

**PILGRIMS OF HOPE (POH)**

**HEAD OFFICE-TONGPING RESIDENTIAL AREA**

**JUBA NABARI- OPP- ICRC COURT**

**Email:** **pilgrimshope18@gmail.com**

**Webmail:** **info@hopepilgrims.org**

**Web:** [**www.hopepilgrims.org**](http://www.hopepilgrims.org)

**History of education in South Sudan**

As a British colony from 1899 to 1956, there was not much effort on the part of the [imperial](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empire) power to establish schools. [Catholic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic) and [Protestant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestant) [missionaries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missionaries) provided limited schooling. However, these schools were taught in the [vernacular](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vernacular) which did not help children become permanently [literate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literate). After Sudan's [independence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independence) in 1956, the ineffective church-run schools were shut down in a wave of Islamisation. New [nationalized](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nationalized) schools were created, and schools used [Arabic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic) instead of local languages. The new schools were also inaccessible to most of the population. The educational opportunities became even more dismal once the [civil war](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Sudanese_Civil_War) broke out. The on-and-off civil warfare devastated educational prospects for generations of Sudanese, due to high costs, lack of buildings, and [insecurity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Security). Since the [Comprehensive Peace Agreement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comprehensive_Peace_Agreement) of 2005 parents are pushing for their children to attend school. While facilities are still widely lacking, 500 new schools have been built. These new structures serve the 1.4 million children who are nowattending primary school, which is a two-fold increase from five years ago. [South Sudan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Sudan)'s official independence in 2011 left Africa's newest country without a basic infrastructure in place, with some of the worst [human development](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_development_%28humanity%29) indicators in the world.

**Challenges**

Many issues prevent the educational infrastructure in South Sudan from reaching its full potential, including poverty, governmental failures, ongoing [violence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Violence), poor health of its citizens, and inaccessibility to schools that are overcrowded, underfunded, and operated by unqualified teachers. South Sudan has the worst gender equality in education in the world.

**General challenges**

Poverty and lack of government funds greatly limits the extent to which [education](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education) can be improved. According to the [World Bank](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Bank), more than half of the South Sudanese people live below the [poverty line](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poverty_line). The [government of South Sudan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government_of_South_Sudan) lacks the money and institutional framework to offer much help. South Sudan is rich in natural resources with oil as their main [export](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Export), representing 98% of government [revenue](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revenue). However, recently [oil exports](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oil_exports) have been completely cut off, due to a high [tax](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tax) which [Sudan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sudan) sought to levy upon oil flowing through their pipelines. It is predicted that the educational budget could be decreased dramatically. The inability of the government to fund schools leads to high education costs that most families cannot afford. An additional challenge faced by students in certain [regions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regions) like Warrap and [Upper Nile](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upper_Nile_%28state%29) is the continual fighting between different factions. [Conflict](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armed_conflict) displaces citizens and unhinges government services. In 2008, there were 300,000 such [refugees](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Refugees) in South Sudan. These [regions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regions) with ongoing violence are bound to suffer more later because, as Jeffrey Sachs has stated, conflict disallows children from attending school and building the skills needed to be a productive society member. Conversely, many refugees from the civil war are returning in droves to South Sudan. Only established in 2011, South Sudan's infrastructure is not up to par yet. However, the repatriates put an even greater strain on the slim resources. Many of these refugees had received better education during their time in refugee camps in places like Kenya. The result is that this [influx](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/influx) of more educated persons is increasing the overall Net Literacy rates of South Sudan. Challenges faced in the classrooms include language disparities, un-unified [curriculum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curriculum), teacher absenteeism, teachers who are untrained, and overcrowded classrooms. South Sudan had decided to use [English](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language) as the preferred language in schools. Currently teachers lack English educational material or the capability to teach in that language. There is presently no unified standard of curriculum for the whole country. This leads to differences in outcome for the students. Teacher absenteeism has also been shown to be an issue where in certain areas of the country, very little time is actually spent learning in the classroom. Even when teachers are present, there is a good chance that the teacher is untrained. Estimates show that as many as 7,500 teachers are not qualified to teach primary school. Overcrowding is yet another problem in classrooms, and in 2009, it was judged that there were on average 129 students per classroom.

**Additional challenges for girls**

While all of the above described issues apply generally to students in South Sudan, certain cultural practices add greater difficulty for girls seeking education at any level. South Sudan currently has one of the lowest globally ranked levels of [gender equality](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender_equality) in the world. Two of the biggest reasons for girls dropping out of school include early marriage and early [pregnancy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pregnancy). The [dowry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dowry) associated with marriage can be a lucrative incentive for parents to marry their daughters off at an early age. This practice is especially common in [rural](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rural) areas. Prioritization of boys' education over girls' leads to girls being removed from school earlier. If a family cannot afford to send all of their children to school, the interests of the boys' education will be favored. Further, girls' domestic responsibilities within the household increase with age, which leaves less time for girls to attend school and to study. Violence can be a deterrent for parents considering sending their daughters to school in South Sudan. If the distance to school is large, fear of attacks by men while on the way to or from school is a huge concern. Lack of facilities also prevents girls from attending school. Most schools do not have separate [latrines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latrines) for girls, and those without access to sanitary napkins are more likely to not attend school while menstruating.

With a 16% female [literacy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literacy) rate,[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Educational_inequalities_in_South_Sudan#cite_note-18) South Sudan ranks lowest in the world. Two-thirds of the approximately two million illiterate South Sudanese are women and a girl is more likely to die in [pregnancy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pregnancy) or [childbirth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Childbirth) than to [graduate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graduation) from primary school. In 2005, the female: male enrollment rate in primary school was 35:100.

**Women in general**

According to [UNESCO](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNESCO), as of 2017, the number of illiterate individuals older than 15 constitutes more than 70 percent of the population in South Sudan. The challenges are particularly severe for female children. According to the 2010 South Sudan Household Health Survey, the nationwide literacy rate for women remains to be 13.4 percent. According to [UNICEF](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNICEF), fewer than one percent of girls complete primary education. One in four students is a girl and South Sudan maintains the highest female illiteracy rate in the world. It is estimated that more than one million of children eligible for primary school are not enrolled, with secondary school enrollment being even lower than 10% among those eligible.

**Institutional levels of education available to women**

**Primary and secondary schools**

Girls are more likely to be enrolled later and removed from primary school earlier than their male student counterparts. [Primary schools](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primary_schools) have a male graduation rate of about 16%, while girls' graduation rates lag behind at 9%. For the reasons discussed above, girls are at a clear disadvantage in education. Completing [secondary school](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secondary_school) has been found to deter early marriage and provide opportunity for girls by producing [skilled workers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skilled_workers).

**Higher education**

During the civil war, the four major universities in South Sudan relocated to [Khartoum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khartoum). Since independence, the universities have been slowly moving back to the region. The process is hindered by the cost of rebuilding, and many faculty members are unwilling to move to South Sudan, where the cost of living is significantly higher. Other challenges include the increasing enrollment rates, a 50% increase to 6,000 at the [University of Juba](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Juba) from the '08/'09 school year to the '09/'10 school year. The universities are not yet equipped with the facilities to operate with so many students. Available facilities for on-campus housing are insubstantial and this can be a deterrent to parents sending daughters to receive a university education. Safety and protection worries are still an issue at this level of education for women. The complete lack of latrines for women on campus can be another barrier to high education. Some women have found that having [higher education](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Higher_education) is also an obstacle to their [marriage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marriage) prospects. Some traditionalists believe that women should not be educated, and others are dissuaded by the assumed increase in [dowry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dowry) price that would come with a more educated woman.

 South Sudan today:

A generation of children in South Sudan is being deprived of a fair chance in life.

More than two million children, or over 70 %, are out of school in South Sudan, putting at risk their futures and the future of the country. Some of the out- of- school children are living in pastoral communities, moving with their cattle and are not able to attend regular classes. The largest group of out-of-school children in South Sudan are girls. Poverty, child marriage and cultural and religious views all hinder girls' education.

**Part of the working Solutions**

Education for all children is not only the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do.

A child born to an educated mother has a 50 per cent higher chance of survival. The risk of child marriage and early pregnancy is lower if girls stay in school.  Educated parents are more likely to send their children to school. POH is doing girl child education campaigns, giving school uniform to the most vulnerable girls-books and pens and school bags, while carrying out menstrual hygiene promotions in schools, advocating for more safe spaces for menses in schools creating more conducive environment for girls and to encourage parents and caregivers to send their children to school.