



Project Information Document (PID)

Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 07-Jul-2020 | Report No: PIDA29445



BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country Sudan	Project ID P174220	Project Name Sudan Education COVID19 Response	Parent Project ID (if any)
Region AFRICA EAST	Estimated Appraisal Date 22-Jun-2020	Estimated Board Date 23-Jul-2020	Practice Area (Lead) Education
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning	Implementing Agency Ministry of Education	

Proposed Development Objective(s)

To support learning continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic school system shutdown and transition back to school during recovery.

Components

- Supporting learning continuity through TV, radio, and newspapers
- Supporting safe transition back to school during recovery
- Program coordination and management

The processing of this project is applying the policy requirements exceptions for situations of urgent need of assistance or capacity constraints that are outlined in OP 10.00, paragraph 12.

Yes

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)

SUMMARY

Total Project Cost	10.65
Total Financing	10.65
of which IBRD/IDA	0.00
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS

Non-World Bank Group Financing



Trust Funds	10.65
Education for All - Fast Track Initiative	10.65

Environmental and Social Risk Classification

Moderate

Decision

The review did authorize the team to appraise and negotiate

Other Decision (as needed)

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

1. **Sudan is a lower-middle-income country with a fast-growing population, close to half of which is living in poverty.** The most recent official estimates of poverty in Sudan are based on the 2014/15 National Household Budget and Poverty Survey (NHBPS). During 2009-2014, the share of Sudanese living in moderate poverty, i.e. on less than US\$3.20 per capita per day PPP (a standard typical for lower-middle-income countries) increased from 40.5 percent to 46.1 percent. Despite economic sanctions and secession of the oil-rich Southern states, Sudan’s gross domestic product (GDP) grew at an annual average rate of 2 percent between 2008 and 2017. In nominal terms, GDP per capita increased four-fold from Sudanese Pounds (SDG) 3,617 to SDG 14,485. However, in constant 2016 prices, there was a 5 percent decrease in per capita GDP owing to a slower growth relative to population increase and high inflation. The total population is estimated to have reached 43 million in 2020 and growing at an annual average of 2.5 percent in the last 10 years. The school-aged population (4-to-16-year-olds) accounts for one third of the population and continues to grow, contributing to the rising demand for basic services such as education and healthcare. The country has made considerable progress in human development: child mortality reduced from 105 per 1,000 (2000) to 65 per 1,000 (2016); and maternal mortality dropped from 544 per 1,000 (2000) to 311 per 1,000 (2015) (World Bank WDI). The youth literacy rate, defined as the proportion of youth between the age of 15 and 24 that can read and write a simple sentence in any language, increased from 78 percent in 2000 to 86 percent in 2014 (World Bank WDI).
2. **Starting in late 2018, Sudan was hit by a political and economic crisis that led to widespread protests and the toppling of a 30-year regime in April 2019.** A new Government was formed in September 2019 to lead a transition phase of three years, paving the way to national elections. The transitional Government is facing a deep economic crisis and political challenges that could jeopardize its plans for transition to civilian rule. Macroeconomic instability, including high inflation, foreign exchange shortage, and lack of liquidity are hampering the economy. The parallel market exchange rate has depreciated



considerably (200 percent) since January 2019. There have been shortages in bread, fuel and currency/cash, while inflation is maintaining an increasing trend. Since November 2019, inflation rate grew above 60 percent reaching 81.6 percent by the end of March 2020 and 114 percent in early June 2020¹. As a result of monetizing the deficits, inflation is expected to accelerate. Without accompanying fiscal and monetary measures, the devaluation failed to reduce the premium on the parallel exchange market, and the parallel exchange rate reached SDG 150 per US dollar in June 2020. Scarcities in oil products along queues for cash withdrawal from banks continued, in addition to long hours of electricity shedding.

COVID-19 Context

- Sudan, like the rest of the world has been experiencing the unprecedented social and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.** The COVID-19 shock is expected to be transitory with potential recovery possible in 2021; but the overall adverse economic impact on Sudan will be substantial. The economic impact of COVID-19 includes the increased price of basic foods, rising unemployment, and falling exports. Restrictions on movement are making the economic situation worse, with commodity prices soaring across the country. According to the IMF projections, consumer prices are expected to increase by 81.3 percent in 2020. Tourism, air transport, and the oil sector are visibly impacted. The IMF has already forecasted an overall economic stagnation in 2020 in Sudan. For instance, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is expected to decrease by 7.2 percent in 2020 (IMF, 2020). Slowing growth and COVID-19 policy responses will have a significant negative impact on government revenue. Slowing activity will automatically translate into lower levels of tax and other government revenue collection. The combined effect on government revenues is projected to be significant. In Africa, forecasts suggest that revenues could be 12 to 16 percent lower in 2020 compared to 2019 (Calderon, Kambou, et al. 2020).
- The Government has established a high-level emergency committee to oversee the operations to deal with COVID-19 pandemic.** In a week between June 12-19, 2020, the number of new virus infections detected in the country increased by 19 percent, bringing the total to 8,020. The Ministry confirmed 74 more fatalities due to the novel coronavirus, taking the nationwide death toll to 487. Sudanese authorities attempted to act quickly in the face of the spreading virus. On March 14, 2020, the Government announced closure of schools and prohibition of mass gatherings. Two days later, they closed airports, ports, and land crossings, banned travel between states, and required a one-month quarantining for incoming travelers. On March 25, 2020, authorities released 4,217 prisoners as a precautionary measure to reduce the risk of transmission in detention. The latest step was imposing night curfew from 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m., while the State of Khartoum has announced a partial lockdown starting April 18 for three weeks. People could move within their districts between 8:00 am and 1:00 pm (which was later further extended to 3:00 pm). According to the Multi-hazard Emergency Health Preparedness Plan prepared by the government and guided by the World Health Organization (WHO) the financing needs to cope with COVID-19 related health care is about US\$120 million. So far, the domestic private sector has pledged to contribute US\$2 million to help the Government, the Government reallocated US\$3 million, and the UN

¹ Central Bank of Sudan



with other international partners are expected to contribute US\$9 million. The World Bank (WB) is planning to contribute US\$35 million to the COVID-19 response from the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Fund (HEPRF) initiated jointly by the WB and Japan. In addition, the WB is preparing a US\$7 million project funded by the State and Peacebuilding Fund (SPF) to help support the Government emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The US Government has also announced a grant of US\$8 million, while the European Union announced a support package of EUR70 million. The Islamic Development Bank is also expected to contribute US\$35 million to Sudan.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

5. **Sudan has made a significant improvement in basic education over the last decade.** Between 2008/09 and 2017/18, the total number of schools (public and private) increased by 2,800, allowing one million more children to access education. The number of students completing primary education and proceeding to secondary school increased from 251 to 336 thousand during the same time. Provision of preschool education, an important step to build school readiness, is relatively high with Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) reaching 43 percent in 2017/18, ten percentage points above average for Sub-Saharan Africa. Around 26 percent of basic schools have preschool facilities. In 2018, 65 percent of learners enrolled in Grade 1 reported having some preschool education, an improvement of about 16 percentage points from 49 percent recorded in mid-2000 (ESA, 2018).
6. **Despite recent progress in student enrollments, the education sector suffers from multiple challenges.** The country is seriously off-track in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4, which commits the world to ensure "inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning" for all by 2030. So far, universal high-quality schooling at the basic education level has proven unachievable. The World Bank Learning Poverty indicator shows that 40 percent of 10-year-olds in Sudan were not able to read and understand a simple text. And the crisis is not equally distributed: the most disadvantaged have the worst access to schooling, highest drop-out rates, and lowest-quality schooling. Sudan ranks 132 out of 157 countries on the Human Capital Index (HCI) with a score of 0.38. This indicates that a child born in Sudan today will be 38 percent as productive when she grows up as she could be if she enjoyed complete education and full health.
7. **Sudan has one of the highest numbers of out-of-school children (OOSC) in the SSA region, with approximately three million school-age children not in the education system.** While 52 percent of those children had never attended school, 48 percent started but dropped out. Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) at the primary level has been stagnant and low – at 69 percent in 2018/19. Due to the pandemic, the number of OOSC children may increase as there is a high risk that children will not return to school once the education system re-opens.
8. **Low public funding for education is affecting the quality of services and impeding access.** The consolidated education budget as a proportion of the overall budget remained stagnant at 11 percent between 2009-2017, which is low compared to the SSA average of 16 percent. As a share of GDP, spending



in education was halved from 2.4 percent in 2009 to 1.2 percent in 2017, which is the lowest in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Federal Government has argued that States are expected to provide additional funding to Education. Though, the task would be extremely difficult given the deep economic crisis and recession. Being severely underfinanced, 72 percent of public schools in Sudan (11,860 schools) meet one of the disadvantage criteria: (i) poor learning environment (absence of water supply, latrines, fences, electricity); and (ii) lack of teachers (high pupil-teacher ratios). According to the Annual School Census, 1,647 public schools do not have any access to clean water including 223 schools for girls (2018/19).

COVID-19 Education Context

9. **The education system in Sudan was severely affected by the pandemic.** All education institutions have been closed since March 14, 2020 with an estimated 6.2 million² students out of school. Grade 8 Basic Education examinations have been postponed in 12 of the 18 states until further notice. Unabated, this situation could have profound, long-term negative impacts on the country's human capital and economic development. Without major effort to counter their effects, the school closings shock will lead to learning loss, increased dropouts, and higher inequality. The economic shock will exacerbate the damage, by depressing education demand and supply as it harms households; and together, they will exact long-run costs on human capital and welfare. A recent World Bank study³ using data on 157 countries simulates that COVID-19 worldwide will result in a loss of 0.6 years of schooling adjusted for quality, bringing the average learning that a student achieves during their lifetime down from 7.9 years to 7.3 years. As many as 4.5 million students could drop out due to the income shock of the pandemic alone. In the absence of any remedial action, students from the current in school cohort will face, on average, a reduction of almost US\$840 in yearly earnings, or a loss of US\$50 thousand per student in lifetime savings over 35 years. The combination of being out of school and the loss of family livelihoods caused by the pandemic may leave girls especially vulnerable, by increasing caregiving responsibilities, the likelihood of adolescent pregnancies, and the potential of early marriage frequently associated with the negative income shock. Globally this amount has a present value of 10 trillion. The world stands to lose as much as 17 percent of the investment's governments make in students' schooling.
10. **Slowing economic growth and declining government revenues will reduce planned increases in education spending in 2020.** Economic growth accounted for 88 percent of global increases in government education spending between 2010 and 2015 (Al-Samarrai, Cerdan-Infantes, et al. 2019). This suggests that lower economic growth in 2020 will either reduce planned increases in education budgets or will lead to reductions in the absolute size of education budgets resulting in larger financing gaps in the sector plan.
11. **The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to have a massive income shock for many households leading to further shrinking of the education sector budget.** Household income for many families is likely to decline due to

² Annual School Census 2018

³ Azevedo, J.P., A. Hasan, D. Goldemberg, S.A. Iqbal, K. Geven (2020). Simulating the potential impacts of COVID-19 school closures on schooling and learning outcomes: Global estimates. World Bank, Washington, D.C.



an increase in both rates of unemployment and underemployment. In Sudan, families have been contributing greatly to education costs, including goods and services, capital costs, salaries to volunteer teachers, and food provision to teachers and pupils. In basic education, for instance, on top of the SDG 2.6 trillion (US\$389 billion⁴) covered by public finances, parents added a total of SDG 496 million (US\$74 million) in 2016/17, translating to about 16 percent of the known spending. The current economic situation is likely to affect the ability of families to pay for education going forward, so there is an urgent need to mobilize more funding. With the growing inflation affecting the purchasing power of households in Sudan, many will lose the ability to pay for goods and services.

12. **Sudan's access to concessional external finance is limited** as it remains on the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism. Sudan is highly indebted with sizeable external arrears and has been in non-accrual status with the World Bank Group (WBG) since 1994. At the end of 2015, its external debt amounted to US\$50 billion (61 percent of GDP) in nominal terms, about 84 percent of which was in arrears. Given the lack of access to IDA, WB activities and projects are funded by TFs, EFOs, Multi-Donor Trust Funds or Grants from global partnerships such as the GPE, GEF, FCPF, SPF, SCBTF, as well as Bank allocations for Advisory Services and Analytics (ASAs).
13. **The proposed grant in the amount of US\$10.65 million from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) aims to support the country's COVID-19 Education Response.** The proposed project will aid Sudan to address the immediate effects of the pandemic by supporting continuity of learning now, as well as to prepare for the school system's re-opening once the pandemic has subsided. In this respect, the project aims to minimize the negative effects of the crisis in both the short and medium-term, thereby diminishing any negative developmental impacts.
14. **The proposed project is being processed under emergency procedures and will be implemented over 18 months.** On March 31, 2020, the GPE Board voted to create a US\$250.0 million COVID-19 Accelerated Funding Window under the GPE Fund (for which the Bank is the Trustee). This window will provide allocations to address the pandemic's impact on education systems in 67 eligible-to-apply countries. Sudan is eligible to receive up to US\$15 million as a grant (including Grant Agency supervision fees). The World Bank has been selected as the Grant Agent by the Federal Ministry of Education and the Local Education Group (LEG) for this grant.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

Development Objective(s) (From PAD)

The Project Development objective is to support learning continuity at the basic education level⁵ during the COVID-19 pandemic and school system shutdown in Sudan and safe transition back to school during recovery.

⁴ Using average exchange rate for 2017: US\$1.00 = SDG6.68 (World Bank, WDI).

⁵ Basic education in Sudan comprises grades from 1 to 8.



PDO Level Indicators

1. Basic education I students benefiting from remote learning programs (% by gender and geographical location)
2. Students previously enrolled in grant-supported schools who return to school once the school system is reopened (number)

Intermediate indicators

- Teachers trained in using distance learning methods (number)
- Disadvantaged schools⁶ with access to water (number)
- Teachers and school administrators in grant-supported schools who return
- Rapid Learning Assessment conducted when schools resume (yes/no)

Student and teacher related indicators will be disaggregated by gender and schools will be disaggregated by state and localities.

Key Results

D. Project Description

15. The proposed project design is guided by the following principles: (a) urgent response to support students and teachers engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic and school system shutdown; (b) use of most common media of communication for distance learning such as radio, television, newspapers for students; (iii) facilitating engagement of students through assignments that will be graded by teachers; and (iv) mobilizing teachers to engage in interacting with students in distance education during social distancing, assessing students' assignments and reporting the results.

Component 1: Supporting learning continuity at the basic education level during the COVID-19 pandemic and school system shutdown (US\$6.93 million).

Sub-Component 1.1: Production and dissemination of TV and radio education broadcast and newspaper education columns (US\$1.40 million).

16. **This sub-component will support** (i) curation and adaptation of distance learning programs in Mathematics and Arabic (including relevant materials available from other Arabic speaking

⁶ Disadvantaged schools – schools without access to fresh water



countries) to be broadcasted through TV and radio with assignments for students to engage in; (ii) development of Arabic and Mathematics columns to be disseminated through newspapers; and (iii) development of guides for teachers to grade and record the results of students' assignments.

17. **Broadcasting free radio and TV lessons to give students an opportunity to continue learning.** Radio programs would target all school-age-children in all 18 states of Sudan. TV lessons would complement radio instructions in Khartoum and other urbanized areas with high penetration of television. The lessons would be aired on national radio and TV stations 4-6 hours a day from Saturday to Thursday (in Rwanda the duration is six hours, in South Sudan – four hours). The lessons would focus on students in basic schools (grade 1-8 students). The Project will facilitate interaction with pupils through text messages and phone-ins.
18. **The Project will support the National Center for Curriculum and Educational Research (NCCER) in developing the learning continuity programs.** First, the NCCER will select textbooks in Math and Arabic to broadcast through radio and nominate teachers to record the lessons. NCCER will also work with textbook authors and teachers to prepare Arabic and Mathematics assignments to be distributed to students in newspaper columns. The selection of key content, development of audio and TV materials and corresponding assignments to be given to students should ensure simplicity and easy accessibility for parents and teachers to follow. **The Project will also support extensive radio awareness campaign for COVID-19 prevention** by working with radio channels at the national, state, and locality levels during peak hours to deliver hygiene messages, promote handwashing and practice social distancing.
19. *Priority support for disadvantaged students.* Students with special needs face particular challenges from loss of schooling as a result of COVID-19. The component will support the development and delivery of specialized distance learning materials for these and other disadvantaged students, such as girls and students from the poorest households.

Sub-Component 1.2: Engagement of students and teachers in the learning continuity programs (US\$4.33 million).

20. **For both radio and newspaper-broadcasting, assignments in Math and Arabic will be developed to engage students in the learning process.** Guidance for completing the assignments will be provided to students at the end of each episode. Pupils will be asked to complete the assignments, and their parents will leave the complete forms in a drop box (secure and weatherproof) installed in each public school. Blank quiz sheets will be printed in newspapers. Teachers will mark the assignments and submit the results to the Project M&E team in SMS/WhatsApp. Paper forms of the assignments will be stored in schools and audited by a third-party when schools resume. When students are back to classrooms, headteachers will recognize/reward those students that completed most assignments.



21. **The Project will, where appropriate, mobilize the participation of community teachers.** Community teachers account for one in six teachers in Sudan and are very important in sustaining the education delivery to date. With the school closure because of the COVID-19 pandemic, these teachers' livelihood will be severely affected as they would no longer receive support from parents and communities. Therefore, the Project will prioritize community teachers to be assigned in each participating school to collect the quiz result and grade them, with a small stipend to be provided to these teachers for their efforts.
22. **The Project will provide COVID-19 grants to basic education schools to support their engagement in distance learning and return back to the classroom.** Grants will be used to (i) remunerate teachers for grading of student assignments; (ii) buy cell phone minutes, text, and data for teachers to transfer results of grading and communicate with students; (ii) recognize/reward those students that completed most assignments; (iii) buy soap and water; and (iv) procure minor stationery such as chalks, pens/pencils, and paper. Schools may also use grants to prepare welcome packages for students when they come back.

Sub-Component 1.3. Provision of radios to the poorest families (US\$1.20 million).

23. **Under this sub-component, the Project will provide radios and solar power banks to target households.** The Project will target communities with schools without electricity and the lowest learning outcomes (bottom 20 percent). Rich school-level data obtained from the School Census in 2015-2019 with support from the BERP will be used for the targeting of project beneficiaries. It is expected that approximately 60,000 poor households will receive the radios.

Component 2: Supporting safe transition back to school during recovery (US\$4.33 million)

Sub-Component 2.1. Ensuring children's return to school (US\$2.45 million).

24. **Under this sub-component, the project will also support communication/connectivity campaigns to ensure sustained enrollment for and protect girls and vulnerable children.** Beyond filling the gap in learning, the Project also seeks to protect vulnerable children – and especially girls – as they spend months out of school and mitigate the heightened risk of early marriage. Girls are more likely to end up doing household chores and might not return to school. Using radio and other technologies to promote safeguarding and health messages, supplemented by human interaction with their teachers or other community leaders, could help protect adolescent girls from sexual abuse, violence, and pregnancy. The project will use extensive communication at the school-level to raise parents' and community awareness in child protection in particular girls.

Sub-Component 2.2. Rapid assessment of learning when schools resume



25. **This sub-component will support schools to conduct a rapid assessment of student needs when schools resume.** The closure of schools, even with mitigation measures, will result in slower learning progress. The poorest are likely to fall further behind their richer peers. When schools re-open, a rapid assessment of students will identify learning gaps and inform remedial programming and learning opportunities so that all students catch up to grade level rapidly. Finally, the analysis of the graded assignment (quizzes) in Component 2 will also inform what teaching and remedial strategies are needed to help students catch up.

Sub-Component 2.3. Provision of water tanks to schools with no access to clean water (US\$0.82 million).

26. **Under this sub-component, the Project will provide water storage tanks (500 liters)** for schools lacking water storage facilities to help in handwashing and hygiene once the schools are open. According to the Annual School Census, there are at least 1,647 public schools without water supply including 223 schools for girls (2018/19). Schools will be allowed to purchase water to support handwashing and other wash and sanitation needs to reduce the risk of COVID-19 resurgence. In addition, school grants which would be provided under another GPE funded operation – Sudan Education Emergency Support Project (P172812) – will be used to buy soap and water.

27. **Component 3: Program coordination and management (US\$0.45 million).** This component will support the Federal Ministry of Education (FMOE) in overall program coordination, monitoring, and evaluation. The Program Coordination unit will cover functions such as planning, procurement, financial management, environmental and social risk management and monitoring and evaluation. Technical experts will be mobilized as necessary. The Program Coordination Unit will monitor the progress by collecting and analyzing school-level data under the Annual School Census.

Legal Operational Policies	
	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No
Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60	No
Summary of Assessment of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts	

E. Implementation



Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

28. **The implementation will be mainstreamed through the MoE, State Ministries of Education, and localities** at the local government level, using the existing government structures in Sudan.
29. **Component 1 will be implemented by the NCCER and localities with the support of states and the Federal MoE.** At the federal level, the NCCER will coordinate the production and broadcasting of learning continuity programs, as well as, development of assignments for mass printing in newspapers. Government systems will be used to provide training to teachers in grading student assignments.
30. **Sub-component 1.3 ‘Provision of radios to the poorest’ will be supported by the MoE Department of Planning.** The implementation arrangement will build on the textbook preparation and distribution under the BERP, and, to the extent possible, government systems will be used to deliver the radios to communities. However, implementation capabilities may vary among the localities. Therefore the Project may make use of Third Party Providers to support capacity building at the beginning of the program and then phase out as the system mature. The nature and role of such third-party providers shall be defined once a capacity assessment is done to determine their capability to manage school grants.
31. **Component 2 will be led by the Department of Planning and the Assessment Center,** under the senior MoE leadership led by the Under-Secretary. The Under-Secretary is the Chief Administrator at the MoE, and the overall responsibilities of implementation fall under his/her office. A Steering Committee, chaired by the Under-Secretary and participation of beneficiary States, will meet virtually monthly to provide the strategic guidance and oversight in the implementation of the program activities.
32. **The MoE and States will be supported by a Program Coordination Unit (PCU).** The PCU will be led by a Program Manager and include the following key personnel: (i) component coordinators, (ii) program monitoring and evaluation specialist, and (iii) procurement, financial management, and administrative staff.

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APPROVAL

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