

Sudan Country Profile

Compiled by Transform Alliance Africa

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Sudan Country Brief and Fact Sheet



Laws, Policies and Guidelines Related to Care for Children

Key international policy instrument	Country response
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)	Signed and ratified, 1990
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (2000)	Acceded, 2000
The Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption (1993)	-
African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990)	Signed, 1990
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	-

Key national legislation, policy instruments and frameworks

The Child Act, 2010. Alternative care for children is covered in the **12 chapters dedicated to the right of the child for protection** in this Act.

The National Policy on Welfare and Protection of Children Deprived of Parental Care, June 2011. This was approved by the National Council for Child Welfare (NCCW), whose primary responsibility is policy formulation, coordination and planning on child protection and care issues. Planning on child protection is carried out in conjunction with the National Council for Strategic Planning.

Key Figures and Statistics

Sudan remains in a protracted emergency and development crisis due to conflict internally and in South Sudan. As a result the country has significant numbers of both refugees and internally displaced persons. UNHCR estimated over 400,000 refugees were living in Sudan in 2015¹. The country is estimated to have 1.7 million orphans and vulnerable children with child poverty levels as high as 47%²; from a social protection perspective, national figures show that 47% of people in Sudan live below the national poverty line.³ There are no clear statistics on the categories of children growing up in institutions or other forms of alternative care; neither are there clear figures on the number of institutions caring for these children.

¹ <https://www.unicef.nl/files/unicef-child-notice-soedan-en.pdf>

² <https://www.soschildrensvillages.ca/sudan>

³ Save the Children, <https://www.savethechildren.org/us/what-we-do/where-we-work/africa/sudan>

Social Protection and Alternative Care Options

The country has weak child protection and care systems and as a result violence against children is pervasive. Some of the major issues affecting children include: separated and unaccompanied children from Sudan due to frequent conflict; child labour; malnutrition; poverty and illiteracy.

Criminalisation of pregnancy outside marriage has resulted in increased cases of child abandonment. Women and girls in these situations not only face pervasive stigma and discrimination but are also at risk of so-called 'honour' killings. The Ministry of Social Affairs, UNICEF and other actors have responded to these issues through the existing alternative family care approach of Kafalah, and additional support is now accessible (albeit mostly in Khartoum) to pregnant and single mothers.

Kafalah is widely practiced in Sudan, and is an alternative to adoption. Sudan is a predominantly Muslim country where Islamic religious teachings are absolute. In this context, blood relationships cannot be cut off by any legal or policy framework. This is fundamentally different from countries in which adoptive parents are given permanent parental rights to a child including lineage, naming and inheritance. Under Kafalah these rights are not transferred but children cared for under this arrangement nevertheless have an opportunity to experience permanency and family life, in much the same way as adoption. (Note, adoption can be allowed for non-Muslim children in Sudan; this may occur under the Non-Muslims Personal Status Act.)

The role of institutions in Sudan

The majority of institutions in Sudan are state-run and located in Khartoum, River Nile, Gezira, Red Sea and South Darfur. Alternative family care has been reinforced in recent years as a result of abandoned children suffering severe neglect and deprivation in institutions leading to high death rates.

A Ministry of Social Affairs report shows that between 2004 and 2010, the number of children admitted to institutions in Khartoum was 4,210. During the same period, in those same institutions, 1,681 child deaths were reported.⁴

The government of Sudan, UNICEF, Hope and Homes for Children and other actors have worked to implement Alternative Family Care for abandoned children and currently over 3,000 children are being supported in families.⁵

Additionally, services to pregnant and single mothers have reduced cases of abandonment. There is also on-going awareness-raising of the negative impacts of institutionalisation through the media and community leadership structures.

Recommendations

⁴ Sudan's Initial Report on the Implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 2010

⁵<https://bettercarenetwork.org/sites/default/files/Looking%20Back%20Looking%20Forward%20Report%20HHC257.pdf>

- **Establish and enforce independent oversight mechanisms for alternative care services.**
- **Systematically collect data on institutions** and children in their care as well as those receiving other alternative care services.
- **The government should expand the space for civil society actors to complement government resources,** reinforce accountability and provide space for more actors to complement government's role in child protection and care.
- **The government should decriminalise birth outside marriage** as this not only reinforces stigma and discrimination but also results in increased rates of abandonment among single teenage mothers.
- **Ensure adequate and appropriate resources are allocated** by government to support family-based care and family-based alternative care systems.



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These Country Fact-Sheets developed by Transform Alliance Africa (TAA) Members are a snapshot of important national information relevant to care reform. They provide an overview of key policy and legislative frameworks, alternative care approaches and social protection, and latest developments in the sector. Note that the fact-sheets will be updated after every 6 months. If you have information relevant to care-reform please send an email to the Coordinator stephen@transformallianceafrica.org. We will consider the information in our next update.