

# Mid-Term Review Report for the SEAQE 2 project - South Sudan

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## Norad Collected Reviews

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# South Sudan SEAQE 2

## Mid Term Review



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## I BACKGROUND

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The SEAQE 2 project is focused on supporting girls and boys to access, engage and learn in inclusive primary and Alternative Learning Programs (ALPs) in the Eastern Equatoria Region of South Sudan. SEAQE 2 is strongly focused on development education pathways for marginalised and conflicted affected children, including OOSC, girls and children with disabilities. In this phase of the program, emphasis was given to improving wellbeing, economic opportunities, the capacity of civil society and the government. The result being that SEAQE 2 would contribute to strengthening equitable access, participation and learning outcomes within learning environments and strengthen the education system.

Prior to the start of SEAQE 2, the target area of Greater Kapoeta in Eastern Equatoria State was heavily affected by the civil war in South Sudan, which has internally displaced over 2.18 million people (60 percent of whom are children) and driven over two million refugees out of the country. Widespread poverty, food insecurity and epidemics are consistent challenges, with outbreaks of cholera in Kapoeta State leading to school closures. The SEAQE 2 target area was classified in the emergency phase under the Integrated Food Security Classification (IPC) four, with some areas potentially reaching IPC 5 (famine).

During the first year of the SEAQE 2 project, the target area was characterised by insecurity despite ongoing peace negotiations between the government and opposition leaders culminating in the formation of the unity government in February 2020. Inter-communal conflict characterised by revenge killings and on 26 November 2019 ADRA staff were victim to an armed robbery while travelling to Chukudum from Kapoeta.

Within the education sector, the National Minister of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI) continued the roll out of the new curriculum, which emphasises competency-based child centred approaches. However, the low capacity of teachers to adopt and use the curriculum hampers quality improvements, with 70 percent of teaching staff being untrained volunteers.

In the first year of the SEAQE 2 project, the project focused on mobilising communities and stakeholders and ensuring that schools were operational. This included stakeholder engagement within the four project counties in Eastern Equatoria State where the twenty project schools are located, the reopening of 4 previously non-functioning primary schools, which brought 1,170 OOSC back into school, and assessments and construction/rehabilitation activities within 3 of the 5 schools targeted for construction/rehabilitation, despite some delays experienced due to flooding and inter-communal violence in Lokwarmor. The project launch was attended by representatives from the MoGEI as well as state, county and local leaders who committed their support for the project and towards addressing education barriers, such as early marriage. Four county education forums were also held to strengthen coordination and engagement with civil society groups and community engagement activities were undertaken on the benefits of inclusive education and the importance of sending girls and children with disabilities to school. Coordination meetings with the University of Juba and the Rambur National Teacher Training Institute to support the provision of in-service teacher training and certification, an initiative from phase I of the SEAQE project, were continued.

The year 2020 was one of continued security risks, armed conflict and significant disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Political contentions regarding the implementation of the peace process as set forth in the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan continued throughout 2020. Key State and county political leadership roles, such as governors, ministers, county

commissioners and members of parliament, were left unfilled and inhibited ADRA and the project’s ability to coordinate service delivery with the government. At the same time, the target areas of Greater Kapoeta (Kapoeta North, Kapoeta South, Kapoeta East and Budi) continued to experience increased insecurity and inter-tribal conflicts and ADRA staff faced another incident of armed robbery in February 2020 while staff were travelling between project locations. Flooding in large parts of South Sudan also made access to project target areas difficult and destroyed harvests, contributing to the deteriorating food security and economic situation.

By March 2020, rising cases of COVID-19 infections resulted in all schools being closed for a 7 – 8-month period. Candidate classes (Primary 8 and Secondary 4) were reopened in October so students could prepare for the national exams in early 2021 and all other schools / classes resumed in May 2021 after 14 months of school closure. ADRA and the SEAQE 2 project pivoted to supporting the national COVID-19 education response and recovery plan. In collaboration with the MoGEI and other education partners, the SEAQE 2 project supported the development of the ‘School on Air’ program, an innovative multi-grade radio learning program to engage learners at home, although the coverage of the program was limited to primary grades 5 - 8. ADRA adapted activities to support learning continuity through ‘School on Air,’ this included providing home-based learning materials and equipment and supporting target schools to provide pre-recorded lessons through a facilitator to small groups of learners (10 - 15). Prior to schools reopening, the SEAQE project supported back to school campaigns to promote children’s safe return to school.

Throughout 2020, the SEAQE 2 project made steady progress against outcome areas. For instance, school construction/rehabilitation targets were achieved, PTA trainings were conducted to strengthen parental engagement and establish school policies, and the mentoring program for teachers and PTA members was further developed to accelerate implementation of activities in families, schools and communities and adapt to restrictive COVID-19 guidelines.

The SEAQE 2 project supported schools and communities to enable safe return of students once schools reopened. This was in May 2021. There was significant involvement of the community in preparing the school grounds and providing security. There were only a few security incidence at target schools due to ongoing security provision by community members and the peace and reconciliation efforts undertaken by county commissioners to maintain peace amongst rival clans and reduce the incidence of cattle raiding.

## 2 SAMPLE ACHIEVED

### 2.1 SCHOOLS VISITED

Data was collected in a total of sixteen schools, all were primary schools. Three teams made up of six enumerators travelled to school locations over a two-week period.

Table 1: Schools included in the sample

	School Name	Location		School Name	Location
1	Choroi Primary	Kapoeta North	10	Katiko Primary	Kapoeta South
2	Paringa Primary	Kapoeta North	11	Nachilagur Primary	Kapoeta South
3	Chukudum Primary	Budi	12	Natapar Primary	Kapoeta South

4	Lokwamor Primary	Kapoeta North	13	Longeleya Primary	Kapoeta South
5	Lomeyen Primary	Kapoeta North	14	Mogos Primary	Kapoeta East
6	Lorege Primary	Budi	15	Nasigiriat Primary	Kapoeta East
7	Karkomuge Primary	Kapoeta North	16	Lowoyakale Primary	Kapoeta East
8	Lomilmil	Kapoeta South	17	Kaldo Primary	Kapoeta East
9	Piobokoi Primary	Budi	18	Loolim Primary	Kaoeta East

## 2.2 FINAL SAMPLE

A total of 541 individuals were surveyed including 327 males and 168 females. Of this number, a total of 145 students were assessed from Grade 4 and Grade 7, including 101 males and 44 females.

Table 2: Participants interviewed for the MTR

	Total	Males	Females
Students	G4 – 118 G7 – 27 Total – 145	101	44
Teachers	32	30	2
Headteachers	15	14	1
Parents	173	91	82
SMC	171	87	84
Education authorities	4*	4	0
Partners	1*		
Total	541	327	168

\*The survey did not differentiate authorities for SEAQE 2 and EiE. ADRA South Sudan reported that from the total of 18 education authorities interviewed, 4 were from SEAQE 2 target areas and 14 were from the Upper Nile. Regarding partners, whilst the data collected from KOBO stated that all three partners were assigned to the EiE project, according to ADRA South Sudan, 1 was a SEAQE 2 project partner and 2 were connected to the EiE project. The presentation of findings from authorities and partners therefore are not differentiated.

## 3 FINDINGS

### 3.1 SUMMARY

Several high-level findings have been extrapolated. These are:

- The performance of students in the Grade 4 learning assessment for literacy was lower than other country results. Many students were unable to answer questions and girls' performance in literacy and numeracy was lower than boys. Gender differences were statistically significant with high confidence values. Most Grade 7 students did not answer any of the questions in numeracy. This suggests that they did not understand the questions and/or were unfamiliar with the type of questions asked. Literacy results for students were much higher in Grade 7, especially for the reading task.

- The distance learning program only reached children in grades 5-8 and those in areas that were easily accessible, but if expanded, it could be replicated to support OOSC.
- At baseline it was apparent that students were rarely asked their opinion and that teacher conduct was a concern in some schools. This remains the case with corporal punishment, bullying and harassment continuing to be issues facing students in school. Whilst very encouraging that ADRA supported schools in developing student governing bodies, greater emphasis may need to be placed on creating an enabling environment for all students to have a voice in the school community.
- Girls' safety concerns including GBV, shaming, bullying and harassment were raised as a significant issue. For children with disabilities, discrimination, shaming and violence were reported as concerns. Teachers reported that they tended to try to resolve issues concerning student's safety and protection on their own and most have received training.
- Whilst student social emotional wellbeing has been given some attention, including peer clubs, cultural and sporting events and awareness raising, Head teachers strongly felt that more cultural and sporting events would be beneficial and more training on psychosocial support for teachers was needed.
- There are still very few female teachers.
- During the 14 months of school closures caused by COVID-19, 78 percent of teachers did not receive a salary. Many teachers spoke of their struggles, including hunger and abuse because they were home. Many teachers recommended that an additional support payment would help their teacher wellbeing.
- The education level of locally recruited teachers is low (50 percent are only primary school educated) but locally recruited teachers stay teaching within their communities longer than qualified teachers brought in from town. This necessitates a different approach to teacher professional development. In this context, ToT is not an effective strategy for teacher professional development. This has led to the development of the mentorship program as an alternative and more relevant strategy.
- Teachers highly value mentoring and coaching (94 percent) and In-service teacher training (75 percent) and peer learning (28 percent). Over 50 percent of teachers found online teacher training, WhatsApp SMS messaging and distance learning the least valuable to their professional development.
- Parents would like to have more frequent meetings with teachers, and more feedback on their children's learning.
- The REFLECT program appears to have been successful as an effective parent engagement strategy and as a vehicle to share information, discuss issues and address barriers to access for girls and children with disability.
- ADRA South Sudan partner staff agree that ADRA coordinates and partners well with other NGOs and civil society groups and the network of organisations that are supporting schools in areas such as referral, child protection and disability inclusion is growing.
- The close cooperation and support for both the capacity development and the practical needs (e.g., transport, office equipment) of education authorities is helping to strengthen their capacity to support and monitor inclusive education .



## 3.2 RELEVANCE

**The SEAQE 2 project is highly relevant to supporting the education needs of conflict affected children in South Sudan, including girls and children with disabilities.** The SEAQE 2 proposal outlined the profound barriers to education that children face in the target communities. This included poverty, food insecurity because of conflict and drought, and significant child protection issues, including violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect. There are numerous school related barriers stemming from a fragile education system that is characterised by inadequate quality, access and equity, including inequitable resource allocation for education facilities, teachers and learning materials in rural areas. The population in the target area includes pastoralist communities who are illiterate and place little value on education. **According to MTR respondents, existing barriers to education have been amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic and school closures.**

Education and gender indicators within the SEAQE 2 target areas are below the national average and South Sudan has some of the worst education and gender indicators in the world. The Net Enrolment Rate in South Sudan is 32 percent (28 percent in target areas) and only 40 percent are girls. Completion rates are particularly low, at 15 percent in target areas, indicating that most children drop out of school before completing a full cycle of education. Only 55 percent of primary schools across the country are in permanent buildings and the target area has the least number of schools that were open/functioning (27 percent) in the country, with schools that were open losing an average of 30 days of education a year and a third of schools reporting attacks. The number of OOSC in the target area was among the highest in the country and includes girls, children with disabilities, orphan/foster children and displaced children.

Girls face significant barriers to accessing, participating and completing a full cycle of education. Traditional gender roles limit investment in girls education and early marriage, domestic violence and sexual and gender-based violence are widespread. Girls are an income source in South Sudan, as husbands pay a bride price in cattle and bride prices have risen, driving cattle-raiding, conflict and the abduction of girls. 52 percent of girls are married by age 18 and 9 percent before the age of 15. Early marriage leads to adolescent pregnancy, high rates of maternal mortality and exclusion from school.

Children with disabilities are among the most marginalised children in South Sudan and face significant barriers to education. Only 1.7 percent of children with disabilities are in primary school despite 4 percent (severe) and 13 percent (moderate) of the population estimated to have a disability. Conflict is the leading cause of disability in children, causing at least 21 percent of impairments in South Sudan.

### Prior to COVID-19

The SEAQE 2 project response to the barriers to education faced by marginalised children, including girls and children with disabilities, in target areas were highly relevant. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (2019), the project focused on expanding education services by re-opening four non-functioning primary schools and commencing construction/rehabilitation of a further 3 schools. Engagement and awareness raising among communities on inclusive education and the role of parents and communities in mobilising children to attend school was conducted, as well as the provision of learning materials and hygiene supplies, including learning materials for 56 children with disabilities. Head teachers, teachers and PTAs from 18 of the 20 schools were trained on effective school management, life skills and psychosocial support emphasising inclusive education. **Student governance bodies (prefects) were established in 19 of the 20 schools and trained on roles and responsibilities, including peace building, conflict resolution, life skills and WASH and developed action plans to support school**

management. Female advocates / role models were identified to promote girls education and to help advocate against early marriage.

**According to ADRA South Sudan staff involved in the MTR reflection workshop, efforts to strengthen parental and community engagement and ownership of schools was highly relevant to restructuring / establishing effective PTAs and resulted in the mobilisation of local resources and support for school improvements.** REFLECT is being used in South Sudan to increase parental support for education. REFLECT is a functional adult literacy program widely used around the world. It teaches literacy through empowering community. **The efforts made to mobilise parents and communities has resulted in significant community support for schools, including in the provision of food and local materials to fill gaps in school feeding and improve security around schools.**

**Support for teacher professional development was highly relevant given teachers in SEAQE 2 target schools are under qualified.** The SEAQE 2 project has supported the upgrading of the Budi Education Centre, the only in-service teacher training centre in the target area. The centre was assessed for electrification in 2019 and solar power and batteries installed during the dry season in 2020. At the same time, coordination with the University of Juba and Rambur National Teacher Training Institute, which supported in-service training and certification of 104 teachers during SEAQE 1, was continued.

During COVID-19

**Project responses to COVID-19 school closure were highly relevant and ADRA was able to adapt quickly to support distance learning and children's safe return to school.** Mentors and teachers were deployed to conduct home visits and offer small group lessons via the government initiated 'School on Air' program. **However, this program was only provided for primary grades 5 - 8 and was not accessible to all children. Out of the 20 SEAQE 2 supported schools, 12 schools offer only lower grades and do not have grade 5 - 8 learners. These schools were therefore not involved in the distance learning initiative. Furthermore, according to head teachers, children with disabilities, children in remote areas, children whose families had to migrate and children from poor households struggled to access distance learning.** Both girls and children with disabilities faced barriers to accessing distance learning. Work, household chores, early marriage and a lack of parental support created barriers to distance learning for girls while neglect, a lack of parental support, a lack of home learning materials and domestic violence were barriers faced by children with disabilities.

When schools reopened, the project supported back to school campaigns, including girls education campaigns, and supported schools to comply with COVID-19 guidelines. This included upgrading WASH facilities and the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). To help recover lost learning, schools implemented catch up classes. Smaller gatherings and school-based training and mentoring of education personnel, including teachers, head teachers and education authorities on inclusion, management, protection and quality education as well as mentoring of PTAs/School Management Committees (SMCs) were conducted in compliance with COVID-19 protocols and to support the safe reopening of schools.

Social and Emotional Wellbeing

Child protection and psychosocial support for children is a critical issue in the South Sudan context and efforts to strengthen child protection and psychosocial support within SEAQE 2 supported schools and

communities have been highly relevant. This has included the mapping of service providers, the establishment of referral systems to both local child protection and health services and cooperation with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and local organisations on gender-based violence responses and adolescent sexual and reproductive rights. **School based activities, including training on child protection and psychosocial support has been provided and supports the identification and referral of children requiring additional support, including children suffering from post-traumatic stress.**

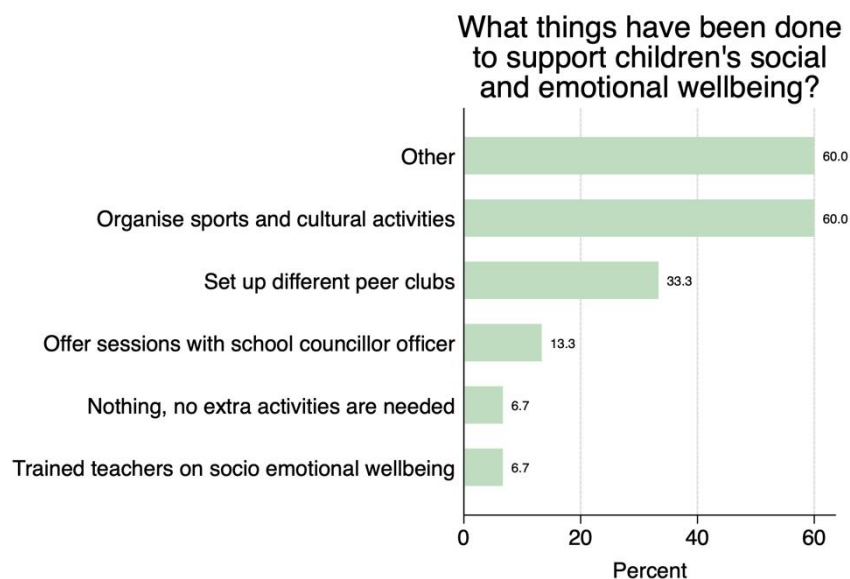


Figure 1: Things that were done to support children's social emotional wellbeing as reported by headteachers.

**Sports and cultural activities and different peer clubs were common activities undertaken in school to support children's social emotional wellbeing.** There were also reports of awareness raising sessions with parents and students on COVID-19 prevention and the importance of education continuity. **Head teachers felt more could be done in this area, including more opportunities for students to play and learn together through cultural and sporting events and peer clubs as well as more training on psychosocial support for teachers.**

### 3.3 COHERENCE

The MTR found that the SEAQE 2 project is aligned with several national education policies and priorities, including the Education Policy (2017 - 2027), Education Sector Plan (ESP) 2017 - 2022, Inclusive Education Policy (2014) and Girls' Education Strategy (2018 - 2022), which all give focus to equitable access to education and creating quality, conducive and safe environments for all children to learn. Most education authorities reported that ADRA has supported the implementation of Education for all (100 percent), gender equity (83 percent) and inclusive education (83 percent) policies and the implementation of COVID-19 response plans (67 percent).

ADRA South Sudan collaborates closely with national and local education authorities and the SEAQE 2 project has contributed to resourcing the State and 4 county education offices with office equipment and transport vehicles (motorbikes) to fulfil their school inspection roles and responsibilities. This has included

fostering collaboration between the MoGEI and state education authorities to provide training and plan for joint school inspection.

ADRA South Sudan is leading coordination efforts among education stakeholders on critical issues, such as teacher incentives and teacher professional development reforms. Four county education forums have been established in Kapoeta East, North, South and Budi in which county and local education authorities and stakeholders, including local leaders, NGOs, head teachers, PTA networks, women and youth groups, share information and collaborate to improve access, equity and the quality of education services.

**ADRA South Sudan partner staff either agreed (2 out of 3 respondents) or strongly agreed (1 out of 3 respondents) that ADRA coordinated and partnered well with other NGOs and civil society groups.** The SEAQE 2 project has established partnerships with NGOs and CSOs, including Hope for South Sudan Church and Community Need Initiative (CNI), to provide direct support to learners and cooperates and complements programs and initiatives by other agencies to advance inclusive education policy and practice. This has included fostering partnerships between some target schools and the Network for Integrated and Rural Achievement (NIRA), Save the Children and Community Development and Support Service (CDSS) for the training of learners on menstrual hygiene management and how to make reusable pads. ADRA is the state anchor for girls' education in Eastern Equatoria state and collaborates with the Girls Education South Sudan (GESS) program for inclusive education technical expertise and community mobilisation and awareness raising and has established a partnership with Community Development South Sudan (CDSS) for research and advocacy on inclusive education reforms.

**The SEAQE 2 project also aligns and compliments the NORAD funded Together for Inclusion (TOFI) program implemented by ADRA in South Sudan, which is developing partnerships with Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) to further enhance their involvement in inclusive education activities.**

The SEAQE 2 project also coordinates with the MoGEI and UN agencies to leverage national programs and ensure target schools benefit. For instance, ADRA successfully coordinated with the MoGEI and UNICEF for the distribution of 27,000 textbooks to target schools and participates in coordination efforts to find longer term solutions to gaps in teaching and learning materials. **At the local level, ADRA has coordinated and collaborated with government, local authorities and UN agencies to strengthen laws for the protection of children. This has included bylaws to ban the practice of early / forced marriage in some target communities.**

### **3.4 EFFICIENCY**

**The COVID-19 pandemic and continued state fragility caused disruption to the efficient delivery of the SEAQE 2 project, and this was beyond ADRA's control.** COVID-19 travel restrictions and limitations on the number of people who could gather at one time meant that project activities were delayed and adapted. For instance, the mentor training program was adapted so that smaller groups of mentors were trained at one time / location and school-based training sessions were adapted to adhere to COVID-19 guidelines and protocols.

**Rising insecurity in the project target areas also impacted the efficient delivery of project activities. Instances of communal conflict, road ambushes and insecurity within the project areas, which resulted in two instances of ADRA staff being ambushed and personnel**

robbed, necessitated the use of escorts / conveys and/or transportation by air rather than road travel. This impacted both the timely delivery of project activities and activity costs.

The economic impacts of COVID-19 and the adjustments to program activities had budget implications that were efficiently managed by ADRA Norway in partnership with ADRA South Sudan. Inflation rates because of COVID-19 border closures and the disruption to supply chains resulted in cost increases for construction materials. Some activity costs also increased because of the adaptations required to respond to COVID-19. For instance, the shift to a decentralised training approach and support for learning continuity through the deployment of facilitators led to additional costs for the deployment of mentors and facilitators. In response, ADRA Norway reallocated carry over funds from SEAQE 2 Somalia to accommodate cost increases in other SEAQE 2 project countries, including South Sudan.

According to ADRA SEAQE 2 partners in South Sudan, SEAQE 2 was professionally managed, was cost effective, project activities were conducted in a timely manner, and they received good support from ADRA.

### 3.5 EFFECTIVENESS

#### Program achievements

Table 3: Outcome achievements against baseline and milestones

Outcome	Indicator/s	Baseline	Milestone	MTR
	# and % of learners in supported educational institutions achieving expected standards of quality, inclusive and effective learner-friendly education environments	0%	25%	16% of learners (15% f; 16% m)
	% reduction in gender disparities in learning achievements in end-of-school exams	3.3% difference	4% reduction (3.1 % difference)	173% increase in disparities
Outcome 1: More marginalised children and youth access and participate in inclusive education	% and # of out-of-school children (f/m) enrolled in supported educational institutions that remain in the learning institution the following year.	61% (718, of which 380 f; 338 m) of 1,170 out-of-school children – 2020 data	70% (159, of which 80 f; 79 m) of 225 out-of-school children	tbc
	# and % of learners (f/m) that benefit from education in supported educational institutions that meet the expected standards of inclusive education (ETLE and TVETQA)		35%	51% of learners (54% f; 48% m)
Outcome 2: More children and youth learn in safe, protective and healthy education institutions	# of learners (f/m) enrolled in supported educational institutions	5081 learners (1850 f; 3231 m; of which 3 f; 1 m with disability)	6791 learners (2688 f; 4103 m)	7230 learners (3120 f; 4110 m; of which 14 f; 42 m with disability)
	# and % learners that benefit from education in supported educational institutions that meet expected standards for healthy, safe and protective institutions (ETLE and TVETQA composite indicator)		35% of learners (35% f; 35% m)	75% of learners (67% f; 79% m)
Outcome 3: Learner's benefit from improved quality teaching and relevant learning	% of supported educational institutions where SMCs/PTAs meeting expected standards in managing and strengthening supported educational institutions (ETLE)		35%	25% of 12 supported educational institutions
	# and % of learners in supported educational		15%	25% (16%F, 29%M)

	institutions achieving the minimum proficiency level in reading and mathematics (Norad indicator 2.1)			
Outcome 4: Learners, parents, communities and other stakeholders are more positively engaged with educational systems	# and % of supported educational institutions that meet the expected standards for participation of learners, parents and employers	0%	35%	33% of 12 sampled supported institutions
Outcome 5: Strengthened civil society influences education policies and practices	# of research and advocacy documents developed by civil society	0	1	0
	# of policies, plans and budgets developed/revised to include quality, equitable, safe and/or inclusive education and/or protection for marginalised groups	0	1	0

For the most part, progress is evident in most outcome areas except for Outcome 5 which has been hampered due to COVID-19. A higher proportion of head teachers achieved ETL standards, and a higher proportion of schools achieved ETL's minimum quality standards than was expected in 2021. Teacher quality assessments and participation levels of parents and students was lower than expected in 2021. Several areas were identified for improvement including supporting teachers in psychosocial support and wellbeing, formative and summative assessment and positive discipline/behavioural management. It was also recommended that parental engagement needs to be improved to ensure students are supported at home. It was also suggested that parents could be involved in monitoring school progress and support the management of resources. There was an 0.7 reduction in gender disparities in learning achievements in end-of-school exams for the year 2020. This was an improvement from 2019, which was 0.9. The slight reduction has been attributed to efforts invested in girls education such as provision of gender segregated WASH facilities and the increased parents responsiveness to allow girls to do homework. The majority (64 percent) of supported educational institutions met the expected ETL standards of inclusive education. It was observed during monitoring visits that most of the schools tracked and maintained records of school enrolment, monitored learners' attendance, and kept records of student academic results.

### 3.5.1 Outcome 1 (access to learning for girls, children with disabilities etc)

This outcome is focused on OOSC, and girls and children with disabilities access to education. At baseline, low and infrequent attendance and high student dropout tended to typify SEAQE 2 target schools. Schools reported success in re-enrolling students, which suggests that seasonal work and the demand for labour may be driving low attendance and annual drop out figures.

**Indicator 1.1: % and # of out-of-school children (f/m) enrolled in supported educational institutions that remain in the learning institution the following year (disability) (Norad indicator 1.2)**

Table 4: Numbers of out of school children supported in 2019, 2020 and 2021 that remained in the learning institution

COUNTRY	2019 TARGET	2019 ACTUAL	2020 TARGET	2020 ACTUAL	2021 TARGET	2021 ACTUAL
South Sudan	357 (143 f; 214 m)	1,170 (506 f; 664 m)	70% of 357	61% (718) (330 f; 338 m) of 1170	70% of 225	97% (4,710) (1988 F, 2722 M) of 4850 learners.

In 2019, four non-functional primary schools were re-opened, resulting in 1,170 (506 f; 664 m) out-of-school children being enrolled in school. **This achievement was also the result of dialogue with communities, emphasising the importance of including girls and children with disability, training for chiefs on their role in mobilizing children to attend school, and addressing issues such as early marriage, in addition to providing scholastic materials and hygiene supplies.**

Out of 1,170 (506 F; 664 M) OOSC enrolled in 2019, 718 (380 F; 338 M) remained in school in 2020, registering for the 2020 school year before schools closed on 21 March 2020 due to the COVID-19 lockdown. Except for primary Grade 8 and senior Grade 4, school remained closed for the rest of the school year. In 2021, once schools reopened, ADRA focused on verifying school enrolment data to ascertain the number of learners who had dropped out so that they could be approached to re-enrol and followed up with out-of-school children and adolescents. Additionally, ADRA facilitated a Back To Learning (BTL), house – to – house and radio awareness campaign to promote enrolment/re-enrolment. The frequent meetings and monitoring of the schools and the PTAs on their action points by the project staffs had contributed towards the children retention.

**In 2020, the enrolment of 718 (380 F; 338 M) OOSC, including 31 female children with disabilities and 16 male children with disabilities, ahead of the COVID-19 school closures, was attributed to the REFLECT program that encouraged parents to enrol their children in school, community sensitization events conducted through the PTAs and the provision of learning materials.** During school closures, ADRA also managed to support continued learning for 1,566 (516 f; 950 m) children through pre-recorded or radio education programs and supported re-opening in October 2020 of the Primary 8 candidate classes for 41 (12 f; 29 m) students to prepare for the national examination in early 2021, providing personal protective equipment (PPE) and hygiene materials.

**Teachers noted the radio education program to have been well received, although many reported challenges faced in accessing the distance learning program. Teachers reported that this improved student learning outcomes for those able to access the program.**

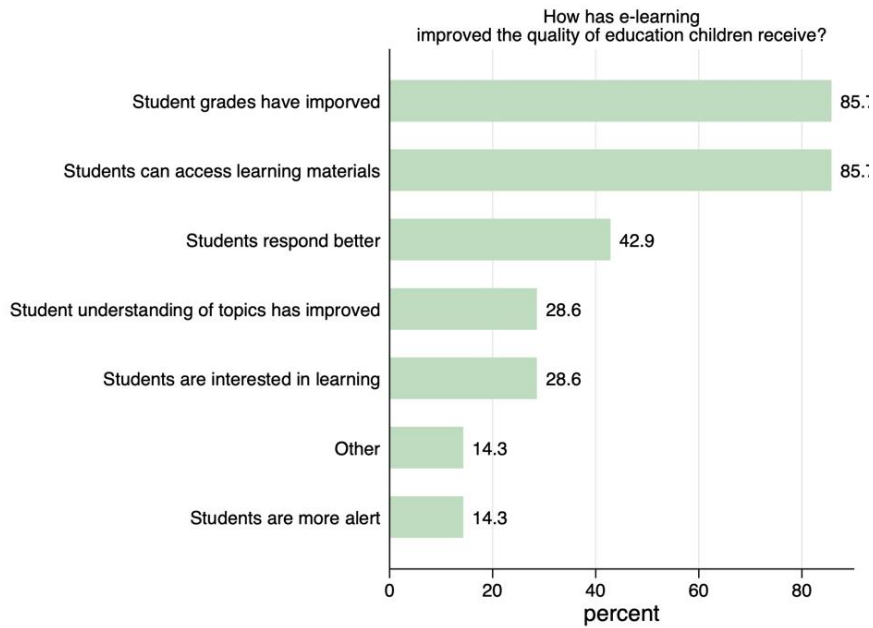


Figure 2: Improvements e-learning made to the quality of education children receive as reported by head teachers.

COVID-19 resulted in major disruptions to the school system. **Over 50 percent of head teachers and teachers reported significant disruption to school and almost 10 percent of head teachers reported the additional burden of disruption in their salary payments.** Seventy eight (78) percent of teachers reported not receiving a salary during school closures. According to Head teachers, children with disabilities, children in remote areas and children whose families had to migrate were most affected by the COVID-19 school closures. **The common concerns faced by children when schools were closed was the limited resources they had at home, missing exams, reduced time for learning and limited opportunities to engage with their friends.**

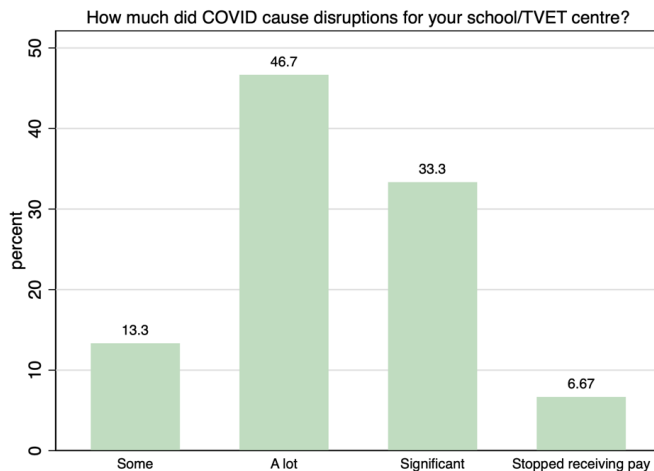


Figure 3: Disruptions caused by COVID-19 as reported by teachers.



**Teachers reported that many students found it difficult to return to school when schools reopened because of the demands on children to help at home, the distance they need to travel and poverty.**

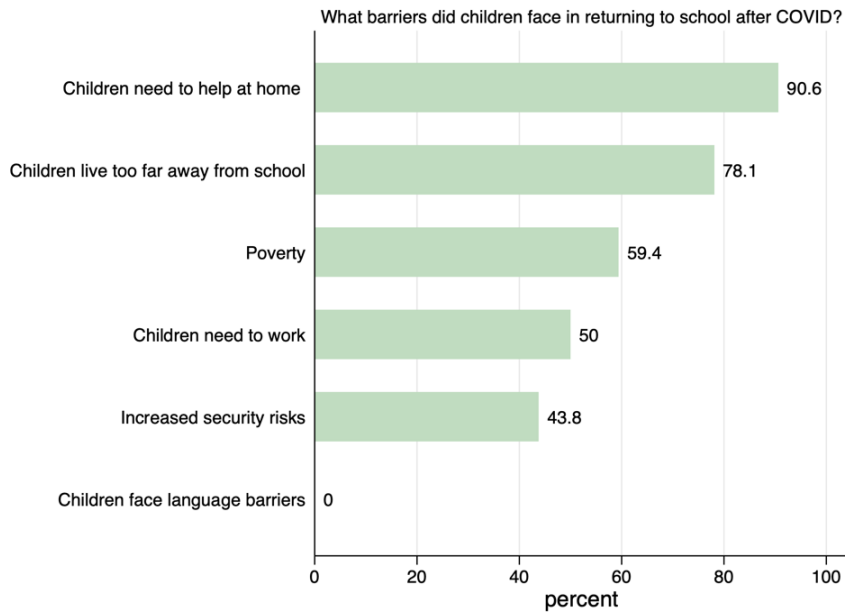


Figure 4: Barriers faced by children returning to school after COVID-19 reported by head teachers.

**Overwhelmingly, head teachers (90 percent) reported that efforts were made to re-engage girls and children with disabilities when schools reopened. They reported that schools provided dignity kits and back to school kits to encourage girls to return to school. The girls education campaign was also commonly reported by head teachers as an activity to encourage girls to return to school.**

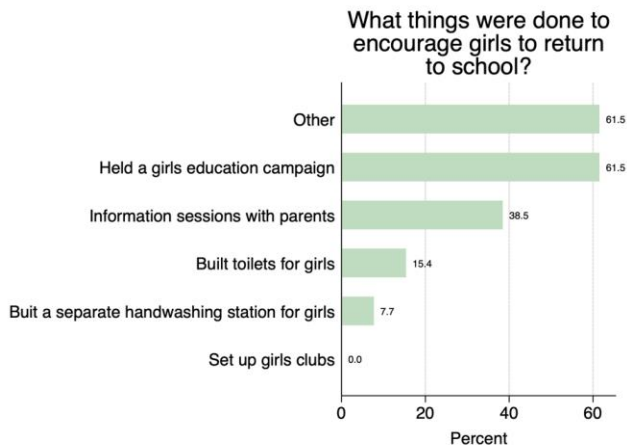


Figure 5: Things that were done to encourage girls to return to school as reported by head teachers.

Similarly, head teachers reported holding information sessions with parents to encourage the return to school of children with disabilities. The most common action however was the return to school packs,

assistive devices and awareness raising within the community. Note: return to school packs and assistive devices were common responses in ‘other.’

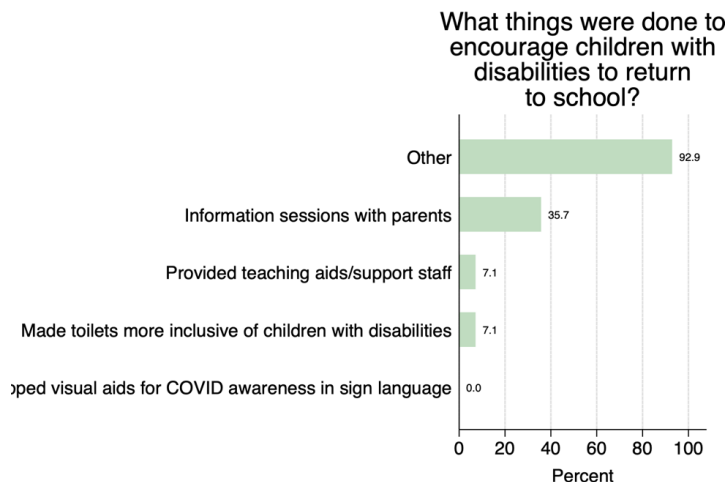


Figure 6: Things that were done to encourage children with disabilities to return to school as reported by head teachers.

**Indicator 1.3.1: Number of partnerships formed supporting inclusive education for learners**

Table 5: Partnerships that were established in 2019 and 2020.

COUNTRY	2019 TARGET	2019 ACTUAL	2020 TARGET	2020 ACTUAL	2021 TARGET	2021 ACTUAL
South Sudan	0	4	1	2	2	4

In 2019, ADRA mapped the stakeholders in the education sector in Eastern Equatoria and participated in regular coordination meetings to share updates, establish synergies and share work plans. This resulted in a partnership being established between some schools and the Network for Integration and Rural Advancement (NIRA), Save the Children, and Community Development Support Service (CDSS), who supported the training of 12 (3 f; 9 m) learners on puberty and menstrual hygiene management and mentoring of 75 (45 f; 30 m) learners and 24 (18 f; 3 m) learners on how to make reusable pads with 3 sewing machines donated by CDSS. In 2020, 2 additional partnerships were formed to support inclusive education for learners with Hope for South Sudan Church and Community Need Initiative (CNI) providing direct support for learners. More broadly, the project cooperated with Light for the World and CNI, as well as supporting the Girls Education South Sudan (GESS) program for technical expertise and community mobilization and awareness on inclusive education. The partnership with Community Development South Sudan (CDSS) is on research and advocacy on inclusive education and the Hope for South Sudan church donated clothes for marginalised children as a demonstration of their commitment.

In 2021, ADRA focused on linking schools to health facilities and were successful in establishing two new partnerships with hospitals: Kapoeta Civil Hospital and Budi Civil Hospital. The hospitals offer medical services and in 2022, it is expected that they will offer psychosocial support/counselling to students and teachers. ADRA also undertook further mapping of services to support inclusive education by connecting to DPOs at the national level, Humanity and Inclusion and TOFI consortium members.

### 3.5.2 Outcome 2 (inclusive and safe learning environments)

This outcome is focused on establishing safe, inclusive and healthy learning environments for students and covers gender sensitive infrastructure (classrooms, electricity, toilets, and safe drinking water), inclusive policies and linkages to health and protective services.

**Indicator 2.1:** # of learners (f/m) enrolled in supported educational institutions (disability) (Norad core indicator 1)

Table 6: Student enrolment in 2019 and 2020.

COUNTRIES	2019 TARGET	2019 ACTUAL	2020 TARGET	2020 ACTUAL	2021 TARGET	2021 ACTUAL
South Sudan		5,081 learners (1,850 f; 3,231; of which 3 f; 1 m with disability)	6,288 (2,386 f; 3,902 m)	4,850 (2,040 f; 2,810 m)	6,791 learners (2688 f; 4103 m)	7,230 of learners (F= 3082; M= 4148; FwD = 14; MwD= 45)

As noted earlier, COVID-19 caused significant disruption to children’s learning. Enrolment was impacted due to many schools reopening more gradually than others and then the sudden closure of schools in late March. The project opted for a community-based learning program, using a mix of home-based learning and small group learning where this was possible with the pre-recorded lessons on radio. **The learning program reached 1,566 (516 f; 950 m) P5 to P8 learners. Additionally, 41 (12 f; 29 m) learners were supported to prepare for their P8 national examinations.** Once schools reopened in 2021, enrolments bounced back. A total of 7,230 of learners (F= 3082; M= 4148; FwD = 14; MwD= 45) enrolled in the 20 schools supported by SEAQE II project. This surpassed the target and demonstrated the effectiveness of the mobilisation and house to house campaign efforts. Whilst most students were from the 20 target schools, 314 (138 F, 176 M) were enrolled in 6 ALP centres.

Some delays in construction planning occurred due to flooding and inter-communal violence in Lokwarmor. Construction plans for three out of five schools, including classrooms, school offices and staffing quarters, were finalised in 2019 and the selection of the construction company completed. In 2020, four classrooms were constructed in Lokwamor, and 3 classrooms were rehabilitated in Faraksika, bringing the cumulative total to 7 classrooms constructed/rehabilitated. In addition to this, 3 school offices were also completed and 6 teacher’s quarters (3 blocks of 2 rooms). Assessments and preparation work for construction and rehabilitation work of 15 more classrooms in three schools was postponed until 2021 due to COVID-19. In 2021, construction efforts continued with the rehabilitation of 13 classrooms bringing the total to 20 which mirrors the accumulative target.

An important feature of an inclusive environment is ensuring that students feel safe whilst they are at school. In 2019, one school (Piobokoi) established a code of conduct promoting a healthy, safe, protective and supportive learning environment. This followed the training of 18 (3 f; 15 m) head teachers that took place in 2019 on policies and practices regarding bullying, gender, violence, child protection, corporal punishment, exploitation, improper teacher-student relations, school health and nutrition. By 2021, these 18 schools developed their code of conduct.

**Indicator 2.2.1:** Number of supported educational institutions with codes of conduct promoting a healthy, safe, protective and supportive learning environment

Table 7: Schools with codes of conduct in place in 2019, 2020 and 2021.

COUNTRIES	2019 TARGET	2019 ACTUAL	2020 TARGET	2020 ACTUAL	2021 TARGET	2021 ACTUAL
South Sudan	0	1	0	1	10	18

In 2020, all 20 supported schools received the teacher code of conduct and child protection guide, promoting healthy, safe, protective and supportive learning environments and were given training and mentoring on the formulation and promotion of the policies and practices. All the teachers signed the child protection policy as a commitment towards child protection. Training conducted by the school-based mentors was also provided to head teachers and PTA/SMC members on the teachers' code of conduct and child protection in preparation for school re-opening. Two schools were not reached due to security reasons and the limitations faced by the head teacher to attend initial training.

**This was validated by head teachers, 80 percent of whom reported that child protection mechanisms were in place in their schools.**

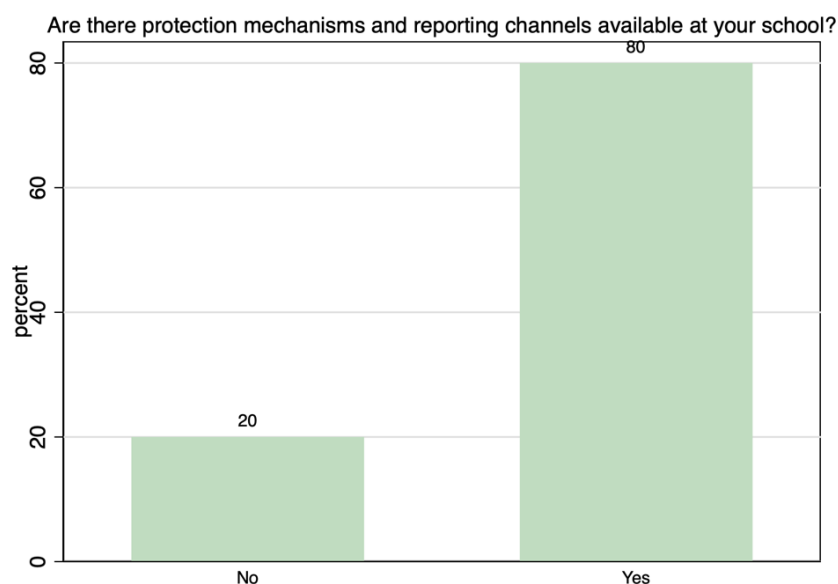


Figure 7: protection mechanisms and reporting channels as reported by head teachers.

**Head teachers also reported that they had received child safeguarding and protection policy training and training on corporal punishment.**

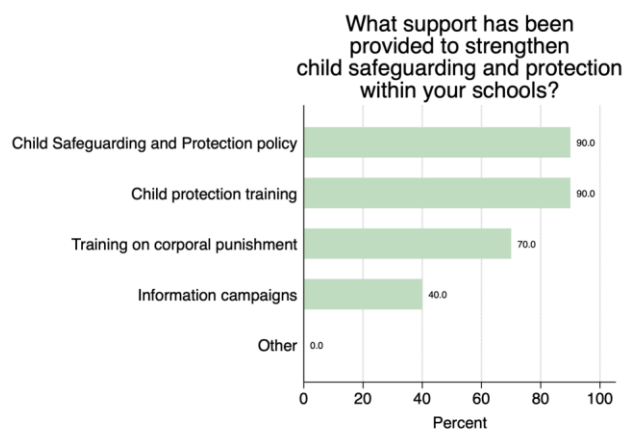


Figure 8: Support that was provided to strengthen child safeguarding and protection within schools as reported by head teachers.

To ensure that the referral mechanism is operational, the number of referrals is reported. This provides an indication of how the mechanism is being used in schools.

**Indicator 2.3.1:** Number of referrals to health, safety and/or protection services (sex)

Table 8: Number of referrals made between 2019-2021.

COUNTRIES	2019-2020 CUMULATIVE TARGET	2019-2020 CUMULATIVE ACTUAL	2020-2021 CUMULATIVE TARGET	2020-2021 CUMULATIVE ACTUAL
South Sudan	225	16 (5 f; 11 m)	325	176 (141 in 2021)

In 2019, ADRA began the process of supporting schools to establish referral mechanisms through mapping service providers and training teachers and head teachers. ADRA conducted awareness activities in the communities and mentored teachers and head teachers on the use of referral tools for students and children with special needs. Referral books were distributed to the schools. **In 2020, the project referred 16 (5 f; 11 m) learners to health, safety and protection services. The project leverages another ADRA project, Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (ASRH), to establish referral pathways for health-related cases, including rape cases and referrals in Kapoeta South. The number of referrals was low because of COVID-19 school closures, although the project did develop an adapted community-based referral mechanism during COVID-19, completed the mapping of service providers and completed training with school administrators in preparation for school re-opening.**

In 2021, good progress was made in greater Kapoeta, where ADRA collaborated with another ADRA project – a health project called Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (ASRH). This enabled a referral pathway for health-related issues among children and youth to be established. In Budi, referrals were made to Coraid and Budi civil Hospital.

### 3.5.3 Outcome 3 (teaching)

This outcome is focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning and aims to strengthen school governance structures and systems, improve teacher capacity and practice, provide effective and relevant teaching and learning materials and more relevant knowledge, attitudes, values and life skills for learners.

At baseline, there was a dearth of stationery and teaching and learning resources. Students reported that this was having a negative impact on their learning.

**Indicator 3.3.1: Number of learners (flm) provided with learning materials (Norad core indicator 3)**

Table 9: Students who have received learning materials in 2019-2021.

COUNTRIES	2019 TARGET	2019 ACTUAL	2020 TARGET	2020 ACTUAL	2021 TARGET	2021 ACTUAL
South Sudan	1,000 (600 f; 400 m)	4,840 (1,877 f; 2,963 m)	500 (190 f; 310 m)	4,850 (2,040 f; 2,810 m)	0	1001

In 2019, 4,840 (1,877 f; 2,963 m) children, including 56 children with disability (35 f; 21 m), received learning materials. This was more than originally targeted since it was discovered during preliminary engagement with the 20 target schools that demand for materials essential to learning was higher than initially planned. At the beginning of 2020, all 20 schools received teaching and learning materials at the beginning of the new school year. These materials included pens, pencils, exercise books for individual learners and chalk, geometrical sets, science and social studies wall charts, manilas and pairs of scissors for teachers. Additional PPE and WASH items, such as face masks, soap and buckets, were provided by UNICEF to schools in Chukudum, Lorege, Piobokoi and Faraksika. In 2021, the distribution of learning materials was not planned. However, through a UNICEF donation, ADRA assisted to distribute 240 radios to schools in Budi which benefited 960 students and 41 students benefited from receiving exercise books as part of this donation.

At baseline, the issue of salary payments was discussed by teachers as a concern for student learning. Teachers stated that they were not paid on time by the local authorities. It was understood by the baseline team that these teachers may not have been formally trained. The late or non-existent payment, according to the teachers, caused their colleagues to stop coming to school or, worse still, to leave teaching once and for all. In 2021 calendar year, ADRA was able to pay teacher incentives after a lengthy verification exercise. This payment was actioned in December 2021. Teachers interviewed in the MTR reported they had not received payment, which means the MTR must have taken place before teacher payments had been processed.

Also at baseline, more than half of teacher focus groups said they had not received any training or support from government or school leadership to make them better educators. Teacher professional development was therefore a key initiative in the SEAQE 2 South Sudan project.

**Indicator 3.2.1: Percentage of teachers (flm) in supported educational institutions who meet expected standards in effective teaching practices (ETLE)**

In 2019, ADRA undertook some initial consultation with the University of Juba and Rambur National Teacher Training Institute, which had been involved in the training and certification of 104 teachers in the previous phases of the project. The focus of the consultation was to confirm provision of in-service training and certification for teachers in this phase of the project, beginning in 2020 with a target of 40 (5 f; 35 m) teachers. It was also planned that teacher mentoring, classroom observations, and feedback session activities would commence in 2020 to improve the effectiveness of teaching practices.

In 2021, 33 percent of teachers meet expected standards for effective teaching practice based on the ETLE assessment. This achievement is below the expected target of 35 percent.

Table 10: percentage of teachers in target schools demonstrating proficiency in ETLE standards

Annual Reporting – teacher practices in schools																								
	K T utilizes effective questioning to stimulate children's engagement and understanding			L T utilizes a variety of quality learning/teaching materials & ways of presenting a lesson			M T explicitly states learning goals and objectives and reminds students of the learning focus area during the lesson			O T utilises formative and summative assessment and is able to analyse data that informs S achievement			P T integrates learning and applies knowledge to real life experiences			Q T establishes clear behavioural expectations and is able to manage behavioural issues in an effective and positive way			R T uses mother tongue to further explain key concepts and support learning as needed (when mother tongue is not the language of instruction).			S T is knowledgeable of psychosocial wellbeing and support and is able to plan trauma recovery interventions.		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Ineffective	9%	0%	9%	6%	0%	6%	8%	0%	8%	19%	0%	19%	17%	0%	17%	5%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	14%	0%	14%
Needs development	49%	3%	52%	52%	9%	61%	40%	2%	42%	27%	3%	31%	53%	5%	58%	53%	1%	55%	20%	2%	23%	53%	5%	58%
Effective	40%	1%	41%	34%	0%	34%	49%	2%	51%	50%	1%	51%	26%	0%	26%	39%	3%	42%	73%	2%	75%	30%	0%	30%
Exemplary	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%

The table above highlights some strengths and weakness in teachers practice. Overall, teachers are moderately proficient in stating the learning goals and objectives, utilising formative and summative assessment and using mother tongue to explain key concepts. Teachers need development in questioning skills, using teaching aids effectively, applying knowledge concepts to real life experiences and supporting the psychosocial wellbeing of students.

**The information reported by ADRA accords with teachers surveyed in the MTR. Of the teachers surveyed, 75 percent have received teacher training on gender inclusion, indicating that one in four have yet to receive training in this critical area. A similar proportion of teachers have received teacher training on disability inclusion. Almost 70 percent of teachers felt that they had noticed some change in their teaching practices as a result, indicating that there remains some room for further improvement. Before COVID-19, 90 percent of teachers had received mentoring and coaching support, just over half had received some In-service teacher training from ADRA and 16.5 percent had been involved in peer learning.**

**During COVID-19, 84 percent of teachers continued to receive mentoring and coaching support and one in three received some In-service teacher training. A small percentage of teachers (12 percent) received support through training institutes and peer learning. Only 6 percent engaged in distance learning activities. Almost one in five did not receive any professional development support.**

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the availability of teacher professional development. According to Head teachers, when students returned to school, the majority (70 percent) of teachers received mentoring and coaching support and some (40 percent) received training on how to adjust the curriculum. A small percentage (13 percent) did not receive any support. The teachers reported that they needed a lot of preparation to prepare for student's return to school, including being familiar with social distancing and COVID-19 guidelines, organising catch up lessons for students and communicating with parents on the importance of regular attendance. **The teachers suggested that they would**

benefit from more mentoring and coaching (97 percent), more training on developing catch up programs (81 percent), more support on how to assess learning (72 percent) and how to adjust the curriculum (63 percent).



Figure 9: Professional development activities that teachers most value.

Teachers highly value mentoring and coaching (94 percent) and In-service teacher training (75 percent) and peer learning (28 percent). **Over 50 percent of teachers found online teacher training, WhatsApp SMS messaging and distance learning the least valuable to their professional development.**

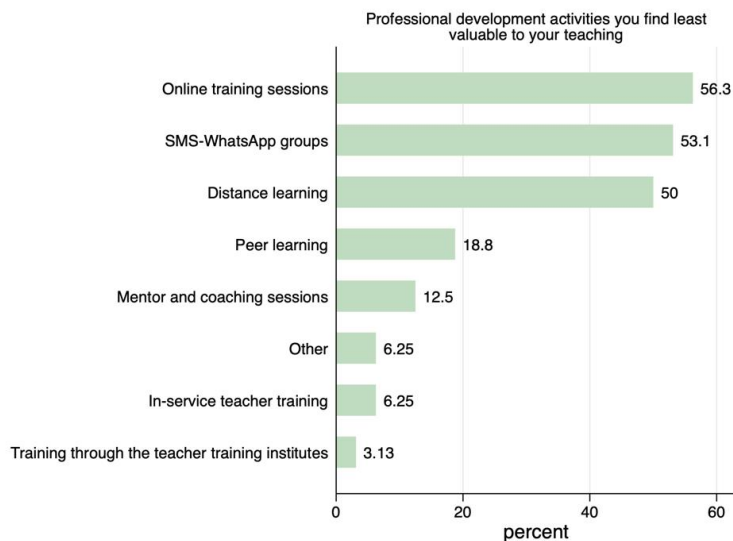


Figure 10: Professional development activities that teachers find least valuable.

In 2021, as teachers returned to the classroom, ADRA adapted its support to teachers. To offset the challenges of COVID-19, ADRA expanded the school based mentoring to what we now referred to as TEAMS (Teacher Mentorship Support). In this initiative, mentors are deployed to schools to work with the teachers, head teachers and PTAs/SMCs. School based mentoring for teachers was done in 12



supported schools whereby the mentors worked with the teachers to provide them tutorial support in the areas of planning (lesson plans, scheme of work), participatory teaching/child centred, classroom management, inclusive education, child protection and teachers' code of conduct as stipulated in South Sudan teachers' code of conduct. The initiative reached 88 (4F, 84M) teachers. They received mentorship for 3 weeks followed by one additional week for classroom observation/coaching.

Inservice teacher training is a type of training designed to provide on – to job training to teachers who are already teaching. A teacher with a minimum of Secondary School Certificate is eligible to enrolment into this program that takes at least two years (6 terms) of training. The terms are organized during holidays when tutors from Rambur National Teacher Training Institute engage the teachers in at least two weeks of face – to – face sessions in a County Education Centre. Courses covered include Mathematics, Christian Religious Education, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education, Early Childhood Development, English Language, Co-curricular activities, Sociology of Education and Psychology. Once a teacher successfully completes the program, he/she will qualify for a certificate in teacher education from University of Juba. Supervisors from University of Juba and Teacher Development and Management Services (TDMS) conducted one week supervision for the Inservice training, which was conducted in November 2021. ADRA supported 78 teachers (F=12, M=66) in this program.

Meanwhile, Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is a program designed for teachers who have no certificate for secondary education. The program is designed for a duration of two years in four cycles. 8 modules have been designed for this program, namely; How children learn, curriculum expectations, learning areas/subjects 1, learning areas/subjects 2, assessment, inclusive education, language development, and co – curricular activities. ADRA uses a combination of TDMS/MoGEI, Master Trainers from State Ministry of Education and locally hired mentors. The training runs side by side with the Inservice in County Education Centres (2 CECs were used, one in Budi and another in Kapoeta South). The trainings are residential and ADRA provides materials and feeding as well as transportation for trainees and facilitation fee for tutors. In 2021, 60 (F=13; M=47) teachers were involved in the CPD program.

#### **3.5.4 Outcome 4 (parent, community and other stakeholder engagement)**

This outcome is focused on improving the engagement of learners, parents and communities to strengthen schools and children's learning and development.

At baseline, parents' and communities' participation were at elevated levels with parents feeling they were consulted regularly. According to the parents, the focus of most consultations was about 'student mobilisation,' that is, to encourage students to go to schools and to help reduce the number of dropouts. Fewer reported engaging with teachers about students' academic performance, although this did happen towards the end of the academic year.

*Indicator 4.1.1: Percentage of supported educational institutions that meet expected standards of participation of learners in decision-making (ETLE)*

In 2019, initial work began with the engagement of 289 (89f, 200m) students in school governance bodies (prefects) in 19 project schools (95%). Students were provided with 2 days training on their roles and responsibilities, peace building, conflict resolution, life skills and WASH. After the training, the prefect's body developed action plans for their contribution towards the general management of their respective schools. It was noted in the 2019 annual report that students were beginning to help teachers organise the assembly and follow up on hygiene and discipline matters.

The ETL assessment in 2021, revealed that 33 percent of schools are meeting expected standards regarding student participation. This was slightly below the target of 35 percent. In those schools that have met the standard, different clubs have been established including debating club, sports club, hygiene and sanitation club, agriculture clubs and environmental club. Schools also established pathways for students to be involved in the PTA/SMCs committee, school disaster risk reduction/resilient committee, child protection committee, resource mobilization committee, and the hygiene and sanitation committee. ADRA faced some challenges establishing clubs and involving students in committees in the PI-P4 schools due to the age of the students. It was also understood that students face cultural barriers engaging with adults and elders and it was felt that an important way to address this was to engage parents and continue to encourage students to strengthen their voice through debating. It was also thought that a radio talk show for schools in the town and parents' days or any other events which enable students to speak publicly could change this.

Strengthening students self-agency in the school is a crucial step toward improvements in their participation in decision making. **In the MTR students reported on whether head teachers or teachers asked for their opinion. Most students (70 percent) were not asked their opinion. Only 20 percent reported that head teachers and teachers asked their opinion. Of those that answered this question positively, they reported that their opinion was requested 'sometimes' and most (80 percent) students felt that action was taken when their opinions were sought. This is encouraging, although the results highlight where further improvements are needed.**

*Indicator 4.2.1.a: Number of parents (f/m) of learners in supported learning institutions participating in positive parenting training*

Positive parenting training was not conducted in 2019, although 283 (143 f; 140 m) parents were engaged in family strengthening activities. In 2021, positive parenting classes resumed and 613 parents (M=286; F= 327) from 17 schools participated in training which covered positive parenting, child protection, Sexual Reproductive Health, nutrition education, hygiene and sanitation and peace education.

*Indicator 4.2.1.b: Number of parents (f/m) of learners in supported learning institutions participating in family strengthening activities*

The REFLECT methodology is being used in South Sudan to increase parental support for education. In 2019, four days training was provided in Kapoeta for 18 (0 f; 18 m) REFLECT facilitators on the methodology and they were given the materials needed to start their centre. The training ensured an understanding of the REFLECT approach, increased facilitation skills in literacy and numeracy, identified Didinga and Toposa community challenges and approaches to address these and how to report on the progress of the REFLECT Circles. In 2019, 283 (143 f; 140 m) out of 366 (188 f; 178 m) enrolled REFLECT learners attended REFLECT classes twice a week from 3pm to 5pm in the 12 REFLECT circle centres in the four target counties (Budi, Kapoeta South, Kapoeta East and Kapoeta North). In 2020 an additional 8 REFLECT circle centres were established in school communities of Piobokoi, Lorege, Chukudum and Farasika. The REFLECT circle runs twice a week and the meeting days are established by the learners based on workload and preferred time. The REFLECT circles cover four major topics: numeracy, literacy, cross-cutting issues (positive parenting, peace education, nutrition, child protection, importance of education, inclusive education) and community issues or factors affecting community, causes, effects and possible local solutions. **During 2020, a total of 329 (203 f; 126 m) parents have been actively involved in family strengthening activities alongside their REFLECT**

**classes to support income generating activities and change perceptions towards education, through the Village Saving and Loan Associations (VSLA). Activities were implemented in compliance with COVID-19 restrictions.**

This initiative continued in 2021, with 1049 (M=583: F= 466) parents participating in family strengthening activities. This constitutes 589(103F, 486M), who were involved in the Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques (REFLECT) training and 360(363F, 97M) parents who participated in the Village Savings and Loan Association. 12 REFLECT centres operated in 2021 often running classes for 2 days a week. Evidence from ETLE conducted have strongly affirmed that parental participation in schools has increased because of REFLECT activities and VLSA. **It is also evident that REFLECT has acted as a pathway for learners to get into ALP classes.**

### **3.5.5 Outcome 5 (civil society influence & policy change)**

This outcome is focused on strengthening civil society influence on education policy and practice through improved capacity to track, monitor and advocate for inclusive education and the education rights of marginalised children. This outcome focuses on strengthening civil society fora and networks to support dialogue more effectively between civil society and governments.

In 2019, 4 county-based education forums were formed in Kapoeta East, North, South and Budi. The Forum involved a broad range of key stakeholders, including local education authorities, (Payam education supervisors, inspectors and county education directors), County Executive Directors, commissioners, Paramount chief, head chiefs, chiefs, sub chiefs, and partners (cord aid, ARC, CDSS, ROG), head teachers, the PTA and the PTA network, women groups, church leaders, Women leaders and the Youth leaders. A total of 230 (55 f; 175 m) participants attended the Education fora with the objectives to improve education quality, address the challenges of enrolment, retention, girl child education, education of orphans and children with disabilities and to identify the root causes and barriers to education in their counties. In addition, 124 (5 f; 119 m) local chiefs were trained on inclusive education to mobilize support for education and address issues such as early marriage. It emerged at the training that 75 percent of the chiefs did not understand their role in supporting education and were not actively encouraging school attendance. Only about 10 percent had attended school themselves. An inclusive education network was formed at the state level to coordinate, mobilise and influence decision makers in supporting education at county level as well as voicing their concern to the state level on matters relating to education. The County Education forum membership is comprised of 4 executives and 7 members each from the Payams of Counties, headed by the chairperson, deputy, the secretary general and secretary of information and civil society members, making a total of 11 members per forum. This coordination resulted in the cooperation with NIRAS, CDSS and Save the Children mentioned earlier.

In 2020, ADRA continued their engagement with Light for the World, CNI, CDSS and Hope for South Sudan church on research and advocacy on inclusive education to support learning of marginalized children. It was anticipated that this would be further expanded once schools re-opened and restrictions were lifted. ADRA also planned to engage Disable People's Organizations for persons with disability (DPOs) whose capacity has been strengthened by the Norad funded Together for Inclusion (TOFI) project.

In 2021, ADRA signed an MoU with CDSS as the main partner for Outcome 5. CDSS conducted mapping of education actors across the four counties targeted by the project. The partners confirmed their willingness to participate in education sector coordination (a platform for government – civil society interaction). Four education sector coordination for a were established – one at each of the four counties. Each county sector coordination discussed education issues and developed recommendations

for action. CDSS was facilitated to validate the findings and recommendations at the state level with the State Ministry of Education and stakeholders. Efforts were also made to establish education forum in each of the counties. The education forum is a platform for civil society – civil society interaction (without the government).

Capacity development of local implementing partners has been ongoing through mentorship in conducting education fora and networking. While no capacity assessments have been undertaken to provide an objective measure, **ADRA partners agreed that ADRA provided them with good support through the SEAQE 2 project.**

**Achievements regarding policy influence through research and advocacy has been limited to date although plans are in place to strengthen civil society organisations and establish more robust plans concerning policy actions and research in 2022.**

## 3.6 IMPACT

### Learning Assessments

The learning assessments are important indicators of effectiveness. Initiatives such as teacher professional development and/or an inclusive learning environment are often evaluated based on their contribution to student learning outcomes. The surveys and assessments provided the following by way of evaluation.

- Slightly more males (94.1 percent) than females (93.2 percent) love coming to school.
- Most male and female students had positive associations with school, they value their education, especially as it enables them to further their education, and their teachers support them.
- **Most students (74.3 percent male students and 65.9 female students) feel that their teacher is good at helping them learn and understand the lessons. This is lower than other countries and implies that some teachers may not be supporting students effectively, particularly girls.** 5 percent of female students stated that their teacher did not help them understand the content of the lesson. Importantly at baseline, students from 8 schools reported serious misconduct by their teachers, including drunkenness, absenteeism, corporal punishment and verbal abuse. It is evident that there may still be significant issues regarding teacher conduct that requires attention.
- Most students (88.1 percent of male students and 77.3 percent of female students) stated that children were not hurt at school. **Importantly 20 percent of female students reported that they were hurt at school. Responses indicated that students were hurt from beating and caning and some teachers are not delivering the curriculum according to expectations.** Over one in ten students reported that their teacher had hit a child in the classroom. This may be a critical area for further investigation.
- **Overwhelmingly, (75 percent of males and 63.6 percent of females) are not asked their opinion.** This indicates that students are not given the opportunity to voice their concerns or speak out on issues that affect them. Only a small proportion (17.8 percent of male and 31.8 percent of females) felt their opinion was heard by head teachers and teachers.

- Students report that when their voices are heard, this has led to improvements in the school garden, availability of teaching and learning resources and sport materials.

**The results indicate that students had a positive association with their school and their teacher, although the relationship between the teacher and student may not be the strongest with indications that students may not be given opportunities to share their opinions and experience corporal punishment.**

### Student learning results

Student learning results were shared with ADRA South Sudan during a validation workshop where possible local contextual factors that could explain results were discussed. According to ADRA South Sudan, low student learning assessment results are attributed to curriculum gaps and low teacher capacity. It was thought that underqualified teachers find some subject content difficult to understand and therefore struggle to effectively teach some literacy and numeracy skills to their students. The MTR team consider these factors plausible and helpful in explaining results.

### Grade 4

**Overall, there are several students who are struggling to grasp foundational skills in literacy and numeracy.**

### Literacy

**Unlike Grade 4s in other countries, children in SEAQE schools in South Sudan appear to have found the task difficult and 31.8 percent of male students and 43.3 percent of female students scored below 21 percent on the literacy assessment. No female students scored above 81 percent and only one in ten boys did.** It infers some variation in the class but a much higher proportion of students who are struggling. Whilst there is a distinct variation in scores for boys and girls, these are not statistically significant.

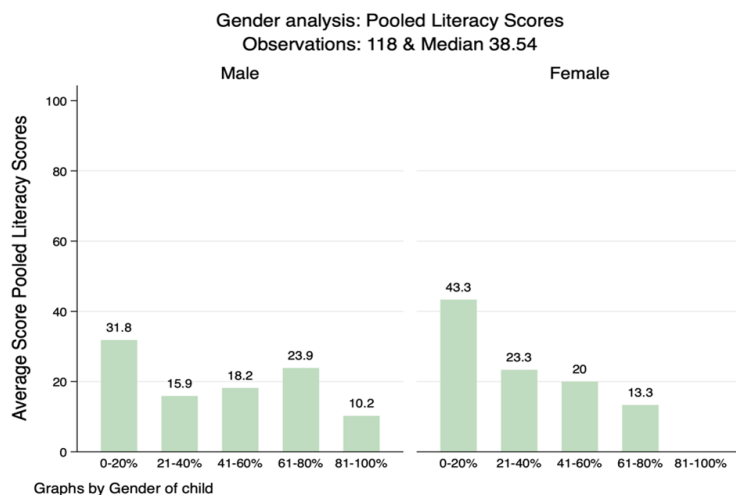


Figure 11: Pooled literacy scores for Grade 4 students by gender.

Gender differences are evident in some of the literacy subtests. The gender differences were statistically significant with a  $p$  value  $P \leq 0.001$ . This suggests that in some subtests, girls are struggling more than boys. In the first literacy subtest, for instance, students were required to identify and read ten words

provided to them. The graph below presents the results. Girls were unable to say more than 7 words on the list and 43.3 percent of girls were unable to read one word. This was different for boys, where there was more variation in the cohort and only 25 percent of boys were unable to say one word. This, however, is still high.

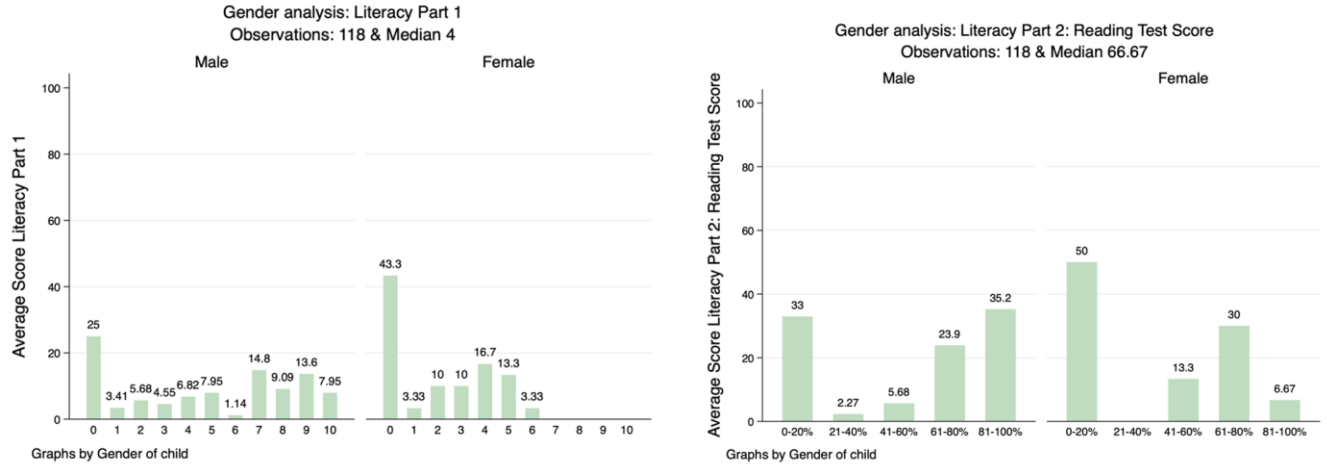


Figure 12: Word knowledge and reading subtest scores for Grade 4 students by gender.

Similarly, the reading score above, indicates that more female students (50 percent) than male students (33 percent) scored below 20 percent on their reading test. In this test, students are required to read the text as a measurement of fluency. The gender differences were statistically significant with a  $p$  value  $P \leq 0.01$ .

### Numeracy

**Results in numeracy mirror results in literacy, with most students (37.5 percent of males and 66.7 percent of females scoring below 20 percent on the numeracy assessment.** No girls and only 5 percent of male students scored above 81 percent on the same assessment. The gender differences were statistically significant with a  $p$  value  $P \leq 0.05$ .

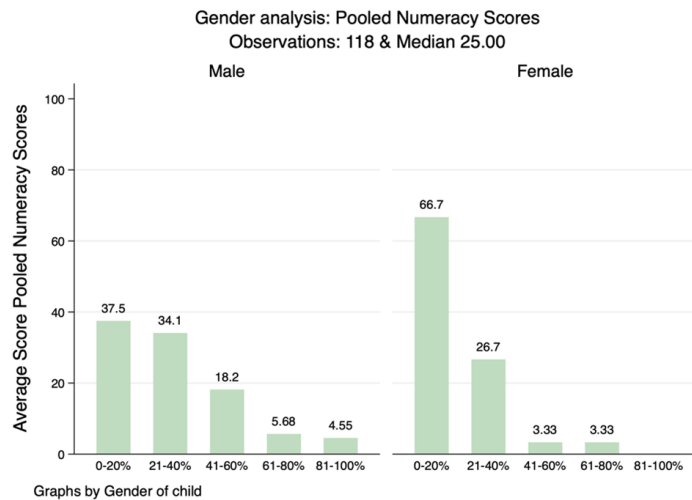


Figure 13: Pooled numeracy scores for Grade 4 students by gender.

Investigating this issue further, there is some variation in subtests which implies that students are struggling with areas of numeracy.

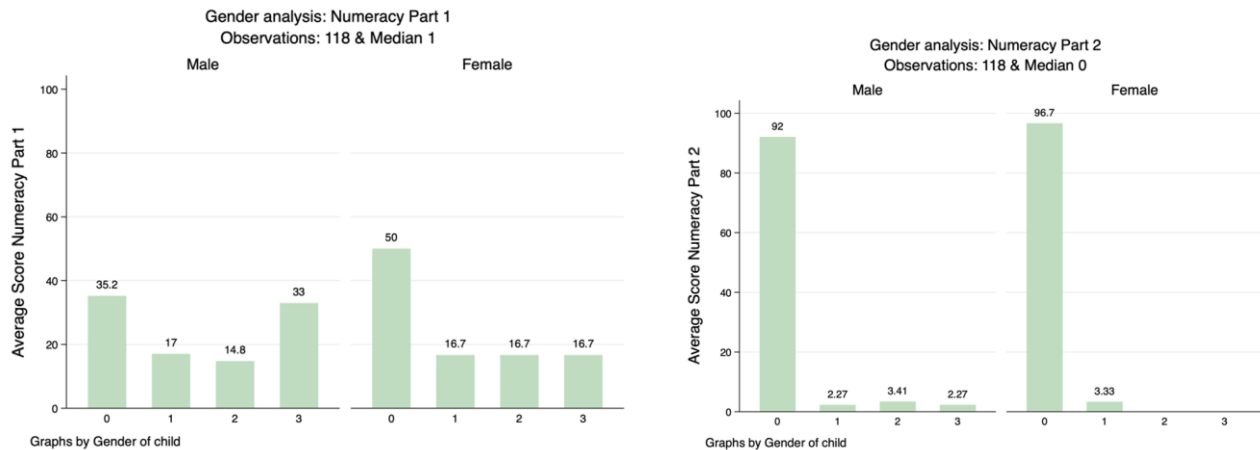


Figure 14: Subtraction and word problem subtests for Grade 4 students by gender

The first task required students to answer subtraction questions. One in three male students were able to complete this task compared to only 16.7 percent of female students. **Knowledge of basic number operations was evident in over 50 percent of students.** This varies when applied to word problems. In the second subtest, students were required to read a word problem and then construct a mathematical expression and solve it. Being able to read and understand the question is required and poor literacy may be the reason students have struggled with the second numeracy subtest.

### Grade 7

Due to the small sample of students, the results may not be representative. In the cohort of students, male and female students appear to have performed better in literacy than numeracy.

### Literacy

Almost one in four students struggled to answer the four literacy subtests. A small number (7.69 percent) of male students scored above 80 percent, which is encouraging, but no females were able to produce results like this. Most females (42.9 percent) scored between 41-60 percent.

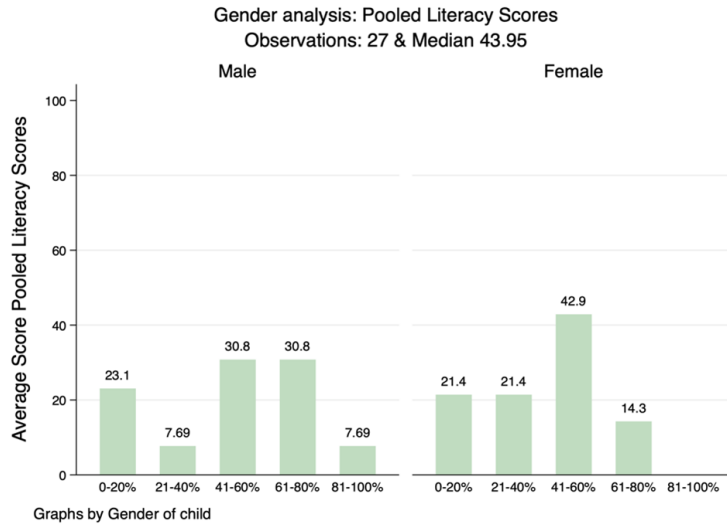


Figure 15: Pooled literacy scores for Grade 7 students by gender.

There is some variation in subtests which is important to investigate as it may imply a specific literacy skill that requires additional support. For instance, on the listening passage, students did not perform as well as they did on the reading test. Many students (61.5 percent of males and 57.1 percent of females) scored well when asked to read a short passage. In the listening test, most students were not able to answer a question. It suggests that listening comprehension requires some attention. This may be related to difference in children’s first language or other language concerns. If students are using a different language in the classroom to what they use

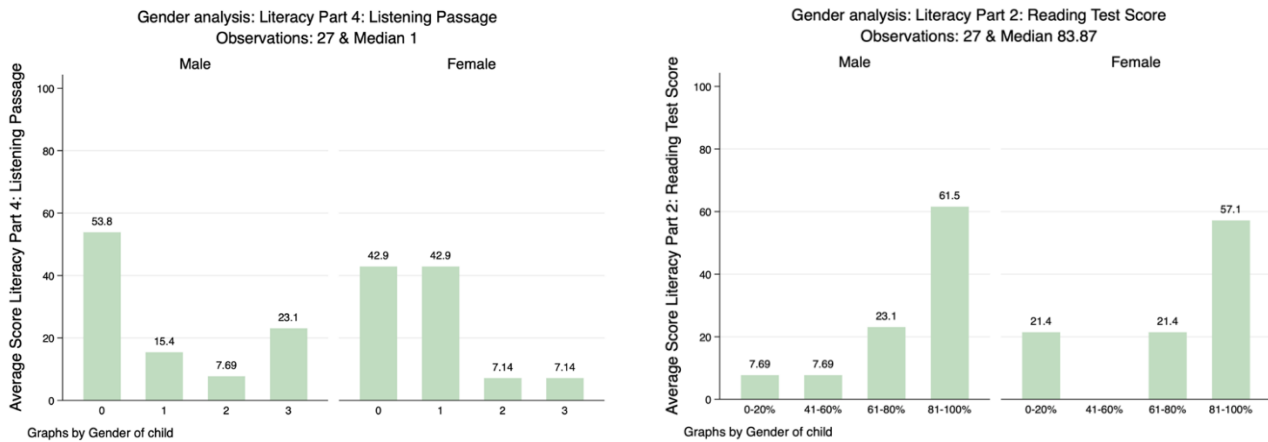


Figure 16: Listening and reading scores for Grade 7 by gender.

at home, this could explain the variation. It also indicates that teachers are giving priority to reading rather than listening. It implies that less attention is being focused on reading with understanding.

This is plausible as the scores for reading comprehension indicate that almost one quarter of students did not answer any questions, indicating that they did not understand what they had read.



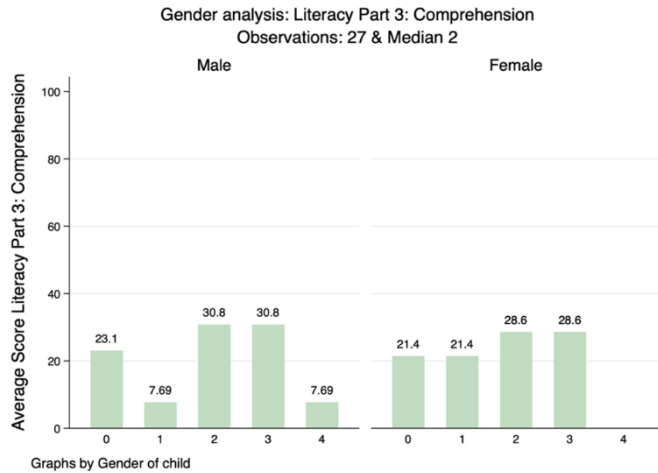


Figure 17: Comprehension scores for Grade 7 students by gender.

### Numeracy

When numeracy results were pooled for the 27 students who completed this assessment, all students scored below 20 percent.

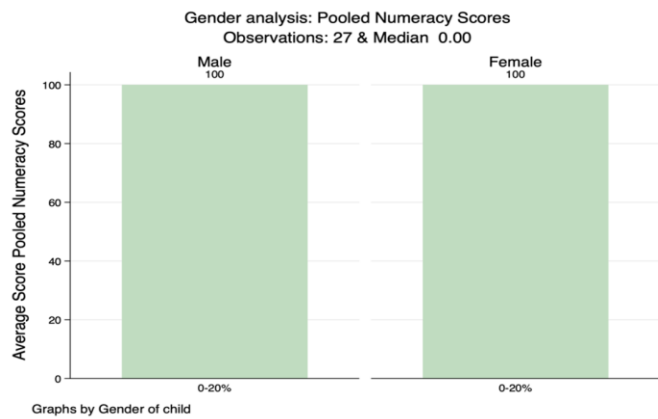


Figure 18: Pooled numeracy scores for Grade 7 students by gender.

There is some variation in subtests which are important to share as it provides a little more information about the areas that these students are struggling in. Of the four subtests only two were responded to. The first subtest, which required students to answer multiplication and division problems, and the third subtest, which were basic linear expressions.

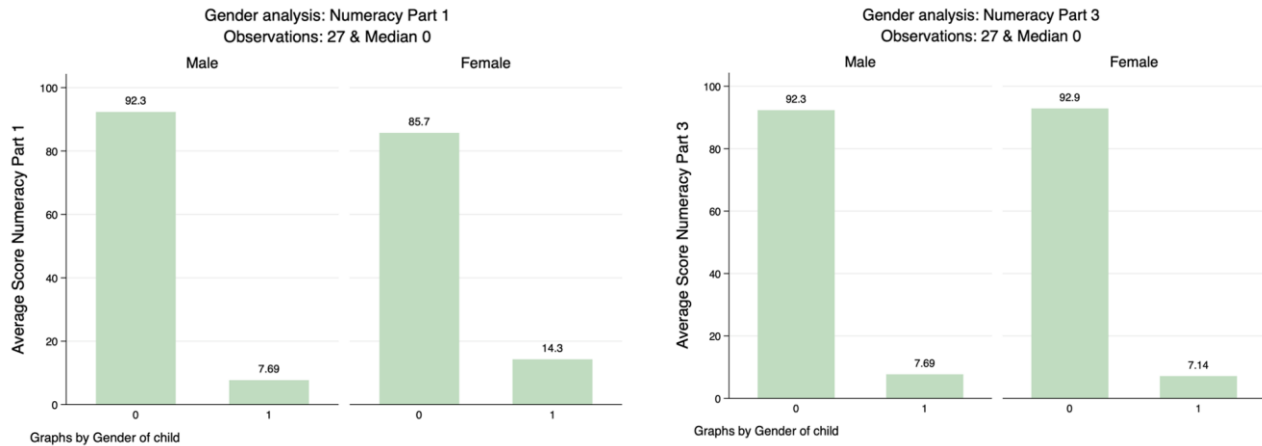


Figure 19: Numeracy subtest scores for Grade 7 by gender.

An exceedingly small proportion of children were able to answer one of the questions on each of these subtests.

### 3.7 SUSTAINABILITY

In the original design document, ADRA had defined the parameters for sustainability; to increase organisational commitment, capacity at all levels, strengthened systems, and lasting knowledge assets for education. The program planned to bring about this change through capacity building activities directed at institutional, organisational and individual levels of the education system. According to the approach, this would encourage actors to work together under a common purpose and would subsequently lead to increased government commitment toward the education system, greater availability of resources from the community, private sector and donors toward education services and more effective inclusive education reforms. It was noted in the design that the strengthening of civil society would create sustainable change that could hold the government accountable for inclusive and quality education policies, practices, plans and budgets.

The sustainability strategy for South Sudan aimed to provide a model for change and gradually see community and government commitment toward supporting school improvement. This will be supported by increasing capacity in schools, their communities, local authorities, states and the national agencies. It was anticipated that schools would have increased capacity to apply for and access diverse types of funds, such as incentives for teachers, school capitation grants and girls' education support. The government would also have increased capacity to plan for and manage inclusive, quality and protective education. CSOs will have built sufficient expertise to keep growing the capacity of communities to engage in education, beyond the life of the project.

SEAQE 2 South Sudan will use a phased approach for their exit strategy, transferring activities to community, education institutions and CSOs over the duration of the project. For ADRA Norway, a key exit strategy will be to develop capacity of partners in administrative, financial, technical and resource mobilisation areas. In previous exists, ADRA Norway has learned that a successful close-out requires participatory phase-out planning.

**In terms of progress, the 3 partner respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they know about the program's sustainability strategy.** There were mixed responses to the question asking whether the benefits would last beyond the life of the project. Two partner respondents affirmed this to be the case whereas one disagreed with the statement, indicating that there is some doubt that SEAQE 2 benefits will last. This was different to responses from Head teachers, 13/15 (86.7 percent) agreeing that the progress would remain after the project ends. This is due to the different relationships they have with the project and the specific interests of each stakeholder.

**Interestingly, almost half the Head teachers (7/15) had shared promising practices with other schools through meetings and discussions.** This is a promising sign given the SEAQE 2 strategy seeks to develop models that can be replicated by other schools.

**Partner respondents thought that approaches used during COVID-19 could be used to support education for children who experience marginalisation. This reflects the responses from Head teachers (89 percent) who thought that the distance learning program could be expanded to support OOSC.**

**There are also promising signs that the support to teacher professional development will be integrated into the government system, with all partner respondents noting agreement in the progress being made.** All partner respondents felt that the child protection mechanism established can continue without ADRA's ongoing support, with three respondents doubting this at present.

### **3.8 CROSS CUTTING ISSUES**

#### Child protection

Children within SEAQE 2 target communities and schools face a myriad of child protection risks and project interventions to strengthen child safeguarding and protection mechanisms in target schools and communities are highly relevant to the needs of vulnerable children, including girls and children and disabilities.

The SEAQE 2 project proposal noted that the vulnerability of children, particularly girls, has increased as the traditional protection mechanisms of families and communities have been disrupted by war. Children are victims of killing, maiming, abduction, sexual violence and recruitment in armed groups, with 19,000 boys and girls having been associated with armed groups. The conflict has exacerbated poverty, displacement and damaged family relationships. Violence against children is widespread within families, the community and school. Despite national policies prohibiting corporal punishment, it is still widely practiced in schools and the sexual harassment and abuse of students remains prevalent. There are poor mental health and wellbeing outcomes among conflict affected children, including depression, anxiety and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), with rates of PTSD estimated at between 41% - 53%. Children with disabilities face intersecting vulnerabilities which increase their exclusion. Disability is considered a punishment from God and children with disabilities face significant stigma and are exposed to discrimination and increased risks of violence and abuse, including high rates of sexual violence against girls with disabilities.

MTR respondents identified protection risks faced by boys, girls and children with disabilities in SEAQE 2 communities and schools. Within communities, head teachers identified neglect, child labour, domestic

violence and security issues as protection risks faced by boys, girls and children with disabilities. Boys were also identified as at risk of conscription into the armed forces / militia groups and girls and children with disabilities faced significant risks of gender-based violence (girls: 93 percent, child with disabilities: 33 percent). According to MTR respondents, protection risks have increased because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Within schools, teachers reported several safety risks to boys, girls and children with disabilities. Most teachers (78 percent) reported safety risks to boys, including violence (84 percent), shaming (80 percent) and bullying and harassment (48 percent). Most teachers (75 percent) also reported safety risks to girls, including gender-based violence (87.5 percent), shaming (71 percent) and bullying and harassment (50 percent). Most teachers (94 percent) also reported safety risks for children with disabilities at their school, including widespread discrimination (100 percent), shaming (67 percent), violence (57 percent) and bully and harassment (57 percent).

ADRA has supported the strengthening of child safeguarding and protection systems within SEAQE 2 communities and schools. ADRA Norway has produced four child protection training packages on 1) child protection for teachers, 2) child protection for communities, 3) positive discipline for teachers, and 4) positive discipline for parents and caregivers. In 2021, ADRA South Sudan participated in a virtual training of trainers on positive discipline provided by ADRA Norway and this was cascaded to teachers.

ADRA South Sudan has also provided child protection training to PTAs/SMCs within all target schools and local chiefs were invited to attend. The training was successful with participants recognising cultural and traditional norms, such as child labour, child marriage and the use of boys for cattle raiding, as harmful to children and resolving to work together to promote child protection and strengthen child protection reporting. To this end, mapping and referral systems to relevant service providers have been established and are working, with 16 child protection cases identified and referred to health, safety and protection services in 2020. To combat the negative impacts of COVID-19 school closures on the protection of children, the community-based child protection referral mechanism was adapted, and training provided to school administrators in preparation for schools re-opening.

**According to head teachers, the majority (80 percent) of SEAQE 2 supported schools have established protection mechanisms and reporting channels and the project has helped establish a child safeguarding and protection policy (90 percent), provided child protection training (90 percent), training on corporal punishment (70 percent) and information campaigns (40 percent) to strengthen child protection and safeguarding within the school.** 90 percent of head teachers believe that this has helped address safeguarding and protection risks, although 100 percent of head teachers thought more training on child protection and corporal punishment and more information campaigns were needed.

#### Conflict sensitivity

SEAQE 2 program interventions have been conflict sensitive. **ADRA South Sudan has been responsive to local conflict dynamics and has built trust and respect within target communities and schools and among local stakeholders.** Staff noted that when they visit target communities, often accompanied by escorts to navigate roadblocks and reduce security risks on route, they typically stay for two weeks and that this has helped build positive relationships and increased the confidence of local stakeholders.

**MTR respondents reported that the SEAQE project has not affected the relationship between diverse groups. ADRA partners either agreed or strongly agreed that the SEAQE**

**2 project is conflict sensitive, and 80 percent of head teachers reported that the project has not influenced relationships between distinct groups.** While 20 percent of head teachers responded that the project did influence the relationship between distinct groups, the comments captured suggest that these effects were positive, with head teachers noticing an improvement in school and community relationships.

## 4 LESSONS LEARNED

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- Teacher training for underqualified teachers was not effective as 50% of teachers were only primary school educated. This necessitated a change in approach from ToT to school-based mentoring. It also necessitates providing support to teachers with literacy training so that their own basic education can be improved and in turn they can engage and learn more from teacher professional development initiatives.
- Efforts to secure qualified government teachers did not work as qualified teachers do not stay in rural areas long. Local teachers, although underqualified, are committed to their local community and stay longer.
- Establishing schools in underserved areas is a highly effective strategy for supporting OOSC to enter school.
- A focus on PTA and community engagement through REFLECT has created a keen sense of school ownership and support for school improvements.
- The assessment methodology was not familiar to the students and may have been the reason many failed to complete subtest items. Greater orientation and discussion with students prior to the assessment to address their fears and concerns would be valuable, ensuring that the consent process is also an opportunity for discussion on the assessment process.

## 5 RECOMMENDATIONS

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### I. For support to students

- a. Tailor and target support for the return to school of children who experience the most marginalisation, including children living in poverty, children who live far from school, girls (including teenage mothers) and children with disabilities. This should include financial support as poverty is a significant barrier and has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. It was also noted that due to the high prevalence of hunger, school feeding programs may be needed.
- b. Continued learning and collaboration with the TOFI project is encouraged to continue enhancing inclusion practices in school.
- c. Girls remain poorly represented in the higher grades. A carefully targeted intervention to address this is worth considering but should be informed by a deeper analysis of the barriers. Poverty may be a contributing factor and cash transfers may be a solution.
- d. It is apparent that the learning gaps observed from the assessment may be the result of access to textbooks for lower and upper grades and that children may have missed important curriculum areas. This may be the explanation for gaps in numeracy observed in Grade 4 and Grade 7 students. The MTR recommends further investigation of learning gaps in male and female students and work with Head teachers and teachers to

identify options to address these gaps. Evidence suggests that high intensity tutor groups can be beneficial to address learning gaps.

- e. Continue to strengthen social and emotional learning (SEL) and psychosocial support for students through more support to the SMC and teachers to develop cultural and sporting activities and further training for teachers on psychosocial support.
- f. Continue to strengthen student governing bodies and student clubs in schools and work regarding the teacher code of conduct as it is evident that some students experience corporal punishment, bully and harassment and do not feel their voice is heard by school leaders and teachers. Student clubs, including girl clubs, can be an effective way of encouraging the participation of girls and challenging negative gender stereotypes.
- g. Consider replicating the distance learning program to meet the education needs of specific groups of OOSC, such as children on the move and working children. A pilot could be initiated to capture and document successes and challenges.

## **II. For parents**

- a. Review parent teacher meetings and work with teachers to ensure they are regularly providing feedback to parents on their child's progress.
- b. Continue expanding and strengthening the REFLECT model which is an effective mechanism to encourage parental participation.

## **III. For teachers**

- a. Expand the teacher mentoring program to include peer learning. This could build on the government's plan to send qualified teachers to remote schools. The qualified teachers could lead peer to peer teacher capacity development efforts for local underqualified teachers. This would have to be done in a conflict sensitive manner as local teachers may feel threatened / usurped by qualified teachers from urban areas coming into their local community / school.
- b. There was a strong interest to expand reflective circles in schools as this was considered a highly effective low-cost model to improve teacher confidence and capacity.
- c. Provide subject specific in-service teacher training to support underqualified teachers to master subject knowledge and improve effective teaching.
- d. Teacher wellbeing is strongly associated with teacher management and support. It is likely that teachers performance is being impacted by the conditions of their employment as teachers. As well as strengthening programs to promote social emotional wellbeing of teachers, advocacy is needed to address salary concerns.
- e. Implement strategies to attract more females into the teaching profession.
- f. Expand the partnership with the teacher training institute so that more locally recruited teachers have a pathway to accreditation.

## **IV. For SMC**

- a. Most SMC members would like training and support on how to support the education of girls and children with disabilities as well as training on financial management, leadership and governance.

## **V. For education authorities**

- a. The coordination mechanisms established in 2019 do not appear to have continued. Re-establish the coordination mechanisms as the demand to coordinate support to schools

at the county level has been raised by ADRA stakeholders and will grow because of the impacts of COVID-19.

**VI. Project improvement**

- a. Ensure the sustainability approaches are reviewed regularly and progress begins in developing the architecture for the exit strategy. This takes time and significant consultation with stakeholders.