



RESEARCH BRIEF

No. 06 - 2016

COUNTY and PAYAM EDUCATION MANAGERS 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

The County and Payam surveys involved quantitative data collection using smartphones and Open Data Kit (ODK) open source software. Research was conducted in all ten former States between 27th June 2016 and 28th September 2016. A total of 31 County Education Officials from 21 Counties and 50 Payam Education Officials from 46 Payams were surveyed.



County and Payam Education Managers Survey Objectives

The purpose of the County and Payam survey is to gather information regarding the operations and capacities of County Education Departments and Payam Education Offices, and to build a picture of their relationship with schools under their supervision and their interactions with the GESS programme. This information will help the work of GESS and MoGEI. Understanding more about how County and Payam officials work with schools is key to making the 'last mile' of the GESS programme operate successfully, and to medium term sustainability of the education system.

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.
- For County and Payam officials, successive redivisions of the subnational administrative map by Presidential Decree have created massive upheaval, and economic collapse has left officials unpaid and without operational funds.
- This survey shows how County and Payam officials have withstood this adverse context to remain in place, keep supporting schools, have adapted to their new and important roles supporting Capitation Grants.



Key Findings

County & Payam Education officials report schools have improved

The majority of County and Payam staff reported that the schools under their supervision have improved since the Baseline was carried out in 2014. 84% of Payam officials and 71% of County officials surveyed said they had observed improvements over the past two years, and 61% of County and 78% of Payam staff reported an increase in enrolment. In the majority of cases, these improvements were directly attributed to the impact of GESS interventions.

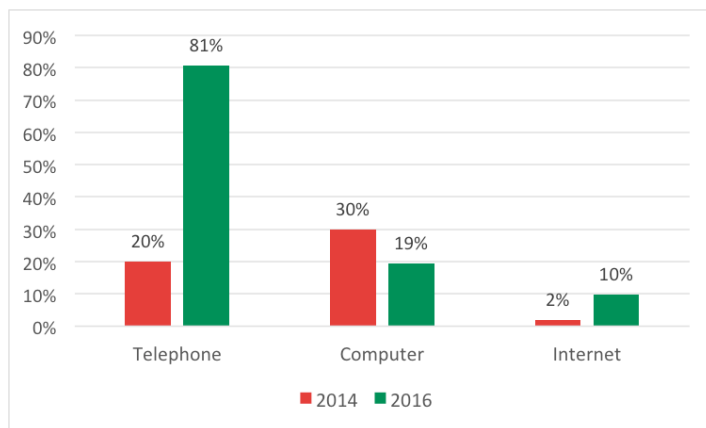
Increase in available resources at County and Payam offices, including communications and access to bank services

Access to appropriate technology in County and Payam offices has increased since the Baseline, particularly telephones, although availability of computers and internet facilities remains low. 84% of Payam staff and 81% of County staff reported having access to telephones in their offices, compared to 21% and 20% at the Baseline. The survey did not distinguish between different types of phones (smart/feature/dumb), which would be a useful detail to incorporate into future research.

Computers were reported to be more prevalent at Payam than County level, and the proportion of County staff who said they had access to computers has dropped slightly since 2014. Internet connectivity remains low, although it has improved from the negligible levels reported at the Baseline.

35% of County officials report having access to a bank account, up from 16% in 2014. This is likely to be linked to the introduction of County Operating Transfers.

Comparison between resources available at County Education Offices in 2014 and 2016

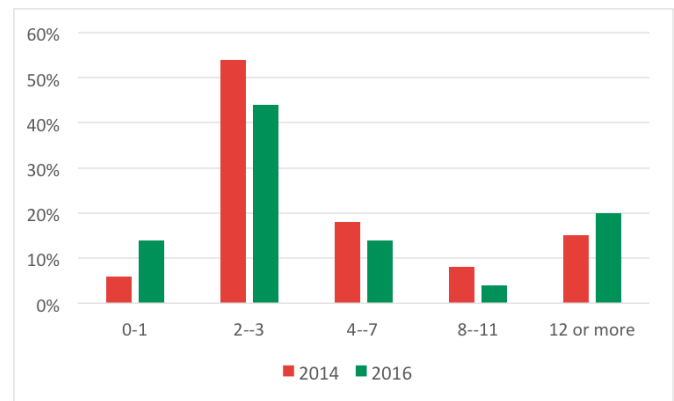


Reduced frequency of school visits

There appears to have been a drop in both the frequency of school visits and average number of schools visited by

local education authorities. County staff reported visiting an average of 18.4 schools for an official inspection in 2015, down from 26.9 in 2013. The frequency of self-reported school visits by Payam Education officials has also decreased, with a higher proportion reportedly visiting each school under their supervision 0-1 times than at the Baseline. This correlates with information provided by Head Teachers in the School Survey. As at the Baseline, the majority of Payam officials visited each school 2-3 times in 2015.

Avg. reported number schools visited by Payam Officials over the course of the year, comparing 2014 and 2016



The most common reported activities performed by County and Payam officials during school visits are talking to the Head Teacher and teachers, observing lessons and talking to the pupils. There is a lack of emphasis on checking written records.

Following a school visit, County and Payam officials reported that written feedback is more frequently provided to schools than at the Baseline.

Reported qualification levels of County and Payam staff have dipped since the Baseline

County and Payam Education Offices remain overwhelmingly male.

Almost all the officials surveyed had a background in teaching, but County staff tended to have taught at higher levels and for longer.

Qualification levels amongst County and Payam staff have dropped since the Baseline, with a lower proportion of County officials holding a Teaching Diploma and a drop in the proportion of Payam staff holding a Teaching Certificate. This is likely linked to the economic crisis which has led some public sector staff to seek better remunerated roles elsewhere, as well as the impact of the introduction of 28 States, which has seen lower level staff move up to fill more senior roles.

County and Payam education officials discharge oversight responsibilities around Capitation Grants and Cash Transfers; but successive reorganisations mean not enough of them have reference copies of policy documents to hand

There has been a general decline in the retention of policy documents at County and Payam offices since the Baseline. The documents most commonly held at County and Payam offices relate to school inspection; retention of national policy guidance is very low.

Cash Transfer and Capitation Grant manuals are reportedly held at approximately a third of County and Payam offices.

Under half of the County and Payam officials interviewed could produce copies of the documents on request. The proportion of Payam officials who reported that copies of School Development Plans were kept at the Payam Education Office has decreased since 2014. Of the Payam officials who claimed they kept copies at their offices, only a third could produce them when asked to do so, compared to over half at the Baseline.

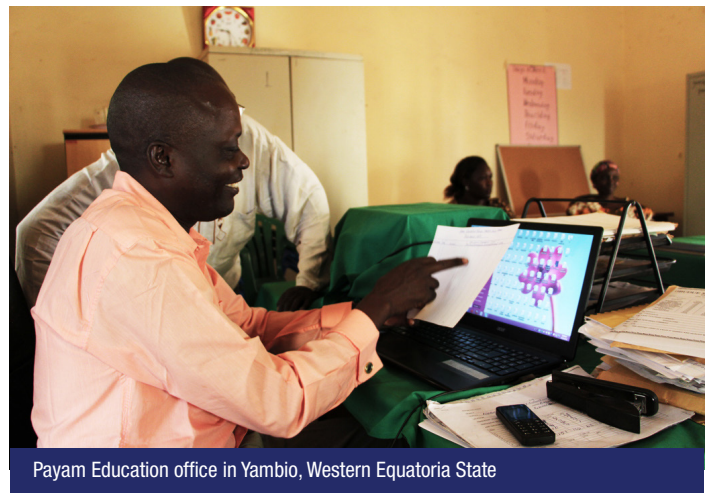
Record-keeping is clearly an area in which improvement is required, although these discrepancies can partially be explained by the impact of conflict and the introduction of 28 States in place of the former 10 States in December 2015. A fresh distribution of policy documents will be made for Academic Year 2017.

Protective structures for children

According to Payam staff, inappropriate relationships between teachers and pupils are relatively rare, with approximately 80% reporting that they were not aware of any cases in their schools in the previous year. All the respondents said that some form of action would be taken if a teacher had an inappropriate relationship with a learner at their school.

Cases are most likely to be dealt with at school level, and very unlikely to be referred to the police or local community chief, according to Payam staff. There was a lack of consensus among Payam officials regarding the hypothetical consequences for pupils and teachers.

Payam officials were divided over what would happen to the pupil involved in a relationship with a teacher. The most common response was that they would continue at the school with extra support, with the second highest proportion predicting the school would ask the learner to leave. 90% of Payam officials did not think the outcome would be different if the pupil was a boy or a girl, although some respondents suggested the girl might face pressure to marry or end up pregnant.



Payam Education office in Yambio, Western Equatoria State

Recommendations

- Viable pay, and funding for operations, in particular costs of visiting schools, and communications costs, are key to County and Payam officials being able to do their job effectively
- Given the increase in availability and usage of mobile phones, more use should be made of smartphone technology to support the work of County and Payam Education offices. In particular, officials should be trained to use smartphones to upload and send accountability documents to www.sssams.org and to record their observations on school visits – and GESS is adding new functionality to the SSSAMS system this year to support.
- County and Payam staff would benefit from support to guide their activities during school visits, with a particular emphasis on monitoring pupil and teacher attendance and more rigorous scrutiny of school documents. Officials want and need concrete step-by-step processes.
- There are very few women working in County and Payam education official roles: getting more women promoted from the ‘chalkface’, to school leadership and beyond will create role models for female teachers, women contemplating teaching, and school girls.
- County and Payam officials are willing to engage about child protection issues, and want to do the right thing when they do: they need clear guidelines and processes to help them.

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.