

INSPIRE

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AIM

Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS) is a programme that will transform the lives of a generation of children in South Sudan – especially girls – through education. South Sudan, the newest country in the world, has some of the lowest educational indicators, with education of girls being among the lowest. Very few girls who begin primary education continue to secondary school; in 2016, 128,000 girls started primary school, but only 2,700 completed secondary school. GESS is determined to change this, so that all girls can go to school, stay in school and achieve in school.

MANAGEMENT

Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS) is an initiative of the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI), Government of the Republic of South Sudan, funded by UK aid from the UK government, and the Government of the Republic of South Sudan. In order to realise its strategic objectives of eliminating barriers to girls' education and promoting gender equality throughout the education system, MoGEI is supported by a consortium, led by BMB Mott MacDonald/Cambridge Education, and including BBC Media Action, Charlie Goldsmith Associates and Winrock International.

The programme began in 2013, and will last until 2018.



RESEARCH BRIEF

No. 11 - 2016

OUTPUT 1 MIDLINE SURVEY: Quantitative survey in South Sudan to assess changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices related to education



Knowledge, Evidence & Research

The **Knowledge, Evidence & 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. The 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), Midline (2015-16), and Endline (2017-18). The research completed under Output 1, which focuses specifically on the role and impact of social and behaviour change communication, seeks to compliment the wider GESS KER work.

GESS Output 1 - Social and Behaviour Change Communications

Led by BBC Media Action, Output 1 seeks to create an enabling social-cultural environment in support of girls' education through a social and behaviour change communication approach via the radio programmes and community outreach. GESS radio programme, 'Our School', is broadcast in nine different languages across South Sudan. As well as through radio, the programmes are aired during community mobilisation activities, including listening clubs and community dialogue sessions.



Methodology

The midline research methodology included a **nationwide quantitative survey and qualitative focus group discussions** with Our School audiences, as well as **surveys and interviews** with participants of the community mobilisation activities. The midline survey interviewed a total of **3,169 adults** aged 15+ across all the former 10 states of South Sudan using a nationally representative random probability sampling approach. The field survey took place between May and July, 2016.



Output 1 Midline Survey Objectives

The objective of the Output 1 midline survey was to collect data on the reach of Our School and its role in influencing knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, social norms, and practices related to girls' education in South Sudan. The research also looked at the media landscape in general and the media consumption of target audiences. Insights from the research have also been used to inform the content of radio programmes and community mobilisation activities.





Key Findings

The Our School audience

The number of people listening to Our School **increased from 0.9 million in 2014 to 2 million in 2016** (surpassing the September 2016 logframe target of 1.4 million). Out of the listeners to the programme, 80%, or 1.6 million, are listening to at least every other episode, suggesting that engagement is high. There may be a number of reasons for the increase in listeners, including the addition of a number of local languages and broadcast partners, compared to when the baseline survey was conducted in 2014; a publicity drive for the programme in late 2015 and early 2016; and the changing media landscape in South Sudan.



NB: 'Adult Population' = 15+ yrs; 'Potential Audience' = adults with access to radio; 'Reach' = no. listeners in past 12 months; and 'Regular Reach' = no. listening to at least every other episode.

Community mobilisation activities

The number of school communities reached with community mobilisation activities (such as listening groups and community dialogues) increased **from 437 in 2014 to 913 in 2016**, surpassing the September 2016 logframe target of 845. The community mobilisation activities form an essential part of the project, which aims to reach a proportion of the 38% of the South Sudanese population without access to media, as well as consolidating the learnings from the programme. These community mobilisation activities give people a chance to listen to the programme and discuss it in groups.

Improved knowledge about initiatives that support girls' education, particularly among the Our School audience

Compared to the baseline, at midline there was a higher number of respondents aware of elements of the school system that support girls' education (including Cash Transfers; Capitation Grants; training for head teachers and teachers; the mentoring programme; and school management committees (SMCs)). In total, **53% of respondents were aware of three or more of these initiatives, compared to only 22% at baseline**. This may reflect the increase in roll-out and publicity around these activities that has happened since the time the baseline was conducted. There was also a significant and positive association between awareness of initiatives supporting education and Our School, with 76% of those listening to Our School aware of three or more initiatives compared to 44% of those who did not listen.

"What made me to continue listen to Our School is because it has good pieces of information that my brothers, the whole community and I need in order to change so that we can allow and encourage our girls to study".

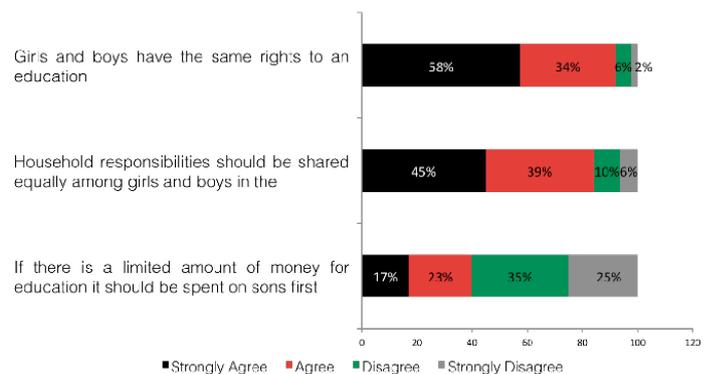
- Our School listener, Wau

Most listeners report key learning from Our School, including about programme outputs such as Cash Transfers and PTAs and SMCs

Overall, listeners reported having learnt from Our School about the ways parents and communities can support girls (95%); why it is important for a girl to stay in school (92%); how to register a child at school (90%); how girls receive Cash Transfers (89%); budgeting for girls' education (88%); and the role of parent teacher associations and school management committees, and how they relate to the community (88%).

Perceptions and attitudes to education are positive, but many still prioritise boys if funds are limited

Attitudes towards girls' education continued to be generally positive, with 92% of respondents agreeing with the statement "girls and boys have the same rights to an education in South Sudan", compared to 84% at baseline. However, 40% of respondents agreed with the statement "if there is a limited amount of money for education it should be spent on sons first", showing that in practice when money is limited, a boy's education is prioritised by many.



Regular listeners to Our School are significantly more likely to have a girl in school than those not listening

The South Sudan School Attendance Monitoring System (SSAMS) still demonstrates that more boys than girls are enrolled in school – though girls' enrolment has increased year on year since the start of the GESS programme. However, statistical analysis, using logistic regression on BBC Media Action's midline survey, shows that regular listeners to Our School with a daughter/girl are significantly more likely to say they have the daughter/girl in school compared to non-listeners, after controlling for other factors.

Parents and children who are regular listeners of Our School discuss education with their girls/daughters compared to those who have not listened

Similar analysis showed that regular listeners to Our School are on average twice as likely to frequently discuss education with their daughters/girls, compared to non-listeners.

Our School audiences show higher participation/involvement in education

On all measures, participation was significantly higher among those who listened to Our School, compared to those who did not. For example, 48% of those who listened to Our School said they had asked a question or sought information from a local school, compared to 29% of those who did not listen. Overall, regression analysis also showed that regular listeners of Our School are on average 1.6 times more likely to have been highly involved with/participated in education compared to non-listeners.

"Our School encouraged me that you should leave a girl to finish school and I feel confident telling them that when they are still in school is not a good time for marriage. You should wait, you should finish".

- Our School listener, Aweil Jedid

The biggest barrier for keeping children in school is lack of funds, but Our School listeners are more likely to take actions related to budgeting

At both baseline and midline, the main reported reason that girls and boys drop out of school is "lack of money for fees". The midline shows a positive association between Our School and respondents reporting actions related to budgeting. For example 59% of listeners reported saving money or selling something to help pay for uniforms or books compared to 49% of non-listeners. Regression analysis found that listeners were 1.4 times more likely to have done this compared to non-listeners, even when controlling for other factors, such as levels of income and education, among others.

There is need to tackle inclusivity and responding to the conflict

Despite population movement being common, 43% of respondents agreed with the statement that children who are not from the local area should not be able to go to school in the area, showing that addressing attitudes related to social cohesion continues to be important.

Conclusions and Recommendations for Social and Behaviour Change Communications

The midline research suggests Our School has contributed to improved knowledge amongst the poorest in the education system; higher involvement in education; and more positive practices, such as discussing education with girls or daughters and budgeting for education.

Moreover, regular listeners to Our School who are parents or caregivers are six times more likely than non-listeners to say they have a daughter in school.

Recommendations

- The GESS consortium should continue to work to address differences in levels of knowledge and practice among men and women. Men continue to participate more than women in SMCs, PTAs and have higher levels of awareness around GESS initiatives such as Cash Transfers and Capitation Grants that support girls' education. Increasing participation will also help raise awareness of what is happening in the classroom and the quality of education provision. In turn, this should lead to greater dialogue between parents and the school system and more accountability around issues in education and girls' education, specifically.
- The GESS Output 1 activities should continue to attempt to mitigate the disparities of access to radio with community mobilisation and outreach activities.
- Attention to increases in ethnic tensions and the impact of the conflict will need to remain a focus of the Our School programmes.



A Listening Group in Terekeka, former Central Equatoria, gathers around a solar powered wind-up radio to listen to an episode of 'Our School'.

References GESS/ BBC Media Action (2016)
GESS Output 1 Midline Survey, May 2016, conducted by
Forcier Consulting