

Research Brief

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COUNTY AND PAYAM SURVEY: Baseline Survey of County Education Departments and Payam Education Offices

Knowledge, Evidence and Research in GESS

The Knowledge, Evidence and Research (KER) component of the Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS) programme aims to generate knowledge about best practices in education (both nationally and internationally, in programmatic causality, and in impact. KER seeks to develop an evidence base for the project interventions linking inputs to outcomes and impacts, as well as a broader information hub focused on girls' education. To inform the programme activities, research for the overall programme will take place in three phases: baseline (2014), mid-term (2015-16), and end-term (2017-18).

County Payam Survey Objectives

The purpose of the survey was to gather baseline information regarding the management structure and capacities of the Payam Education Offices and County Education Departments. The findings will be used to inform GESS activities and the MoEST. The objectives of the survey were:

- To understand the practices and capacity of the Education Officials at the County and Payam levels ; and
- To understand the County and Payam Education Officers' roles in the system.

Methodology

Quantitative data was collected from the County and Payam officials in seven States. Data could not be collected from Jonglei, Unity, and Upper Nile due to conflict. A total of 64 surveys were conducted in 47 Counties, and 276 surveys were conducted in 240 Payams.

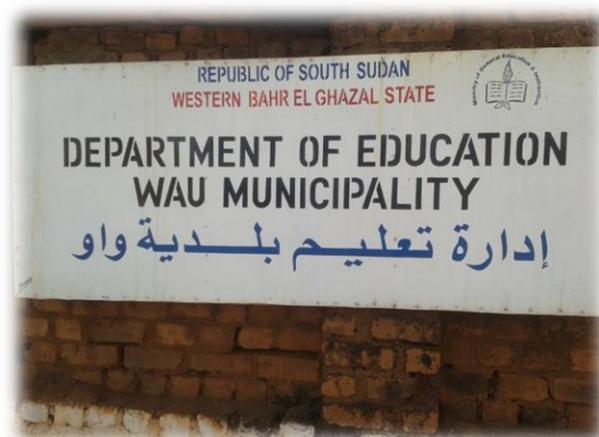
Quick Facts

- County and Payam education officials are almost all male. 96.9% (n=62) of the County respondents were male, as were 98.2% (n=271) of the Payam respondents.
- Around half of the County survey respondents (50.1%, n=32) stated that they made school visits with an official County vehicle, compared to 29.4% (n=52) of the Payam respondents who reported being able to use official means.
- Means of communication via telephone or internet are limited with internet access being extremely limited and only available in 1.1% (n=3) of the Payam offices, and (1.6%, n=1) of the County offices.

Key Findings

Qualifications and skills

For the majority of the County officials, their highest educational attainment was a Diploma in Teaching/Education, or a Bachelor of Education (76.6%. n=49). In comparison, for the majority of Payam officials, their highest educational attainment was a Certificate in Teaching/Education (64.9%, n=179).



Almost all respondents had a professional background in teaching, but the County officials invariably reported having had longer periods of teaching and more experience in senior roles (such as Head Teacher) when compared to the Payam officials.

Computer literacy was not high among either group of officials, compared to mobile phone proficiency, in which both groups reported to have high ability.



Equipment and facilities

Education offices at both levels do not appear to be well-equipped, although County officials reported having more facilities than did Payam officials.

Means of communication via telephone and internet are limited, with only around one-fifth of both County and Payam offices (20.3%, n=13 Counties and 21.4%, n=59 Payams) reporting to have telephones. Fewer Payam offices (8.7%, n=24) reportedly have computers, with internet access being extremely limited and only available in 1.1% (n=3) of the Payam offices. While more County offices were reported to have computers (29.7%, n=19), their internet connectivity appears just as limited (1.6%, n=1).

Logistics, infrastructure and financial services

81.3% (n=52) of County officials and 89.9% (n=248) of Payam officials said that their office did not have a bank account.

County officials cover greater distances than Payam officials when visiting schools, but have slightly better access to means of transport, with half of them using official County vehicles. The average distance of the furthest school from a County office was reported to be 86.2km, compared to 27.7km from a Payam office. Around half of the County survey respondents

(50.1%, n=32) stated that they made school visits with an official County vehicle, compared to 29.4% (n=52) of the Payam respondents who reported being able to use official means.

Duties

Proportionally more County officials reported undertaking inspection duties than Payam officials. Checking financial records was the least well-performed duty by both types of Government officials.

The duties that appear to be more heavily undertaken by the Payam officials are checking textbook numbers, observing lessons, and speaking to Head Teachers. County officials' work included inspecting financial records, school development plans, test results, and learning materials, as well as EMIS data collection.

Payam officials appear to have close involvement with schools, but not all Payam Education Offices have a comprehensive set of School Development Plans (SDPs).

County respondents reported teacher codes of conduct, job descriptions, and the General Education Act 2013 as the most prevalent types of policy documents available. The least available documents were those relating to teacher standards, school guides, and school inspection frameworks.

There were strong indications that County and Payam officials are not fully aware of the situation of the non-Government schools within their administrative jurisdictions. There appeared to be many gaps in their knowledge of faith-based, community, private, and other schools in their Counties and Payams.

School governance structures

School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) were found to be far more prevalent than the Boards of Governors (BoGs), which correlates to the findings of the GESS School Survey conducted in August 2014.

However, Payam education officials themselves did not report being overly involved in school-related committees, with just under a third (30.15%, n=83) reporting to be a SMC, PTA, or BoG member for any of the schools under their supervision.

Gender

County and Payam education officials are almost all male. 96.9% (n=62) of the County respondents were male, as were 98.2% (n=271) of the Payam respondents.

Possible Responses to Findings

The possible responses below are beyond the scope of the GESS programme's own activities, but should be considered as broader suggestions for support to the education sector in South Sudan:

Finding	Possible responses
Low computer literacy among County and Payam staff	Support the use of smartphones or tablets (e.g. using FormHub questionnaires for school inspections) rather than laptops, given officials' higher mobile phone proficiency
Poor communication infrastructure, particularly internet	Encourage sharing of resources with education sector partners operating in the area, and/or support the creation of communication 'hubs'
Few County and Payam offices have bank accounts, making transfer of budgets difficult and high-risk	Support banks to open branches in County towns, and / or support the roll-out of Mobile Money services in South Sudan
Many important policy and guidance documents reported not to be available at County and Payam offices	Support the distribution of hardcopy documents to Counties and Payams, and / or support the use of smartphones or tablets, onto which scanned documents can be loaded

References GESS (2014)

Baseline Survey of County Education Departments and Payam Education Offices.

Aim

Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS) is a 5.5 year programme - April 2013 to September 2018 - which aims to transform a generation of South Sudanese, especially girls by increasing access to quality education. There are many barriers (cultural, financial, poor infrastructure/quality) that are preventing girls from going to school. The GESS programme works closely with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) to realise its strategic objective of eliminating barriers to girls' education and promoting gender equality throughout the education system. GESS is being implemented in all ten States of South Sudan.

Management

Girls' Education South Sudan is an initiative of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), Government of Republic of South Sudan, funded by UK Aid and the Government of the Republic of South Sudan. MoEST is supported in the implementation of GESS by a consortium led by BMB Mott MacDonald, and including BBC Media Action, Charlie Goldsmith Associates and Winrock International.