

# THE CHALLENGES OF TRANSPORT SYSTEMS OF SCHOOL CHILDREN: A CASE STUDY OF JUBA CITY



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## Acronyms

AED .....	Academy for Educational Development
AES.....	Alternative Education System
ALP .....	Accelerated Learning Programmed
CGS.....	Community-based Girls' Schools
ECD .....	Early Childhood Development
EFA.....	Education for All
EPDF .....	Education Program Development Fund
GDP.....	Gross Domestic Product
GESS.....	Girl Education South Sudan
R-TGoNU.....	Government of National Unity
GoRSS.....	Government of the Republic of South Sudan
GPE .....	Global Partnership for Education
IDP.....	Internally Displaced Person
IEC .....	Intensive English Course
IOM.....	International Organization for Migration
IRI.....	Interactive Radio Instruction
MoGEI.....	Ministry of General Education and Instruction
SMoE .....	State Ministry of Education
UNICEF.....	United Nations Children's Fund

## **Executive Summary**

South Sudan faces enormous challenges in the provision of social services, especially in the health and education sector, as well as the overall infrastructural development. Most of South Sudan's infrastructure, to be more specific, road infrastructure and networks, are severely underdeveloped due to years of protracted civil war that the country has gone through. In the capital of South Sudan, Juba, it is very difficult for public buses or private cars to move through the city. A limited number of schools that are located in town have transport services and their fees are affordable. However, most students walk from home to school and vice versa. These long commutes affect the students' punctuality and their performance. Little has been done by the government owned schools to tackle the challenge of transportation. The limited number of road networks in Juba means that pupils who reside in these inaccessible areas cannot or have a more challenging time finding buses that can take them to school.

This research study found that there are no government operating and regulating transportation services in Juba. The study used convenience sampling to obtain data from 290 respondents from all the schools in the three main town blocks of Juba, which are Kator, Munuki, two areas of Gudele. Sampling was also gathered in two areas of Sherikat, which is not considered part of Juba. Interviews were also conducted with representatives from the National Ministry of Education, States Ministry of Education, Payam Education Offices and the Head teachers of the selected schools.

Our findings were the following:

Less than 20% of the population used a newly improved transport system for students in Juba City schools.

57% of respondents walk to school daily, which suggests that this is the most used method to reach school.

Motorcycles and bicycles are another means of transport to school and back home. These are risky because the roads in Juba are very narrow.

Non-Government Public transportation does not reach all the areas within Juba city, and these are available daily between 6am and 7pm. These buses are not always reliable and secure for students.

The main Payam's of Juba, Kator and Munuki have limited road networks that are connected, while others like Logologo, Sherkat and Gudele road networks are very poor and not connected.

Public transportation fare is unaffordable for students and parents, making this not sustainable. Transportation from home to school, depending on the distance, is between 500-1000 SSP, which is difficult for most parents to afford, and results in students having to walk.

According to these findings, the three main challenges facing the students on their daily student life routines are 1) lack of transportation to school and back home 2) Public transportation unaffordable prices, and 3) poor road network infrastructure. To solve these challenges, there

is a need for the government of South Sudan to invest in its transportation sector, support schools to establish an affordable transportation system, and improve the road network infrastructure.



## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This study aimed at examining the means students in Kator, Munuki, two areas of Gudelea, and Sherikat use to commute from home to their places of learning and back home. In countries where the education sector is a government priority, great measures to ensure safe transportation for students is top priority. School Bus fares depend on whether the school is privately or government owned transportation policies, resources, etc.

There are many lessons to be learned from students who use the bus as a means to go to school. These students tend to learn to take better care of their personal belongings, they are more social and have many friends, and they like to share with others, to name a few. This qualities helps them in their overall development and well-being, makes them responsible and independent members of society. The notion of responsibility also teaches them how to be accountable in a large setting outside of the family unit.

#### 1.1. Background of Study

Improving the quality of general education is one of the objectives of South Sudan's first Education Strategic Plan of 2012-2017. To achieve this objective, it's important for schools to build on their resource management and structure strong leadership and governance through the formation of management boards and committees. Examples of these are the Parent and Teacher Association (PTA) and the Schools Management Committee (SMC). South Sudan's first General Education Act enacted in 2012 defines PTA as "a body of teachers and parents that mobilizes resources from the community on behalf of a primary and secondary school and participates in passing the school's annual plans and budget. The Ministry of General Education and Instruction Handbook for School Governing Bodies states that "involving the community in running of school helps the school and community." This collaboration serves to build trust and strong relationships between the school authorities and parents, and supports the notion of education as a life-long investment for children and youth in the country. It also brings the communities together to continue to work together.

South Sudan's educational system lacks prioritization and investment by the governing authorities. This attitude, which makes the education system fragile, can be seen in the low quality basic infrastructure of roads that can easily improve the transportation system in the country (Athow, 2013). The 21 year old civil conflict that South Sudan went through has also contributed enormously to the low quality of education. According to the Eye Radio (2020), 'lack of transports, food and textbooks are key issues that affect pupils from attending classes (Michael Daniel 19/10/2020).'

The study finds a lesser percentage of the enrollment rate in all schools in and around Juba. Only few school children in some schools have an improved transport system to their Respective Schools and back home daily. Part of the problem lies in the limited public transportation and high fares for students. Only a few private primary and secondary schools

remain standing in the entire Juba city with improved transport service according to the number of pupils and official interviewed. In other hand, Girl's education is on the rise in South Sudan; this is because of the support the government received from the partners like the Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS) for government schools.

### **Problem statement**

Then southern Sudan went through decades of civil war with northern Sudan before becoming an independent country, South Sudan. It also experienced its own internal conflicts in 2013 and 2016. These conflicts greatly impacted the quality of the education and transportation system, leading to many challenges felt today. Most children and youth are still out of school due to the challenges of transportation and an unconducive learning environment.

### **Objectives**

The aim of this research was to learn how school children in three main town blocks of Juba, which are Kator, Munuki, two areas of Gudele and Sherikat, commute from their home to schools and back daily.

#### **1.1.3 Research Questions**

What percentage of school children walk to their schools?

How many school children use private or public transport?

Who is paying the transportation fee and what is the cost?

How far is the distances the students covered daily?

#### **1.1.4 Scope of Study**

This study was done in three areas of Juba, Kator, Munuki and two areas of Gudele. From my observation, the public transport and other means are charged pupils on a daily basis.

#### **1.1.5 Limitation of Study**

Due to the use of nonprobability sampling methods, the findings of the study could not be used to generalize the challenges of the transportation system of students in and around Juba.

To overcome language barriers, the researcher had on several occasions to translate the questionnaires from English into "Juba Arabic."

The lack of understanding of what a 'research is and what it entails, made some selected participants hesitant or decline to participate in the study.

There was a degree of bias as the researcher was involved in data collection.

There was a lack of access to some individuals, organizations or documents that could have widened the scope of the research and its findings.

## **1.2 Structure of Study.**

This study included the introduction and background of the study area in chapter one. Chapter two focus on the conceptual and empirical review of related literature and theory on scientific grounds. The study continues with chapter three which focuses on the methodological review of the whole study. It provides a description of the nature of the household survey, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, personal observation, and document review. Chapter four and five present the empirical findings and discussions. These chapters discuss issues under the broad topics of water supply and accessibility, toilet use and availability; the impacts of poor access to water supply and sanitation, and the possible recommendation measures forwarded from the population. They also include the limitations and challenges the researcher faced during the study work. Finally, the research study includes conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE STUDY REVIEW

Previous research conducted by UNICEF (2008) found that the British administration did very little regarding educational development in Southern Sudan. Sudan got her independence from Britain in 1956 and after the Khartoum regime assumed leadership in the country, the official language of instruction was changed from English to Arabic countrywide. The government moved on to Islamize the system in the country and this included the entire teaching and curriculum. These are some of the root causes of low-level educational developments in South Sudan (then Southern Sudan), which resulted in the rapid decline of the educational sector, poor access to quality education and low coverage of formal education systems.

#### 2.0 Study Overview

The African Union (2021) report states that South Sudan's state-building efforts were overwhelmed by how much the government needed to accomplish to provide access to educational opportunities. The interest was for those significant numbers of learners, and most particularly the populations who are disadvantaged or left behind during the conflict.

The African Union, together with the Member States and Regional Economic Communities, agreed to adopt a plan of action on achieving several objectives aimed at transforming education on the continent within the decade ending in 2015. Ministers of education meet biannually to take stock on the status of the implementation of this agreed plan of action and make decisions on how to address the challenges of education and agree on strategic responses.

The regional educational report on the status of infrastructures and implementation of the Plan of Action for Education for All, aims to provide a picture of the actions taken at regional and national levels to execute the plan. Compared to other East African countries, South Sudan has one of the lowest literacy rates in the region. According to a UNESCO (2016) report, South Sudan stands at 27 percent of literacy rate.

#### 2.1 Theory of study

A critical assumption was that a proposal design with appropriate degree of autonomy was at the Payams level and sufficiently decentralized, and is now functional with basic infrastructure as well as adequate human and financial resources in place.

The developed hypothesis asserted that improved and expanded safer education services for children and youth enhanced relevance of education and learner's well-being, strengthened the quality and management at the Payams levels to support basic education, and provided effective responses to crises affecting the primary education sector to meet the population's education needs and promote stability. The hypothesis was premised on the need for the inclusive education opportunities and to stabilize communities that nourish schools,

communities require access to financial, material, technical, and human resources that will build their resilience.

### **2.1.1 The Education Structures and Regional Perspective**

The data gathered in this research analyzed infrastructure development from more than 20 Sub-Saharan countries and others in the region. The results of this data have been presented in other reports covering different areas of infrastructure, transport, water and sanitation and different policy areas, including investment needs, fiscal costs, and sector performance in all these countries.

The report indicates that South Sudan's infrastructure is underdeveloped compared to other African countries. South Sudan has been in conflict for a long time, and although the country has a large quantity of oil and other mineral reserves, her infrastructure and economic development are at a standstill. South Sudan differs from other countries in terms of topography, infrastructure, and financial resources. This study analyzes and presents results that reflect why the transport system in South Sudan has not been improved (Rupa Ranganathan, 2011).

Literature review revealed that from the historical background of education in Sudan, during the second civil war (1983) up-to-date, there has been an increase in student enrollments, but the transport system is still underdeveloped. Compared to regional countries that report their adult literacy rate, only Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger have adult literacy rates below 20 percent. Furthermore, schools operating in South Sudan were part of this coordinated education system. Although most schools currently are being supported by the missionaries and non-governmental organizations. At the autonomy of South Sudan, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), started funding the rolling out of the Education Management Information System. The project started in 2006 with the Rapid Assessment of Learning Spaces survey of all primary schools. In 2007, censuses on education were carried out yearly, and from 2008 onwards, all the secondary schools were covered. In the following years, the EMIS project started achieving its objectives and covered schools and learning spaces, improving the quality of the data gradually. The effectiveness of the EMIS education census was discussed in term participation schools (Reinikka, 2012)

Article 14 of the Child Act of 2008 states that every child has the right to free education at the primary level which is compulsory (Ministry of Legal Affairs and Constitutional Development, 2009). However, millions of children are out of school in South Sudan, putting at risk their futures and that of the country (UNICEF South Sudan, 2020). Most of the students missed classes due to the long distance they commute daily from home and school. This affects their results and when they fail, they get discouraged and abandon school. Lack of infrastructure, low skilled trained teachers and learning materials, coupled with the massive disruption caused by the conflict, imply that not all children entered primary school (UNICEF, 2020), the number of school children has been decreasing every year since 2010. The situation has been

exacerbated by the 2013-2015 conflict in which children fear to move long distances from home to school.

The main factors limiting school attendance were costs and distance. Costs include formal costs such as learning material and uniforms as well as informal charges sometimes demanded by schools, which particularly affect poorer families who can't afford to pay. Furthermore, roads and paths to school in South Sudan are often impassable during the rainy season (UNICEF, 2020). Therefore, more girls are attending school, but they continue to face additional transport challenges to school and back home. Most of the families with limited resources are more likely to send boys to schools instead of girls as an investment; this is culture practice that hinders the development. Moreover, an estimated 900,000 children with disabilities in South Sudan cannot attend school due far distance and lack of transport.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Overview

The education system in South Sudan is respectively managed by both the state authority and regulated by the national Government. The system consists of eight years of primary school, four years of secondary and four years of university studies.

#### 3.1 Research Design:

This research study has several objectives. These objectives need both insights from the end users that are the students who are attending school within and around Juba and the authorities that are currently involved in the management of education. Data from the end users were gathered through usage of a quantitative research design. The information captured includes quantification of opinions and attitudes, among others, and this approach enables the researcher to arrive at evidence-based conclusions that are supported by authentic data. For the authorities/institutions, a qualitative method was used. Therefore, the study design was a mixed method undertaking.

#### 3.1.1 Target Population

The areas of study are schools that are both public and private in three main town blocks of Juba, which are Kator, Munuki, two areas of Gudele and two areas of Sherikat. Although schools usually serve as an institution, the study focused primarily on students. Thus, the respondents are students and teachers.

#### 3.1.2 Tools and Instruments of Study

The study utilized questionnaires that were designed and pre-tested to glean data from respondents of diverse social and economic backgrounds. Questionnaires were chosen and administered for the reliability and efficiency of the tool used by the researcher to gather data from respondents within a convenient period of time. For the qualitative portion, interviews were conducted with representatives from schools, and the state's Ministry of education. The interviews consisted of brief open-ended questions.

#### 3.1.3 Research Procedure

Due to limited resources and the scale of the project, the study used non-probability sampling methods through convenience sampling. A total of 200 respondents from 40 schools took part in this study; 5 respondents per school. The research was conducted in both public and private schools.

### **3.1.4 Data processing and analysis**

The qualitative portion of the data was quantified and analyzed using Excel Software. Qualitative data in this research refers to identified common opinions that were grouped together. Interview results were also analyzed manually.

### **3.1.5 Ethical considerations**

The researcher took several ethical issues into consideration. Consent to conduct the research in the school was obtained from each school head teacher prior to the start of research. At the schools, participants were first informed about the purpose of the research and their consent was also sought before proceeding with the questionnaires.



## CHAPTER FOUR

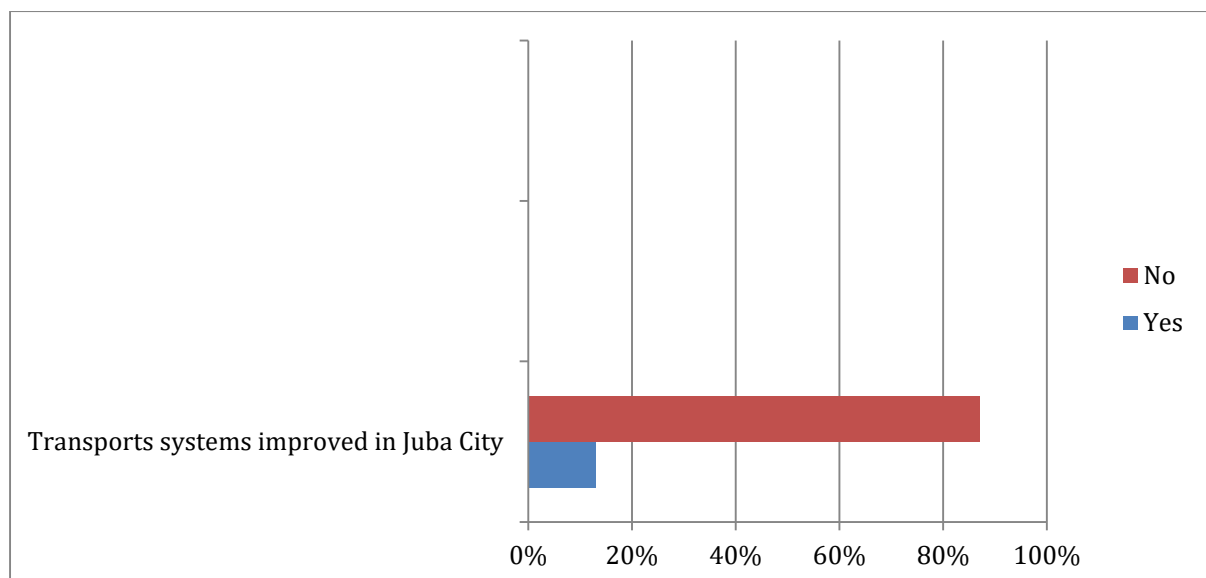
### RESULTS AND DISCUSION

#### 4.0. General Characteristics and Study Population in Juba City

Data in this research were obtained from the primary sources in 40 schools in and around Juba city. 200 participants from 40 schools in and around Juba city answered the survey used in this research. This research was undertaken in preparation for the assessment of transport systems of schools' children in and around Juba. The aim of this research was to understand how students commute daily to and from school, the distances covered daily, the fare, and how these, if any, affect their daily attendance. There are believed to be over 1000 primary and secondary schools (Interviewees). The transport system in all these schools has not improved, and this is reflected in the high transportation costs, which prevent students from going to school.

#### 4.1. Results

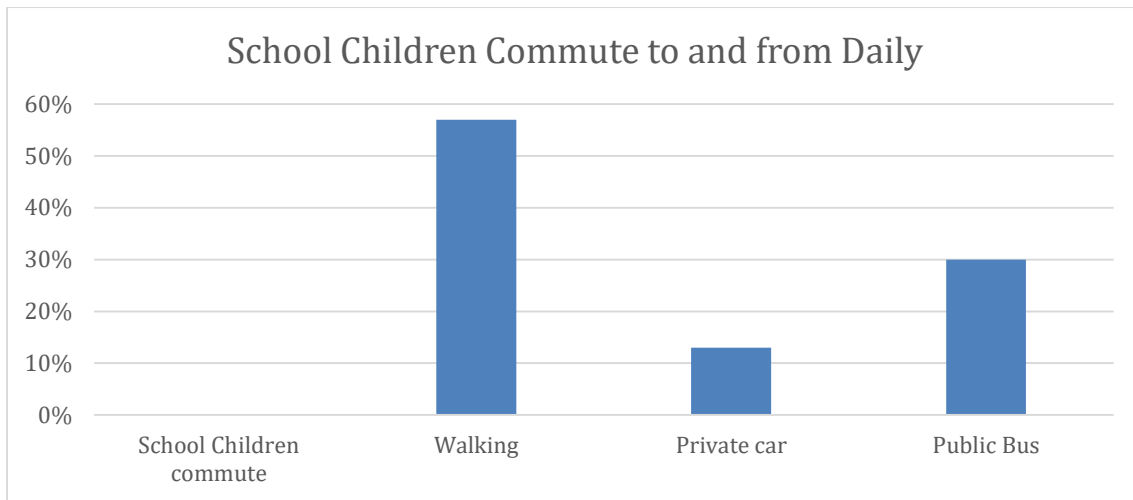
From the finding, 87% of the respondents revealed that the general transport system in Juba city has not improved, while 13% of the respondents indicated that some of the schools have improved transports system these past few months (figure 1).



**Figure: 1.** Nature of transport system of school children in Juba city

**Data Source:** field Data

The study revealed that 57% of the students in and around Juba walk to school. 30% of students use public buses, while 13% use private vehicles as a form of transport daily (figure 2).

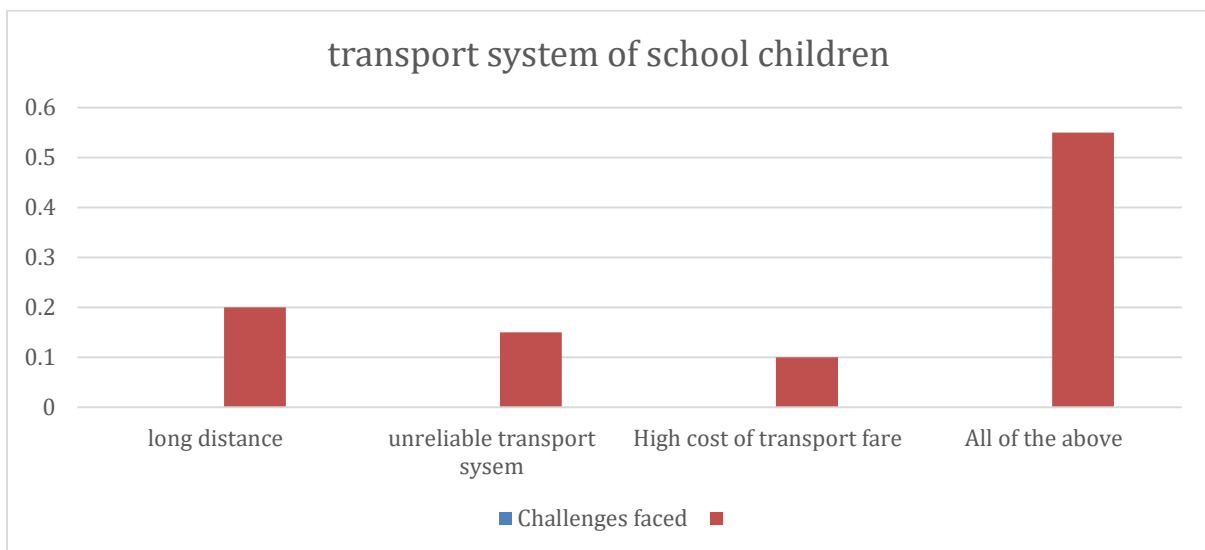


**Figure. 2:** school children commute to and from the school daily.

**Source:** Field Data

#### 4.1.1. Challenges faced transport systems in Juba.

From the field data presented in figure 3, the findings revealed that 55% of the school children are facing the challenges of the poor transports system in Juba, while 20% of the school children indicate long distance as the major challenge. 15% of the school children revealed an unreliable transport system as a major challenge. 10% revealed high transportation cost as a major challenge.

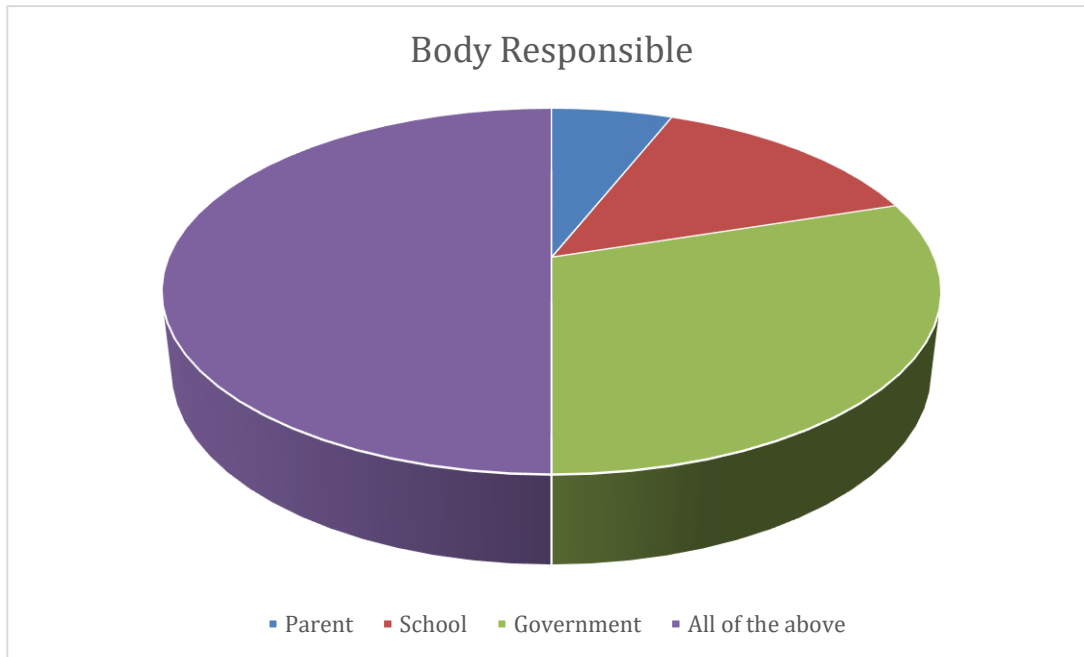


**Figure. 3:** Transport systems challenges by students in Juba

**Source:** Field Data

#### 4.1.1 Body responsible for transport of school children

Figure 4 revealed that out of the 50% of the respondents, 30% of the respondents stated that it is the responsibility of the government of South Sudan to improve the transports system. 14% of the respondents believe that it is the schools responsibility to improve the transport system. 6% of respondents believe that it is the responsibility of the parents to improve the transport system.



**Figure. 4:** Body responsible for transport system of school children in Juba city

**Source:** Data field

#### 4.1.3. Discussion

The transport system in and around Juba faces many challenges. Schools such as Darling Wisdom, Shining Star and Wisdom Star International currently have buses which transport their students to and from school and home on a daily basis. However, roads are still not well connected to facilitate the movement of buses in a reliable manner. These challenges are further exacerbated by the limited investment in the transport system and the high fare costs makes transportation also unaffordable to students. Increase in fare cost is usually blamed on increase in fuel, which is regulated by Nile Petroleum Company.

According to the findings in my research, 87% of the respondents revealed that the Government has not improved the general transport system of students in and around Juba, while 13% of the respondents indicated that some schools have their own transport system for their students. My results suggest that challenges in transportation are connected to low performance in students. Students also use bicycles as means of transportation. This form of transportation is not safe compared to buses and other vehicles because of poor road construction.

The research also revealed that 55% of students are facing the challenges of the transports system in Juba, 20% believed the long distances between homes and the schools as the major challenge, and 15% revealed the unreliability of the transportation system as the major problem, while 10% revealed the high transportation fare cost as the major challenge.

From this analysis, the majority of the respondents believe it is the collective responsibility of the parents, schools, and government to improve the transportation system. The transportation union should consider repairing and upgrading roads within Juba city, which would facilitate the movement of public buses in and around Juba.

Regulation is currently viewed in policy literature as the best way to address the issues with school children transportation systems. However, for regulation to be successful, it must be enforced properly. This is difficult to do in poor and developing countries, especially where corruption is prevalent. In South Sudan, most institutions are in the embryonic stage and regulation is hard to enforce, especially since the regulatory bodies have not been strengthened. In the transportation sector, the regulatory framework for the mandated institutions is not functioning well. However, an additional stricter rules and regulation would require a big financial investment and well-designed guidelines would be applied to address the matter aiming at improving the transportation system.

#### **4.1.4. The nature of Transport system in Juba**

The attendance of the pupils at various schools in Juba is relatively average due to the conflict coupled with poor educational services and facilities in the country. The weight of these pressures is typically on poor transport and the distance to which the pupil walks to school daily. This spells a promising future for South Sudan; besides being instrumental for healthy living and economic prosperity, education is also a key for future peace and development.

#### **4.1.5. Public Transport Bus**

The public bus terminals located beside marketplaces, such as Juba, Custom, Konyo-konyo, Muniki, Gudele, Mangateen, Gumbo etc. are operated by private individuals not by the government. To operate such public transport buses, the registration to traffic police is required, which makes them over-charge the population including students (JICA, JULY 2010).

#### **4.2. Taxis and Boda Boda**

Another form of public transportation available in Juba is taxis. Taxis are divided into Sedan and Bike types. The bike taxis is referred to as “Boda-Boda” and are more popular and used frequently. The sedan types of taxis are usually more expensive and because of the cost, are rarely used. For children in developing countries, walking long distances to school is not uncommon. However, these long journeys can be more challenging for children living with a disability, those suffering from malnutrition or illness, or those who are required to work around the household. Children, especially girls, are also vulnerable to violence when they

walk long distances to and from school because of the state of the country (citizen, 2019). Although access to education is universal human rights, some countries like South Sudan are facing difficulties of transportation system and the children with disabilities are particularly affected by the challenges these poor transport system and the long distances.

Students affected by poor transportation and long distances, particularly children with disabilities and children from poor families have lower attendance rates and are usually out of school before completing their primary education. Apart from a poor transportation system, other challenges such as discrimination, lack of trained teachers, and a lack of access to school disadvantage children who seek quality education.

In South Sudan, children from the poorest families rarely attend school because it is unaffordable. This forces many to stay at home doing domestic work. These families poor families in turn remain locked in a cycle of poverty that goes on for generations. For many African countries, education is theoretically free and universal for all. In South Sudan, the government with the support from the development partners provides funds to cover school items like uniforms, books, stationeries, extra lessons, exam fees and support to school buildings.

According to a survey conducted by National Baseline Household Survey (NBHS); some parents had cited that “no money for school costs” and “schools are too far from home” as the reasons for their children not attending the schools. According to the Care International, there is a correlation between poor attendances in the class and the locations of the schools. This indicates that there is still a lots of effort to be made in order to improve the transportation system to provide access to education for all the children in South Sudan.

However, some recommendations to help address some of the issues are:

Investing in the transportation sector is one of the key recommendations. The government of South Sudan should concentrate on bringing companies that will provide buses in numbers, which could also result in fare reduction.

Rehabilitation and renovation of the road networks can improve the transportation system of students.

#### **4.2.1. CONCLUSION**

Public transportation fare is unaffordable for students and parents, making this not sustainable. Transportation from home to school, depending on the distance, is between 500-1000 SSP, which is difficult for most parents to afford, and results in students having to walk.

This study was conducted from secondary and primary schools around Juba under South Sudan Center for Strategic and Policy Studies (CSPS).

This study concludes that the poor transportation system in Juba negatively influences attendance and daily performances of the students. Limited infrastructure remains the major challenges for the school-going children. An improved transportation system must be set in place to play a crucial role in the future rolling, timely attendant, and performance outcome for the students. As such, it is important to address the key issues that the research has highlighted.

This research is a complete participation of different researchers in CSPS and the schools where the data were collected. I would like express my sincere thanks to the Chairman of the board of directors, Executive director, Program officer, fellow Research Assistants, the Logistic officer and the Executive Secretary and the rest of the staffs at CSPS for their unwavering support.

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