



EDUCATION

OVERVIEW

After enduring two decades of civil war, the people of South Sudan have one of the lowest literacy rates in the world (only 27 percent of the adult population can read and write, according to the Southern Sudan Commission for Census, Statistics, and Evaluation, 2010). In public opinion polls, education consistently leads the list of government services that are most highly valued and desired—demonstrating that South Sudanese see a better education for their children as a top priority.

USAID is helping the Government of the Republic of South Sudan's (RoSS) Ministry of Education and ministries at the state level to build human and institutional capacity to deliver decentralized education services. This approach ensures that throughout South Sudan, as many children as possible have access to better education.



Pupils in a busy classroom session in South Sudan.

USAID's current education program, begun under the 2005 to 2011 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) period, supports gender equity, interactive radio instruction, capacity building for education ministries, and the integration of health and education. As USAID implements a transition strategy for South Sudan in this post-independence period, upcoming education activities may include: literacy and English language training via radio, establishment of community-based education resource centers, mentoring for girls, support to parent-teacher associations, piloting of alternative education models for mobile and vulnerable populations, and capacity building at RoSS and state levels. In addition, USAID will launch a flagship program focused on building professional support systems for primary schoolteachers. This program has been designed to meet the Ministry's top priority—to increase the number of trained and qualified teachers throughout South Sudan. As USAID helped to build systems and train teachers during the CPA, the Agency is well-positioned to provide support in this crucial area.

STRATEGY

As South Sudan emerges from decades of conflict and moves to the task of nation building, it must meet many challenges, including ensuring effective delivery of essential public services to meet the high expectations of citizens. An educated and healthy work force is necessary for the development of sustainable livelihoods, and educated and healthy citizens form the foundation for stable and democratic governance. USAID's strategic approach includes support for pre and in service training programs for teachers, school administrators, and education inspectors, with special attention given to ensuring gender parity and equality of access for girls and women, and sensitivity to the needs of out-of-school youth, and mobile and other vulnerable populations. The ongoing investments described below conclude USAID's support under the CPA (2005-2011). New investments, currently under design, will be detailed 2012, in support of the strategic approach described in this document.

INVESTMENTS

GENDER EQUITY THROUGH EDUCATION (GEE)

The GEE program aims to reduce financial, cultural, and institutional barriers to gender equity in education. This is accomplished by providing tangible incentives for women, girls, and disadvantaged boys to further advance their education at secondary school and teacher-training levels. GEE provides small scholarships to girls and disadvantaged boys to further their secondary education and encourages more women to join the teaching profession. Currently women comprise only 24 percent of those in

training to become teachers in South Sudan. GEE also provides school improvement grants to institutions that enroll GEE scholars and works with the Ministry of Education's Department of Gender Equity and Social Change and the State Ministries of Education with technical assistance to support the Department in addressing policy barriers to girls' education, gender parity and equity.

SOUTHERN SUDAN INTERACTIVE RADIO INSTRUCTION (SSIRI)

The SSIRI project's goal is to improve the quality of education in South Sudan. This is done through the effective use of radio and other distance learning technologies that deliver high-quality education programs to children and adults. The programs are broadcast on 20 FM stations through local agreement arrangements. Schools that are out of range of radio signal are provided with MP3 players and solar power systems to enable them to utilize the SSIRI programs. SSIRI is implemented through the Ministry of Education's Directorate of Alternative Education Systems. The SSRI project continues to work with education officials at the state, county, and village levels to enhance local ownership and sustainability.

BUILDING RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DELIVERY OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES (BRIDGE)

Through the BRIDGE project, USAID supports improved capacity of state and local governments in conflictive areas to deliver essential services, including education. In the states of Warrap, Unity, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, and Upper Nile, BRIDGE is assisting local authorities to integrate education, water, livelihoods, and health interventions. Citizens participate in educational reform advocacy groups; BRIDGE supports community schools where government services cannot reach; and the project reinforces parental involvement in school organizations through school management committees and parent teacher associations. USAID provides resources to these schools to enhance teaching skills. Activities leverage current USAID education programs and coordinate with ministry officials to increase access to, and the quality of, education in these vulnerable areas.