



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

**The Rt Hon. Baroness Chapman of
Darlington**

Minister of State for International
Development and Africa

King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH

Sarah Champion MP
Chair, International Development Committee
House of Commons

1 April 2026

Dear Sarah,

Thank you for your letter of 13 February regarding our education programming in South Sudan. I welcome the Committee's continued attention to supporting access to education for girls and other vulnerable children in South Sudan.

The UK has been a committed donor to education in South Sudan and remains so. Our Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS) programme has directly supported 1.5 million girls to access education. Through our dedicated programming, we have ended the disparity between girls and boys enrolling at primary school – from one girl to four boys in 2013 to now one-to-one gender parity.

Country-by-country allocations for the next three years will be made public in the FCDO's Annual Report and Accounts in the summer. Officials are in the early stages of preparing our portfolio of allocations. Whilst I am unable at present to confirm the precise amounts for Education, I can reassure the committee that the Education, Health and Humanitarian response will remain our priorities in South Sudan.

The transition from the Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS) programme to the new Education for All South Sudan (EFASS) programme is currently underway. The EFASS Business Case will be made public once procurement has been completed. The Business Case details our appraisal of delivery options informing how our support makes the best use of UK resources in meeting the education needs of girls and the most vulnerable.

UK leadership in the education sector remains strong and we retain support from our likeminded partners, who delegate their spending through us, already securing an additional £20 million for 2026. We will maintain our lead in the sector, aligned to the government's strategic plan and building on the significant gains made since independence in 2011. Girls and children in the most vulnerable contexts will continue to be supported to access and complete basic education. All our work complements and closely aligns with existing multilateral investments made by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and Education Cannot Wait and other civil society partners working in South Sudan. The World Bank is also supporting the Transitional Government of South

Sudan by funding the approximately \$100 million (including \$11.4 million contributed by GPE) 'Building Skills for the Human Capital Development' project, focusing on strengthening teaching services through large-scale teacher training, re-operationalising schools in refugee-hosting communities, and strengthening capacity for management of the education system.

As well as funding, UK expertise as provided both by professional advisers and external UK research has been instrumental in shaping human development policy integral to building core systems and service delivery in South Sudan. UK expertise has been influential in supporting policy decisions on inclusion and gender equity.

I would like to stress to the committee that, whilst the UK remains a steadfast partner to the people of South Sudan, the Transitional Government has done little to demonstrate a willingness to invest in their own people. Budget allocations by the Government of South Sudan on Education (2.6% budget allocation in 2025 and 3.5% indicative this year; actual funding provided much lower), remain far short of meeting the minimum recurring costs of paying teachers, many of whom have not received salaries for over 12 months. The UK continues to utilise its position as co-chair of the South Sudan Public Financial Management Oversight Committee to press for fiscal discipline, transparency and for increasing budget allocations for essential services.

We are also deeply concerned about the escalating violence in South Sudan, characterised by appalling violence against civilians, humanitarian operations, a rise in displacement, and arbitrary constraints on aid access. We continue to engage South Sudanese political leaders, alongside our likeminded partners, to urge an immediate ceasefire and a recommitment to an inclusive political dialogue. On 18 December, we joined Troika partners (the US and Norway) in a joint statement condemning the failures of the transitional Government. In our political engagement we press for improved financial management and for the Government to step up and invest in their people.

Reductions in ODA do mean tough choices need to be made and officials are working closely with all our partners including the Ministry of Education to make sure every penny of UK ODA invested provides the best return on our investment.

I hope this information is helpful to the Committee.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Baroness Chapman', written in a cursive style.

The Rt Hon. Baroness Chapman of Darlington
Minister of State for International Development and Africa