



**Windle Trust**  
International



**Secondary Education in South Sudan:  
A Neglected Priority**

## PREFACE

The standard and speed of any nation's socio-economic growth depends entirely on the methods of effective learning and teaching procedures that promote the acquisition of relevant skills, desired attitudes and the required knowledge for development.

All these have to be based on comprehensive, qualitative and relevant primary, secondary, technical and vocational education as well as tertiary education. The aim of pedagogical educative activities is to inculcate into learners the outcomes of the South Sudan curriculum, for achievement of national and global aims through progressive improvements.

Conscious of these aims, the National Ministry of General Education and Instruction issued legal directives in accordance with the Interim Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan, the Education Act, 2012 and General Education Strategic Plan 2012 – 2017, for a four-year learning period for secondary education to enhance quality education. Not only that, but primary education was expanded to accommodate more primary education learners and thus more primary school leavers. The increase in the gross enrolment rate in primary education makes it imperative that secondary education be expanded, improved and equipped with all necessary educational necessities, including competent and professional teachers.

Therefore, the preparation of secondary education teaching staff by the government of South Sudan and its education partners, requires redoubled efforts to be exerted regarding the training of secondary education teachers in colleges of education and in universities, on the new South Sudan curriculum, together with the creation of attractive teachers service conditions.

The teaching profession has to be rooted in gender sensitive procedures for equal chances in the profession for both sexes, male and female. As such, the promotion of girl child education is a high necessity. This requires legal procedures to be formulated and applied to enable and motivate female learners to complete their education and for the protection of women generally against violence.

I therefore, call upon all the stakeholders and education partners to work effectively in the promotion of secondary education for the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills, and to strengthen competences for effective development and environment sustainability.

In conclusion, this report has systematically set the roadmap for an urgent and comprehensive programme of support for upgrading secondary education academically and professionally. In addition to expansion, gender sensitive staffing, and the creation of a conducive learning environment will be essential to realise the ambitions of South Sudan curriculum and its educational goals.

Therefore, with an open mind I urge you to consider all the issues that have been raised in this report about secondary education and to give them serious educational thoughts.

Michael Lopuke Lotyam  
Undersecretary  
Ministry of General Education and Instruction

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) are a potential game-changer for educational development because of their unambiguous commitment to the expansion and improvement of secondary schooling.
2. The secondary education sector in South Sudan has been neglected for decades. To address the shortcomings of the past and to begin to meet the hopes and aspirations of the present, there is an urgent need for a long-term, comprehensive programme that learns and applies best practice in terms of increasing access; expands the physical estate of the nation's secondary schools; provides essential teaching materials and invests in a diverse programme of teacher development and management.
3. South Sudan is stuck at the bottom of the global league table for education. Enrolment rates are amongst the lowest in the world and reflect a profound gender bias. Literacy levels, especially for women, are shockingly low; most of the country's teachers are untrained, poorly paid and lack the most basic teaching materials. School infrastructure is limited and often poor quality.
4. The secondary sector in South Sudan is relatively small with enrolment in 2017 totalling about 80,000 and an enrolment rate of approximately 5%. This figure hides gender-based and regional disparities, which mean that in some parts of South Sudan, secondary enrolment may be as low as 1% for young women. Low enrolment rates are compounded by high dropout rates and provide clear evidence that the current system is not working equitably or efficiently.
5. Very few girls make the transition to secondary school. Even fewer complete secondary education. In 2017 less than 3,500 girls will complete four years of secondary schooling. Because so few young women complete secondary school, the number of women who can go on to become teachers, health workers, accountants or enter other professions is very small.
6. There is compelling evidence that the most effective way to increase the transition to secondary school is to provide scholarships that cover tuition and living costs. This is not innovative, but it is tried and tested. It is time to introduce a national secondary scholarship scheme in South Sudan.
7. There are 220 – 250 secondary schools in the country, with approximately 3,000 teachers. These relatively low numbers mean there is an exceptional opportunity to bring about sector-wide change in a short time frame. But action is needed now - nearly 40% of schools do not currently have the facilities to fulfil the minimum provision required by the post-Independence curriculum.
8. The government has inherited a teacher training and qualification system in urgent need of reform. More than a quarter of teachers are untrained. Current training and certification requirements are recognised to be confusing, ineffective and removed from classroom realities. There is no specific teacher training qualification to meet the needs of the secondary sector and training programmes offered by ngo's or others are of questionable value in terms of quality, recognition or advancement.
9. If the Millennium Development Goals has taught us anything, it is that focussing on increasing access to education is only part of the solution. To achieve transformative and enduring change it will be necessary to improve the quality of teaching. That means investing in teachers as matter of priority, not as an after-thought.

10. If the quality of teaching and learning is to improve, it will be essential to focus on:
  - a. Upgrading the skills and knowledge of the existing body of teachers and to strengthen headteachers skills and confidence in leadership and management
  - b. Creating a certification framework that creates alternative pathways for teacher training and continuous professional development. One option would be a school-based training programme that combines a range of instructional approaches from the use of open and distance learning technologies to face-to-face workshops and peer-based networks.
  - c. Ensuring that a programme of teacher professional development is relevant to the national context and consistent with other national priorities.
11. There is no dispute about the incredibly difficult context in South Sudan with widespread conflict, deep social divisions, and profound economic and financial weaknesses. But this is not the whole picture. Windle Trust International has worked in South Sudan since 2005 including areas that have been badly affected by conflict, displacement, hunger and isolation. Our experience tells us that education programmes can be delivered effectively even in the most difficult of contexts.
12. At the policy level, it is also important to recognise that the South Sudan government is open to addressing the needs of the education sector in a variety of ways. There is no attempt to create a 'one size fits all' model to which all schools or organisations must comply. Indeed, the growth of private or community schools in recent years is a clear indication that the government recognises both the limits imposed by the prevailing context as well as the value of partnerships and collaboration.

## INTRODUCTION

In 2015, when the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) were replaced by the Sustainable Development Goals, the policy framework for educational development changed significantly. The MDG's committed nations to ensure that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

The emphasis of the MDG's on primary education helped to shine a spotlight on the importance of primary education and there can be no doubt that the focus united countries around the world in prioritising investments in primary education. In many countries in Africa, where enrolment rates in both primary and secondary schools were low, and had suffered years of decline or stagnation as a consequence of structural adjustment policies, the MDG's sparked a renewed recognition of the importance of education in social and economic development.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) build on the progress made towards achievement of the MDG's. While continuing to recognise the importance of primary education, the SDG's make a new and explicit commitment to provide free and equitable secondary schooling as well as recognition of the importance of improving educational outcomes. The SDG's are a potential game-changer; this is the first time in decades that there has been a collective and unambiguous commitment to the expansion and improvement of secondary schooling. Increased participation in primary education has led inexorably to a greater demand for secondary schooling. In response, it is the responsibility of governments and donors alike to respond to the hopes and expectations that have been encouraged.

The goal to which signatory governments are now committed is to ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning. In addition to this top line commitment the SDG's also define specific targets which include:

- To ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.
- To ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.
- To increase substantially the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.
- To eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.
- To ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including.....human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity.....
- To build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.

Two years after their adoption, it is time to examine how the potential of the Sustainable Development Goals can be realised in South Sudan. In particular, this report will examine the current state of secondary education in South Sudan. It will make the case for an urgent and sustained expansion of support. The children of South Sudan have benefitted enormously in the last five years or more from a range of projects designed to increase access to primary education. If South Sudan is to make the most of those earlier investments it is essential to develop a new and comprehensive programme of support to expand the secondary sector and to improve the quality of teaching and learning that it provides.

Following a short description of the operating context, this report focusses on three related issues:

- Trends in enrolment in both primary and secondary schooling
- The teacher workforce and their ability to provide quality education
- Schools and classrooms



*Class sizes in South Sudan's schools are often very large and teachers often lack teaching materials. It's no surprise that teachers rely to an excessive extent on conventional 'chalk and talk' methods.*

## THE CONTEXT

An analysis of the size and effectiveness of South Sudan's secondary school sector needs to begin by recognising the nature and extent of neglect and marginalisation that goes back many decades. The history of education provision in South Sudan<sup>1</sup> highlights the profound and continuing impact of the relationship between conflict, inequality and schooling. The World Bank<sup>2</sup> summed up this history by concluding that

*“ Before the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the relatively few schools operating in South Sudan were not part of a coordinated education system. During the second civil war, for example, most schools were run by missionaries, communities, or non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Schools differed widely on almost all counts: duration of the primary and secondary cycles; curriculum (Ethiopian, Kenyan, Sudanese, or Ugandan); language of instruction (English, Arabic); and mode of organization. ”*

This fragmentation and under-development of the education sector was not just a consequence of the war. There is too often a failure to recognise that the current dire educational context in South Sudan is the consequence of educational policy over decades. In *Islands of Education*, Marc Sommers concluded

*“ Several lasting educational trends in Southern Sudan trace back to the British-dominated, pre-Independence Condominium period, when education was intentionally under-developed to maintain the perceived 'purity' of the Southern Sudanese and simplify administrative responsibilities. These trends included exceptionally poor educational quality, selective access to school, a pronounced tendency for boys to dominate schools attendance and an underdeveloped and weakly-co-ordinated education system. ”*

<sup>1</sup> See for example UNESCO, *Islands of Education: Schooling, civil war and the Southern Sudanese (1983 – 2004)* <http://www.eldis.org/go/country-profiles&id=21787&type=Document#.WVUESU1K3cs>

<sup>2</sup> Education in the Republic of South Sudan, World Bank <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/787661468302991853/pdf/705950PUB0EPI0067902B09780821388914.pdf>

These colonial policies of neglect, bias and marginalisation were continued and arguably exacerbated by the government of Sudan after Independence in 1956. In particular, attempts in the 1980's to introduce Islamic education and to make Arabic the language of instruction served only to sharpen the sense of difference and alienation that was so widespread amongst the peoples of Southern Sudan. In the conflict that broke out in the 1980's, education was not just a benefit to be withheld; it was a specific component of the war with both sides using access to education and the language of education as a dimension of their overall strategy.

The current government inherited a country that was stuck at the bottom of the world league table for education and with a range of daunting obstacles to overcome<sup>3</sup>. Primary and secondary enrolment rates were amongst the lowest in the world. Literacy levels, especially for women, were shockingly low, and remain so; most of the country's teachers were untrained, poorly paid and lacking the most basic teaching materials. The curriculum was either non-existent or copied from other countries and, with a few notable exceptions, school infrastructure at both primary and secondary levels was at best poor quality and at worst, simply non-existent. This is not to absolve the government from its responsibilities for fulfilling the commitments it has made since Independence to expand access to schooling and learning and to improve the quality of educational outcomes, but it is essential to set expectations and priorities in the context of a long history of neglect, fragmentation and destruction.



### The legacy of chronic conflict and neglect

The current government inherited a country stuck at the bottom of the world league table for education and with a range of daunting obstacles to overcome. Literacy levels, especially for women, were shockingly low, and remain so; access to both primary and secondary schooling was limited and inequitable; and most of the nation's teachers were untrained, poorly paid and lacking the most basic teaching materials. The curriculum was either non-existent or copied from other countries and school infrastructure at both primary and secondary levels was, too often, inadequate, poor quality and not suitable for effective teaching and learning.

<sup>3</sup>Education in South Sudan: investing in a better future <http://gordonandsarahbrown.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Education-in-South-Sudan-investing-in-a-better-future.pdf>

Compounding these problems is a profound regional imbalance in education provision, an imbalance that reflects a history of fragmented and piecemeal provision. In the south, where Christian influence was strongest, the Catholic Church in particular made significant investments in schools; in contrast, those parts of what is now South Sudan which are distant or more inaccessible were neglected. The consequences have endured to the present. Out of a total number of just over 80,000 pupils enrolled in secondary schools, about 23,000 of them are at schools in what is now known as Jubek state<sup>4</sup>. This proportion is inevitably influenced by the fact that Juba is the national capital, but when it is arguable that the key development challenge facing the government is to nurture a sense of nationhood, prevailing and profound regional imbalances in terms of access to education need to be recognised for what they are - a source of inequity and potential resentment.

## RECENT TRENDS IN ENROLMENTS

In the last decade or so there has been a strong emphasis on increasing access to primary education. The World Bank reports that the gross enrolment rate at primary level increased from 21% to 72% between 2000 and 2009. Between 2005-2009 the number of children enrolled in primary school doubled from 0.7 million to 1.4 million<sup>5</sup>. This is compelling evidence both of the strong demand for education and of recent years' efforts by the government and others to expand the number of schools. Over the same period pupils in secondary schools increased from 17,000 to 44,000. The 2016 National Education Statistics<sup>6</sup> reports enrolment at about 60,000. This is consistent with the more recent and comprehensive school attendance data which indicates that secondary school enrolment in 2017 is just over 80,000.

It is evident that there has been considerable unmet demand for education at all levels – and this demand will only grow. This is partly because of the nature of South Sudan's population structure. The total population is approximately 12 -13 million. About half of that number is under the age of 18, and over 70% is under 30. This age structure clearly has direct and significant implications for the education sector – it will have to expand rapidly if it is to meet the needs of a growing population. It is also partly because access to education became an integral part of the struggle for independence. Denied opportunities for education by decades of deliberate neglect, Independence was widely expected to bring access to good quality education on a scale that had hitherto been denied. That does not mean access only to primary schooling or literacy classes. Crucially, it also means access to secondary education, because it is only by completing secondary education that other doorways and opportunities for education and employment are opened.

Currently the secondary sector in South Sudan is relatively small. Despite some growth in enrolment between 2005 -10, the secondary school gross enrolment rate is the lowest in the world. In 2013, it was just 5% - but even this figure hides gender-based and regional disparities, which mean that in some parts of South Sudan, secondary school enrolment rates may be as low as 1% for young women.

**Table 1: Secondary School Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) by gender and year<sup>7</sup>**

Year	GER Total	GER Male	GER Female
2013	5.1%	6.4%	3.5%
2012	6.6%	8.6%	4.2%
2011	5.9%	7.7%	3.8%

<sup>4</sup>See Schools database as at 5 July 201; <https://www.sssams.org/ams/pupilHist.php>

<sup>5</sup>Education in South Sudan: investing in a better future, p19 <http://gordonandsarahbrown.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Education-in-South-Sudan-investing-in-a-better-future.pdf>

<sup>6</sup>National Education Statistics, 2016; Table 3.2.1

<sup>7</sup>Education for All Review 2015; <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002316/231645e.pdf>



*The secondary school gross enrolment rate in South Sudan is the lowest in the world. In 2013, it was just 5%. This figure hides significant gender-based and regional disparities, which mean that in some parts of the country secondary school enrolment rates may be as low as 1% for young women.*

Such catastrophically low enrolment rates for entry into secondary education have a profoundly negative effect on future economic and social development. It helps to explain why there are so few skilled or qualified South Sudanese workers in sectors as diverse as the building trades, the hospitality industry or business and accounting. The weak development of South Sudan's human resources is the direct consequence of a long history of marginalisation and exclusion from education and training. Nor will these shortcomings be addressed by continuing to focus to an inordinate degree on the primary schools sector. While it is important to recognise the obstacles to human and economic development posed by continuing conflict and insecurity, it is equally essential to address the specific constraints to sustainable development presented by a perpetuation of policies and priorities that have restricted access to secondary schooling and reinforced damaging educational inequalities.

The table below illustrates that the big difference between South Sudan and other African countries in expanding access to education is not at primary level, but at secondary level. On average, gross enrolment rates in Africa at secondary level were 29%; but in South Sudan they were just 6%, making secondary school enrolment in South Sudan the lowest in Africa. In its commentary on progress towards the goals of Education for All, the government of South Sudan acknowledged that "there has been little emphasis put on the transition from primary to secondary school as a result of the nationally low provision of secondary school". While that may well have been justified in earlier years when the emphasis of policy was on increasing access to primary education, WTI would argue that it is now time to complement the recent focus on primary education by introducing a new, comprehensive and sustained emphasis on secondary schooling.

**Table 2: International Comparison of Educational Coverage, 2009<sup>8</sup>**

Region	Primary (6 years) GER (%)	Upper secondary GER (%)
Central African Republic	89	8
Chad	90	17
Congo, Dem. Rep.	90	31
Ethiopia	102	15
Kenya	113	43
Uganda	122	15
Sub-Saharan Africa	104	29
The Republic of South Sudan	88	6

## GIRLS ACCESS TO SECONDARY EDUCATION

All recent EMIS reports make one point startlingly clear – that very few girls make the transition to secondary school and even fewer complete their secondary education. In the whole of South Sudan in 2017, less than 30,000 females were enrolled in secondary school. Even that number gives a misleading impression of the rate of participation. There are just over 12,000 young women enrolled in S1, but the number the number of girls who will complete four years of secondary school education is less than 3,500.



*Girls like Bakhita and Grace, who attend Kings College School in Yambio are exceptional - simply because they will complete secondary school. The number of young women who drop out of secondary school each year is twice as high as the number of young men.*

With a dropout rate of over 70% it is crystal clear that the current secondary school system is not working effectively or efficiently. EMIS data reinforces this point, with evidence that the dropout rate between grades for secondary schools is approximately twice as high as the dropout rate between grades for primary schools.

<sup>8</sup>Education in the Republic of South Sudan: Status and Challenges for a new system; World Bank 2012

**Table 3: Number and dropout rate per class and gender, 2015<sup>9</sup>**

Class	Number of dropouts			Dropout rate		
	Total	Male	Female	Overall	Male	Female
P1	14,011	7,883	6,128	6.0%	6.0%	6.7%
P2	8,877	4,773	4,104	6.0%	5.0%	6.8%
P3	7,978	4,468	3,510	6.0%	6.0%	6.6%
P4	6,916	3,685	3,231	6.0%	5.0%	7.1%
P5	5,774	2,996	2,778	6.0%	5.0%	7.7%
P6	4,238	2,162	2,076	7.0%	5.0%	8.3%
P7	3,178	1,663	1,515	7.0%	6.0%	9.2%
P8	2,243	1,226	1,017	8.0%	6.0%	10.1%
S1	1,377	726	651	9.0%	7.0%	13.0%
S2	1,162	601	561	10.0%	8.0%	14.9%
S3	904	485	419	10.0%	8.0%	14.5%
S4	311	170	141	5.0%	4.0%	7.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>56,969</b>	<b>30,838</b>	<b>26,131</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>7.4%</b>

There has been some research into the reasons for these very high levels of dropout and very low levels of secondary completion – and the three most commonly cited specific reasons are cost, distance and conflict/displacement.

It may well be that these explanations would benefit from further research so that a fuller understanding of the reasons for dropping out of secondary school can be developed. But on the basis of what we already know – both of the deficiencies of the secondary sector in South Sudan and of what has worked well in other countries in Africa<sup>10,11</sup> - it is clear that continuing with, or making modest adjustments to, existing policies and practices will not lead to significant or sustained improvements in secondary sector enrolment, completion and learning outcomes.

Early marriage followed by pregnancy are often cited as a major cause of the high female dropout rate – and the startling difference between male and female dropout rates at secondary schools is indicative of a profound imbalance. As Table 3 shows, the male dropout rate is approximately half that of females, with 15% of girls dropping out during the second or third year, while the dropout rate for boys is a comparatively low 8%. Girls are deeply aware of this imbalance. Mary Kadigia, a student at Kings College Secondary School in Yambio, says “Education is easier for boys. They don’t get pregnant and they don’t need to assume all the work at home.”

Headteachers, school governance groups and relevant authorities at state and national level are all aware of this high dropout rate for females - and there are welcome signs that schools and educational authorities are becoming less judgmental and more supportive of young women who become pregnant. Dominic Venasio, for example, is headteacher of a secondary school that has relocated to Yambio because of the conflict in other parts of the state. He acknowledges the high rate of pregnancies in Yambio, which prevent girls from continuing with their schooling. “We work hard with other partners to stop the increase of adolescent mothers in our town,” says Dominic. “One is asking our students to abstain from sexual activities, but the second is promoting contraception, in case they want to have sex anyway.” Amongst the students, too, there are intense debates about pregnancy. Joy Daniel, for example, says “I don’t want to have children yet. I prefer to finish my education.” She is often involved in discussions with her classmates, encouraging them to control themselves and prevent pregnancy. In Joy’s words “When you’re a mother it’s really difficult to attend classes.”

<sup>9</sup>National Education Statistics Report 2016, Table 3.3.2

<sup>10</sup><http://www.heart-resources.org/2016/01/evidence-on-girls-secondary-education/>

<sup>11</sup><https://www.cfr.org/report/what-works-girls-education>

Inevitably, of course, some girls will become pregnant and some boys will become fathers. At the moment it is not easy for pregnant girls or young mothers to continue attending secondary school. But in an unusual and encouraging initiative, Yabongo Secondary School has set up a programme to provide evening classes for those – male or female – who have dropped out of school, but want to complete their secondary schooling. Students with young children bring their babies to class where they can sleep or be looked after.



*Teenage pregnancy is one cause of female student dropout from secondary school – but there is no reason why it should prevent them from completing their secondary education later. In Yambio, Yabongo Secondary School offers evening classes where young women and men can bring their children to class.*

To break the cycle of marginalisation and exclusion that has hindered female participation in secondary schooling for decades, South Sudan needs a long-term, comprehensive programme that learns and applies best practice in terms of increasing access; expands the physical estate of the nation's secondary schools; provides essential teaching materials and invests in a diverse programme of teacher development and management. In terms of increasing female secondary enrolment, there is compelling evidence that the most effective way to increase the transition from primary school and to reduce dropout rates is to provide scholarships that cover all tuition and living costs. This is not an innovative model, but it is tried and tested in a range of contexts in Africa. It is time to introduce a national secondary scholarship scheme in South Sudan.

The consequence of prevailing policies and priorities is a profound marginalisation of women in South Sudanese society. Because so few young women complete secondary school, the number of women who can go on to become teachers, health workers, accountants or to enter other professions is very small. As an example, the proportion of female teachers in South Sudan is extremely low; the 2016 EMIS report indicates that of approximately 26,000 primary school teachers, less than 4,000, or 14%, of the teacher work force, of them are female. In rural areas and especially in pastoralist communities, the percentage will be much less.

In secondary schools, the number of women teachers is even lower than in primary schools. There are almost 3,000 teachers in secondary schools in South Sudan – but the number of female teachers is just over 250. That’s about 9% - and means that young women, at a sensitive time in their personal development , are in schools where status and authority are almost wholly in the hands of male teachers. It is not surprising that parents are reluctant to send their daughters to such male-dominated institutions.

## THE TEACHER WORKFORCE

There are approximately 3,000 teachers in the secondary sector. This is a relatively low number, and though such a small workforce would commonly be seen to be a problem (with overcrowded classes and inadequate cover) from the perspective of teacher development , the small number of secondary school teachers means there is a rare opportunity to bring about sector-wide change in a relatively short time. With so few teachers, it is perfectly feasible to design and deliver a five years programme that could upgrade the teaching and management skills of the entire secondary school teacher work force. If there is delay in introducing a nationwide secondary school teacher development and support programme, the number of teachers will only grow and make a future programme more expensive to deliver.

One feature of the secondary schools teacher workforce that needs to be highlighted is its profound gender imbalance. Just 9-10% of them are women<sup>12</sup> - and little progress is being made in reducing such a profound inequality. According to the 2016 National Educational Statistics Report, 2,066 from 2,221 newly registered teachers were male. That is just 7% of newly registered teachers. The table below reveals not only the scale of the imbalance but also the regional variations. It is not surprising that Jubek state has the highest proportion of female secondary teachers in the country – though even here women are just 15% of the workforce, so six out of seven teachers are male.

**Table 4: Number and % of teachers in Secondary schools by gender and state, 2016**<sup>13</sup>

Former State	State	Secondary		
		Total	% Male	% Female
Northern Bahr el Ghazal	Aweil	227	95%	5%
	Aweil East	52	100%	0%
	Lol	47	98%	2%
Warrap	Abyei AA	19	95%	5%
	Gogrial	122	94%	6%
	Tonj	93	98%	2%
	Twic	75	99%	1%
Lakes	Eastern Lakes	73	99%	1%
	Gok	16	100%	0%
	Western Lakes	101	86%	14%
Western Equatoria	Amadi	42	93%	7%
	Gbudwe	130	97%	3%
	Maridi	71	97%	3%
Central Equatoria	Jubek	737	85%	15%
	Terekeka	19	100%	0%
	Yei River	600	90%	10%
Eastern Equatoria	Imatong	311	88%	12%
	Kapoeta	70	97%	3%
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,855</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>9%</b>

<sup>12</sup>National Education Statistics, 2016; Table 3.5.1

<sup>13</sup>Adapted from National Education Statistics Report 2016, Table 3.5.2

Changing the composition of the teacher workforce to reduce prevailing inequalities is clearly a massive and long-term challenge. If the government is to succeed in its aspiration to recruit, retain and promote more female teachers, business-as-usual will not work. Fundamental change is going to be necessary, but before starting on a process to transform teacher professional development, it is important to recognise that the government has inherited a teacher training and qualification system in urgent need of reform.

According to the 2016 education statistics<sup>14</sup> just 56% of secondary school teachers have an academic qualification of diploma or above. More than a quarter of teachers are untrained. Only 8% have completed an in-service training course while another 8% have completed a two years pre-service training programme. The low level of academic qualifications combined with the small number who are professionally trained has an inevitable impact on teaching methods and teaching effectiveness.

In practice, the majority of secondary teachers have been in post for years. They may have been appointed when South Sudan was part of Sudan and a large proportion of those with an academic or professional qualification may have been trained either in Sudan or, for those who fled into exile, in Kenya or Uganda. Irrespective of the fact that their training may have been in Arabic, rather than English, and the curriculum in which they were trained was not the one currently used in South Sudan, it is essential to recognise that it is these people who are currently keeping the secondary sector going. It would cause a major disruption to the functioning of the sector if a significant proportion of existing teachers were taken out of the system either permanently (through compulsory retirement, for example) or even temporarily (to attend a centre-based course for 2 or 3 years).



*A Mathematics class at King's College Secondary School in Yambio, Gbudwe State. Structures made from locally available raw materials may be a relatively cost-effective response to the urgent need for more classrooms.*

The current training and certification requirements however are widely recognised to be confusing and ineffective for teachers and schools alike. They are too restrictive, inflexible and removed from classroom practice and realities. In consequence, existing rules and requirements are observed only in the breach. There is no specific teacher training qualification designed to meet the needs of the secondary sector. Entry to the profession is, in theory, confined to those with a degree. Several routes may be followed such as a four-years Bachelor's Degree in Education or a one-year program (for holders of undergraduate degrees) leading to a Diploma<sup>15</sup>. In reality, secondary schools and headteachers are often obliged to recruit teachers who have little more than a secondary school leaving certificate.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid: Tables 3.5.4 and 3.5.5

<sup>15</sup>USAID, The Status of Teacher Professional Development, 2009; p8

In the absence of an effective and comprehensive teacher certification policy, teachers are undergoing programmes of varying duration offered by a range of ngo's or others, each with a particular emphasis and evidenced by certificates of participation or completion. Such certificates are of symbolic value only; they are also a source of uncertainty to educational authorities and of frustration to individual teachers for whom the 'certificate' is of questionable value in terms of recognition, promotion or salary.

If the quality of teaching and learning is to improve, it will be essential to achieve three objectives. First, to upgrade the skills and knowledge of the majority of the existing body of teachers and to strengthen headteachers' skills and confidence in leadership and teacher support. Second, to create a certification framework that creates alternative pathways for teacher training and continuous professional development. With one or two notable exceptions South Sudan's teacher training institutes have barely been functioning for some years. Even if they were working well, their capacity is so small it would take decades to train or upgrade the numbers of teachers that are needed if they were to follow existing multi-year, centre-based training programmes. To complement existing courses, what is needed is a school-based training programme that combines a range of instructional approaches from the use of open and distance learning technologies to face-to-face workshops and peer-based networks. The third objective of such a programme is to ensure that it is relevant to the national context and consistent with other national priorities (on languages for example).

Both the Government of South Sudan and its major education donors have ambitious targets to expand access to, and to improve the quality of, secondary education in the country. WTI applauds their commitment – but if the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals has taught us anything, it is surely that increasing access to schooling is only part of the solution. To achieve enduring change, change that will transform personal development as well as educational outcomes, it will be necessary to improve the quality of teaching. That means investing in teachers as matter of priority, not as an after-thought.



*Even though most teachers in South Sudan work in classrooms that lack desks, chairs or teaching materials, an engaging and stimulating teacher can capture the interest and attention of children.*

## THE NUMBER OF SCHOOLS

Although the data tends to be a little inconsistent and should be interpreted as being indicative rather than definitive, there is a widespread acceptance that South Sudan has between 220 - 250 secondary schools. This includes both government funded schools and schools run by ngo's, churches and others. The table below provides a breakdown of the distribution of the schools by state.

While it is likely that there has been some growth in the total number of schools in recent years, these figures reveal just how small the secondary sector is in South Sudan. If the nation is to make the most of its human and natural resources, it is imperative to develop a comprehensive and long term plan to expand and improve the secondary sector. The starting point is the demand for additional secondary education.

**Table 5: Number and % of Primary and Secondary schools by state and ownership, 2016**<sup>16</sup>

Former state	State	Secondary		
		Total	% Gov.	% Non-gov.
Northern Bahr el Ghazal	Aweil	30	30%	70%
	Aweil East	6	50%	50%
	Lol	5	60%	40%
Warrap	Abyei AA	2	100%	0%
	Gogrial	10	60%	40%
	Tonj	7	71%	29%
	Twic	6	67%	33%
Lakes	Eastern Lakes	6	50%	50%
	Gok	1	100%	0%
	Western Lakes	7	29%	71%
Western Equatoria	Amadi	5	60%	40%
	Gbudwe	13	62%	38%
	Maridi	6	50%	50%
Central Equatoria	Jubek	37	38%	62%
	Terekeka	2	50%	50%
	Yei River	44	41%	59%
Eastern Equatoria	Imatong	20	45%	55%
	Kapoeta	6	83%	17%
<b>Total 2016</b>		<b>213</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>2015</b>		<b>215</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>2013</b>		<b>152</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>43%</b>

This demand is rooted in the flow of pupils through the education system; to appreciate the likely scale of demand for secondary education, we must first bear in mind what is happening at the primary level. South Sudan has about 3,000 primary schools, with well over one million pupils. Given the focus in recent years on increasing access to primary education, it is inevitable that this number will increase significantly and that the increase will be sustained for years to come. This is because less than half of the children eligible for enrolment at primary schools have actually enrolled, with a net enrolment rate of 41% in 2013<sup>17</sup>. Even if we assume that the drop-out rate continues to be very high, EMIS data indicates that nearly 63,000 pupils sat the primary school leaving examination in 2015. Approximately 53,000 passed the examination and would be eligible for secondary school enrolment. Those numbers can only increase as primary enrolment and completion rates go up.

The secondary sector is not only under enormous pressure from increased demand arising from growing primary schools enrolment. It is also under pressure at the top end of the secondary cycle because many schools only have the classrooms and other facilities for three years of secondary education, not the four years that is now the standard. This gap in provision reflects the fact that a significant proportion of the

<sup>16</sup>Adapted from Table 3.1.3, National Education Statistics Report, 2016

<sup>17</sup>Education for All 2015 National Review

secondary sector was based on the Sudan curriculum. The legacy of the past means that 88 from the 228 secondary schools registered on the SSSAMS website<sup>18</sup> for 2017 do not currently offer four years of secondary education. Put another way, nearly 40% of schools do not currently have the facilities to fulfil the minimum provision required by the curriculum.

It would not require major investment to address this deficiency. Given that there are so few pupils completing secondary school, even the construction of just one additional classroom would ensure that all South Sudanese pupils would have an equal opportunity to sit the Secondary Schools leaving examination. The expansion of provision would also help to address historical and regional inequalities in access to full length secondary school education. For while it is true that almost every state has at least one school that does not meet the minimum requirement, over half of the schools with insufficient capacity are concentrated in just 5 states (Wau, Eastern Nile, Jubek, Aweil and Lol).

The most telling indicator of the capacity of the secondary school estate to meet the demands placed on schools is the number of classrooms in which to conduct lessons. The classroom is the space in which teaching and learning happens and if that space is too small and over-crowded, lacking essential furniture or not conducive to effective teaching, initiatives that focus on increasing access to secondary school, without considering the capacity of the secondary sector estate, will only exacerbate existing problems.



*Students in Yambio taking a biology test. Most secondary schools have too few classrooms; are in a poor state of repair and are cramped and over-crowded. Given trends in primary school enrolment and a growing population, the school estate is desperately in need of both improvement and expansion.*

<sup>18</sup>See <https://www.sssams.org/>

The most recent information on the secondary school estate is to be found in the 2016 EMIS report. This does not cover the whole country, so the data should be treated as indicative rather than being seen as final and precise. The report<sup>19</sup> suggests that there are about 1500 classrooms for the secondary sector, though only 1,100 are permanent. With approximately 80,000 secondary students enrolled, it suggests there are on average over 50 pupils in each classroom. In many parts of the country, however, it is much higher. In Rumbek, for example, the two state-funded secondary schools have nearly 3,500 pupils. In the last three years, the number has grown by over 1,000. The two schools have a total of 29 classrooms – and that means classes have over 100 pupils. Such a high number is simply not conducive to effective teaching and learning and teachers and headteachers will devise a variety of ways to reduce class sizes including ‘shift’ working or using outdoor spaces. These measures may help in the short-term, but they do not address the strategic needs of the secondary sector. To address those needs a comprehensive and nationwide plan of action to expand and improve secondary school infrastructure is urgently needed.

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

This report seeks to highlight the chronic marginalisation of secondary education in South Sudan and the scale of the challenges that need to be addressed. It represents an appeal to government, donors, ngo’s and others to commit to a shared endeavour to make significant and sustained improvements. Yet despite the difficult context and the nature of the challenges to expansion and improvement of the secondary sector, this final section seeks to highlight the potential for positive change.

There is no dispute about the long history of marginalisation and neglect; nor do any of the key stakeholders in the education sector seek to downplay the incredibly difficult context, characterised by widespread conflict, deep social divisions and profound economic and financial weaknesses. But this is not the whole picture.

Windle Trust International has worked in South Sudan since 2005 including areas that have been very badly affected by conflict, displacement and hunger. Our experience - on the Girls Education South Sudan programme, for example - tells us that programmes can be delivered even in the most difficult of contexts. Primary enrolment is up, participation has been prolonged and gender inequalities have diminished. Community interest in education is growing; attitudes are changing. While the expansion of primary education for both girls and boys has been sustained, secondary school enrolment has not seen such sustained expansion. The evidence suggests that poverty and the costs of schooling are the principal obstacles to increasing access, not a lack of interest.

Staff may be poorly trained but, with few resources and little support, they are keeping schools running and are eager to improve their skills and knowledge. The work that Windle Trust International has already done – with teachers and teacher training institutions – provides a clear indication of the will that exists at school level and upwards to improve the quality of teaching and to support teachers in their professional development. There will be a variety of ways to bring about these improvements and this report does not seek to recommend or advocate for a particular solution. At this stage it may be appropriate to encourage flexibility and inclusiveness, rather than adherence to approaches that may have made it difficult for teachers to improve or expand their qualifications.

At a policy level, it is important to recognise that the South Sudan government is open to addressing the needs of the education sector in a variety of ways. There is no attempt to create a ‘one size fits all’ model to which all schools or organisations must comply. Indeed, the growth of private or community schools in recent years is a clear indication that the government recognises the limits imposed by context and capacity and its readiness to explore alternative ways to increase access or improve quality in partnership with others.

<sup>19</sup>National Education Statistics, 2016; Table 3.6.1

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International

## ABOUT WINDLE TRUST INTERNATIONAL

Windle Trust International – WTI – is a UK registered charity that has been working with refugees or conflict-affected communities in the Horn and East Africa for over 40 years.

Windle Trust International believes that everyone is entitled to a high quality education that will not only extend knowledge and understanding but also inspire independent thought, critical analysis, a sense of responsibility and a commitment to the common good. High quality education in turn depends on high quality teaching and effective relationships with other stakeholders to attain the best practicable educational outcomes. We will be open to deploying a range of interventions, methods and technologies, selecting those that are most appropriate to circumstance and context. With the benefit of a high quality education, girls and boys as well as older learners can become active citizens, positive role models and leaders in their communities, helping to bring about enduring change; reducing poverty; challenging stereotypes and creating a more just, tolerant and prosperous society.

This report has been written by Ian Leggett and David Masua, both of whom are employed by WTI. A number of expert reviewers also gave invaluable feedback, for which we are very grateful.

For more details on our work and to contact us, please see our website <https://windle.org.uk/>

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