systems in place to identify hazards three months in advance and regular meetings are held to address the impacts of these hazards, MoGEI is not involved in these discussions, partly because there is no focal person or unit in MoGEI responsible for disaster risk reduction and climate change. New disaster risk reduction and climate change focal points have been identified and trained. They will be included in discussions and integrated into an interministerial early warning communication chain. This chain will work as follows: once MoHADM identifies a hazard, the MoGEI focal point will be alerted, who will then contact the focal points of the states/administrative areas that will be affected by the identified hazard. Once the states are informed, each focal point will communicate directly with head teachers so that they can begin implementing measures to ensure learning continuity, as identified in the contingency plans developed under the Quality Priority Programme.

Table 47: Strategy 9.5: Strengthen internal governance and communication structures

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Sustain and improve VSAT Internet connectivity at SMOE and administrative area offices	Education coordination framework fully operational	Non-operational	Operational
Distribute additional ICT tools to SMOGEIs, administrative areas, county education departments, and county education centres			
Establish ICT unit at MoGEI and in all states and administrative areas			

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Conduct a functional analysis resulting in a review of the Blue Book according to conclusions			
Establish a centralized donor funding and activities tracking system			
Establish an early warning communication system/chain between MoHADM and MoGEL disaster risk reduction focal points at decentralized levels			

4.3.3 Policy Goal 10: Strengthen and unify TVET system governance

4.3.3.1 Strategy 10.1: Improve the policy and regulatory landscape of TVET including assessment and certification

To oversee the management of the newly unified system, a TVET authority will be established, comprising both national and state administrative offices. The authority will be responsible for overseeing and regulating the TVET system. One of the central components of their operations will be the implementation of the South Sudan National Technical Qualification Framework. At various decentralized levels, including the national level, the authority will be led by a director, complemented by a team of three support staff members. Additionally, the authority will integrate the South Sudan National Qualification Authority, which will operate from the national office, harmonizing the system under a universally recognized qualifications framework. This will streamline and professionalize the management of TVET programmes across the country.

The administration of the unified system will be supported by a national TVET assessment and certification awarding body. This entity will be responsible for conducting assessments and awarding certifications for trade skills units in the South Sudan Examination Secretariat, thereby standardizing TVET assessments and certificates at a national level. Certification will serve as a measure of proficiency and qualification for individuals transitioning from non-formal to formal education and training programmes. To ensure the effective operation of the assessment and certification body, a team of three staff members will be assigned to facilitate the training of assessors under the new system, further enhancing the overall quality and credibility of the TVET assessment and certification process. Furthermore, the system will benefit from the establishment of quality standards, with engagement from the private sector, where a sizeable portion of TVET graduates find employment. This endeavour will include the formulation of inspection guidelines customized to the diverse array of TVET trades and subjects. The guidelines will be distributed to decentralized TVET authorities, which will empower inspectors to apply them effectively during their assessments of TVET institutions.

Table 48: Strategy 10.1: Improve the policy and regulatory landscape of TVET including assessment and certification

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Establish TVET authority for system regulation and South Sudan National Technical Qualification Framework, including state offices	Number of TVET centres certified under minimum standards	0	219

Activity	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Develop guidelines for recognition of prior learning			
Establish a national TVET assessment and certification awarding body	Number of TVET graduates certified under the unified assessment system	0	75,000
Develop TVET quality standards with participation from private sector			

5. Cost of implementing GESP and financing

This section discusses the expenditure and financing requirements to meet the policy priorities and objectives set out in the GESP for 2023–2027. The financing structure includes both the cost of the activities proposed under the GESP and the cost of sustaining and expanding the current educational system. The projections were made using a demographic simulation model developed for South Sudan. Based on hypotheses formulated on the evolution of learners as well as the selected policy options and objectives, the simulation model estimates the main costs of the planned education policies and strategies. The model only includes enrolment-driven costs of planned policies and objectives focusing on staff salaries and incentives, school buildings and equipment, and key non-salary expenditure, including textbooks and teaching and learning materials. All other interventions, here termed system-strengthening activities, were costed in sessions with the national team and technical experts. The costs include those related to policy development, staff training, and community awareness campaigns.

5.1 Future economic outlook

The economic outlook for South Sudan is cautiously optimistic. The country has observed an economic rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic, which is particularly linked to an increase in the price of oil. The International Monetary Fund projects that the South Sudanese GDP will grow an average of 5 per cent annually over the plan period. In addition to this positive economic growth, more resources are anticipated to be available to the government due to the end of the mandatory fixed payment scheme to Sudan, which expired in 2022. While other mandatory expenditures related to the processing and transit of oil will be maintained, the end of the annual fixed sum payment, which was agreed during the peace agreement, has lapsed. This provides greater fiscal space for the government to provide public services, including education.

The total recurrent expenditure on education is projected to increase from 5 per cent of the total recurrent expenditure in 2021/22 to 17 per cent by 2026/27. The total development expenditure on education is projected to increase from 4 per cent of total government development expenditure to 10 per cent over the same period. While these increases are significant, they are deemed to be realistic due to the pre-existing commitment to education and the anticipated efforts of the plan to reduce key bottlenecks in the financing processes. In 2021/22, only 5 per cent of recurrent expenditure was spent on education. However, the initial budget allocated to education was 16 per cent of the total recurrent budget. This suggests that the reason for low expenditure in education is not due to a lack of political will at the budgetary level, but rather due to issues with budget execution. Therefore, the 17 per cent target to education is not seen to be out of reach. Efforts will be made throughout the GESP to improve budget execution by improving financial transparency and strengthening communications with the MoFP (see Governance and Financing Priority Programme). This will ensure that the government can attain the necessary levels of financing throughout the plan period.

Table 49: Macroeconomic outlook, 2021/22–2027/28

	2021/22	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Population (thousands)	13,651	14,675	15,145	15,693	16,290	16,872
GDP (constant, trillion SSP)	4,245	4,779	4,998	5,228	5,458	5,699
GDP/capita (constant, SSP)	310,965	325,633	330,042	333,169	335,077	337,753
Government expenditure (million SSP)	723,542	814,488	851,955	891,145	930,355	971,290
Recurrent expenditure	698,637	786,453	822,630	860,471	898,332	937,858
Capital expenditure	24,905	28,035	29,325	30,673	32,023	33,432
Education expenditure (million SSP)	37,973	73,997	93,746	115,154	138,070	162,779
Recurrent expenditure	36,995	72,329	91,704	112,708	135,192	159,436
as % of govt recurrent expenditure	5.3%	9.2%	11.1%	13.1%	15.0%	17.0%
Capital expenditure	978	1,668	2,042	2,446	2,878	3,343
as % of govt capital expenditure	3.9%	6.0%	7.0%	8.0%	9.0%	10.0%

Note: The government expenditure does not include mandatory expenditure.

5.2 Costing of the GESp

The process of costing the plan followed a collaborative and iterative design process, which started with identifying policy priorities, objectives, and strategies, and defining activities. The defined activities served as the basis for the costing process. During the planning process, representatives from 10 states and three administrative areas were consulted to ensure that the experiences and realities of the decentralized levels were considered. The defined activities were separated into two categories: enrolment-driven activities and non-enrolment-driven activities, otherwise known as system-strengthening activities. Enrolment-driven activities are those whose cost is determined by the number of learners enrolled in school. The financial simulation model was used to project the evolution of these activities, with population being the fundamental driver. Activities that were not deemed to be driven by enrolment underwent a costing process. Cost drivers were identified for each activity during the process, followed by the associated cost of each driver and the quantity needed for the respective activity. The frequency of activities over the plan period was considered and the yearly cost of implementing activities was subsequently generated. The costs of the cost drivers were standardized across the plan to ensure that activities of a similar nature did not have varying costs. Furthermore, these costs were generated by consulting with the national technical team, including government engineers, to ensure alignment with the South Sudanese context.

After identifying the initial costs, a rationalization process began with those activities included in the model, particularly development costs, which initially were obviously a shopping list with the associated elevated costs. Through a collaborative process, consensus was reached regarding the prioritization of development activities, particularly the construction of new classrooms and schools, rather than the upgrading of existing facilities or the rehabilitation of institutions. The institutional capacity to undertake the interventions was also considered. It included the system's capacity to train enough teachers to improve access, as well as construction capabilities. It is important to note that the government has not

constructed any schools since independence. Targets for the various parameters used in the simulation model were agreed upon through this collaborative process until a reasonable financing gap was reached. Cost rationalization of system-strengthening activities was also conducted by revising quantities and targets as well as identifying redundant or duplicate activities across the plan.

In succession to the ESA 2022, a financial simulation model was developed to reflect the levels of expenditure on the current system and the relative outputs across sub-sectors. The model depends on the number of schools, learners, teachers, and instructors, along with other variables observed in ESA 2023. Future years are predicted based on the associated population growth. The simulation model accommodated any activities proposed in the plan that were seen to be dependent on these factors, with costs associated with the expansion of existing programmes in the current education system. For example, the simulation model accommodates the recruitment of teachers as an expansion of the existing workforce. The plan requires the government to add the additional salaries of newly recruited teachers to their payroll, in addition to the salaries of teachers already in the system. These costs are projected based on the evolution of GDP. This means that elements such as teacher salaries will increase alongside economic growth and decrease alongside economic decline. It is important to note that the simulation model is fundamentally dependent on population and its growth. As explained in Box 1, the costs from the model are only valid to the extent that the population is valid.

Box 1: The Influence of Population Growth on Costing Estimates

The cost of expanding the existing programmes in the current education system, or enrolment-driven activities, is driven by the estimated population. For the purposes of costing this sector plan, population growth for South Sudan has been constrained to the sub-Saharan African average of 2.5 per cent. A regional average has been used due to the lack of reliable population data available for South Sudan. South Sudan has not conducted a census since independence; therefore, existing projections are predicated on old census data. This data become weaker for projection as one gets further away from the census year. Utilizing 2.5 per cent, it is estimated that over 600,000 school-aged children (3–18 years old) will be added to the system. The cost of expanding the education system, as projected by the simulation model, considers this population growth factor. This assumption alone has significant cost implications on the plan, particularly in relation to the construction of new schools and classrooms.

5.3 Cost of implementing the GESP

The cost of implementing the plan consists of two facets: the costs associated with the new activities and the costs of running and expanding the existing system. Considering both facets, the GESP for 2023–2027 is projected to cost around SSP 701.1 billion over the five-year period, which is made up of SSP 505.4 billion in recurrent costs and SSP 195.7 billion in capital costs. When learning and teaching materials are considered to be part of recurrent costs, infrastructure-related capital costs translate to 28 per cent of the projected costs. When learning and teaching materials are considered as development, the share of capital expenditure as a percentage of the projected costs averages 40 per cent. The level of expenses is expected to increase over the plan period, from SSP 33.3 billion in 2023/24 to SSP 176.1 billion in 2027/28. The substantial increase between 2023/24 and 2024/25 is driven by construction activities commencing in this year, after which the costs are projected to stabilize. Overall, there is an anticipated fivefold increase in

spending over the period to support both the expansion of the sector at the various education levels, in line with school population projections, and the construction efforts needed to increase educational access.

Table 50: Projected cost of GESP implementation by type, 2023/24–2027/28 (million SSP)

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
Expected costs (Option 1)	33,311	161,595	173,152	156,970	176,083	701,112
Recurrent (includes books)	29,522	115,864	125,616	107,732	126,707	505,441
Capital	3,789	45,731	47,536	49,239	49,376	195,671
Capital as a % of expected cost	11.4%	28.3%	27.5%	31.4%	28.0%	27.9%
Expected costs (Option 2)	33,311	161,595	173,152	156,970	176,083	701,112
Recurrent	29,522	78,658	90,829	103,395	121,542	423,946
Capital (includes books)	3,789	82,937	82,323	53,575	54,541	277,166
Capital as a % of expected cost	11.4%	51.3%	47.5%	34.1%	31.0%	39.5%

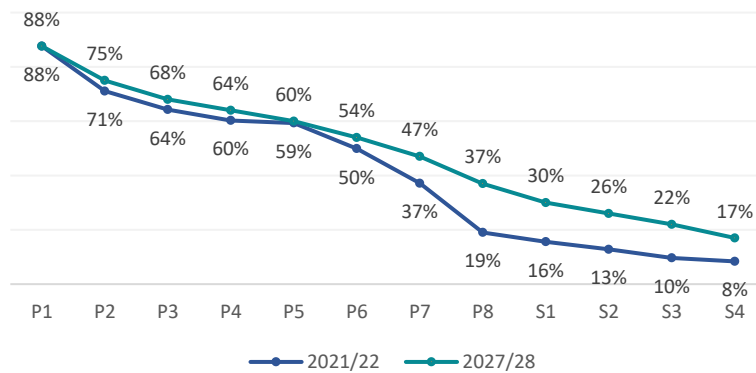
Infrastructure is expected to account for 28 per cent of total plan costs in Option 1, where capital costs exclude learning and teaching resources. This is a major increase from 7 per cent of capital expenditure in education in 2021/22. Due to the post-conflict nature of South Sudan, which has left a severe undersupply of learning institutions, this increase has been deemed reasonable, thereby necessitating strong construction efforts. Since independence, the government has been unable to fill the gap left by schools that were destroyed or damaged beyond repair due to conflict and natural disaster. The GESP proposes to invest in infrastructure for the next five years, as shown in *Table 51*, to compensate for previous years in which no government-led construction efforts were executed.

Table 51: Summary of schools and classrooms to be constructed

Type	Schools/Institutions	Classrooms
Pre-primary	–	510
Primary	116	3,303
Secondary	135	–
AES	–	–
TVET	11	–
TTI	11	–
Total	273	3,813

Large-scale construction of classrooms and schools at both the primary and secondary levels will help to improve access to and retention in primary and secondary education, as shown in the schooling profiles in *Figure 2*. The plan incorporates a hybrid approach to the delivery of schools and classrooms, with 10 per cent of the schools and classrooms being permanent and 90 per cent being based on semi-permanent structures trialled in the current Education Sector Programme Implementation Grant. The costing has accommodated differentiated unit costs for the permanent and semi-permanent structures. Furthermore, as partners have collectively been the sole financier of infrastructure developments in recent years, it is reasonably assumed that this trend will continue, making the high proportion of investment in capital feasible and attainable.

Figure 2: Projected access rates by grade, 2021/22 versus 2027/28



Recurrent costs will mainly be driven by the expansion of the system in terms of increased enrolment in both public schools at various levels of education. Another cost driver will be the increase in teacher salaries to reach an average of two times GDP per capita in 2026/27 from a baseline of less than one multiple. This was deemed to be a crucial intervention in improving the attractiveness of the teaching profession and is a reform that is currently under way with MoGEI and MoPS.

Table 52: Cost of expanding existing programmes and strengthening the system, 2023–2027

(In million SSP)	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
Total projected costs	33,311	161,595	173,152	156,970	176,083	701,112
System expansion	25,468	142,585	156,578	145,600	167,826	638,058
System strengthening	7,843	19,010	16,574	11,370	8,257	63,054
As % of total costs	23.5%	11.8%	9.6%	7.2%	4.7%	9.0%

System expansion activities will account for the majority of the costs over the plan period, projected at SSP 641.1 trillion or 91 per cent of total expected plan costs. The focus on expanding the system is an indication that the top priorities are improving access and retention and accommodating the rapidly growing school-age population. The new system-strengthening interventions will cost a total of SSP 63 trillion over the plan period. Activities include developing policies, training MoGEI staff at central and decentralized levels, running community awareness campaigns, providing targeted teacher training, and strengthening data collection, among others. The cost drivers behind these activities, such as transportation or technical assistance, are generally observed to be lower than those of more resource-consuming activities, such as construction. This can also explain their low share in the cost of the plan.

5.4 Financing the implementation of the GESp

The education sector is expected to receive SSP 664.5 trillion, with SSP 277.1 trillion from the government and SSP 387.4 trillion from development partners and donors. The resources expected from government are based on the macroeconomic parameters discussed earlier, including GDP growth. The government is committed to increasing the proportion of recurrent education expenditure as a proportion of government recurrent expenditure from 5 per cent to 17 per cent, and the proportion of development education expenditure from 4 per cent to 10 per cent. The effect of these efforts is seen in the evolving recurrent

and capital resources in *Table 53*. In both cases, the total government expenditure considered is net of mandatory expenditures. Including mandatory expenditure distorts the discretion of the government to allocate resources to a particular sector. Additionally, the proportion of the total education budget allocated to basic education (composed of MoGEI and the NEC) is projected to increase from 36 per cent to 50 per cent, further increasing available resources. This shift was deemed to be a realistic assumption based on an examination of past trends, which have generally had more even distribution of the education budget between basic and higher education. Implementation of this plan is based on the assumption that the government will honour the targeted recurrent and capital resources.

Table 53: Estimated resources likely to be available for implementation of the plan (million SSP)

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
Expected resources	100,801	166,937	128,264	130,420	138,051	664,473
Domestic resources	31,280	41,662	53,695	67,412	83,061	277,110
Recurrent	29,611	39,620	51,248	64,534	79,718	264,732
Capital	1,668	2,042	2,446	2,878	3,343	12,378
External resources	69,521	125,274	74,569	63,008	54,990	387,363

In addition to public resources, the Education Donor Group and various education development partners have committed an indicative SSP 430 trillion over the next five years to implement various activities associated with the plan. The technical team estimated the resources likely to be available to implementing departments and units. They assumed that an average of 10 per cent of the programme costs would be committed funds. In this case, the resources likely to be available drop to SSP 387.4 trillion over the next five years. The commitment from education donors translates to about 58 per cent of the resources likely to be available to the sector. *Table 54* presents a breakdown of the financial commitments made by donors and education partners towards the GESP.

Table 54: Indicative commitment from education development partners (Mn US\$)

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
Global Partnership for Education	4.86	23.92	19.42	19.42	19.42	87.03
Accelerated Flood Response	4.50	4.50				9.00
Multiplier Grant		2.99	2.99	2.99	2.99	11.97
System Transformation Grant		10.44	10.44	10.44	10.44	41.76
Girls Education Accelerator		5.63	5.63	5.63	5.63	22.50
SCG	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	1.80
World Bank International Development Association		8.33	8.33	8.33	8.33	33.30
Save the Children	20.74	27.98	7.88	0.82		57.42
Multi-Year Resilience Programme	17.02	12.35	6.64			36.01
Danida	0.42	0.42	0.42			1.25
Norad	1.83					1.83
Sida	0.66					0.66
SC Norway Telethon	0.82	0.82	0.82	0.82		3.27
Green Climate Fund (and Global Partnership for Education Multiplier)		14.40				14.40

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office	21.06	21.06	21.06	21.06	21.06	105.30
USAID	18.36	17.10	11.70	7.20		54.36
Girls' Education South Sudan	9.00	5.40				14.40
Youth Empowerment	9.36	11.70	11.70	7.20		39.96
UNICEF		22.39	6.19	6.19	6.19	40.95
Sida	4.50	4.50	0.00			9.00
Estimated Total	69.52	125.27	74.57	63.01	54.99	387.36

Note: These estimates have considered a 10 per cent programme cost that will likely be spent by the donating organizations.

When comparing these total projected resources to the overall projected cost of the plan, including both maintaining the current system and adding new activities, the education sector will have an operating deficit of around SSP 36.6 billion or US\$ 36.6 million, representing around 5.5 per cent of the total projected resources (see Table 55). In the long term, MoGEI will need to develop a sustainable financing plan to mobilize resources for the sector. This may involve increasing transparency around mandatory expenditure in the calculation of the resources that ultimately go towards education.

Table 55: Estimated funding gap, 2023/24–2027/28

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
In million SSP						
Domestic resources for education	31,280	41,662	53,695	67,412	83,061	277,110
Estimated external resources	69,521	125,274	74,569	63,008	54,990	387,363
Total expected resources	100,801	166,937	128,264	130,420	138,051	664,473
Projected cost of the plan	33,311	161,595	173,152	156,970	176,083	701,112
Financing gap	67,490	5,342	44,889	26,550	38,032	36,639
Gap as % of expected resources	67.0%	3.2%	-35.0%	-20.4%	-27.5%	-5.5%
In million USD						
Domestic resources for education	31	42	54	67	83	277
Estimated external resources	70	125	75	63	55	387
Total expected resources	101	167	128	130	138	664
Projected cost of the plan	33	162	173	157	176	701
Financing gap	67.5	5.3	44.9	26.6	38.0	36.6
Gap as % of expected resources	67.0%	3.2%	-35.0%	-20.4%	-27.5%	-5.5%

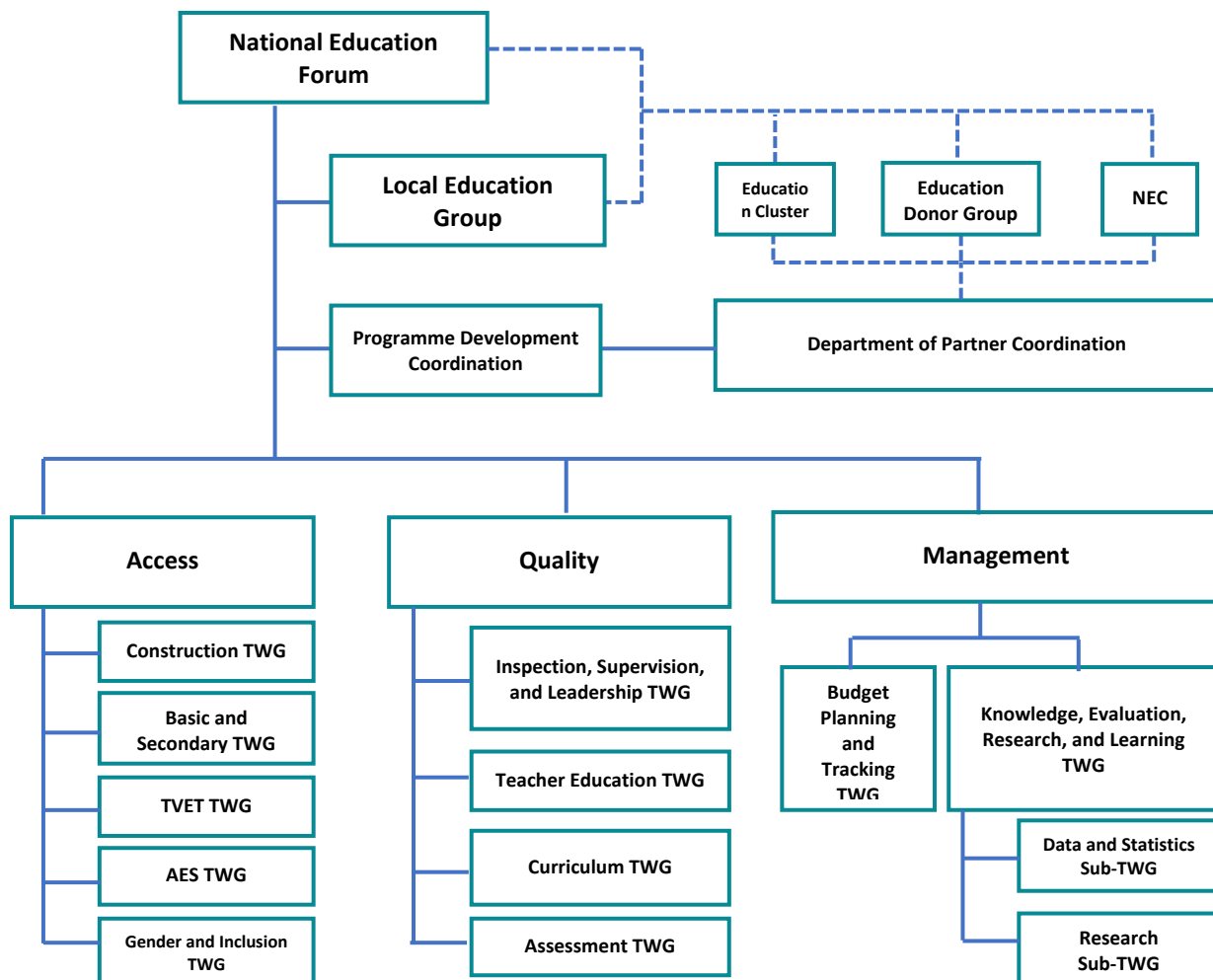
Despite largely positive economic development, South Sudan remains susceptible to significant volatility in terms of inflation and currency devaluation. For the costing process, most unit costs were identified in USD as is conventionally considered good practice. However, costs associated with the current operation of the system, such as salaries and goods and services, were identified in SSP, as is the case in all budgets and expenditure. At the beginning of the costing process, the exchange rate between the SSP and USD was approximately 600:1. However, by the end of the process, the exchange rate had increased to 1,000:1, with a possibility that the financing gap might increase even further before the start of implementation of the plan, triggered by inflation alone.

6. GESP implementation, monitoring and evaluation framework

6.1 Implementation arrangement

A clear and functional implementation arrangement is critical for the successful realization of the objectives, strategies, and activities outlined in Section 3 and Section 4. The implementation arrangement outlines the responsibilities between governmental and non-governmental actors, ensuring the integration of partners, donors, NGOs, community-based organizations, and civil society towards coordinated efforts in the sector. The GESP implementation framework is based on the revised General Education Coordination Framework, which aims to streamline education activities in the country in line with the GESP. The framework is composed of three levels: (i) Policy Direction and Safeguarding, which is responsible for high-level policy development, backstopping, and monitoring; (ii) Technical and Strategy, which is responsible for implementation and accountability; and (iii) Clusters, which is responsible for specific implementation tasks under the three GESP programme areas of access as well as equity, quality, and management, with an additional cluster responsible for education in emergencies. *Figure 3* illustrates the General Education Coordination Framework.

Figure 3: General Education Coordination Framework



6.1.1 Policy direction and safeguarding level

6.1.1.1 National Education Forum

The National Education Forum (NEF) is a joint forum for MoGEI and development partners in the education sector, which include other government sectors that have a working relationship with education. NEF is the highest oversight body in the coordination framework. Its members include representatives from MoGEI, states, administrative areas, flagship programmes, major donors, the United Nations, NGOs, and international NGOs. Additionally, NEF includes representatives from civil society, the teachers' union, and private sector, as well as from other ministries including the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports; Ministry of Labour; MoFP; Ministry of Higher Education; Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare; Examination Council, and the chair/representative of the Education Committee in the Transitional National Legislative Assembly Parliament. NEF oversees issues related to GESP policy, programme planning and implementation, as well as budgeting, monitoring, and evaluation. NEF meetings will be held twice a year. The first meeting will take place to present the annual plan and budget preview. The second meeting will take place to conduct the GEAR. NEF will hold special sessions in the third and final year of GESP implementation to present the results of the midterm and final reviews.

6.1.1.2 Local Education Group

The Local Education Group ensures mutual accountability from policy option(s) to execution and provides oversight on major flagship programmes such as the multi-donor Global Partnership for Education, Education Cannot Wait, Girls' Education South Sudan, and government-funded programmes, as well as other activities aligned with the sector plan. The Local Education Group comprises the Undersecretary of MoGEI (chair), Directors General of MoGEI and development partner representatives, including UNESCO; USAID; Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, European Union; UNICEF; Education Cannot Wait; Multi-Year Resilience Programme; Save the Children; Norwegian Refugee Council School Feeding Programme; African Development Bank; NEC; BRICE-Oxfam, and representatives from other emerging donors. The Local Education Group holds meetings on a bimonthly basis, but extraordinary meetings can be called as needed.

6.1.1.3 Education Donor Group

The Education Donor Group is a forum that aims to advance the aid's effectiveness agenda by organizing and coordinating the support from development partners to the general education sub-sector. The Education Donor Group supports the development, implementation, and monitoring of the GESP. The group takes an active role in the GEAR. The platform also allows for the preparation and presentation of jointly agreed agenda items for consideration by the Undersecretary and the Department for Partner Coordination at subsequent NEF meetings.

6.1.1.4 National Education Coalition

The National Education Coalition is a joint forum for national and international NGOs, civil society organizations, and community service providers who deliver education services in South Sudan. The

central aim of the National Education Coalition is to voice and address pressing educational priorities and challenges within the context of South Sudan and to recommend pertinent mitigation measures that feed into the Education Donor Group, NEF, GEAR, and National Education Budget meetings. The National Education Coalition is entirely an independent network that is managed by a seven-member council drawn from member organizations. Its day-to-day operations are managed by a secretariat (hosted by Oxfam South Sudan Programme), headed by a full-time national coordinator. The National Education Coalition meetings are organized quarterly or convened when the need arises and air are facilitated by the chair of the council.

6.1.1.5 Education Cluster

The Education Cluster is a specialized hub that manages the partnerships among agencies engaged in education during emergencies. Jointly led by UNICEF and Save the Children, the Education Cluster has diverse representation from the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies, various United Nations agencies, both national and international NGOs, donors, academic institutions, and not-for-profit organizations. This entity operates under the oversight of the Humanitarian Coordinator, upholding its commitment to its membership and the populations affected by crises. Its overarching goal is to function as an inclusive coordination platform, ensuring the predictability and effectiveness of humanitarian education responses, accountability to affected populations, and the provision of clear strategic leadership. It also offers guidance to members on advocacy efforts and the allocation of roles and responsibilities to enhance the delivery of high-quality educational services to all children and youth affected by both man-made and natural humanitarian crises in South Sudan. Additionally, the Education Cluster extends its representation to the state/administrative area level when deemed necessary for coordination purposes.

6.1.2 Technical and strategy level

6.1.2.1 Programme Development and Coordination Committee

The Programme Development and Coordination committee will be the standing technical committee for the Local Education Group. It will comprise MoGEI Directors General, Directors, representatives of implementing partners and grant agents, representatives of TWGs, and a representative from the MoFP. The committee is chaired by the Director General for Planning and Budgeting of MoGEI. The chair will determine the frequency of meetings, which will be held monthly or biweekly as required.

6.1.2.2 Department for Partner Coordination

The Department for Partner Coordination is housed in MoGEI and is led by the Director for Partner Coordination. The department is responsible for monitoring the education activities and programmes of the development partners; liaising between MoGEI and development partners (including bi- and multilaterals and NGOs); coordinating development partner activities to ensure they integrate and align with the sector-wide approach; mapping partners to avoid duplication/overlapping; and developing and overseeing the implementation of the reporting systems of development partners. Members of the

Department for Partner Coordination include MoGEI staff in the Department for Partner Coordination and partner representatives from NEF and the Education Cluster.

6.1.3 Thematic clusters and technical working groups

The final layer of the GESP implementation framework consists of three clusters, namely access, quality, and management. The clusters mirror the three priority programmes of the GESP, namely access and equity; quality; and finance and governance. Each cluster is responsible for their TWGs as detailed in *Figure 3*. TWGs are smaller committees that are more focused on providing day-to-day support for the running of the various MoGEI programmes. The TWGs will consist of at least seven persons, including MoGEI and partner representatives, to ensure adequate representation. Cluster meetings are held bimonthly to receive timely updates from TWGs and ensure that messages are communicated through the chain outlined in the framework.

6.1.4 State, administrative area, and county-level coordination for the implementation of the GESP

Due to the decentralized nature of the education system in the country, the coordination framework extends to the states, administrative areas, and counties. NEF is replicated at the state and administrative area level to form 13 state and administrative area education forums and 80 county education forums. At the state and administrative area level, the TWGs report to the state and administrative area education forum, while county TWGs report to the county education forum. The TWGs are responsible for implementing education activities, while the education forum is responsible for overseeing implementation, monitoring and evaluating progress in programme implementation, and providing advice and guidance on the way forward at their specific level.

Every state, administrative area, and county should follow the reviewed coordination manual when establishing a functional coordination education forum. As stipulated in the manual, regular meetings will be organized and chaired by the Directors General of the state and administrative area at the state and administrative area level, and county education Directors at the county level. Ideally, each state and county should hold meetings at least twice a month. States, administrative areas, and counties must participate in the NEF at least twice a year during budget preview and annual review meetings.

6.2 Implementation monitoring and evaluation

The implementation of the GESP will be monitored and evaluated through continuous monitoring activities and periodic evaluations. Monitoring mechanisms will provide the necessary data to assess whether the implementation of the plan is proceeding as expected, and whether the activities are producing the desired outputs and outcomes. The evaluations will examine the higher-level strategic key performance indicators (KPIs) identified below, which will be used to evaluate the plan's success in terms of achieving systematic transformation. Both processes will provide opportunities to identify challenges in the plan implementation as well as offer opportunities to adjust targets and activities as necessary.

6.2.1 Performance monitoring

6.2.1.1 Quarterly monitoring reports

The TWGs in the national coordination framework are the foremost entities responsible for monitoring the implementation of the GESP according to the identified monitoring frameworks. The national TWGs will communicate with their sub-national coordinating bodies to gather relevant data. This data will include continuous monitoring reports from schools and monitoring reports from the state and administrative areas that will be compiled into quarterly monitoring reports. These regular quarterly monitoring reports, based on data collected from the sources identified above, will report on progress on planned activities in the annual workplans, budget release, and utilization. The reports will also identify key bottlenecks and challenges. These reports will be communicated up the chain of command as identified in the implementation framework to ensure that the information is disseminated to those at the decision-making level in order for appropriate solutions to be identified.

6.2.1.2 National Education Forum

The NEF will serve two purposes in the implementation of the GESP. Firstly, it will provide oversight on the implementation of key programming. Secondly, it will play a key role in monitoring and evaluation. One of the key responsibilities of the NEF will be to plan for and organize the annual plan, budget preview, and GEAR. Given the decentralized nature of education delivery in South Sudan, all states and administrative areas will participate in these monitoring events.

6.2.1.3 General Education Annual Review

NEF will also be responsible for organizing the GEAR that will be conducted in October or November each year during the plan period. The GEAR will provide an opportunity to assess progress made against the GESP targets and identify bottlenecks in implementation. In addition to the national review, state and administrative area annual reviews will similarly be conducted and led by their respective NEFs, with their reports feeding into the national-level report. Data for the GEAR will be collected from the Annual Education Census, partner project data, and other sources. These sources will be harmonized into a single system as part of the GESP implementation. In addition, joint field visits will be carried out as necessary prior to the review to fill data gaps.

The GEAR will evaluate the overall performance of the general education sector and the progress on key activities under the GESP. It will report on the overall performance in terms of the KPIs and will also consider financial execution and commitments. The GEAR will identify areas where implementation is lacking, and its findings will be used to inform the development of the annual plan for the following year. This will help to make up for areas of slow progress.

6.2.1.4 Annual workplan and budget preview

To ensure coherent implementation of the GESP, annual workplans will be developed for the central and state/administrative areas linked to the strategic objectives and activities of the GESP. To date, only

national workplans have been developed. The GESP has a specific task to support states and administrative areas in developing these plans to build their planning capacity and ensure that sub-national plans are linked to the overall national plan. These plans will be used to guide a set of annual activities at each state and administrative level, and implemented activities will be monitored against them. Drafts of the workplan will be shared with NEF members prior to the review meeting, which is typically held in April before the conclusion of the budget planning period.

6.2.2 Evaluation of the GESP

Several evaluations will be carried out throughout the lifespan of the GESP. These evaluations will assess the implementation progress against strategic targets and the plan's effectiveness in achieving system transformation. These targets comprise intermediate and outcome indicators. Evaluations will allow for the necessary adjustments to be made and for periodic review and updating of the GESP. It is well understood that over time, the conditions and assumptions made during the preparation of GESP may change unexpectedly, especially given the context of a fragile state such as South Sudan. It is therefore crucial that the plan is evaluated and the necessary adjustments made to ensure optimal success and maximum efficiency.

6.2.2.1 *Midterm and final evaluations*

The GESP will undergo comprehensive reviews in both the third and final year of the cycle. The midterm review will be conducted in 2026 and will examine progress against the KPIs identified in the GESP. The midterm review will provide an opportunity to reconsider targets and activities identified under the GESP. This will allow for modifications according to the current context and progress made. The main objective of the midterm evaluation is to correct the course of the implementation of the GESP and help to achieve programme objectives by the end of the plan period in 2028. Specific terms of reference will be designed to identify the scope of the evaluation process, focusing on measures of outcomes, effectiveness, efficiency, equity, lessons learned, and sustainability.

A final evaluation of the GESP will be conducted in 2028 to assess whether the set policy objectives have been achieved. The purpose will be to draw comprehensive lessons from the implementation of the GESP and to provide guidance and recommendations to inform the planning for the next strategic plan.

6.2.2.2 *Thematic/specific studies*

In addition to these comprehensive reviews, specific research and studies may be conducted to provide sufficient information and influence policy decisions. For example, if specific issues are identified during the GEAR, relevant studies can be designed to examine these issues in detail. These specific research studies may be commissioned at any time, either before or after the midterm evaluation. The results will provide policymakers with the information they need to fill identified data gaps and make evidence-based decisions to improve the implementation of GESP. Moreover, research and analytical works will be undertaken to measure impact and service delivery improvements.

6.2.3 Sources of data for monitoring and evaluation

Data sources have been identified for all of the output and strategic outcome indicators listed in the GESP. The Annual School Census will be the main source of monitoring data for many activities, including those related to enrolment and construction. This highlights the importance of ensuring that a high-quality census is conducted annually as proposed in the plan. Furthermore, the plan envisions the creation of a harmonized data platform that will bring collate from various sources, including the Annual Education Census, SSSAMS, and other partner databases. This harmonization will allow for more frequent monitoring of plan implementation activities since the database will be updated quarterly.

In addition to Annual School Census data, the plan will strengthen the collection of school-based data by training school head teachers to use school monitoring tools. The regular completion of these tools will provide MoGEI with more up-to-date information regarding teacher attendance, enrolment patterns, and the availability of teachers and learning materials. The Department for Monitoring and Evaluation will be strengthened throughout the plan period and the plan will produce periodic monitoring reports based on field visits aligned with key GESP activities and partner-aligned programmes. These reports will serve as a source of data for monitoring overall plan implementation and will help to fill specific gaps not addressed by continuous data collection. Other key sources of information for monitoring will be school inspection reports (once the system is fully operationalized) and activity tracking and completion reports.

6.2.4 Key performance indicators

The GESP contains many indicators for the various programmes at the output and strategic outcome levels. However, to measure the success of the GESP strategic initiatives, it is necessary to develop KPIs that can be used to periodically assess the progress towards the achievement of GESP targets. The indicators have been selected to help policymakers, decision makers, and education managers to monitor and evaluate their performance and direct their policy formulation and target setting. KPIs reveal strengths and weaknesses and help top management and stakeholders determine what needs to be strengthened to accelerate the system transformation envisioned under the GESP. In addition, the KPIs will form the basis of GEAR, which will track progress over time. The KPIs represent a set of measures that are most critical for the sector’s organizational performance during the plan period. As such, there are relatively few KPIs, which focus on key issues and areas of concern, thereby serving as top-level indicators for monitoring, including the GEAR.

Table 56: KPIs for GESP (2023–2027)

Indicator	Baseline (2021)	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Access and Equity						
Pre-primary GER	12%	13%	14%	15%	16%	17%
Primary GER	60%	60%	61%	62%	62%	63%
Primary gross intake rate	88%	88%	88%	88%	88%	88%

Indicator	Baseline (2021)	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Secondary GER	12%	12%	13%	13%	14%	15%
Secondary gross intake rate	16%	20%	23%	25%	28%	30%
Number of AES students/100,000 inhabitants	683	1,122	1,341	1,561	1,780	2,000
Total number of AES students	56,357	99,552	122,849	148,131	175,397	204,065
Number of TVET centres certified under minimum standards	0					219
Number of TVET graduates certified under the unified assessment system	0					75,000
Number of TVET students/100,000 inhabitants	207	321	378	434	491	548
Total number of TVET students	28,325	47,106	57,209	68,185	80,025	92,459
Primary retention rate	22%	29%	32%	35%	39%	42%
Survival rate to P4	69%	70%	71%	72%	72%	73%
Secondary retention rate	54%	55%	56%	56%	56%	57%
Proportion of govt. primary schools with full cycles	30%	53%	64%	76%	86%	96%
GPI in primary GER	0.93	0.94	0.96	0.97	0.99	1
GPI in secondary GER	0.82	0.86	0.89	0.93	0.96	1
GPI in TVET	0.21					0.7
Proportion of learners with disabilities as per the total learner population in preschool, primary, and secondary	1.2%	1.5%	1.8%	2.0%	2.2%	2.4%
Number of new functional resilient community schools established across all sub-sectors	0					865
Proportion of crisis-closed schools implementing continuous learning programmes	N/A					100%
Quality and Management of Resources						
Teacher retention rate (primary)	TBD					90%
Teacher retention rate (secondary)	TBD					90%
% of correct score in EGRA among Grade 3 learners	39.1%					50.0%
% of correct score in EGMA among Grade 3 learners	69.0%					79.0%
Share of qualified ECE teachers	80%	84%	88%	92%	96%	100%
Share of qualified primary teachers	68%	74%	81%	87%	94%	100%
Share of qualified secondary teachers	63%	70%	78%	85%	93%	100%
Share of qualified AES teachers	73%	78%	84%	89%	95%	100%

Indicator	Baseline (2021)	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Share of qualified TVET teachers	0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
Pupil/workbook ratio (pre-primary)	N/A					1:1
Pupil/textbook ratio (primary)	8:1					2:1
Pupil/textbook ratio (secondary)	2:1					2:1
Pupil/textbook ratio (AES)	N/A					2:1
Pupil/teacher ratio (ECE)	42	38	37	36	35	35
Pupil/teacher ratio (primary)	42	42	42	42	42	42
Pupil/teacher ratio (secondary)	20	20	25	30	35	40
Pupil/teacher ratio (AES)	29	29	29	29	30	30
Pupil/classroom ratio (ECE)	77	65	59	52	46	40
Pupil/classroom ratio (primary)	63	63	63	63	63	63
Pupil/classroom ratio (secondary)	43	43	43	43	43	43
% of primary schools offering AES programmes	11%	19%	23%	27%	32%	37%
% of primary schools implementing the CBC		N/A			100%	
% of secondary schools implementing the CBC		N/A			100%	
Number of Pastoralist Education Programmes operating	0	0	6	12	18	25
Number of functional TTIs	3	3	6	9	11	14
Number of functional formal MoGEI TVET institutions	3	3	6	9	11	14
Average teacher salary as % of GDP/capita	78%	119%	139%	159%	180%	200%
Basic education curriculum and associated materials are fully developed	No					Yes
Proportion of teachers practising effective teaching practices	TBD					TBD
Learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy in lower primary	TBD					TBD
Learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy and upper primary	TBD					TBD
Learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy in secondary	TBD					TBD
Proportion of schools undertaking formative assessment	0%					100%
Proportion of schools meeting the basic requirements and minimum standards indicators	TBD					TBD
Proportion of schools that have access to safe water for drinking	68%					77%
Proportion of schools that have a reliable source of electricity	2%					31%
Proportion of schools that have functional sanitation facilities	48%					77%
Percentage of schools with an effective grievance redressal mechanism in place	0%					100%

Indicator	Baseline (2021)	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Percentage of schools reporting reduced cases of school-related violence	N/A					100%
Proportion of qualified TVET instructors (according to minimum requirements)	0%					100%
Proportion of TVET centres implementing CBC	N/A					100%
Number of TVET annual reports being produced	0					5
Proportion of TVET centres with private sector partnerships	0%					85%
Finance and Governance						
Education recurrent expenditure as a proportion of government recurrent expenditure	5%	11%	14%	17%	20%	20%
Share of recurrent education budget allocated to general education	36%	42%	45%	47%	50%	50%
Share of total capital government budget allocated to education	4%	6%	8%	9%	10%	10%
Execution rate of the budget of general education	46%	56%	71%	85%	100%	100%
Proportion of schools covered in the Annual Education Census	75%	80%	85%	90%	95%	100%
Number of primary learners in government and community schools receiving cash transfers	0	0	155,719	325,362	510,218	711,113
Number of secondary learners in government and community schools receiving cash transfers	0	0	22,292	48,201	78,426	113,426
Number of AES students in government and community schools receiving cash transfers	0	0	5,802	13,991	24,849	38,548
Proportion of salary transfer released on time	25%					100%
Proportion of capitation grants released on time	15%					100%
Proportion of states and administrative areas with external audit reports	0					100%
Proportion of states and administrative areas submitting returns	70%					100%
Proportion of counties submitting returns	0					100%
Education coordination framework fully operational	Non-operational					Operational

Note: All indicators whose baselines are to be determined should be confirmed in the first year of implementation and associated with targets set thereafter.

Notes: AES: Alternative Education System; CBC: Competency-Based Curriculum; ECE: Early Childhood Education; EGMA: Early Grade Mathematics Assessment; EGRA: Early Grade Reading Assessment; GDP: Gross Domestic Product; GER: Gross Enrolment Rate; GESP: General Education Sector Plan; GPI: Gender Parity Index; KPI: Key Performance Indicator; MoGEI: Ministry of General Education and Instruction; N/A: Not Applicable; TBD: To be Determined; TTI: Teacher Training Institute; TVET: Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

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