

MS SQUARE ENGINEERING

Research & Cost Advisory Division

The Cost of Rehabilitating Government Schools in Sudan

A Practical Reading of the Contracting Market

Prepared by the Research Team at MS Square Engineering

Prepared for: Investors, Donors & Development Funds

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

This report abandons the language of “projects” and “strategies” that dominates most writing on Sudanese school rehabilitation, and replaces it with the numbers that actually decide an investment: the cost per square metre, and the difference between a school that needs paint and a new door versus one whose roof has collapsed. It is built on real 2026 market prices in Khartoum and on documented, executed projects — not press statements.

The central finding is simple: there is no single “damaged Sudanese school.” Real cost per school ranges from **USD 15,000** for a light repair of a small school to **USD 900,000** for the full reconstruction of a large educational complex. This wide spread is precisely what produces the “astronomical” headline figures seen in the media — figures that collapse into rational numbers once each school is classified by its actual condition.

\$15K–\$900K	8M+	1,000+	4
Real cost range per school	Children out of education	Days of school closure	Practical damage tiers

For any party planning to invest in this sector — an international organisation or a private investor entering through a public partnership — two disciplines are non-negotiable: begin with a field survey that classifies every school into one of the four condition tiers defined below before estimating any budget, and price and settle contracts in US dollars at the exchange rate on the day of execution, not the day of signature.

SECTION 1

1. The Situation on the Ground

The first error in any general cost estimate is treating “the damaged Sudanese school” as one case. UNICEF surveys and field reporting through January 2026 indicate that more than 8 million children are out of education after more than a thousand days of war, and that Sudan records the longest school-closure period in the world. But that large number conceals an enormous variation in the state of the buildings themselves — a variation we divide, in practice, into four real tiers we deal with as contractors and investors:

1**Structurally sound, operationally disabled**

Surface damage (broken glass, doors, wiring, paint, non-functional toilets), or buildings used as shelters for displaced families that need only cleaning and light rehabilitation.

2**Partial structural damage**

Cracked walls, partial roof collapse, surface-foundation damage without total collapse.

3**Fully or partly destroyed by direct shelling**

Requiring full or partial reconstruction.

4**Old, self-built stock**

Built decades before the war, largely through community effort without engineering supervision — dilapidated even before 2023. Around 80% of the existing school stock was built by popular initiative without adequate technical oversight.

SECTION 2

2. Building Material Prices in Khartoum (mid-2026)

Because the Sudanese pound is living an unstable life between an official and a parallel rate, any accurate cost calculation must start from actual material prices, then convert to dollars at the real exchange rate at the time of execution — never at an old assumed rate.

Material	Price (SDG)	Notes
Cement (ton)	570,000 – 780,000	Rose from ~570K in May to 780K by April 2026 in some reports, driven by transport disruption and FX volatility
Imported rebar (ton)	4,250,000 – 4,400,000	Imported steel clearly above local
Local rebar, 3-line (ton)	~2,450,000	Khartoum prices, mid-2026
Red brick (1,000 pcs)	~560,000	Mid-2026 market
Coarse sand (18 m³ load)	~600,000	Mid-2026 market
Ceramic tile 60×60 (m²)	50,000 – 70,000	Mid-2026 market

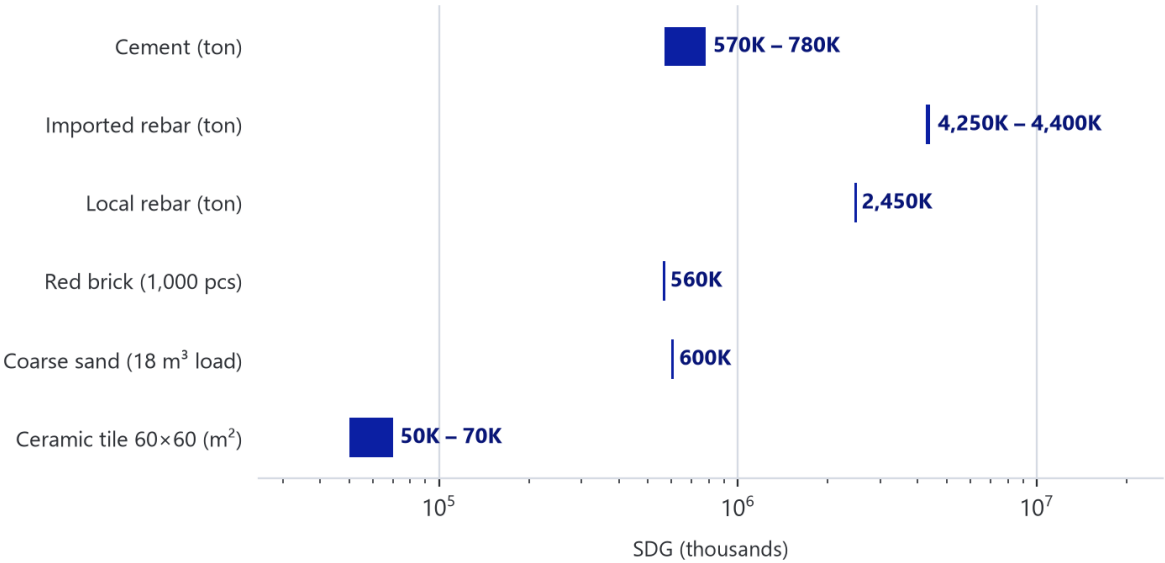


Figure 2 — Core building-material price ranges, Khartoum mid-2026.

SECTION 3

3. The Exchange Rate: The Decisive Point

Here is the real problem for any investor or contractor. There is a large gap between the official bank rate (roughly 3,000–3,400 SDG per dollar at some banks in early 2026) and the parallel-market rate (exceeding 4,600 SDG per dollar). Any government contract priced in pounds and then converted to dollars will yield a radically different result depending on which rate was used — and this is exactly what explains the shocking discrepancies in officially announced figures.

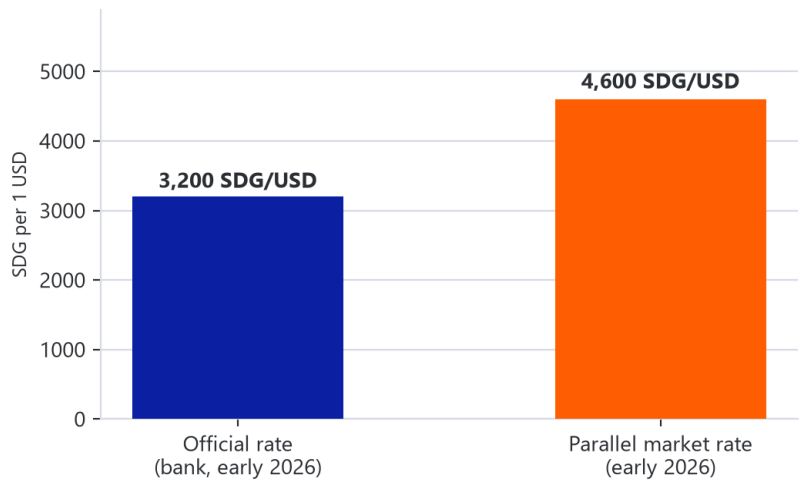


Figure 3 — The official versus parallel exchange-rate gap, early 2026.

4. Actual Cost per Square Metre: From the Market

Drawing on local construction-market sources in Sudan for 2026 and comparison with figures from active contractors, the real cost-per-m² ranges are as follows:

Type of work	Cost per m ² (USD)
Structural shell only (no finishing)	150 – 200
Shell + medium finishing (standard classroom)	200 – 270
Light repair (no structure: paint, doors, windows, toilets)	25 – 60
Medium repair (partial wall/roof repair + finishing)	80 – 150

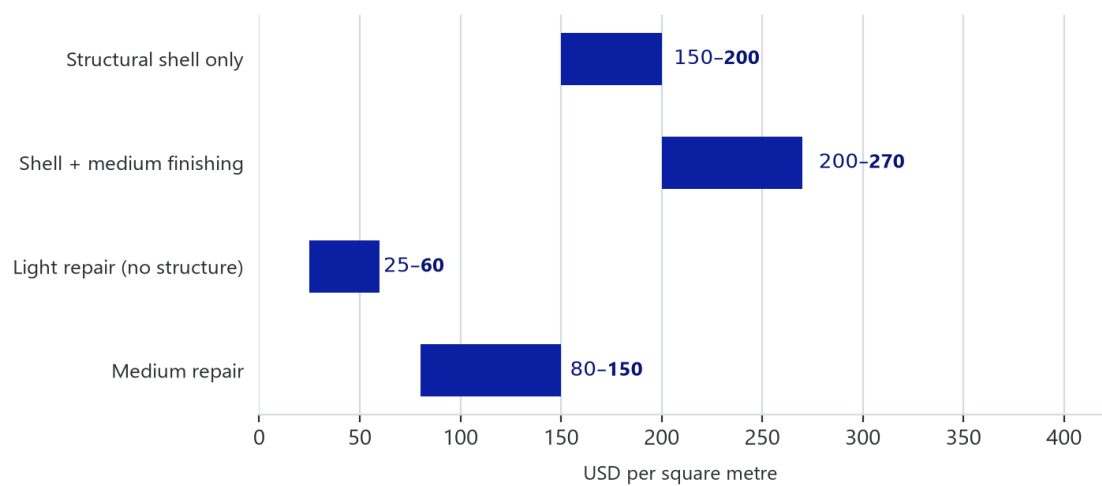


Figure 4 — Construction and rehabilitation cost per square metre, 2026 Khartoum market.

SECTION 5

5. What Does Rehabilitating a Whole School Really Cost?

5.1 — The Khartoum Case: 60 Schools for “28 Billion”

In August 2025 the Governor of Khartoum and the Minister of Education announced a project to rehabilitate 60 schools across the state’s three cities (Bahri, Omdurman, Khartoum) at a declared cost of “USD 28 billion” funded by the Federal Ministry of Finance. As stated in the official source, this figure is economically nonsensical — more than half the entire national budget for just 60 schools — and is almost certainly a media drafting error between “billion dollars” and “billion Sudanese pounds,” a very common mistake in Sudanese reporting.

Reconciling the figure — read as 28 billion SDG and converted at the official rate at the time of the announcement (~600 SDG/USD): $28,000,000,000 \div 600 \approx$ **USD 46.7 million** for 60 schools, or **USD 778,000 per school** — a perfectly rational figure, consistent with a comprehensive rehabilitation of a medium-sized school with medium-to-heavy damage.

5.2 — International Institutions: Documented Numbers

- **Education Cannot Wait** (UN fund) invested USD 33.7 million in Sudan to support classroom construction and rehabilitation, learning materials, and improved access to water and sanitation — benefiting more than 100,000 pupils.
- The **Transitional Education Plan 2025–2027**, launched by UNESCO and the Global Partnership for Education with the Sudanese government, requires USD 580 million over three years for all education-recovery operations — of which USD 272 million was unfunded as of August 2025.
- In **South Sudan** (a direct regional benchmark for the light rehabilitation of a small school), a full restoration of a small primary school (8 classrooms, two administrative buildings, two toilet blocks) cost just USD 50,000, delivered by a local organisation with UN peacekeeping funding.

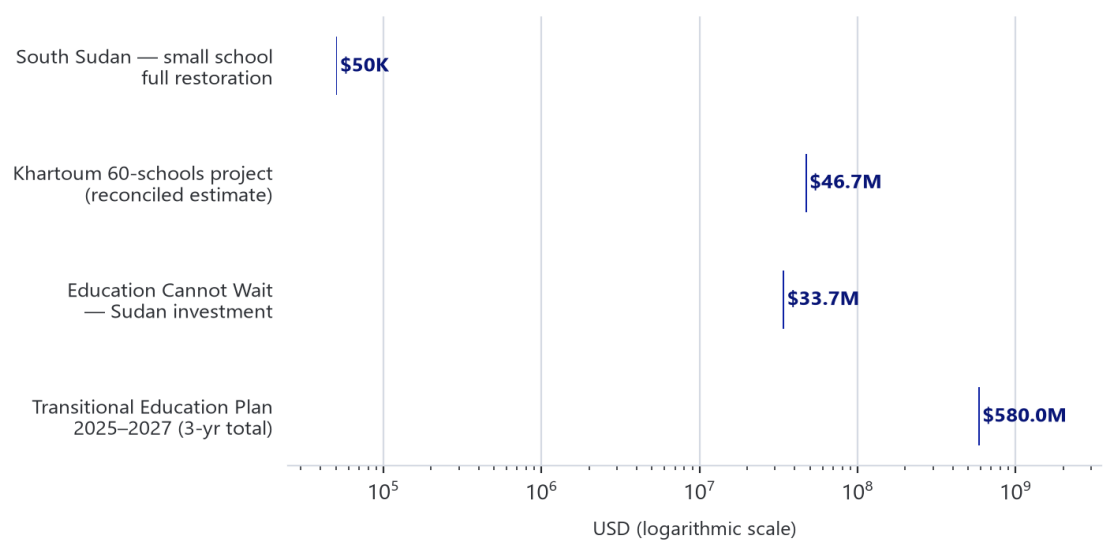


Figure 5 — Documented project and programme figures (logarithmic scale).

SECTION 6

6. Our Practical Estimate: Cost by Size & Condition

Based on a blend of actual market prices, documented project figures, and our experience evaluating comparable construction projects, this is the practical classification we actually use when assessing any request to rehabilitate a Sudanese government school:

School category	Approx. area	Damage condition	Estimated cost (USD)
Small school (6–8 classrooms)	500–800 m ²	Light repair (no structural damage)	15,000 – 40,000
Small school (6–8 classrooms)	500–800 m ²	Medium repair (partial wall/roof damage)	50,000 – 90,000
Medium school (10–15 classrooms + admin)	1,200–2,000 m ²	Comprehensive rehab, partial structural renewal	150,000 – 350,000
Large school / educational complex	2,500+ m ²	Partial reconstruction (heavy shelling damage)	400,000 – 900,000
Totally destroyed school	1,500–2,500 m ²	Full rebuild from scratch	300,000 – 600,000

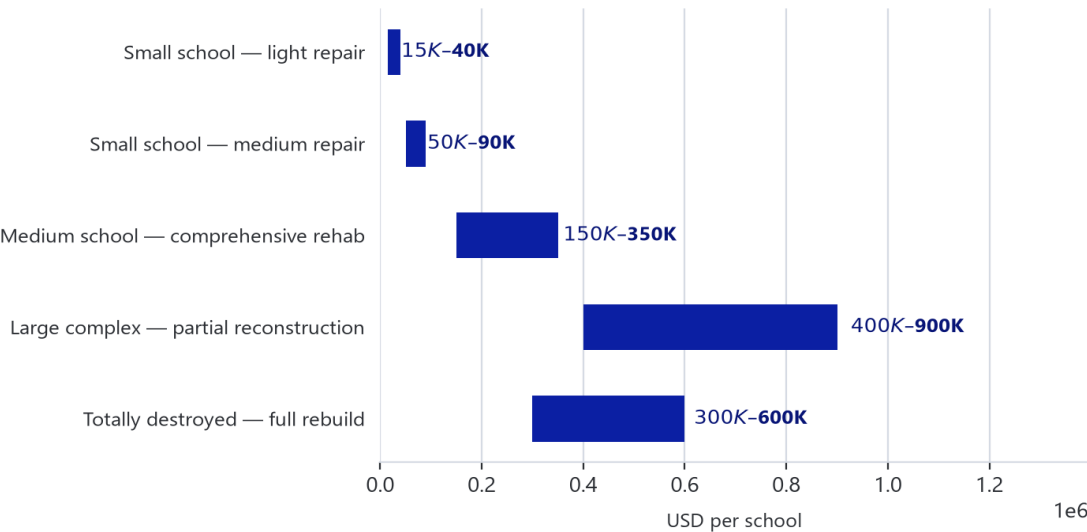


Figure 6 — Estimated rehabilitation cost band by school category (USD).

This table is consistent with the USD 778,000 average extracted from the Khartoum project (60 schools) above, if we assume that project mixes medium, large, and partially destroyed schools — logical, since it covers three major cities with varying damage levels.

SECTION 7

7. Why the Numbers Change Every Month

Any school-rehabilitation contract in Sudan today must include a “price review” clause, because the prices of core materials — cement and steel especially — jumped sharply within just a few months in 2026 due to transport disruption and exchange-rate volatility. Sudanese contractors have actually demanded that a “damage-remedy” regulation be applied to compensate for contracts signed before these sudden increases.

Practical lesson for funders

Price in dollars at the time of execution, not at the time of contracting. This is the single most important protection for any organisation, investor, or government funding school rehabilitation in Sudan.

8. Practical Conclusion

The big numbers — USD 580 million for the national plan, USD 33.7 million for Education Cannot Wait — are strategic, state-level planning figures. But the true cost at the level of a single school ranges, in practice, from USD 15,000 (light repair of a small school) to USD 900,000 (full rebuild of a large educational complex). This wide spread is what explains the “astronomical” figures that appear in media reports without detailing the condition of each school.

Any party planning to invest in this sector should begin with a field survey classifying every school into one of the four tiers above before estimating any budget, and should tie contracts to the actual exchange rate at the time of execution, not the time of signature.

How MS Square Engineering Can Help

Our Research & Cost Advisory Division delivers school-by-school condition surveys, tier classification, and dollar-denominated cost models built on live market prices — the exact groundwork this report argues every funder needs before committing capital.

SOURCES

Sources

- UNICEF Sudan — education access and school-closure reporting, through January 2026.
- Khartoum State Government / Federal Ministry of Education — 60-school rehabilitation announcement, August 2025.
- UNESCO & Global Partnership for Education — Sudan Transitional Education Plan 2025–2027.
- Education Cannot Wait (UN fund) — Sudan investment summary.
- South Sudan school rehabilitation project reporting (UN peacekeeping-funded, local implementing partner).
- Local Khartoum construction-market price surveys and active-contractor pricing, mid-2026.
- MS Square Engineering — internal cost studies and completed rehabilitation projects, Khartoum, 2026.