



South Sudan History and Education Fact Sheet

History

South Sudan, a mainly African and Christian country, has only recently emerged from over 25 years of war with north Sudan, a mainly Muslim, Arabic country. At least 1.5 million people are thought to have lost their lives in the fighting.

Formed from the 10 southern-most states of Sudan, South Sudan is a land of expansive grassland, swamps and tropical rain forest straddling both banks of the White Nile.

It is highly diverse ethnically and linguistically. Among the largest ethnic groups are the Dinka, Nuer and Shilluk.

After decades of war, leading to a comprehensive peace agreement in 2005, and to the separation of the two countries in July 2011, South Sudan is still volatile within its own recently created boundaries.

South Sudan became an independent nation on July 9th, 2011, with a population of about 10 million people, the newest country in the world.

The young state plunged into crisis in December 2013. Fighting between government troops and rebel factions erupted, and within weeks the conflict had killed thousands and prompted more than 800,000 to flee their homes.

Economy

Long based on subsistence agriculture, South Sudan's economy is now highly oil-dependent. While an estimated 75 percent of all the former Sudan's oil reserves are in South Sudan, the refineries and the pipeline to the Red Sea are in Sudan.

In January 2012, the breakdown of talks on the sharing of oil revenues led South Sudan to halt oil production and halve public spending on all but salaries.

A deal in March 2013 provided for Sudan to resume pumping South Sudanese oil in May, and created a demilitarised border zone.

South Sudan is one of Africa's least developed countries; however the new nation has benefitted from international aid since 2005, and stands to benefit from inheriting the bulk of Sudan's oil wealth. The latter is, however, hindered by continuing



disputes with Khartoum, rivalries within the governing party, and a lack of physical infrastructure and economic development. Over-dependence upon oil revenues (80 percent of GDP) clouds its immediate future; the long term future probably lies in diversifying the economy towards the development of agriculture and forestry.

Female Education

Providing quality education in South Sudan is not an easy task. Government statistics for 2011 show that only 39 percent of primary school students and 30 percent of secondary students are female.

According to UNICEF (2016), 52 percent of South Sudanese girls are married before their 18th birthday, with some marrying as young as 12.¹

In South Sudan there are over 1.3 million primary school age children out of school, and enrolment in secondary education is the lowest in the world. Young girls face extreme disadvantages in access to education. There are just 2,000 girls in the last grade of secondary education in the entire country, out of a total population of 12 million (Girls' Education South Sudan 2016). As a result, South Sudan has one of the lowest female literacy rates in the world.²

Only 1 in 10 women are able to read and write in South Sudan. "Women are more disadvantaged when it comes to accessing literacy learning opportunities. Hence, South Sudan urgently needs to promote literacy and create a literate environment that will help advance its development goals for all its citizens."³

The Facts

- For a total of 1,365,757 enrolled primary school children there are only 3,639 primary schools, the classrooms for which are mainly open air or semi-permanent structures
- Pupil classroom ratio is 1:132
- Pupil textbook ratio is 1:7 for English
- Only 42 percent of primary schools have access to drinking water

¹ <http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/10/10/why-keeping-girls-school-can-help-south-sudan>

² <http://efareport.wordpress.com/2012/07/09/south-sudan/>

³ UNESCO <http://www.duniawomenwalk.org/south-sudan-2014/>



**FRIENDS OF
IBBA GIRLS SCHOOL
SOUTH SUDAN**

- Only 44 percent of primary schools have access to latrines
- In 2012, a total of 1,365,757 children were enrolled in primary school – just 39 percent of these were girls
- There are 28,029 teachers in primary schools – only 13 percent of whom are female
- Only 47 percent of classroom teachers have some teaching-related training or qualifications and only 9 percent hold a full diploma
- 26 percent of teachers work on a voluntary basis and many paid teachers have not received their regular salaries during austerity measures

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