



# RESEARCH BRIEF

No. 09 - 2016

## SCHOOL SURVEY: Midline



### Knowledge, Evidence & Research

The **Knowledge, Evidence and Research (KER)** component of the **Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS)** programme aims to generate increased knowledge and evidence for policymakers of what works to promote girls' education in South Sudan, about programmatic causality and impact, and to provide evidence about what may be scaleable and transferable to other contexts. The KER develops an evidence base for the project interventions, linking inputs to outcomes and impacts, and gathers broader information about what works in girls' education. The programme gathers data continuously through the South Sudan School Attendance Monitoring System (SSSAMS), twice yearly through LQS, yearly through school sample survey, and then has set piece Baseline (2014), Midline (2016), and Endline (2018) survey waves.



### Methodology

Tools to assess the state of schools included quantitative surveys involving different actors in schools (Head Teachers, teachers, School Management Committees, students), lesson observations and facilities/infrastructure checks. To check accountability for, and impact of, Cash Transfers and Capitation Grants, the visits to the schools were unannounced. Researchers checked attendance of pre-selected girls from the 2014 and 2015 Cash Transfer payment lists against both the Daily Attendance Registers, and whether the girl was present on the day of survey and could meet the team. Data collection ran from June-September 2016. **93 schools - 75 primary and 18 secondary** - were surveyed. Fieldwork was

disrupted by the July 2016 fighting in Juba, and beyond.



### School Survey Objectives

The purpose of the survey was to gain an overall picture of the state of the primary and secondary schools in South Sudan, understand the education experiences of pupils and students (particularly girls), teachers, and managers, and identify evidence of the impact of GESS. Additionally, the survey at Midline now incorporates the annual School Sample Survey and covers accountability, transparency and direct impact of GESS Cash Transfers, Capitation Grants and quality education initiatives.

### Executive Summary

- Since the 2014 Baseline, the wider context in which the South Sudanese education system operates has deteriorated, with hundreds of thousands of people displaced, rising food insecurity and increasing financial pressure on households and schools.
- Insecurity and economic collapse have compounded the pre-existing barriers to education for girls and boys, of family poverty and unequal access to education.
- In spite of these barriers to education, not only has school enrolment risen to above 1.3m, but the school survey provides evidence that schools have seen visible improvements in terms of infrastructure, number of teaching staff, attitudes towards girls' education, enrolment and the quality of education.
- The school survey also provides evidence that support by GESS programme initiatives has had a positive, tangible impact in these areas, and on the standards of accountability achieved



**Key Findings**

**Still few female teachers; delays in salary payment; fewer highly qualified teachers**

Findings indicate that the teaching profession remains overwhelmingly male; **68 of 71 Head Teachers and 111 of 122 teachers surveyed were men.** Teachers report being paid for an average of 4.42 months over the past year, indicating that salaries are frequently either delayed or not paid at all. Furthermore 17% of teachers said that they had been on strike during 2016 due to lack of pay. There has been a rise in the number of primary and secondary teachers with secondary school certificate as their highest qualification. Additionally, the number of teachers with teacher training certificate (at primary level) and bachelors (at secondary level) has noticeably reduced since the Baseline. This is most likely because of the rise in volunteer teachers.

**As in the Baseline, personal sickness is the most common reason for missing school**

While more girls cited childcare as a reason for absence than boys (16% compared to 7%), slightly more boys (13%) than girls (12%) reported missing school because they were required to perform domestic tasks. Of the students that had missed school in the past year due to insecurity, the highest proportions were found in (former) Western Equatoria (80%) and Western Bahr el Ghazal (45%), reflecting the upsurge in violence in those areas.

**The reported impact of insecurity on pupil attendance is much greater than in the Baseline**

The proportion of both primary and secondary learners who have missed at least one day of school in the last year as a result of insecurity has risen dramatically since the Baseline. In 2016, 45% of secondary male learners and 30% of secondary female learners have missed at least one day of school due to insecurity over the last year, compared to 0.9% of secondary male and 0% of secondary female learners who reported doing so in 2014. At primary level, 28% of boys and 25% of girls report missing school due to insecurity in 2016, compared to 1.9% of boys and 1.6% of girls in 2014. The Baseline did not cover GUN area, so there may have been some selection effect.

**Equipment shortages still evident, but learners' expectations have risen**

Learners report shortages of basic school equipment, with reading books overtaking chalk as the most needed item cited in the Baseline Study. 56% of students listed reading books as the school material they lacked the most, followed by chalk (49%) and computers (44%). In a change from the Baseline, lab equipment is cited by a majority of S2 students as one of the most needed items.

**Physical punishment remains widespread, resented, and a barrier to education**

Clearing the compound and slashing grass are the most common forms of punishment, although half of learners also report that beating was used as a punishment in 2015. There has been very little change in the forms of punishment reportedly used in schools since the Baseline; physical punishments, including beating, kneeling, clearing the school compound and other physical work, remain the most common forms of discipline. Generally, both genders reported to be punished equally, although some respondents report that boys are more likely to be punished than girls. As in the Baseline physical punishment seems more common in primary schools than secondary schools.

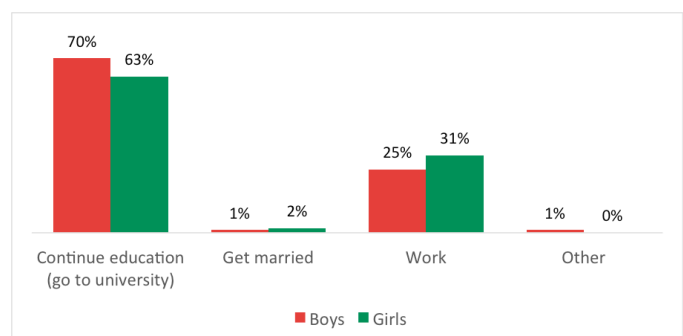
**Attitudes towards girls' education amongst teachers have progressed since the Baseline**

Overall, 72.5% of teachers and Head Teachers (n=148) either disagree or strongly disagree that boys are better suited to higher education than girls, compared to 66.9% in 2014. 71% of Head Teachers also either disagree or strongly disagree that girls were less likely to need an education in their future lives.

**Girls become more ambitious the longer they stay in school, but more work is needed to instil confidence in their abilities**

Boys at primary level are marginally more ambitious than girls, with fewer girls aiming to reach S4 - a trend that is reversed in Senior 2, indicating that, girls become more ambitious the longer they stay in school. Learners in Lakes are far more ambitious than reported in the Baseline Study; 93% of pupils in P5 wish to reach S4, compared to just 54% in 2014. Although the majority of girls reported ambitions to reach S4 and university, in terms of confidence in their abilities, girls are less sure at secondary level that they are as well suited to education as boys. This suggests that as the number of girls enrolled in each progressive school year reduces, girls that remain in school become less certain of their position.

**Preferred post-school destination, as reported by boys and girls**



## Capitation Grants continue to have a significant impact in schools for improving the number of teachers and environment of instruction

For both 2014 and 2015, the most common reported use of Capitation Grants was the payment of volunteer teachers, with a significant increase in 2015 at the expense of expenditure on physical items. It was not possible to get much information on 2016 CG use due to late disbursement, but rules on eligible uses were changed in 2016 to allow up to 60% to be spent on teacher incentives this year, so we would expect to see this trend continue.

Use of Capitation Grants for classroom construction, maintenance and improvement remains high and use of permanent structures and materials has increased over use of local materials/shelters. Prevalence of observable evidence for 2015 Capitation Grant spending was higher at 68% than for 2014 Capitation Grant spending at 60% and the majority of spending could be verified with receipts. Where receipts were not available, head teachers reported that they were being kept at home and in some cases by CLOs or Diocese offices in the case of church schools.

## Number of 2014 and 2015 Cash Transfer recipients found attending high in comparison to national enrolment and attrition rates – evidence of Cash Transfer impact.

In comparison to national enrolment and attrition rates, there is a good level of retention in terms of attendance, increased from two years ago when Cash Transfers were first paid out.

## Cash Transfers continue to provide girls with the means to buy education-enabling items

The majority of girls in both years of receipt report making their own choices on how to spend their transfers and uses were largely items to enable education. Most common reported uses were shoes, exercise books, pens/pencils and soap in both 2014 and 2015. Of the small percentage of girls whose families made the decision or made decisions together with their families on how Cash Transfers were spent, the most common uses aside from education items for the girl, were food or household items.

## Correlation between the areas in which head teachers feel overworked, and the areas in which they would like further training; limited awareness of mentoring programme amongst participating schools

More than half the number of teachers and Head Teachers interviewed reported having received GESS training. 30% Head teachers identified preparing the school development plan and budget as key areas in which they would like further training and also as the areas in which they feel overworked. The average reported number of classes taught per week has increased since the Baseline, as well as an increase in the proportion of teachers reporting preparing lesson plans and schemes of work, suggesting potential growth in teacher

productivity and capacity, linked to GESS training. There was a limited awareness of the mentoring programme, even among schools reportedly participating, schools that have taken part in mentoring programmes (including their own home-grown ones) report positive response, particularly regarding;

- Helping girls make healthy choices in their personal lives
- Creating a peer network to support other girls at school
- Helping teachers to interact with girls more positively



## Recommendations

- Corporal punishment is a barrier to education, that could be addressed, at no cost, by regulation: this should be a priority for development partners and MoGEI.
- Female students lack role models in school: targeted cash support and training to encourage women to enter and remain in the teaching profession to address gender imbalance among teaching staff.
- Personal sickness is listed by both learners and teaching staff as the most common reason for missing school days, colocation of health services at schools, and join-up of education and health administration at County level, is an obvious priority.
- Insecurity is a growing barrier to education, that is not primarily within the control of education actors: local authorities encouraged to take appropriate measures.
- Upper primary and secondary girls are underconfident of their academic potential: ways to build it could include academic enrichment activities and recognition of achievements: summer schools, essay prizes, even as simple as commendations for good work to take home.
- Further guidance and training on accountability and record-keeping would be helpful for school management structures, to ensure improvements continue and more consistent levels of accountability are achieved and maintained.
- If County and Payam officials are to supervise schools, they need to be paid a viable wage, and have operational funding to do so.
- The practical effectiveness of Capitation Grants and Cash Transfers is proven: it would now be logical to take advantage of diminishing marginal costs to scale.

**INSPIRE**

**EDUCATE**

**TRANSFORM**



## 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.