

# Girls' Education South Sudan: Household Midline Survey

Sept 2016

**DRAFT REPORT**

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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.

## Acknowledgements

The team at Charlie Goldsmith Associates would like to thank our colleagues at MoGEI, Forcier, GESS partners, the GESS State Anchors and education partners for their assistance in facilitating and conducting the Household Midline survey research and producing this report.

For their help in facilitating the research, including input into questions, facilitating access, and valuable discussion of results and recommendations, we would particularly like to thank the Ministry of General Education and Instruction, including, but not limited to:

Rt. Hon. Deng Deng Hoc Yai, Minister of General Education and Instruction  
Michael Lopuke Lotyam, Undersecretary  
Avelino Androga Said  
George Mogga Benjamin  
Victor Dut Chol  
George Ali Steven  
Clement Kajokole  
Malual Manyok  
Kur Ayai  
Kiri Lokuto

Charlie Goldsmith Associates would especially like to thank Forcier Consulting for undertaking the data collection, field research and data cleaning for the Household Survey. Specifically:

### Researchers

Mimi Janda  
Jackson Bii  
Yel Luach  
Aler Isaiah  
Chol Peter  
Atem Peter  
Lole Ceaser  
Gonda Samuel  
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Research Officer  
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Research Manager  
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We would also like to thank the GESS State Anchor teams for their invaluable logistical support to research teams in the field, particularly during the July crisis:

ADRA  
BRAC  
Caritas  
Food for the Hungry  
HARD  
Stromme Foundation  
UMCOR  
Windle Trust

Finally, we would like to thank UKAID and our partners on the GESS programme for input into the tools, ongoing support and fruitful discussion of findings and recommendations:

BMB Mott MacDonald  
BBC Media Action  
Winrock International

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# List of Abbreviations

<b>BoG</b>	Board of Governors
<b>CED</b>	County Education Department
<b>CES</b>	(former) Central Equatoria State
<b>CG</b>	Capitation Grant
<b>CT</b>	Cash Transfer
<b>DFID</b>	UK Department for International Development
<b>EES</b>	(former) Eastern Equatoria State
<b>ETMC</b>	Education Transfers Monitoring Committee
<b>GESS</b>	Girl's Education South Sudan programme
<b>GRSS</b>	Government of the Republic of South Sudan
<b>GUN</b>	Greater Upper Nile
<b>JGL</b>	(former) Jonglei State
<b>KER</b>	Knowledge, Evidence and Research
<b>LKS</b>	(former) Lakes State
<b>MoGEI</b>	Ministry of General Education and Instruction
<b>NBG</b>	(former) Northern Bahr el Ghazal State
<b>PEO</b>	Payam Education Office
<b>PES</b>	Payam Education Supervisor
<b>PLE</b>	Primary Leaving Examination
<b>SCE</b>	Secondary Certificate Examination
<b>SMC</b>	School Management Committee
<b>SMoGEI</b>	State Ministry of General Education and Instruction
<b>SSSAMS</b>	South Sudan Schools Attendance Monitoring System
<b>UNS</b>	(former) Upper Nile State
<b>UTY</b>	(former) Unity State
<b>WBG</b>	(former) Western Bahr el Ghazal State
<b>WES</b>	(former) Western Equatoria State
<b>WRP</b>	(former) Warrap State



# Executive Summary

As a result of decades of civil war South Sudan today faces huge challenges in developing its low educational base. The Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS) programme aims to transform a generation of South Sudanese girls by increasing access to quality education. One of the strategic objectives of the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI) is to eliminate barriers to girls' education and promote gender equality throughout the education system.

This Midline report presents the combined findings of the quantitative and qualitative household survey and community focus group discussion findings in the following sections:

- **Section 4.1** outlines the demographic characteristics of households surveyed;
- **Section 4.2** presents findings on household financial decisions and education-related expenditure;
- **Section 4.3** presents an overview of children's school-going behaviour, detailing levels of attendance, absence, dropout, and changing of schools, in addition to offering some of the rationales given by respondents for each;
- **Section 4.4** presents findings concerning attitudes of guardians and children toward education and details the level of parental involvement in their children's education; and
- **Section 4.5** triangulates data from quantitative and qualitative findings as much as possible to present some of the key barriers facing children – particularly girls – in attending and staying at school.

## Methodology

Fieldwork was conducted by Forcier Consulting staff who began data collection on 27th June 2016 and concluded on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2016. In total, n=87 quantitative surveys, n=271 in-depth interviews and n=29 focus group discussions were conducted. Although the original strategy was for all ten [former] states to be surveyed, insecurity in July 2016 meant that teams were unable to reach Western Bahr El Ghazal and Unity State, as well as additional field locations in Central Equatoria.

The quantitative survey, with inbuilt in-depth qualitative questions, was based on non-probability, convenience sampling. Twelve households (i.e. three households

per four Bomas) per state were selected purposively and all states had the same sample size, despite the different proportions of the population, to ensure adequate representation of experience from a state perspective. Bomas were chosen based on their proximity to schools surveyed in the KER GESS School Survey, conducted between July and September 2016. From each Boma, four schools were chosen – three of which were primary schools and one of which was a secondary school – to reflect the overall GESS strategy of a 60:40 ratio. These schools provided school register lists from which children of specific years (P5/P8/S2) were randomly selected and their households chosen for quantitative and in-depth surveys. Within each selected household, surveys and in-depth interviews were conducted with one guardian, one older child (13-18) and one younger child (6-12). Guardians and children were interviewed separately, upon consent of guardian and child, in order to allow respondents to speak openly and honestly about their experiences. Consistent with GESS’ commitment to child protection, researchers were trained on ESOMAR<sup>i</sup> Codes and Guidelines for Interviewing Children and Young People.

FGD participants were selected from the same Bomas identified for the quantitative/in-depth surveys, and selection was based on a purposive sample of community members who had children of school age, regardless of whether they were currently in school or not. FGD participants excluded individuals who participated in in-depth interviews/quantitative survey.

If a school could not be surveyed (e.g. because of insecurity, closure, or poor weather) it was been replaced at random with another school from the same stratum.

## Key Findings

<b>Household financial decisions and cost of education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ The cost of education has increased by almost 400% in SSP terms over the last two years</li> <li>□ 63% (n=55) of guardians said that school fees had increased over the last 2 years.</li> <li>□ Despite the high costs, education remains on average the second highest reported priority for household spending after food</li> </ul>
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<sup>i</sup> European Society for Opinion and Market Research (ESOMAR)

<b>Impact of CGs and CTs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Significantly higher levels of awareness of CGs and CTs amongst guardians since baseline, although some confusion between components</li> <li>•Evidence that CT money has had a positive, tangible impact at the household level and has notably reduced pressure on guardian spending on both education-related and non-related items, including food and medicine.</li> </ul>
<b>School going behaviour (attendance, absence, dropping out, changing schools)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lack of money the most common reported reason for drop-out and low attendance</li> <li>•Second and third most common reported reasons were specific to girls: domestic responsibilities and marriage</li> <li>•Sickness most common reported reason for absence, but menstruation not mentioned as a factor despite follow-up</li> <li>• In families with multiple wives generally children of first wife have priority in attending school</li> </ul>
<b>Attitudes to education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Both children and guardians expressed overwhelmingly positive attitudes towards school</li> <li>•High level of respect for teachers working despite low/absent salaries, but lack of teachers and unqualified (volunteer) teachers a key area of dissatisfaction amongst guardians</li> <li>•Future benefits of education on family and employment opportunities cited as major reason why children like going to school</li> </ul>

TABLE 1 KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BASELINE AND MIDLINE FINDINGS

Baseline	Midline
Average reported annual cost of sending one child to school is 326.5SSP	Average reported annual cost of sending one child to school is 1,170SSP
Poor quality classrooms and few materials were major guardian criticisms of local schools	Lack of teachers and unqualified volunteer teachers major criticisms, reflecting wider trend in country
Only 27% of guardians aware of Capitation Grants and 13% aware of cash transfers	52% of guardians aware of Capitation Grants and 89% aware of cash transfers
No reported impact of Cash Transfers at household level	75% of households who have received Cash Transfers said that the money has had a noticeably positive impact at the household level
No disaggregated data on families with multiple wives	Some evidence to suggest that in families with multiple wives, the

	children of the first wife have priority in attending school, most notably in Eastern Equatoria
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## Key Recommendations

- Cash Transfers have a major impact on household choices about schooling: increase funding and sustainability of Cash Transfers to girls and explore the option of providing similar Cash Transfers for more year groups, and for boys.
- Increase school Capitation Grant levels to support removal or reduction of school fees
- More training with school management structures and County and Payam education officials on the importance of following up absences, alongside practical guidance on the process for doing so
- Increase frequency and depth of teacher professional development, and providing specific training for volunteer teachers, and pathways into longer term service, to reduce the level of ‘churn’ in these roles
- Link up local healthcare initiatives with schools to provide basic services for pupils and teachers: colocation of health services at schools – whether at the basic level of ‘School Mothers’/Matrons, Community Health Workers/Boma Health Initiative, or full-scale colocation of Primary Health Care Units, and join-up of education and health administration at County level, is an obvious priority.
- Continue broadcasting of behavioural change communications and increase coverage of ‘Our School’ programme, in more languages, and by considering provision of low-cost radios for schools to increase opportunities for children to join in with ‘Our School’ programming that do not have access to a radio at home

# 1. Background

## 1.1 An update on the South Sudanese context since the Baseline Report

The wider context in which GESS operates has deteriorated since 2014, as the dynamics of the conflict which broke out in December 2013 have shifted and the economy has collapsed. Fighting was initially concentrated in the Greater Upper Nile region, but has since spread to previously relatively stable areas, in particular the Equatorias and Western Bahr el Ghazal, resulting in mass displacement both within South Sudan and into bordering countries and making it increasingly difficult for schools to function. The implementation of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCISS), signed by both parties to the conflict in August 2015, has faced numerous obstacles, the most significant being the fighting that erupted in Juba in July 2016 which led to the expulsion, by GRSS forces, of the SPLA-IO from the capital and the intensification of the conflict elsewhere. In September 2016, the number of South Sudanese seeking refuge in neighbouring countries surpassed 1 million - including more than 195,000 who have fled the country since the outbreak of violence in July - 1.6 million are internally displaced and more than 4.8 million people face food insecurity.<sup>ii</sup>

The deterioration in the security and humanitarian situation has taken place against a backdrop of economic collapse. The fall in oil production and decline in global oil prices has severely eroded the Government of South Sudan's chief source of revenue; meanwhile inflation has accelerated, with the effective USD:SSP exchange rate increasing from 4.61 in September 2014 to 76 in September 2016, and beyond 100 in early 2017. This has had a serious negative impact on education delivery as a whole, eroding the value of teachers' salaries, who, unlike health workers, have been on the Government payroll since 2005, and negatively affecting the ability of schools to execute their budgets.

While the education sector has continued to operate, its ability to do so has been hampered by the difficult security and economic context. As at September 2016, there were 3,551 schools open in South Sudan, with 1,318,415 pupils enrolled, taught by around 30,000 full-time teachers, according to data on [www.sssams.org](http://www.sssams.org) (the real-time management information system developed as part of GESS). Given the current estimated population of >10m, the cohort of school-age children is of the order of 4million, meaning that South Sudan has one of the highest rates of school-age children out of school in the world.

<sup>ii</sup> UN OCHA Humanitarian bulletin, 22 September 2016:  
[http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SS\\_160922\\_OCHA\\_SouthSudan\\_humanitarian\\_bulletin14.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SS_160922_OCHA_SouthSudan_humanitarian_bulletin14.pdf)

## 1.2 An introduction to the Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS) programme

The Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS) programme seeks to transform the lives of a generation of children in South Sudan – especially girls – through education. GESS is an initiative of the Ministry of General Education and Instruction of South Sudan and funded by UK Aid. The Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI) leads the GESS programme, supported by implementing partners who provide technical advice. At State and County level the State Ministries of General Education and Instruction (SMoGEI) take the lead in programme implementation, supported by partner NGOs, or 'GESS State Anchors'. Implementing partners include BMB Mott MacDonald (lead), BBC Media Action, Charlie Goldsmith Associates and Winrock International.

Girls' Education South Sudan is a practical programme that implements activities that tackle financial, cultural and quality barriers to education for the girl child, while boys will also benefit from an improved learning environment.

The activities are structured along three main outputs:

1. Enhanced household and community awareness and empowerment for supporting girls' education through radio programmes and community outreach.
2. Effective partnerships between GRSS and local organisations to deliver a community-based school improvement programme which will include:
  - a. Cash Transfers to girls and their families;
  - b. Capitation Grants to schools;
  - c. provision of practical support to schools, teachers and education managers to improve the quality of education.
3. Increased knowledge and evidence of what works to promote girls' education in South Sudan.

## 2. Purpose of Survey & Methodology

### 2.1 Overall GESS Objectives

The Knowledge, Evidence and Research (KER) sub-output of the GESS programme seeks to generate knowledge and evidence about education in South Sudan, and what works to get girls in school, staying in school, and learning in school. The research is focused on:

- Has there been a change in enrolment and retention for girls and boys P5-P8 and S1-S4, and which aspects of the programme contributed towards this?
- Has there been a change in quality of education, as demonstrated by improved learning for P5-P8 and S1-S4? What changes in the learning and teaching environment have contributed to this?

The programme outcomes are directly concerned with improvements in enrolment, retention and learning. A School Survey, conducted in n=151 primary school and n=47 secondary schools in seven States in July 2014, captured Baseline data on these outcomes.

The overall objectives of the GESS project surveys are:

- To monitor changes currently occurring in schools, particularly changes related to the GESS project;
- To identify aspects of the GESS programme contributing towards changes in the enrolment rate among girls and boys P5-P8 and S1-S4;
- To identify aspects of the GESS programme that will contribute toward the future measurement of girls' and boys' retention rates between P5-P8 and S1-S4.

The overall KER component of GESS seeks to:

- Develop National and State capacity for research and use of evidence;
- Develop knowledge about the impact of project interventions;
- Develop broader information about what works in girls' education;
- Incorporate process monitoring into learning about successes and failures in design and implementation, protect against doing harm and monitor value for money;
- Inform policymaking: budget priorities and targeted support.

The programme outcomes are directly concerned with improvements in enrolment, retention, and learning. Three other areas of research to enquire in more depth about relationships, activities, and processes linking programme interventions to the outcomes were proposed. These are school and classroom practice, educational choices by households and girls, and management capacity and structures.

In-depth Household Surveys were conducted in June - September 2016, using a subset of schools selected for the School Survey to obtain a detailed picture of the sensitive and complex nature of household decisions on money, gender relationships and power structures, as well the experience of pupils and their households in and out of school. The Household Report provides contextual background that will help inform future changes in education patterns by providing details of household level decisions that affect enrolment and retention of girls in schools.

Another aspect of KER is a set of Learning Assessments that enquire in more depth about relationships, activities and processes linking programme interventions to the outcomes, which are intended to be a series of mathematics and English tests applied to male and female pupils in P5, P8, and S2. The results of these tests, and how they compare to the original Baseline results, are presented in a separate report.

County and Payam Surveys were also conducted between April and September 2014 with the purpose of gathering information regarding the management structure and capacities of Education Offices and County Education Departments.

## 2.2 Household Survey Objectives

The objective of this Household Survey is to get an in-depth picture of the sensitive and complex nature of household decisions on money, gender relationships, and power structures, as well the experience of pupils and their households in and out of school. This qualitative component of the overall research is crucial for inferring causality to changes in education patterns by providing details of household-level decisions that affect enrolment and retention of girls in schools.

This household survey therefore forms an important part of the KER component of the overall programme and its in-depth nature is intended to contribute to a broader understanding about what works best in girls' education. Data captured by follow-up surveys will aid in the monitoring and learning process of the overall successes and areas of weaknesses of the programme. The findings will be used as evidence for future programme structure and policymaking.



The Household Surveys aim to capture data on the following areas:

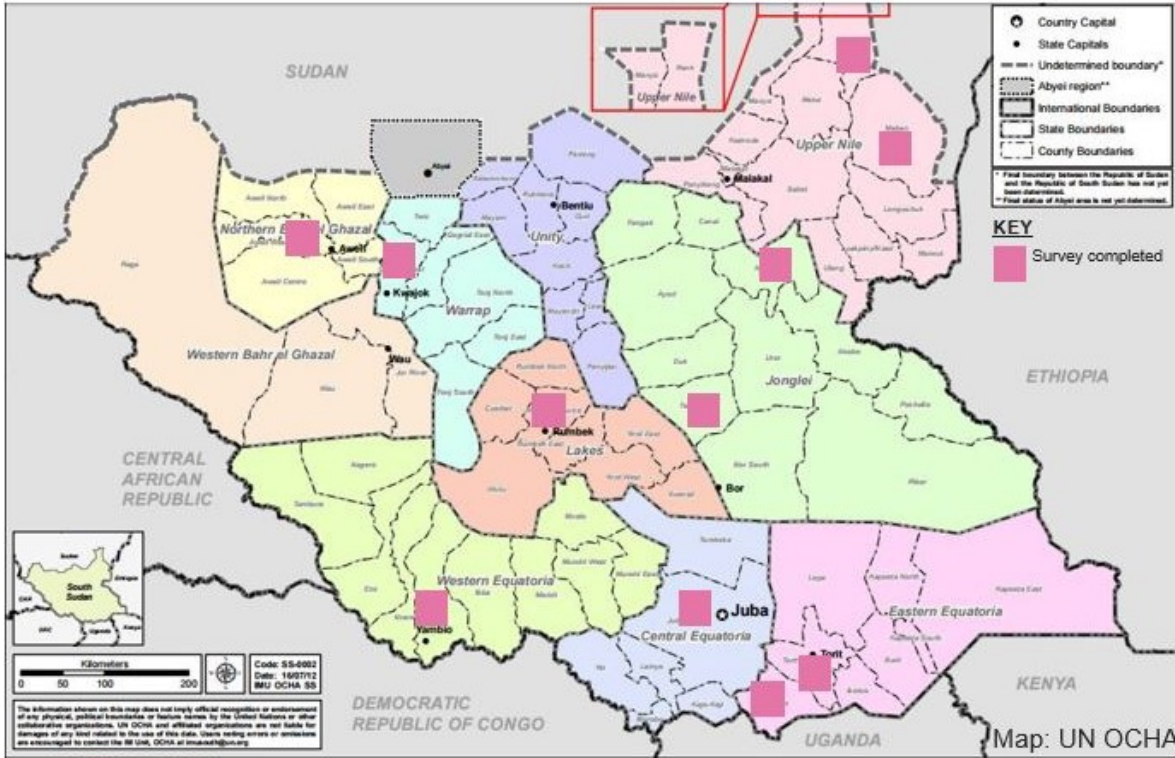
<b>Financial management of households and girls</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Household choices and priorities for financial management</li><li>• Competing costs to education</li><li>• Attitudes toward Cash Transfers and capitation grants</li></ul>
<b>Educational choices by households and girls</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School-going behaviour in terms of attendance, absence, drop-out rates, and changing schools</li><li>• Perceived value and relevance of education for girls and boys</li><li>• Levels of parental support toward their children's education</li><li>• Life prospects and ambitions for girls and boys, with or without education</li></ul>
<b>Barriers to attending school</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gendered perspective on factors that prevent boys and girls from attending school</li><li>• Perceptions about safety for girls to travel to and remain in school</li><li>• Prevalence of early marriage and early pregnancy</li><li>• Distance and travel to school</li></ul>

# 3. Methodology

This predominantly qualitative research uncovered stories that looked in-depth at education experiences. Though not statistically representative of the population, the geographical coverage strives to engage with the range of experiences across the diverse country of South Sudan, recognising that they will be heavily contextualised, even down to the County and Payam levels. Sampling was based on non-probability, convenience sampling, and included twelve households per State.

A total of 87 households were surveyed.

**Household Surveys conducted between June and September 2016**  
 A total of 87 households in 11 counties have been surveyed by GESS research teams in 8 of the 10 (former) states.



Data collection began on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2016 and concluded on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

## 3.1 Sampling strategy

### 3.1.1 Quantitative sampling strategy

The survey was based on non-probability, convenience sampling, in which researchers spoke to three available families that met the criteria in each identified Boma. Four Bomas per State were selected purposively to reflect diversity within the State. Bomas were chosen based on their proximity to schools that were surveyed in the framework of GESS KER. Four schools were selected per State. Of the four selected schools per State, three were primary schools and one was a secondary school – reflecting GESS’ particular concern for secondary education. In order to ensure diversity in the data collected, when possible, one of the three primary schools was a non-government school. Unfortunately, distinctions between sampling urban and rural households was not possible. In each identified Boma, three household surveys and one focus group discussion (FGD) were to be conducted. The sample included household units containing at least two children between the ages of 6 and 18, one of whom was not in school. Children of key years (P5/P8/S2) were to be randomly selected from the school register lists, where possible, and their households selected for interview.

For future sampling purposes, it was decided that if families had moved and were no longer available for interview, then new households would be chosen using the original criteria used to select the first household. To screen for migration, only residents that had lived in the Boma (lowest subnational geographical area) for over six months were selected to participate.

TABLE 2 LIST OF SCHOOLS REPRESENTED IN HOUSEHOLD SURVEY:

State	County	Payam	School	School type
CES	Juba	Munuki	Atlabara West Primary	Primary
EES	Torit	Nyong	John Garang Memorial	Secondary
EES	Magwi	Nimule	Hai Kanisa Primary	Primary
EES	Torit	Iyere	Longwere Primary	Primary
EES	Magwi	Magwi	Omeo Primary	Primary
JGL	Bor	Kolnyang	Agorbaar Mixed Primary	Primary
JGL	Bor	Bor	Bor Mixed Secondary	Secondary
JGL	Bor	Kolnyang	Malek One Primary	Primary
JGL	Nyirrol	Thol	Pieth Primary	Primary
LKS	Rumbek Centre	Jiir	Gol Meen Primary	Primary
LKS	Rumbek Centre	Jiir	Rumbek Complex Primary	Primary
LKS	Rumbek Centre	Jiir	Rumbek Secondary School	Secondary
LKS	Rumbek Centre	Jiir	Tayau Primary	Primary

<b>NBG</b>	Aweil West	Ayat East	Achak Deng Secondary	Secondary
<b>NBG</b>	Aweil West	Ayat East	Mabior Primary	Primary
<b>NBG</b>	Aweil West	Ayat Centre	Makuoch Primary	Primary
<b>NBG</b>	Aweil West	Mariam West	Riangon Primary	Primary
<b>UNS</b>	Maban	Jinmagda	Banjalle Primary	Primary
<b>UNS</b>	Maban	Banishowa	Dangji Basic School	Primary
<b>UNS</b>	Renk	Renk	Nug Kur Basic	Primary
<b>UNS</b>	Renk	Renk	Renk Girls Secondary School	Secondary
<b>WRP</b>	Gogrial West	Kuac North	Alpha Primary	Primary
<b>WRP</b>	Gogrial West	Riau	Malek Akol Primary	Primary
<b>WRP</b>	Gogrial West	Kuac North	Mayen Gumel Secondary	Secondary
<b>WRP</b>	Gogrial West	Riau	Panliet Primary School	Primary
<b>WES</b>	Yambio	Yambio	Bishop Abiangite	Secondary
<b>WES</b>	Yambio	Yambio	Masiya Primary	Primary
<b>WES</b>	Yambio	Yambio	Naduru Primary	Primary
<b>WES</b>	Yambio	Yambio	Yabongo Primary	Primary

### 3.1.2 Qualitative sampling strategy

In-Depth Interview (IDI) sampling was the same as the quantitative survey sampling due to the combined nature of the questionnaire that incorporated quantitative questions with qualitative in-depth questions.

In-depth survey and FGD participants were selected based on their residence within the Boma. Furthermore, participants selected for the FGD were chosen based on a purposive sample of community members who have children of school age. It was intended that the number of participants in each FGD ranged from four to eight people and considerations regarding gender, age, job, and status in the community were made to maximize the participation of all groups and ensure free and open discussion.

In each Boma, the researcher identified a starting point for the interviewer. Once the researcher reached the starting point, the interviewer placed their back to the (main) entrance of the starting point structure and moved to the right. Counting three households (excluding the starting point), the interviewer made contact with residents of the third household. If the randomly selected household had someone who fit the criteria stipulated above, they were asked to join the FGD.

## 3.2 Quantitative surveys

A total of n=87 quantitative surveys were conducted with n=87 guardians. All participants had lived in the Boma for more than six months.

TABLE 3 NUMBER OF SURVEYS CONDUCTED PER (FORMER) STATE

State	Number of surveys
CES	3
EES	12
JGL	12
LKS	12
NBG	12
UNS	12
WRP	12
WES	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>

## 3.3 In-depth Interviews

A total of n=279 IDIs were conducted with guardians and children between the ages of 6 and 18. Guardians and children were interviewed separately to allow respondents to speak openly and honestly about their experiences, without fear of repercussions. Narrative techniques and creative methods were used to learn about experiences and challenges for parents and children, both male and female. Within each selected household, interviews were conducted with one guardian, one older child (aged 13-18 years), and one younger child (aged 6-12 years). Where possible, an additional child interview (older or younger) was conducted with a third child who was not attending school.

Consistent with GESS' commitment to child protection, researchers were trained on ESOMAR Codes and Guidelines for Interviewing Children and Young People. Interviews with children were conducted in a visible location and both guardian and child consents were obtained prior to child interviews. In consideration of child respondent fatigue, child surveys were shorter than guardian surveys, with younger child surveys even shorter than older child surveys.

TABLE 4 NUMBER OF QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED PER SCHOOL

State	County	School	FGD	Guardian IDI	Older Child IDI	Younger Child IDI	Total
CES	Juba	Atlabara West Primary	1	3	2	5	11
EES	Torit	John Garang Memorial	1	3	3	3	10

EES	Magwi	Hai Kanisa	1	3	4	2	10
EES	Torit	Longwere Primary	1	3	5	1	10
EES	Magwi	Omeo Primary	1	3	5	1	10
JGL	Bor	Agorbaar Mixed Primary	1	3	4	3	11
JGL	Bor	Bor Mixed Secondary	1	3	4	3	11
JGL	Bor	Malek One Primary	1	3	5	2	11
JGL	Nyrol	Pieth Primary	1	3	4	2	10
LKS	Rumbek Centre	Gol Meen Primary	1	3	5	2	11
LKS	Rumbek Centre	Rumbek Complex Primary	1	3	2	6	12
LKS	Rumbek Centre	Rumbek Secondary School	1	3	4	3	11
LKS	Rumbek Centre	Tayau Primary	1	3	6	1	11
NBG	Aweil West	Achak Deng Secondary	1	3	5	2	11
NBG	Aweil West	Mabior Primary	1	3	4	4	12
NBG	Aweil West	Makuoch Primary	1	3	5	1	10
NBG	Aweil West	Riangon Primary	1	3	3	4	11
UNS	Maban	Banjalle Primary	1	3	4	3	11
UNS	Maban	Dangji Basic School	1	3	3	3	10
UNS	Renk	Nug Kur Basic	1	3	4	2	10
UNS	Renk	Renk Girls Secondary School	1	3	6	0	10
WRP	Gogrial West	Alpha Primary	1	3	6	2	12
WRP	Gogrial West	Malek Akol Primary	1	3	3	3	10
WRP	Gogrial West	Mayen Gumel Secondary	1	3	6	0	10
WRP	Gogrial West	Panliet Primary School	1	3	6	1	11
WES	Yambio	Bishop Abiangite	1	3	6	0	10
WES	Yambio	Masiya Primary	1	3	5	2	11
WES	Yambio	Naduru Primary	1	3	5	1	10
WES	Yambio	Yabongo Primary	1	3	4	2	10
<b>TOTALS</b>			29	87	128	64	308

### 3.4 Focus Group Discussions

A total of n=29 FGDs were conducted in each surveyed area with members of the community in the same area. FGD participants were members of the community with at least one child of school-going age, regardless of whether they are currently in school or not. FGD participants did not include individuals who had participated in the IDIs.

### 3.5 Limitations

N=308 total qualitative surveys were conducted (29 FGD and 279 IDI), These were broken down between three separate surveys (guardian, older child, younger child). When disaggregated on the state level, the number of respondents per survey, per state ranged from n=5 to n=15. Such numbers of observations are, clearly, too low to be considered truly representative of state level, let alone national-level trends. Therefore, the data collected should be considered as highly contextual. Where possible trends emerge, these should be considered indicative and will be contextualised, as far as possible, against findings from the KER GESS School Survey Report, which had a more robust and representative sample size.

Insecurity meant that some target schools had to be replaced. Ongoing conflict in Unity and Western Bahr el Ghazal meant that researchers were unable to reach these states. Additionally, the outbreak of conflict in Juba in July, and the subsequent spread of fighting to Yei, Lainya and Morobo, meant that further data collection in Central Equatoria was not possible. As a result, the data collected in Central Equatoria was limited to Bomas in Juba.

# 4. Findings

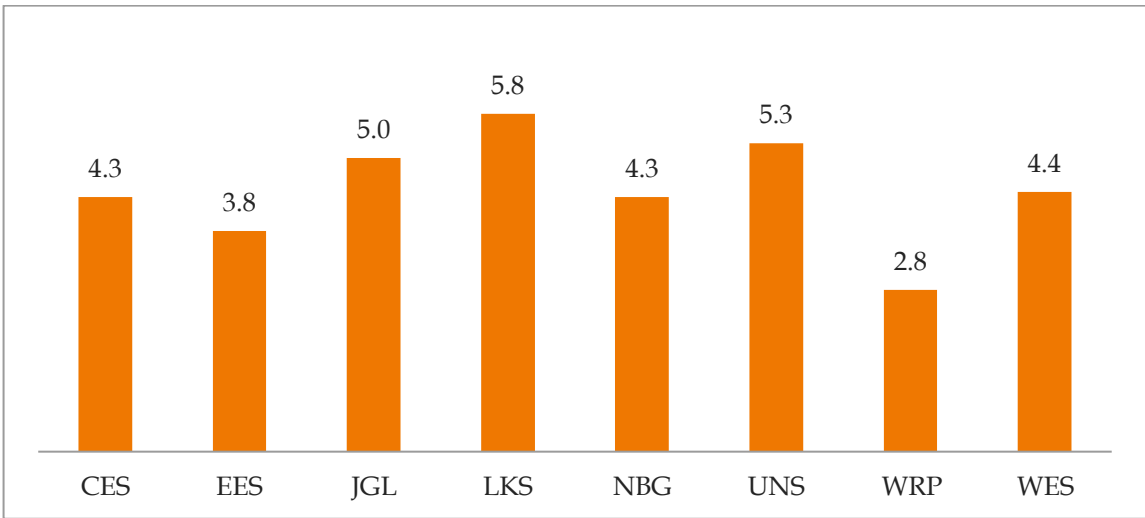
## 4.1 Demographics

In total, n=87 quantitative surveys were conducted with guardians, alongside a total of n=308 qualitative surveys, comprising: n=29 Community FGDs, n=87 Guardian surveys, n=128 Older Children surveys, and n=64 Younger Children surveys.

In terms of the respondents, the gender distribution across the range of surveys conducted was fairly even although, as in the Baseline, more female respondents (n=275, 53.9%) were surveyed than male (n=235, 46.1%), as women were more often to be found at home during the day whilst men were outside the home. This was particularly pronounced in the quantitative survey with guardians (65.5% female compared to 34.5% male) and may have introduced a slight bias to total responses.

Of the households surveyed, the average household was found to consist of 7.27 people, with an average of 2.52 adults over the age of 18 and an average of 4.75 children under the age of 18, although there were some variances by geographical area, with households in (former) Lakes having a significantly higher average reported number of children than households in (former) Warrap.

FIGURE 1 AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN PER HOUSEHOLD

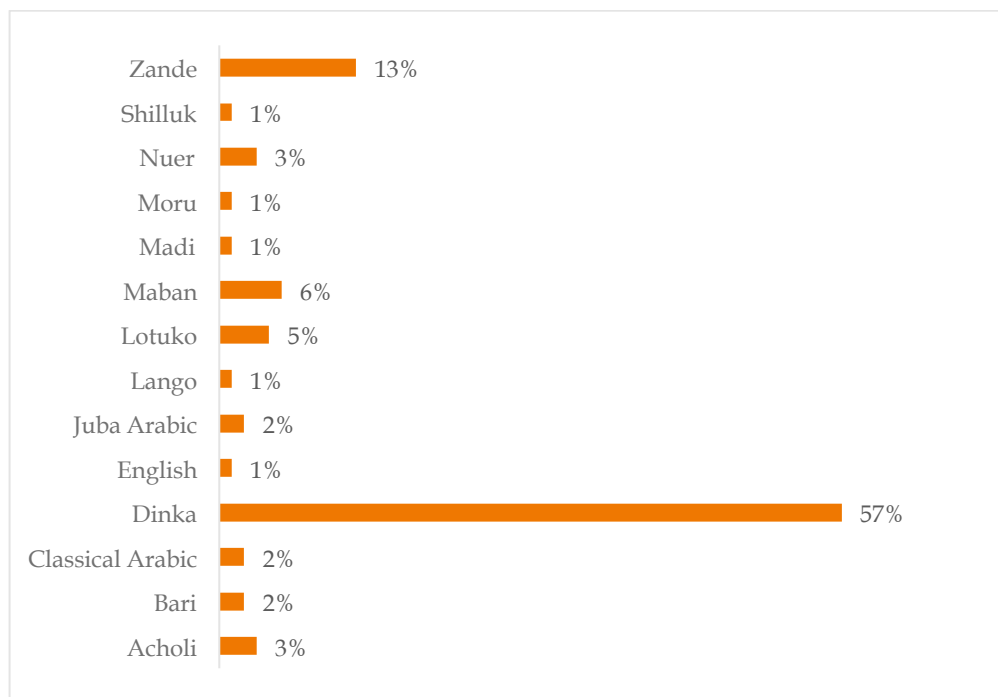


The majority of households surveyed listed Dinka as the main language spoken within the home (n=50) with the next most prevalent language being Zande (n=11). Whilst the Household Survey was scaled up into the Greater Upper Nile region, the events surrounding the July crisis interrupted data collection and



altered the security landscape in the period during and immediately after the July 2016 crisis. As a result, it was not possible to reach former Western Bahr El Ghazal or Unity states and some areas of Central Equatoria, which may have caused a selection bias due to areas where languages such as Juba Arabic, Bari and Nuer are more prevalent, not being reached for survey.

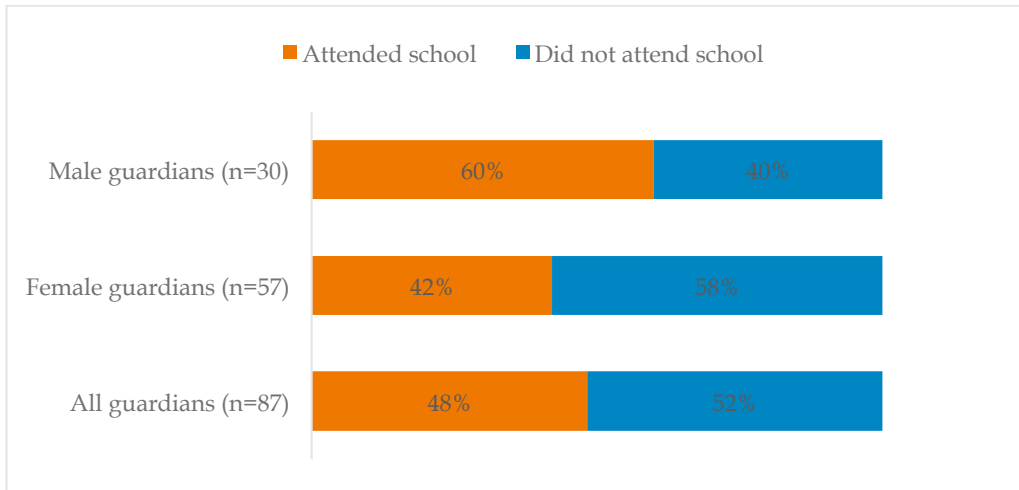
FIGURE 2 MAIN LANGUAGE SPOKEN IN HOUSEHOLDS SURVEYED



Almost half (48 %, n=42) of all guardians surveyed reported having attended formal school. Of this number, the majority reported having finished at primary level (65%, n=26) with 33% reaching secondary school (n=14) and 2 guardians attended university (one male, one female).

Amongst female respondents, only 42% (n=24) stated that they had received some level of formal education, compared to 60% of men (n=18).

FIGURE 3 PROPORTION OF GUARDIANS THAT REPORT HAVING ATTENDED FORMAL SCHOOL



As in the Baseline the primary sources of household income are informal, which likely makes them unreliable

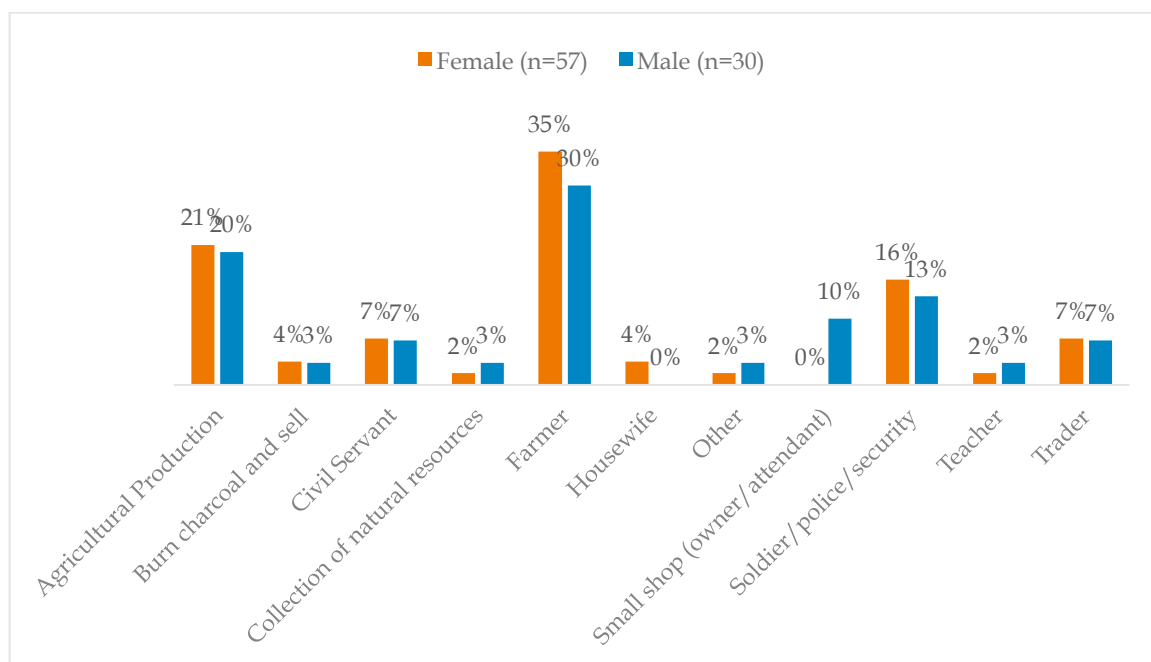
As in the Baseline, the majority of guardians (54%, n=47), regardless of gender, reported their primary profession to be farming (n=29) or agricultural production (n=18).

FIGURE 4 PRIMARY PROFESSION OF GUARDIANS



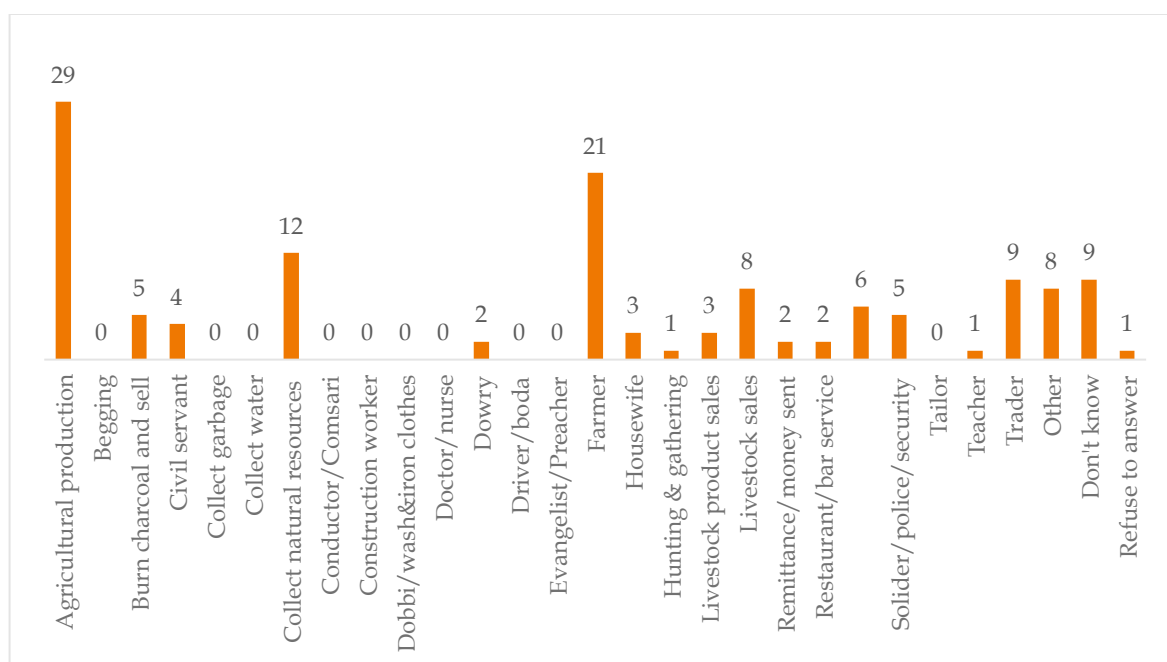
Interestingly, whilst the prevalence of more formal employment was low compared to informal employment types, the proportion of women reporting more formal primary professions such as police/security/soldier, civil servant or teacher was comparable to the proportion of men reporting the same primary professions. The exception to this is owner or attendant of a small shop, which was cited by male respondents only (n=3, 10% of total men), and housewife which was cited only by women (n=2, 4% of total women) which perhaps suggests that guardians are typically both involved in bringing in income for households.

FIGURE 5 PROPORTION OF MALE/FEMALE RESPONDENTS ENGAGED IN EACH EMPLOYMENT TYPE AS PRIMARY PROFESSION



As in the Baseline, agricultural production and farming were also the most frequently reported sources of additional income for households, followed by collection of natural resources. Once again, more formal jobs such as teaching or civil service were not widely cited sources of additional income. However, interestingly dowry does not seem to be a major source of income and its frequency as a cited source of income by guardians (n=2) has reduced when compared with Baseline data (n=8).

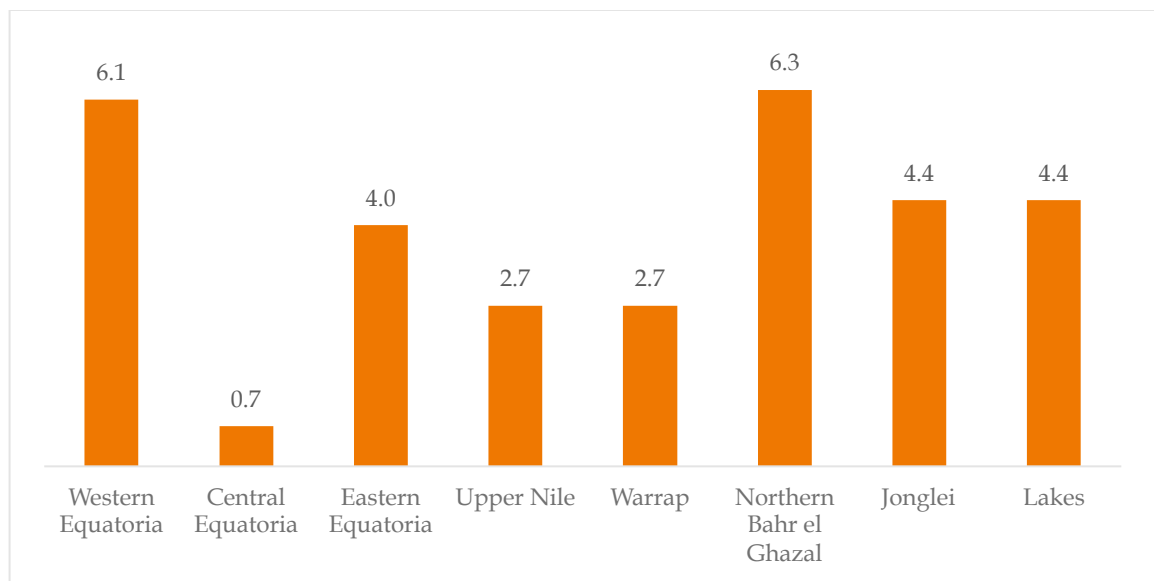
FIGURE 6 ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INCOME, AS REPORTED BY GUARDIANS (N=87)



We asked guardians to quantify how many days in the last week their household had enough food to eat. Across the locations surveyed, the average number of days in which households had had enough to eat was 4.2 days. There were stark contrasts in responses by State, with households in (former) Northern Bahr El Ghazal and Western Equatoria having significantly higher averages of food availability than households in (former) Central Equatoria, Warrap and Upper Nile. Due to the post-July security situation, fewer households were surveyed in (former) Central Equatoria (households n=3) than the other states reached for survey (households n=12).

One reason for this could be the reliance of the majority of households on agriculture and farming as key sources of (informal) income which is dependent on a number of factors including weather, quality of harvest and the opportunity to farm uninterrupted. Lack of food at home and/or school was also cited in qualitative interviews by several younger children, who mentioned hunger, due to lack of food at home or at school, as reasons why they sometimes miss school. One female guardian in Upper Nile remarked “families these days are lacking food due to poor harvest” so “it’s difficult for a hungry child to sit in class and pay attention to what the teacher teaching”.

FIGURE 7 AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS HOUSEHOLDS HAD ENOUGH FOOD IN THE LAST WEEK, PER (FORMER) STATE



## 4.2 Household financial decisions and expenditure on education

### 4.2.1 Household choices and priorities

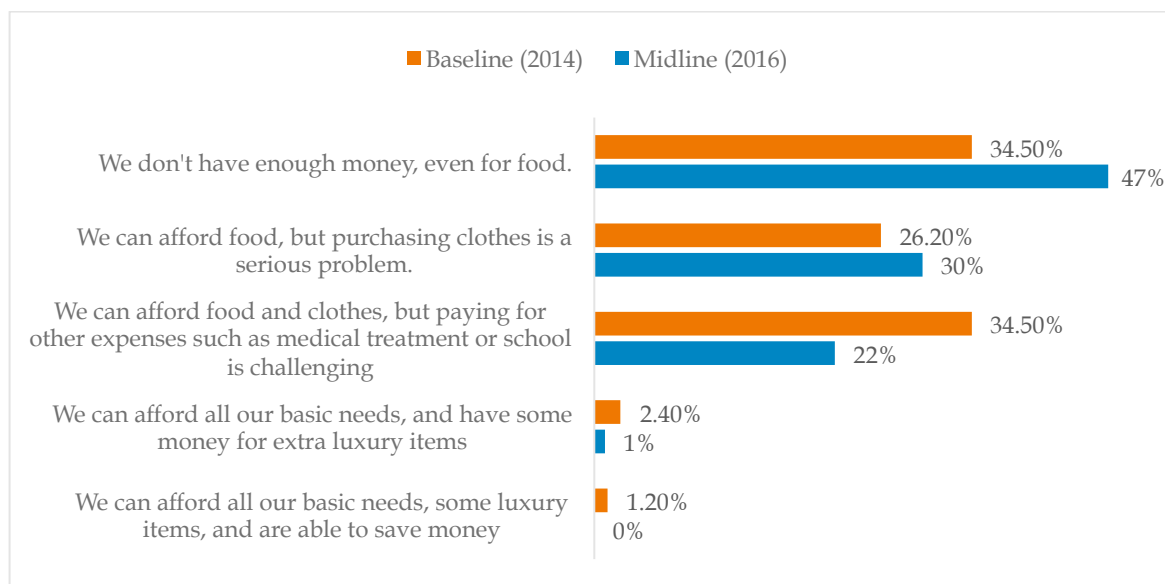
#### Evidence of worsening household financial situation since 2014 Baseline

When asked to describe the current financial situation of their household, almost half of guardians reported that they don't have enough money for food (47%, n=41). This is a significant increase on the number of households that reported in the same situation during the Baseline interviews in 2014 (34.5%).

The remainder reported that, whilst they can afford food, they cannot afford to purchase clothes and/or other necessary items (52%, n=45), with only 1% reporting that they are able to meet basic needs and afford some luxury items (n=1).

This suggests that, due to the worsening economic situation in South Sudan, households are even less financially secure than in 2014, and their reliance on informal sources of income makes future levels of financial security seem unstable which could impact negatively on educational spending, in spite of its high prioritisation by guardians.

FIGURE 8 COMPARISON OF HOUSEHOLD FINANCIAL SITUATION BETWEEN BASELINE AND MIDLINE, AS REPORTED BY GUARDIANS (N=87)

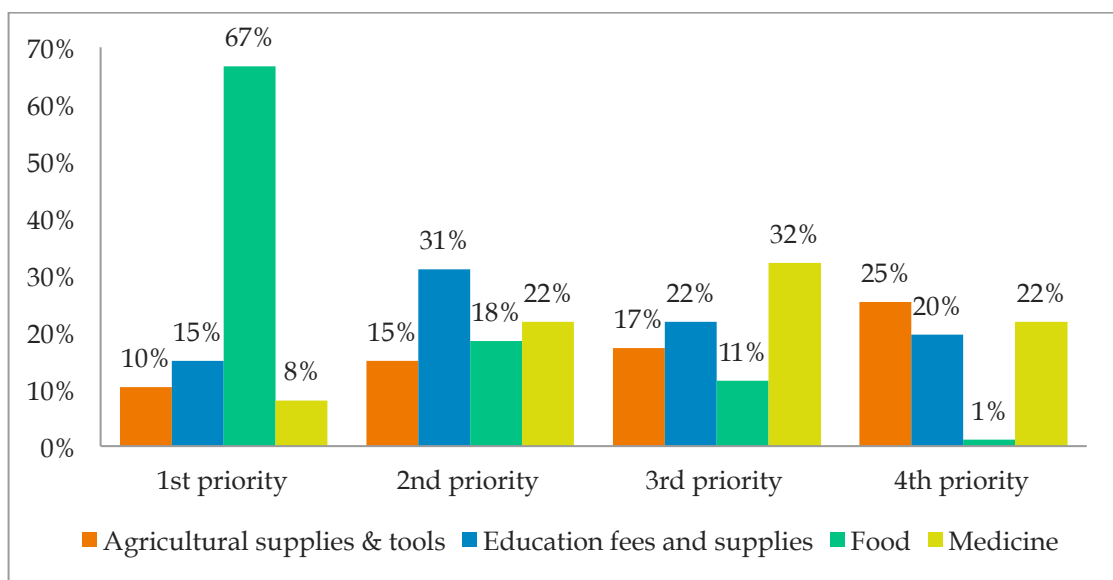


Despite the fragile financial health of most households, and the high costs of education, schooling remains on average the second highest priority for household spending, after food

The majority of households (67%, n=58) reported prioritising spending money on food above all other items, followed by spending on education fees and supplies as a first priority (15%, n=13). According to the Baseline report, on average, the second highest priority for household spending after food in 2014 was medicine/medical treatment with spending on education the third highest priority. According to guardians interviewed for the Midline, on average, spending on education was reported as the second highest priority for households in 2016, after food.

This increased priority for education, in the context of the worsening economic crisis across South Sudan and the reported increases in the cost of education (discussed further in section 3.2.2), demonstrates the increasing weight placed on education by households and an increase in positive attitudes towards education by guardians. This is consistent with points made by the historian Eddie Thomas about increased demand for education in South Sudan being – unexpectedly – correlated with conflict in his recent article ‘Education and Conflict in South Sudan’: <http://odihpn.org/blog/education-and-conflict-in-south-sudan/>.

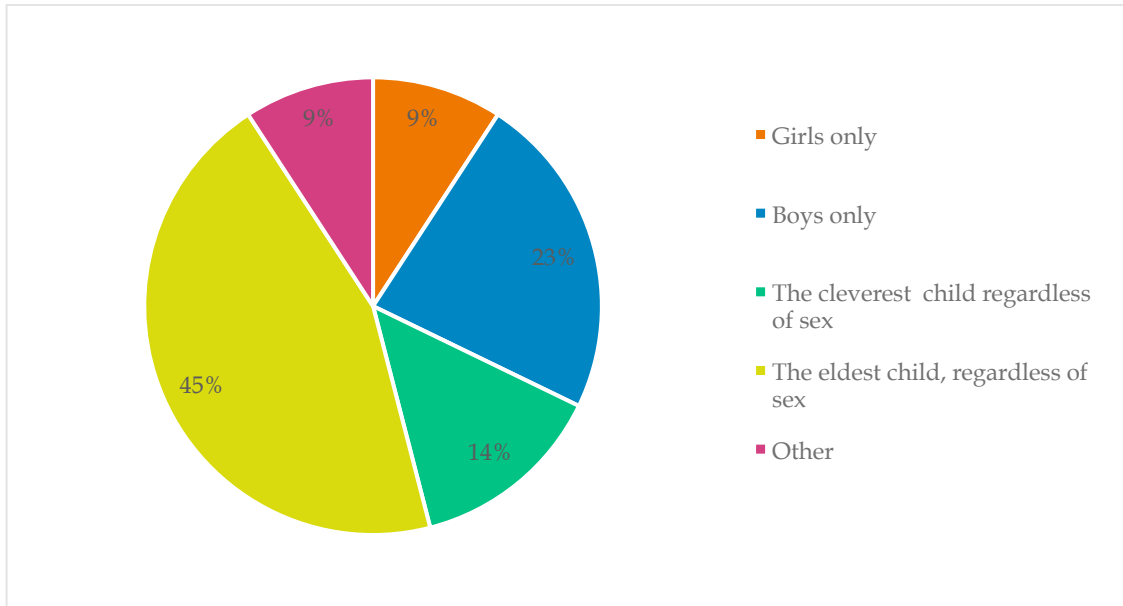
FIGURE 9 TOP FOUR ITEMS THAT HOUSEHOLDS SPEND THE MOST MONEY ON



According to guardians, when households are faced with limited resources, it is the education of the eldest child that would be prioritised, regardless of gender.

Building on feedback from the Baseline survey, we asked an additional question to guardians about whose education within the household would be prioritised, if the household is faced with limited resources. Whilst more guardians stated that boys would be prioritised over girls (n= 20 boys, n= 8 girls), interestingly the majority of guardians reported that priority would be given to the eldest child, regardless of gender (n=39).

FIGURE 10 WHO'S EDUCATION IS A PRIORITY, AS REPORTED BY GUARDIANS

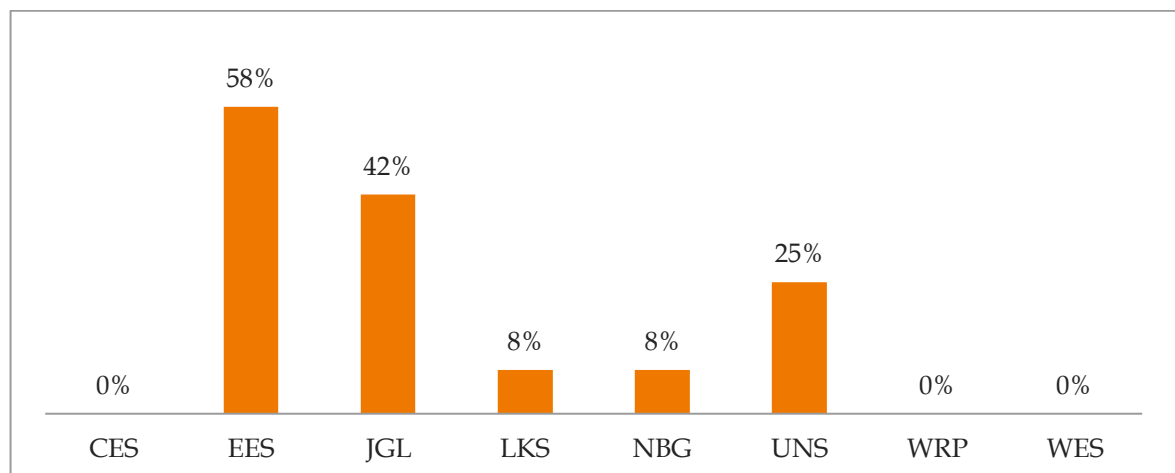


Evidence that the education of children of the first wife may be prioritised in families with multiple wives, but only in some parts of the country.

When asked whether having multiple wives determines the priority of sending children to school 74% (n=64) of guardians said no. However, in some [former] states, most notably Eastern Equatoria and Jonglei almost half of all guardians said that multiple wives *does* play a role in determining which children are the priority to be sent to school.

Of the 20% (n=17) guardians who said having multiple wives does influence who goes to school the household, all stated that the children of the first wife are prioritised.

FIGURE 11 PERCENTAGE OF GUARDIANS WHO BELIEVE HAVING MULTIPLE WIVES DETERMINES THE PRIORITY OF CHILDREN GOING TO SCHOOL



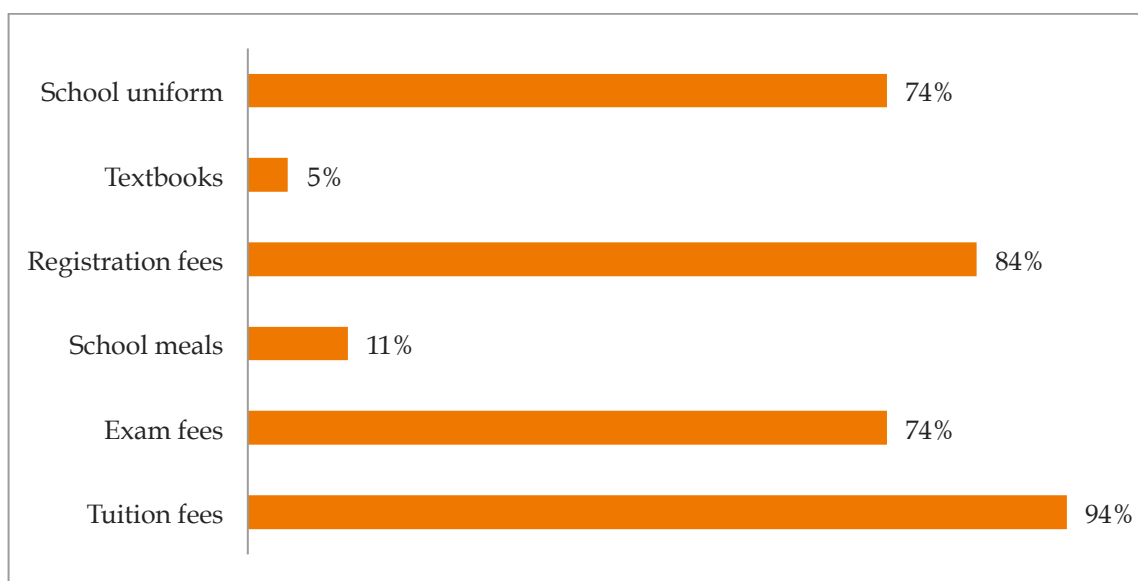


## 4.2.2 Financial costs of education

Guardians report that the overall cost of education has noticeably increased since 2014

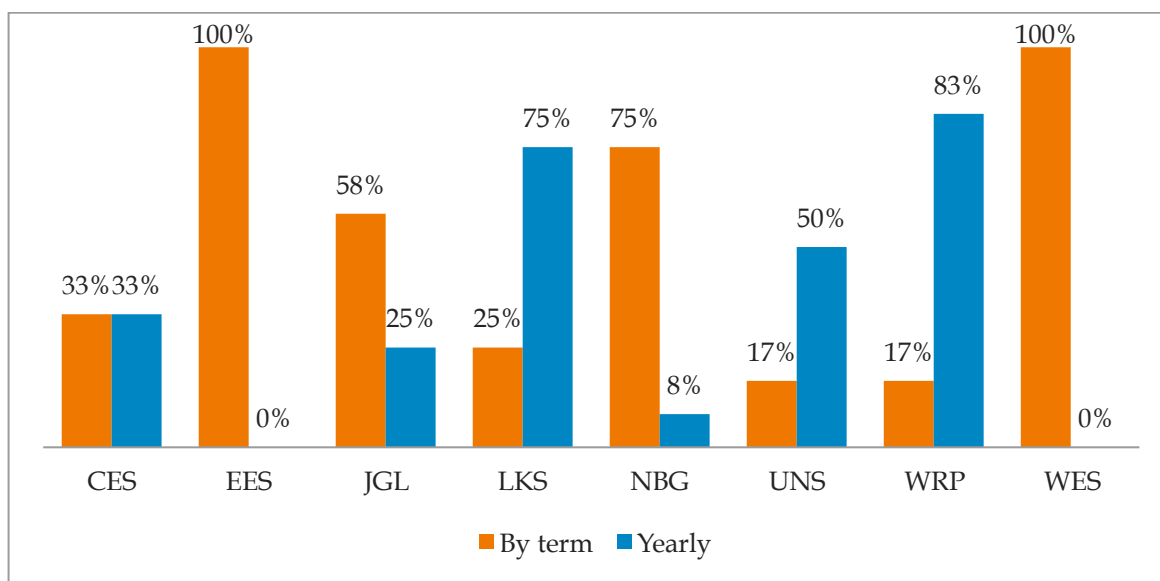
The four most common fees that guardians reported paying are tuition, registration and exam fees, as well as payment for school uniforms. Few guardians indicated that they are required to contribute towards school meals, which is perhaps a reflection of the low number of schools with a school feeding programme.

FIGURE 12 PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS PAYING DIFFERENT SCHOOL FEES



55% (n=48) of guardians indicated that they pay tuition fees on a termly basis, and 34% (n=30) said they pay on an annual basis. Only 5% (n=4) of guardians who pay tuition fees, pay them on a monthly basis. The most common months for fee payment are January, June and July which indicates that most fee payment is done at the beginning of each new term. The below table gives a break-down of the frequency with which guardians pay school fees across the [former] ten states. This data implies that fee payment is done largely by term in Eastern Equatoria and Western Equatoria, but that there is more variation across the other States, with some schools charging fees by term and some charging an annual payment.

FIGURE 13 FREQUENCY WITH WHICH GUARDIANS PAY TUITION FEES



The most expensive fees tend to be for school uniform, although this is likely to be a once-yearly payment, and school feeding. The average amount paid for tuition fee is 152SSP, and the amount ranges from 10-1200SSP. Qualitative data indicates that fees for government schools are considerably lower for those of private and faith-based schools, as is expected.

TABLE 5 COSTS OF ESSENTIAL SCHOOL ITEMS/FEES, AS REPORTED BY GUARDIANS

	Average amount (SSP)	Range
<b>Tuition fee</b>	152	10-1200
<b>Exam fee</b>	52	5-500
<b>School meals</b>	219	25-800
<b>Registration fee</b>	85	5-800
<b>Purchasing textbooks</b>	87.5	50-150
<b>School uniform</b>	296	50-1000

The combined cost of the four most common expenditures – tuition, registration and exam fees and purchase of school uniforms – is 585SSP per year. Given that guardians report an average of 2.7 children attending school per household, the minimum expenditure on education is 1,170SSP. This is a significant increase from the findings in the 2014 Baseline which identified that guardians were spending a minimum total of 326.5SSP per child per year. This increase is undoubtedly linked to the rapid devaluation of the pound from 2015-16.

Furthermore, given the variation in school fee amounts, the actual amount of money spent is likely to be even higher than this. When taking into account

additional costs such as transport and stationery, guardians said that they spend an average of 392SSP per month per child, which works out as 3,528SSP a year (roughly \$50 per annum, at then prevailing exchange rates).

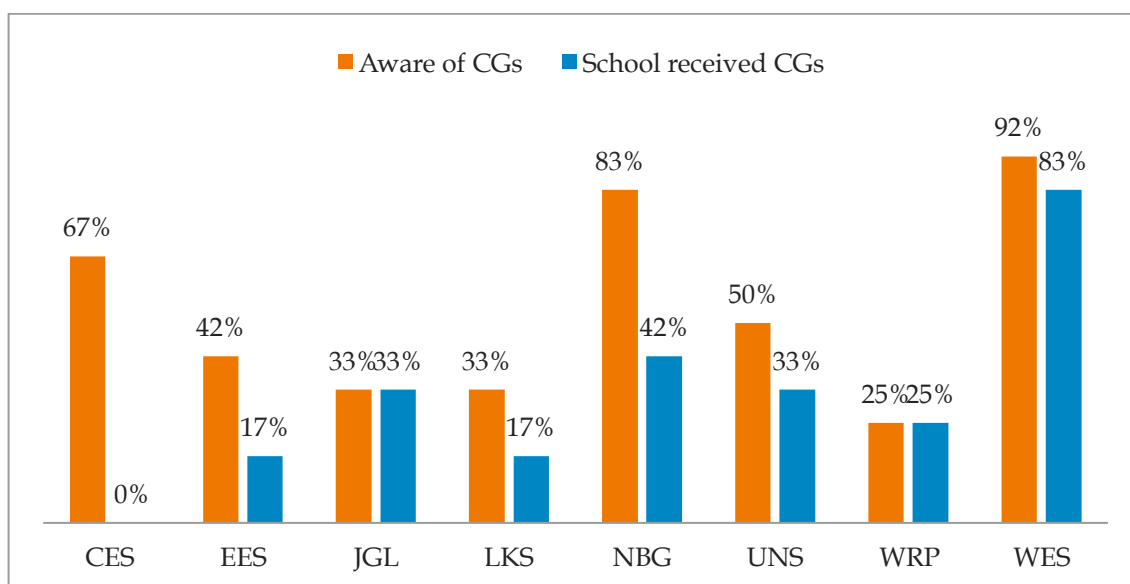
63% of guardians (n=55) stated that the fees they pay have increased (in SSP terms) over the last two years but 21% (n=18) said that the fees had actually reduced – the most reasonable explanation for which would be the introduction of GESS Capitation Grants. Fata from the qualitative interviews indicates that 95% (n=83) of guardians believe that the overall cost of sending their child to school has noticeably increased since 2014 as the cost of supplies in the market, such as school uniforms, stationery and exercise books, has significantly increased. The majority of guardians stated that this is because of the ongoing insecurity and financial crisis in the country and that costs have increased at least proportionally to inflation.

### 4.2.3 Prevalence and impact of Capitation Grants and Cash Transfers

Significantly higher awareness of both Capitation Grants and Cash Transfers than Baseline findings, although some confusion between the two components

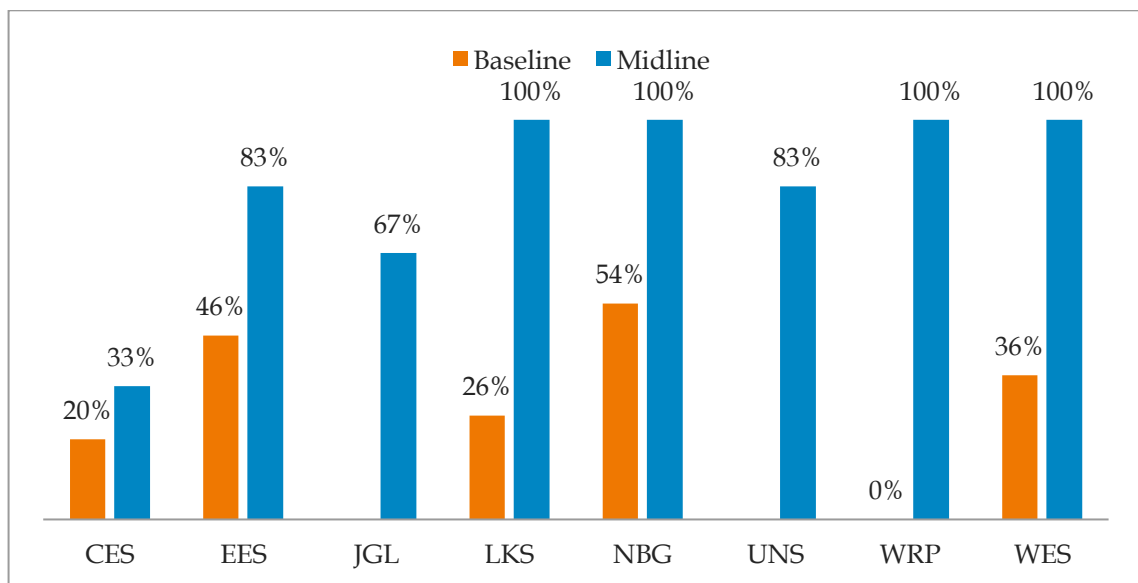
There was relatively high awareness of GESS school Capitation Grants amongst guardians, particularly in Central Equatoria, Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Western Equatoria. 52% (n=45) of guardians said that they had heard of CGs. Within this, men displayed marginally more awareness than women; 57% (n=17) of male guardians said they had heard of CGs, as opposed to 49% (n=55) of women.

FIGURE 14 PROPORTION OF GUARDIANS AWARE OF CAPITATION GRANTS AND/OR KNOW THAT THEIR CHILDS' SCHOOL HAS RECEIVED A CAPITATION GRANT



However, there appeared to be occasional confusion over what Capitation Grants actually are; although several guardians mentioned that they had heard of CGs, further probing in qualitative interviews revealed that many of these parents had confused CGs with cash transfers. When asked about the impact that CGs had had on their child’s school, several parents commented that their daughter had used the money to buy soap or shoes; “when my daughter receives Capitation Grant she was able to buy some school requirement, like stationery, shows and school bag” (male guardian, Eastern Equatoria). This suggests that knowledge of CTs is far more widespread than knowledge of CGs, most likely because of the direct impact at the household level that this component has.

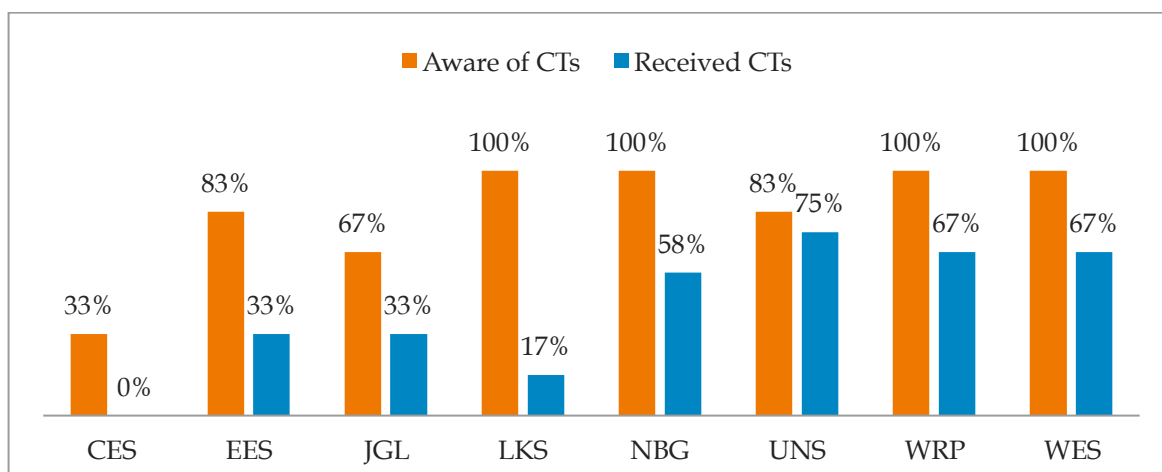
FIGURE 15 CHANGE IN AWARENESS OF CASH TRANSFERS BETWEEN BASELINE AND MIDLINE



The below figure supports this assertion; generally, guardians displayed a much higher awareness of CTs than CGs with an average of 89% (n=77) stating that they were aware of the programme. Levels of awareness were highest in Lakes, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Warrap and Western Equatoria, and lowest in Central Equatoria and Jonglei, (although the low sample size in Central Equatoria makes this data less accurate.)

There does not appear to be a strong correlation between awareness of CTs and receiving CTs. Although almost all guardians had heard of CTs, less than half – 48% (n=42) had had a member of their family receive the money. This suggests that guardians are aware of the programme even when their own children have not received any money (either because they do not have girls, the girls are too young, or the school has not received CTs altogether).

FIGURE 16 PROPORTION OF GUARDIANS AWARE OF CASH TRANSFERS AND/OR HAVE HAD AT LEAST ONE CHILD RECEIVE A CASH TRANSFER



Guardians report noticeable differences in school facilities and an increase in the number of teachers as a result of Capitation Grant money

Comments on the impact of Capitation Grants largely revolved around changes to school infrastructure, and improvements in teaching. One female guardian in Western Equatoria said she'd noticed the school "started doing some little bit of development. There is change in the school furniture", while another from Northern Bahr el Ghazal said "there has been an increase in the number of teachers since school started receiving capitation grant, teaching has also improved a lot".

Evidence that Cash Transfers have had a positive, tangible impact at the household level and has notably reduced pressure on guardian spending on both education related and non-related items, such as food and medicine

Of the 48 households surveyed that reported receiving at least one cash transfer, 75% (n=36) said that the money had benefitted the whole household and reduced the burden of paying for school fees, scholastic materials and gender-specific items such as sanitary pads and soap for girls. Many respondents additionally commented that they used some of the CT money to pay for the school fees of other children in the household, as well as more general needs such as food and medicine. A female guardian from Northern Bahr el Ghazal said "the Cash Transfer has also improved things because catering for all the children in this home is a big challenge for us", and another in Jonglei stated that the Cash Transfer "has improved things because my daughter and her siblings will never go to school in non-uniforms, it has eased the pressure of struggling for their uniforms". This positive impact that Cash Transfer have on the whole household was corroborated by several girls who had received a cash transfer, as well as boys whose sister or female relative had received the money.

“In both years I bought clothes, shoes, pens and books [and] helped my mother. The programme is good and I wish it continues because it helps us” (girl, Upper Nile)

“In my opinion the GESS programme is good because it helps us girls get most of the school requirements without much struggles on the side of our families” (girl, Northern Bahr el Ghazal)

“Yes, they used the money to buy for us our school materials” (boy, Warrap)

The data collected in the School Survey found that 87% of CT recipients said they made decisions on how to spend the money themselves. Joining this up with the Household Survey described above suggests that, even though girls generally retain control of the money they receive, they often chose to contribute at least part of it to general household needs;

“I used the money to buy school materials, body lotion, soap, salt and sugar for the family” (girl, Warrap)

“I received [a] Cash Transfer through GESS...I used the money for paying the balances/debts required for my primary school certificate and gave some money to my mother” (girl, Northern Bahr el Ghazal).

Only 6% (n=3) of guardians who had a member of their household receive a Cash Transfer said that the money had not benefitted the household. In these cases it was because the girl had spent the money on her own needs.

Limited understanding of why Cash Transfers specifically target girls. The majority of guardians believe that both girls and boys should receive cash transfers.

The majority of guardians - 78% (n=68) - said they believe that boys should also receive cash transfers. Many parents reasoned that poverty affects children of both sexes and that boys face similar financial challenges to girls. Comments included “life is hard for everyone” (male guardian Northern Bahr el Ghazal) and “poverty has affected everyone in the community” (female guardian, Lakes).

21% (n=18) of guardians believed that only girls should receive Cash Transfers as girls face specific challenges that boys do not. Four guardians in Warrap stated that girls have been left behind in education and need extra support, whilst others in Upper Nile argued that “girls should be the ones to receive only. This is because girls are the most vulnerable compare to boys” (female guardian, Upper Nile), and “it has to be given to girls only because girls can’t get job easily, but boys can do other work and get money” (male guardian, Upper Nile). There was generally an even split between the opinions of male and female guardians on this issue.

When asked what they would do if their daughter no longer received cash transfers, many guardians said they would not change course; “this help was not there before so I will do nothing if it stops” (male guardian, Upper Nile). Doing nothing was also frequently linked to struggling within the household, as one woman from Northern Bahr el Ghazal stated “I will do nothing but it will worsen the situation since it has reduced the burden that was part of life”. Just over a third of guardians (38%, n=18) said that they would look for additional work to continue to support their children through school.

Over a third of all girls who had received a Cash Transfer said the money directly impacted their ability to stay in school

Alongside comments on the positive impact of Cash Transfers on the household, and the ability of girls to buy their basic needs, 37% (n=17) of girls who had received a Cash Transfer made direct reference to the impact that the money had on encouraging their attendance in school; “the programme is good, it helps us to be at school” (girl, Western Equatoria). Similarly, 31% (n=11) of boys who knew someone in their family who had received a Cash Transfer mentioned the impact that the money had had on the girl’s school attendance. One respondent in Warrap commented “Yes my sister received a Cash Transfer through GESS in 2015. She used her money to buy scholastic materials, clothes and soap. This programme has helped her and other girls a lot to be in school because they get all their school requirements”.

“Parents who took their daughters purposely to school to receive Cash Transfer through GESS will avoid taking their girls to school when this activity comes to an end” (male guardian, Lakes)

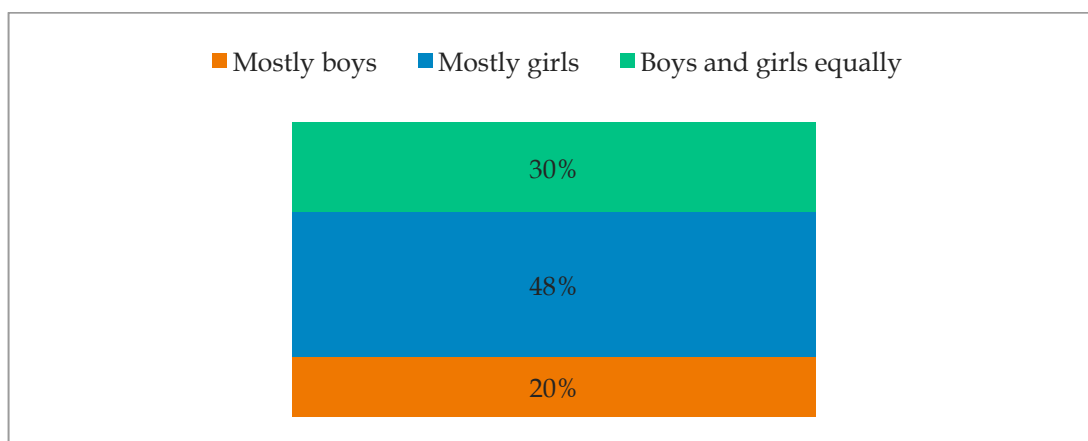
## 4.3 School-going behaviour

### 4.3.1 Enrolment and Attendance

The average number of children per household is reported at 4.7. Of these, guardians report that the average number of children in school is 2.7. 26% (n=23) of guardians stated that one or more boys in the household were not attending school. This number is a little higher than the figure for girls, which was 16% (n=14).

69% (n=60) of guardians said that there were children out of school in their area. Of these almost half (48%) said that girls are more likely to be out of school, as opposed to 20% who said mostly boys.

FIGURE 17 MOST LIKELY GROUP TO BE OUT OF SCHOOL, AS REPORTED BY GUARDIANS



### 4.3.2 Absence

Every drop-out begins with an absence: understanding causes of pupil absence is an important step to reducing drop-out.

Financial constraints identified by guardians and children as major reason for not attending school regularly

Both guardians and older children cited financial constraints as a major barrier to attending school regularly for those enrolled in school. An average of 82.5% of guardians stated that a lack of money for school fees and other materials was a reason why both boys and girls might miss school. In qualitative interviews 38% (n=64) of children mentioned lack of payment of school fees, with many giving examples of times they had been sent home by school administration because their parents could not afford to pay the fees. Similarly, lack of money for school equipment and soap, as well as a lack of school uniform (either because they cannot afford one, or because it is dirty or torn) were also common reasons for absence given by students. Several younger children mentioned hunger, due to lack of food at home or at school, as reasons why they sometimes miss school whilst n=3 children (2 boys, 1 girl) said that they went 'looking for money' sometimes and so were absent from school.

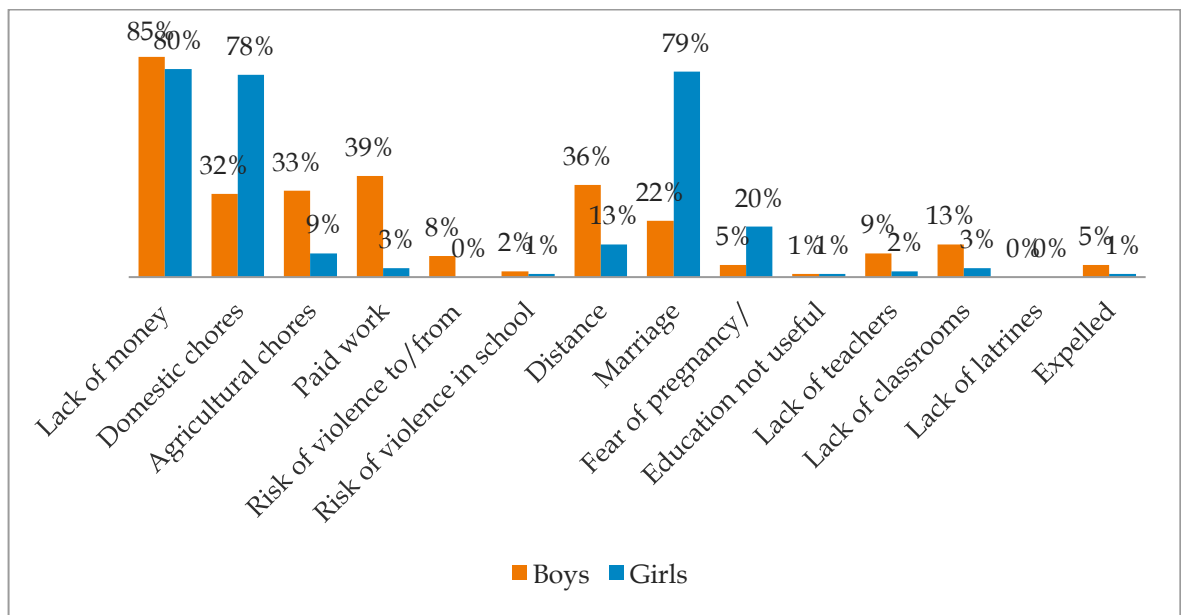
Agricultural chores a common reason for boys to be absent, whilst girls more likely to be absent due to domestic responsibilities

Cultivation was also a common reason for absence, 33% (n=29) of guardians mentioned that cultivation was a reason for boys to miss school, and 9% (n=8) said the same for girls. Further discussion during in-depth interviews revealed that cultivation generally takes place during the months of May-August and although guardians stated that boys were more likely to miss school because of agricultural chores, it is clear that girls are also absent in order to help 'in the garden'. One male guardian in Northern Bahr el Ghazal commented "boys and girls are likely to miss days of school when it is a season for cultivation, because they go and work



on other people's farms in order for them to be paid some money, it mostly happen in May, June and July".

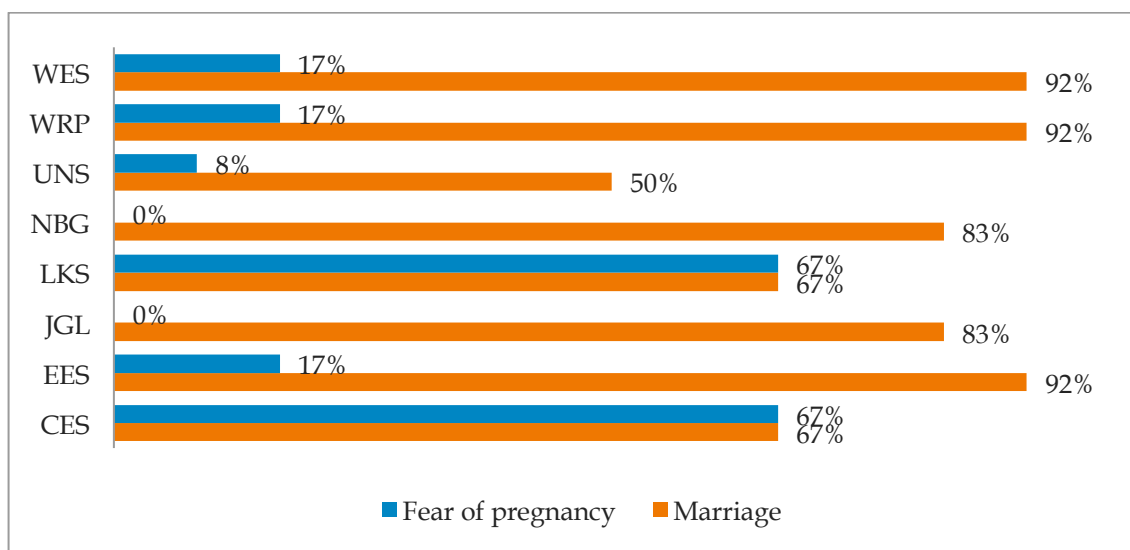
FIGURE 18 REASONS WHY BOYS AND GIRLS MIGHT MISS SCHOOL OTHER THAN SICKNESS, AS IDENTIFIED BY GUARDIANS



Whist over double the number of guardians identified agricultural responsibilities affecting boys school attendance than for girls, 78% (n=68) of guardians reported that girls may miss school due to domestic responsibilities. Several guardians further commented that their own daughters had missed school in the past 12 months in order to attend to domestic chores such as cooking when visitors came.

The second most reported reason for why girls might miss school was marriage, which was mentioned by 79% (n=69) of guardians. A consistently high number of guardians across all states surveyed identified this as a reason why girls may not only miss school but also drop out altogether.

FIGURE 19 PROPORTION OF GUARDIANS WHO BELIEVE THAT FEAR OF PREGNANCY OR MARRIAGE ARE REASONS WHY GIRLS MIGHT MISS SCHOOL



Fighting and insecurity was mentioned by 20% (n=17) of guardians in in-depth interviews from across Lakes, Upper Nile and Western Equatoria as further reason for absence.

Sickness most common reason reported by guardians and children for why they missed school in the last 12 months; follow-up questioning re menstruation as a cause for absence drew a blank

By far the most common reason cited by guardians in qualitative interviews for their children missing school was sickness, either of the child themselves or of another family member. 48% (n=42) of guardians stated that sickness had caused their child to be absent from school in the last 12 months. Similarly 76% (n=129) of children in in-depth interviews said that sickness was a reason for missing school.

This finding is corroborated by the results from the school survey which found that 55% of boys and 58% of girls reported that they were absent because of sickness in the previous year.

Findings from the Baseline revealed that some respondents used ‘sickness’ as a euphemism for menstruation. However, despite a follow-up question that specifically mentioned menstruation, very few guardians cited it as a reason why their daughters missed school and only 15% (n=14) girls reported that they had missed school in the previous 12 months due to menstruation. Whilst cultural sensitivities may have prevented some girls from feeling comfortable mentioning menstruation to the enumerators, the low figures here may somewhat challenge the widely held assumption that menstruation is a major factor in school absence.

### 4.3.3 Dropping out

Of the 22 children interviewed who had dropped-out of school (12 boys, 10 girls) 20 said that the primary reason was because their families could no longer afford the school fees. This appears particularly common when the child is an orphan or has a single parent. Some respondents went on to say that since dropping out of school they had gone to help their parents cultivate, look after livestock, or, in the case of girls, engage in domestic work. N=3 children said that they had (also) dropped out because they were pregnant:

“I got pregnant when I was schooling that’s why I dropped out. I am waiting to give birth then I might go back to school” (girl, Jonglei)

As in the baseline, non-attendance at school is not commonly reported as resulting in follow-up action from the school or education authorities

Non-attendance at school does not appear to instigate much follow-up action from the school or local authorities, and 86% of guardians who said that they had children out of school had never received a visit from a member of either the school or local government to follow this up. Of the 14% of guardians who had received such a visit, 7% were visited by someone from their child’s school and 7% were visited by someone from the local authorities. These figures are very similar to the findings in the baseline; in 2014 it was found that 82% of guardians stated that no one had come to ask why their children were not attending school. This may indicate that the follow-up capacity of both schools and local government has not increased over the last two years.

### 4.3.4 Changing schools

Cost, distance and quality of education cited as the main reasons for a child changing school.

Cases of children changing schools were reported by 21.8% (n=19) of guardians in the qualitative discussions. There are a range of reasons given for this, but predominantly cost, distance and quality of education were cited. (Former) Lakes and Western Equatoria states had the highest reported frequency of school changes.

Cost was a common reason reported by guardians for children in the household changing schools or remaining in current schools. The majority of respondents for whom cost was the biggest factor described having moved children to schools that were less expensive. Cost was also given as a reason for children remaining in their current schools as other options were seen as too expensive in terms of fees or the costs associated with travelling to schools further away from home. Some parents cited the costs associated with changing school:

"No child of mine has ever changed school because of distance, and also buying uniforms for the new school is not a simple task " (Guardian, NBG)

"There is no money to change from that school to another school especially that other schools charge a lot high for school fees" (Juba, CES)

Unlike the Baseline, there were no cases reported of children being transferred from government schools to more expensive private schools, however one guardian in Bor reported moving his child out of private school as he was no longer able to afford the fees. This would fit with the general downward economic trends in South Sudan since 2014 and the reported rise in the cost of education (see section 3.2.2).

Distance, and often associated costs of travel to schools further afield, were also seen by guardians as a major factor in school selection. Many guardians responded that distance limited the choice of schools that could easily be reached. Several guardians in Maban County, (former) Upper Nile state, said that their children attended the only school in the local area as others have closed and schools on the other side of the county are too far to reach. Another guardian in Maban commented that they had had to move their children due to their previous school closing, as a result of conflict and a lack of teachers.

In Western Equatoria, all guardians of pupils attending Masiya Primary School interviewed (n=3) reported having chosen to move their children to the school when it opened as the previous schools were too far away.

Quality of education a key concern for parents when making choices about schools and evidence of child's preferences being taken into account where cost and distance aren't limiting factors.

Guardians' concern about quality of education was pronounced in a number of responses, with some reporting changing schools to seek better quality of education, citing a lack of teachers and resources. Three guardians also reported changing schools at the request of their children. One guardian in Warrap said his daughter changed schools "because she was complaining a lot about the poor teaching in [name] Primary, and she was interested to shift to other school of her choice and so I accepted her choice." Another guardian in Northern Bahr el Ghazal commented that his daughter had moved his daughter to a faith-based school as she wanted to study a religious subject not offered at government schools. A guardian in Warrap also reported that they had let their children choose their own schools so that they are comfortable where they are.

Interestingly, keeping children in their current schools was also put down to ensuring educational quality by n=2 respondents, with one female guardian in Lakes explaining that she didn't think changing schools was "healthy" for her children's education. One guardian also reported that their child was enrolled at another school whilst away from home for an extended period:

“Yes, there was a time when my child went to see her aunt in Aweil town and it happened that she stayed there for very long period and my sister decided to enrol her in another school” (NBS).

## 4.4 Attitudes and education-related choices

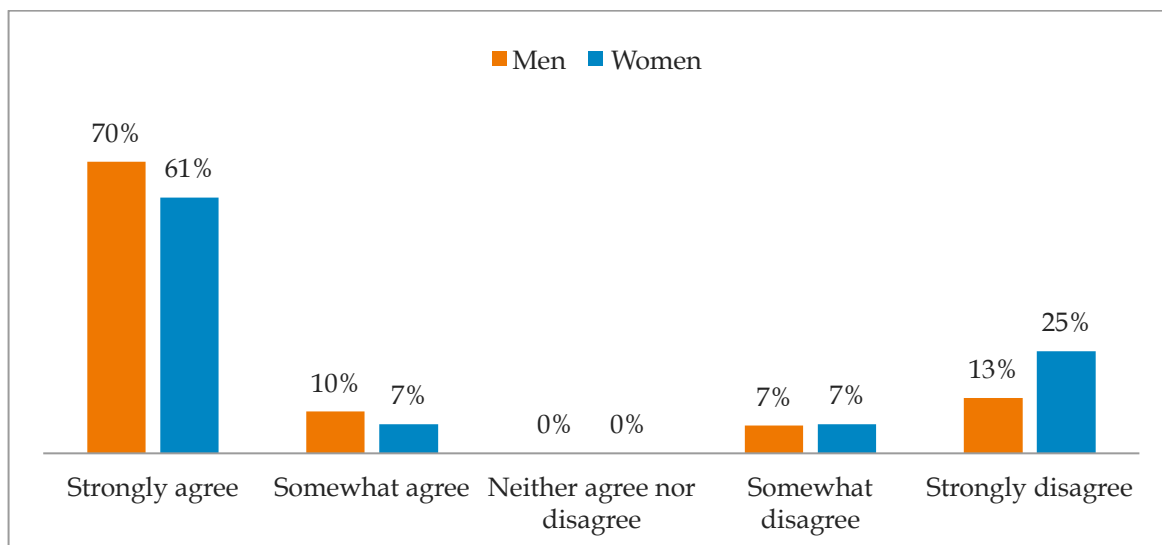
### 4.4.1 Guardians' attitudes toward school and education

Similar to Baseline findings, guardians expressed positive attitudes towards school and education and recognise the value of having educated children

Both quantitative and qualitative findings suggest that guardians and parents have an overall positive attitude toward education and appear to recognise the value of sending their children to school, even though most guardians were not educated themselves. This is in line with the results from the baseline.

Conflict, lack of available schools in the village/town and lack of money to pay for school fees were all reasons why some guardians were not able to attend school. Many guardians mentioned that school was not valued in their communities when they were growing up, and expressed regret that they had not recognised the value of school at that time. One woman in Jonglei said “I didn’t know that school will be this important [or] I wouldn’t have left school”. Cultural trends towards girls’ education were also reported to be more restrictive, and several female guardians in Lakes said that they were not allowed to attend school at that time. Another woman in Northern Bahr el Ghazal said she did not attend school because of a traditional perception that school was only meant for boys which is, according to her, a ‘wrong perception’. The fact that many guardians were able to articulate the negative attitudes towards education in the past alludes to a wider shift in attitudes towards education, and the gradual recognition of the value of education, even for girls – to which GESS Behaviour Change Communication, Community Mobilisation, and other programming may have contributed over the last three years.

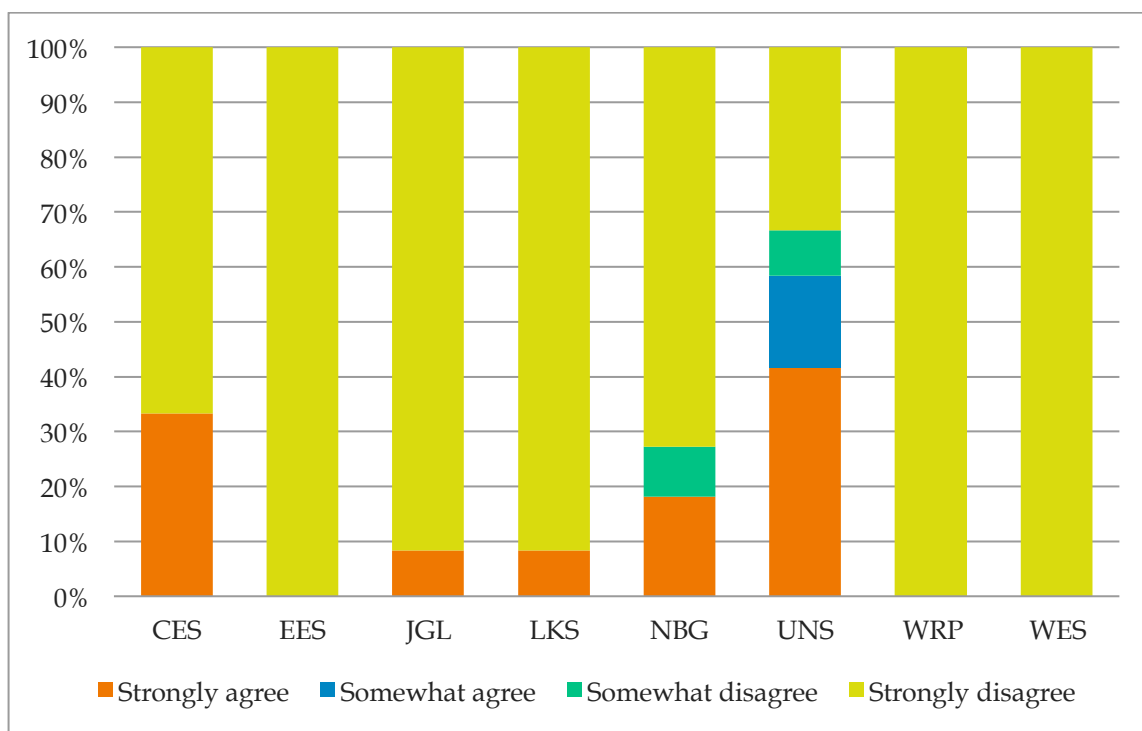
FIGURE 20 GUARDIAN OPINIONS ON SENDING THE CLEVEREST CHILD TO SCHOOL REGARDLESS OF SEX, DISAGGREGATED BY GENDER



The qualitative research suggests that the majority of parents would rather keep both girls and boys in education if it is financially possible. However, given the worsening economic climate since the baseline, the likelihood of guardians having the capacity to send all their children to school is very limited. 45% of guardians stated that if they only have enough money to send one child to school they would send their eldest child, regardless of gender.

There was a disparity between the qualitative and quantitative research regarding whether to keep girls at home once they reach 12 or 13. In the quantitative research, 70% of men and 61% of women strongly agreed that girls should be kept home when reaching 12 or 13. However, in the qualitative survey the vast majority of guardians believed girls should stay in school beyond 12 and should only do domestic work in the evenings and at the weekends. This difference may have been a result of the way the questions were structured.

FIGURE 21 PROPORTIONAL LEVEL OF GUARDIAN AGREEMENT THAT ONCE GIRLS REACH 12 OR 13 IT IS BETTER TO KEEP THEM AT HOME, DISAGGREGATED BY STATE



Future returns of education for boys and girls overwhelmingly favoured over immediate gains from children engaging in paid work

Guardians were presented with the following fictional situation;

*Imagine a man in your Payam has a 12-year-old son who attends school full-time. He badly needs his son to work full time but wants him to stay in school. What should the man do? Why?*

Respondents were asked to offer their opinion on what the man should do and why. Guardians were then asked what the man should do if he had a daughter instead of a son.

Almost every guardian commented that the child should remain in school, regardless of gender. The future returns of education, including getting a better job, being able to support the family financially, and ‘being a better person’, were frequently emphasised as reasons why boys and girls should be kept in school. Furthermore, in contrast to the findings from the baseline, in which guardians from Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Lakes reported higher levels of gender-based discrimination against girls, only one guardian, in Lakes, argued that girls should remain at home as “she will soon be mature and get married”. The fact that no other guardian mentioned marriage or dowry as a reason to take the daughter out of school may suggest that the future returns from dowry payment, have become less of a push factor. Additionally, far fewer parents emphasised the importance of

education for increasing the value of their daughter for marriage than did in the baseline, suggesting an attitudinal shift.

TABLE 6 SAMPLE ADVICE GIVEN BY GUARDIANS WHEN ASKED WHETHER 12 YEAR OLD BOY OR GIRL SHOULD REMAIN IN SCHOOL OR GO TO WORK

Response to son	Response to daughter
“If it was during 90s I would have forced the child to quit school because we use to depend on our sons to do everything, school wasn’t this important. school was only for this people who has money and many children, now I can encourage him to stay at school to secure a better future to help himself and his brothers if he graduated.” (female guardian, Jonglei)	“The man should leave the girl to study and support her fully to finish her studies. There is no difference between a boy and a girl [although] due to lack of resources we give boys the priority to go to school sometimes. Girls can do what boys can do, girls could get better jobs if they get support and a chance to finish school” (female guardian, Jonglei)
“The son should better stay in school so that he will be better in future and get more than what he is getting now” (female guardian, Central Equatoria)	“[The] man should leave his daughter to study in school and look for someone who will work for him because school is a key to successful life” (female guardian, Northern Bahr el Ghazal)
“He should keep his child at school first because he will earn more money after studies” (male guardian, Lakes)	“The man can leave the daughter to continue with her education to be full time in school. Education will make a girl a better person when she completes in, and the father can be proud of her later after the school” (male guardian, Warrap)
“That man should look for another alternative to cater for the work to be done and leaves his son to attend school, because education is a source of wealth in the long run as opposed to this short term work” (male guardian, Northern Bahr el Ghazal)	“She should go to school because if she stay at school she will not get married, so it is not good for her to go [to] work when she is young” (female guardian, Central Equatoria)
“If the work requires the son he can take, maybe if he is the only boy in the house...he has no any other options” (female guardian, Upper Nile)	“The man should restrict the girl to only work at home because she will soon be mature and get married” (male guardian, Lakes)

Some guardians did acknowledge that the ongoing financial crisis may mean that the father in the scenario has to compromise, for example by asking the child to work in the afternoon or at weekends, but all emphasised that education remains the primary priority.

Several guardians also commented on the age of the child as being ‘too young to leave school’ or ‘too young for work’. It would be interesting to repeat the scenario exercise with a girl of 15, who may be nearer to marriageable age, to see if the answers remain the same.



Pressure from the community to send children to school appears less of a motivating factor amongst guardians since the baseline

Whilst respondents acknowledged that there were no legal consequences they knew of for not sending their children to school, some guardians commented that they would lose the respect of the community. Being ‘shamed’, ‘isolated’ and even fined by community leaders were cited as consequences in some states:

“You may be fined and may be rejected to participate or speak in community meetings and social gathering[s]” (male guardian, Eastern Equatoria)

“If I fail to send my children to school, people in my community will not respect me but instead view me as someone who doesn’t care about the welfare of my children” (male guardian, Northern Bahr el Ghazal)

However it appears that these views are less prevalent than they were during the Baseline with many guardians arguing that the lack of money is so widespread that no one in the community expects them to pay for education anymore:

“No one in South Sudan cares about another person’s child not going to school because there are a lot of challenges especially for us here - girls are getting married at early age, lack of good schools and lack of money to cater for school needs” (male guardian, Upper Nile)

“If I can no longer manage to pay [for] my children it’s not my fault” (female guardian, Western Equatoria)

This again points to the rising cost of education over the last two years, which, against the backdrop of the ongoing financial crisis in South Sudan, has meant that households simply cannot afford to send children to school.

#### 4.4.2 Guardian perceptions of school

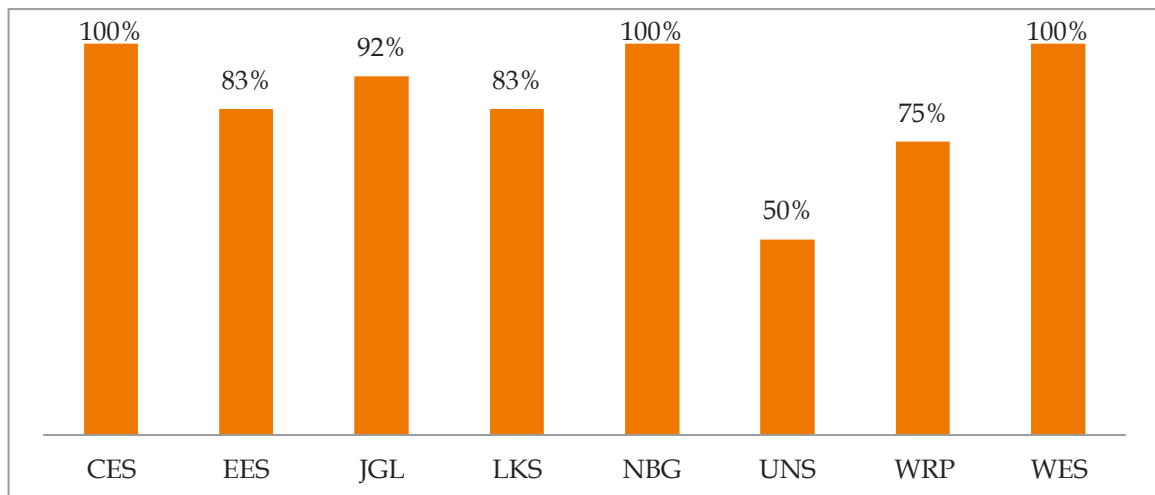
Teachers working despite low salaries, affordable school fees (particularly in government schools) and nearby location were the three best elements of local schools, as cited by guardians.

There was clearly a high regard for teachers amongst most guardians surveyed and an appreciation for the work that teachers do, despite “not being paid regularly” (female guardian, Northern Bahr el Ghazal). One parent in Lakes stated that teachers “are working tirelessly to transform the community through education”.

85% (n=74) guardians believed that the teachers in their child’s school are good teachers. Furthermore 31% (n=27) guardians made direct reference to the good

standard of teaching at their child’s school during the IDIs. The exception to this appears to be Upper Nile, where guardians frequently cited the poor quality of teaching as one of the worst things about schools in their area: “Our schools here only have good buildings but no good teachers” (male guardian, Upper Nile). The below graph illustrates this; only 50% of parents in Upper Nile stated that their child’s school had good teachers, in contrast to all other states where at least two thirds of respondents were positive about the standard of teaching in their child’s school.

FIGURE 22 PERCENTAGE OF PARENTS WHO BELIEVE THE TEACHERS IN THEIR CHILD’S SCHOOL ARE GOOD TEACHERS



Low school fees were also frequently cited as a positive, particularly by guardians with children in government schools; “in government schools we don’t pay much” (female guardian, Jonglei).

Almost all guardians mentioned the close proximity of school as a key reason why they sent their children there, both because it means that children can easily come home to eat at lunch time, and because it is relatively safe for children to travel to school without adult supervision. However, given the purposive sampling method of choosing households close-by to the schools in the sample, this is both unsurprising, and unlikely to be nationally representative.

Parents in Northern Bahr el Ghazal also drew attention to the positive impact of education on the community by improving employment opportunities and promoting peace and unity among communities. One female guardian stated “schools are good in our area simply because they have yielded graduates who now have good jobs”.

Few and absent teachers, unqualified teachers and lack of lessons were some of the key dissatisfactions with schools reported by guardians

Both the low numbers of teachers and absent teachers were cited by guardians as things they disliked about schools in their area. Guardians further commented

that local schools lack *qualified* teachers. 29% (n=25) of guardians identified unqualified teachers as a major concern in schools in their area. Some guardians even cited the prevalence of unqualified teachers as a reason why pupils drop out, saying “what knowledge can a teacher who has not even completed primary give to a pupil?” (male guardian, Upper Nile).

This negative opinion of teachers’ skills is potentially linked to the growing prevalence of volunteer teachers across the country as more and more qualified teachers leave the profession due to low and absent salary payment. Indeed, several guardians made direct reference to the lack of teacher pay as the main reason why teachers were absent. One guardian from Eastern Equatoria further commented that the quality of teaching had reduced “compared to previous years” which may be linked to the reduction in the number of qualified teachers that has occurred in 2016, and has been recorded in the School Survey.

Linked to this, guardians also expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of lessons taking place in schools. Several guardians commented that pupils spend too much time playing in the school compound rather than sitting in lessons. One male respondent stated “whenever I pass I see pupils in the compound” (male guardian, Jonglei).

Insecurity, prevalence of corporal punishment and lack of free school meals were also key complaints amongst guardians. One guardian commented “families these days are lacking food due to poor harvest, it’s difficult for a hungry child to sit in class and pay attention to what the teacher teaching”

### Guardians’ top priorities for school improvement relate to number and quality of teachers

Following on from questions, we asked guardians what changes they thought would make schools in their areas better.

As in the Baseline, the most frequent responses given related to having better qualified or trained teachers (n=39 responses). This fits with the main areas of dissatisfaction expressed by guardians. Having more teachers in school was also a frequently given answer (n=23)

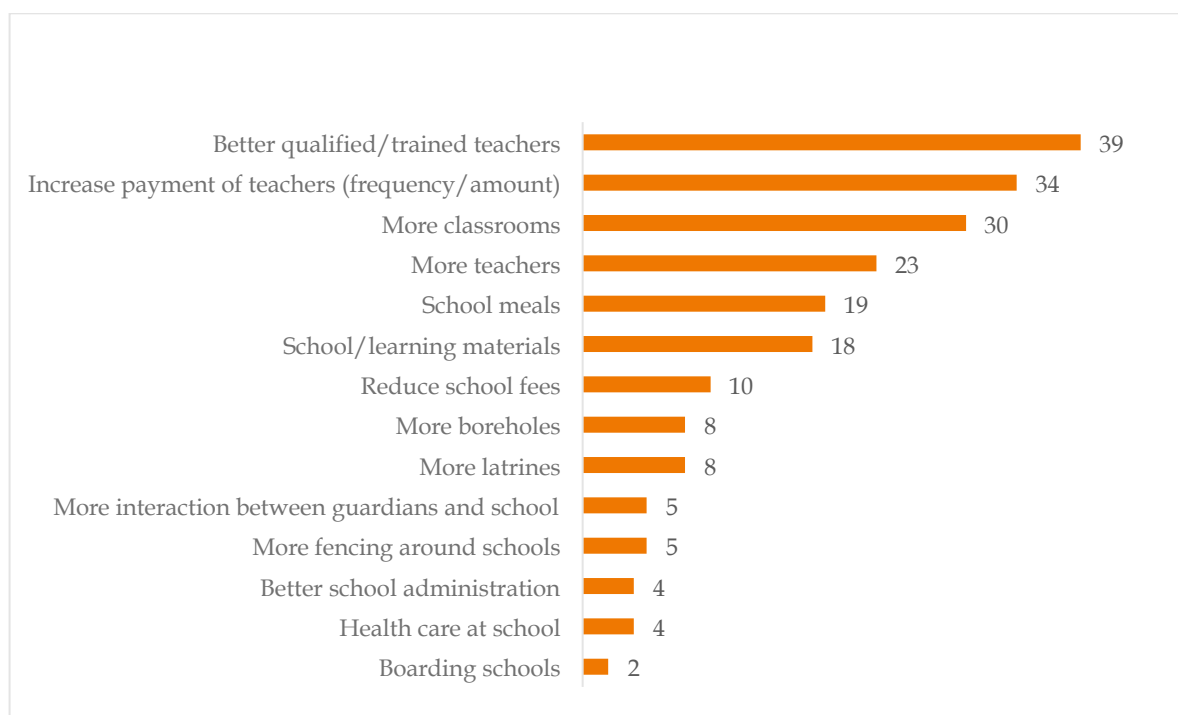
The second most common response was that the value and frequency of teacher salaries should be improved (n=34) which is a marked increase from the Baseline (n=13) and reflects the increasing delay in payment and decrease in real value of teachers wages since 2014. Parents were particularly concerned that lack of payment is impacting on teaching quality and school performance.

A particularly common response was that teachers need to be paid every month to help them focus on teaching. One guardian commented that the government should increase the salaries of the teachers “to discourage them from resignation and frustration” (Female guardian, NBG). Several guardians also commented that

parents should be prepared to give contributions to teachers to keep them in school. One guardian also suggested parents support the cause by petitioning the government on behalf of teaching staff:

"Parents Teacher Association can also call upon the government to intervene in paying teachers so that to discourage them from quitting teaching career" (Male guardian, NBG).

FIGURE 23 NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS TO SCHOOLS, AS REPORTED BY GUARDIANS BY FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE



Construction of classrooms less of a concern in areas that have regularly received Capitation Grants

Whilst construction or repair of classrooms was frequently cited as something that guardians felt would improve schools (n=30), such responses were overwhelmingly from (former) Lakes, Warrap and Upper Nile states. These are areas where there have been difficulties in paying Capitation Grants due to insecurity, inaccessibility or issues with GRSS funds reaching school accounts. As a result, schools in these areas would not have received as many Capitation Grant payments as schools in the other states which, by the time of the Midline Survey, would have received funds in both 2014 and 2015, providing eligibility and accountability measures were met.

The Midline School Survey interviewed Head Teachers about what schools were spending Capitation Grant money and for both the 2014 and 2015 payments, use of Capitation Grants for classroom construction, maintenance and improvement was the most common reported use, after payment of volunteer teachers. It was also reported that use of permanent structures and materials increased over use of

local materials/shelters between 2015 and 2014. This would support the idea that construction of classrooms is less of a concern in areas that have regularly received Capitation Grants, especially compared with the Baseline where it was recorded as the second most common response from across all states.

### 4.4.3 Children's attitudes toward school and education

Future benefits of education on family and employment opportunities cited as major reason why children like going to school

When asked to describe what they most like about school all of the children responded with 'learning' and 'gaining knowledge'. The children express a keen awareness of education being the key to their future. When asked how they could best achieve their goals, all the children stated that education was a necessity to getting good careers. Similarly to the baseline, out of the children who wanted to get jobs, skilled professionals and civil servants were the most popular choice of career. The most popular choice for girls and boys (43%, n=76) was to be doctors or nurses, followed by teachers (n=22) and pilots (n=9). Several students also expressed an interest in politics, with 10 students stating they would like to become ministers and 6 students aspiring to become the president.

As well as future careers, the desire to help their parents was the secondary reason children cited for going to school, with comments such as, "I like school because I want to be educated to help my parents in taking up their parental responsibilities". It appears to be important to children that they bring positive change to their families and they see education as the way to achieve this.

Lack of financial resources the key reason for children no longer attending school

Asides from early marriage and pregnancy in the case of girls, the explanation given for why boys and girls do not attend school were similar. Reasons included, poor family finances, falling in with a bad peer group, a lack of parental engagement and domestic duties. Out of the children (n=20) who were not attending school, most have dropped out because their parents could not afford the schools fees (n=16), early pregnancy was cited by 2 students and there were a small number of children (n=2) who had never attended school because of a lack of financial resources.

A wide range of explanations are provided for why children miss school, with 52 children not attending school or arriving late because of domestic and agricultural duties, particularly during the rainy season, 44 missing school because of not being able to paying school fees and 38 pupils missing school for not having the correct uniform.

## Punishment remains the main aspect of school children dislike

As in the baseline, children continue to cite punishment as the main explanation for why they dislike school. There were a range of reasons children had been punished, including being late to school, wearing the incorrect uniform and fighting in the playground. Forms of punishment include caning and menial tasks, such as slashing the grass in the playground and cleaning the classroom. Children also cite violence amongst children, such as fighting in the playground, as a reason they dislike school.

Students complained about a lack of teachers in school, with 21 children citing this as a reason for their dislike of school. Other children mentioned teachers not turning up to class as a cause of frustration. One child reports that teachers are drunk while in class. Several students also report being hungry as a cause of their dislike of school.

## Children are reporting largely positive developments in the standard of their schools

17 children felt that the teaching has improved in their schools because of better training, but some children have also reported that there has been a decline in the consistency of teaching because teachers are moving out and into the area due to displacement. Opinion was split on whether the quality of teaching had improved, but children in Central Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria, Lakes, Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Western Equatoria largely gave positive responses on the teaching. However, children in Warrap reported no changes to the teaching standards.

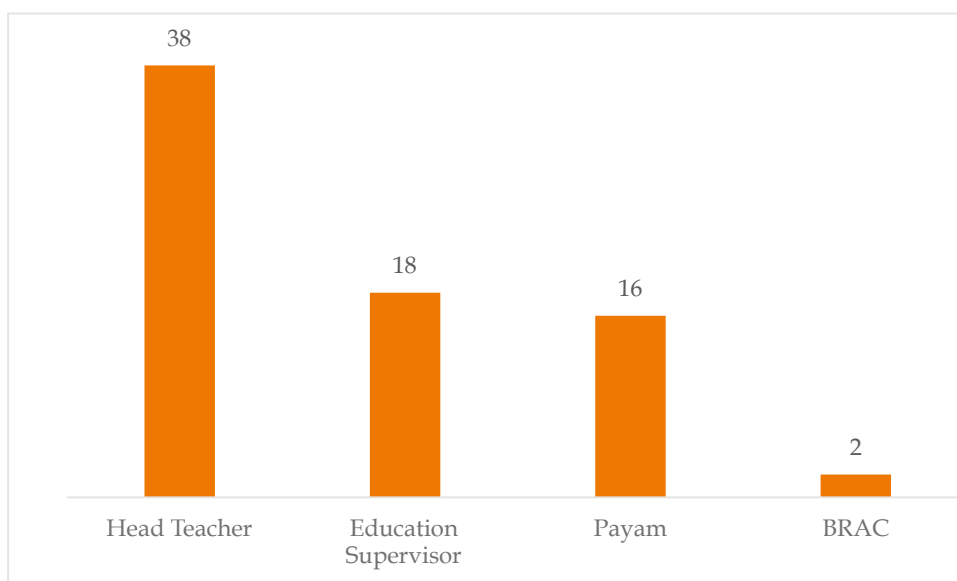
Overall children stated that their learning environment has positively changed, such as having new blackboards, tables and educational resources. The majority of children were unaware as to whether their schools have received capitation grants, but some children stated that repairs have been carried out on school buildings. Several children cited the conflict as the cause of changes within the school, such as damage to the school building and the displacement of teachers. 16 children believed the conflict was causing school fees and the cost of uniforms to increase. Several children stated that their school buildings had improved because of NGOs providing support. One child stated that the “changes happen due to UKAID and pressure from the community that every parent should send his/her child to school”.

While overall children are aware of changes in the school, the majority of children are not aware of the management structures of the school, with 63% (n=109) citing no awareness of the governing body. The children who did know about school governance often had parents in the PTA.

52 children had experienced their classes being observed at least once. Largely these observations were carried out by the head teacher, but 18 children reported having class observations by an education supervisor, 16 children had classes

observed by Payam official and 2 reported BRAC representatives observing their classes.

FIGURE 24 BREAKDOWN OF WHO CARRIED OUT CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS, AS REPORTED BY CHILDREN



Whilst radio access is low, children who have listened to the 'Our School' radio programme give overwhelmingly positive feedback

Whilst the majority of children surveyed reported that they did not have access to a radio at home, of the children that reported listening to the radio (n=82), 65.9 % (n=52) said they had listened to the 'Our School' radio programme and 98% (n=53) of these listeners gave positive feedback on its content and impact, particularly about how it had encouraged them to attend school and work hard. One girl said "Our School is talking about the importance of education. I have developed interest of going to school everyday and avoid absenteeism because of listening to our School Programme." (girl, (former) Eastern Equatoria). Many children also reported that it had encouraged their parents and communities to support them in going to school, particularly girls. One boy reported that, whilst he himself did not have access to a radio, his friend tells him about the 'Our School' programme and he found the content encouraging.

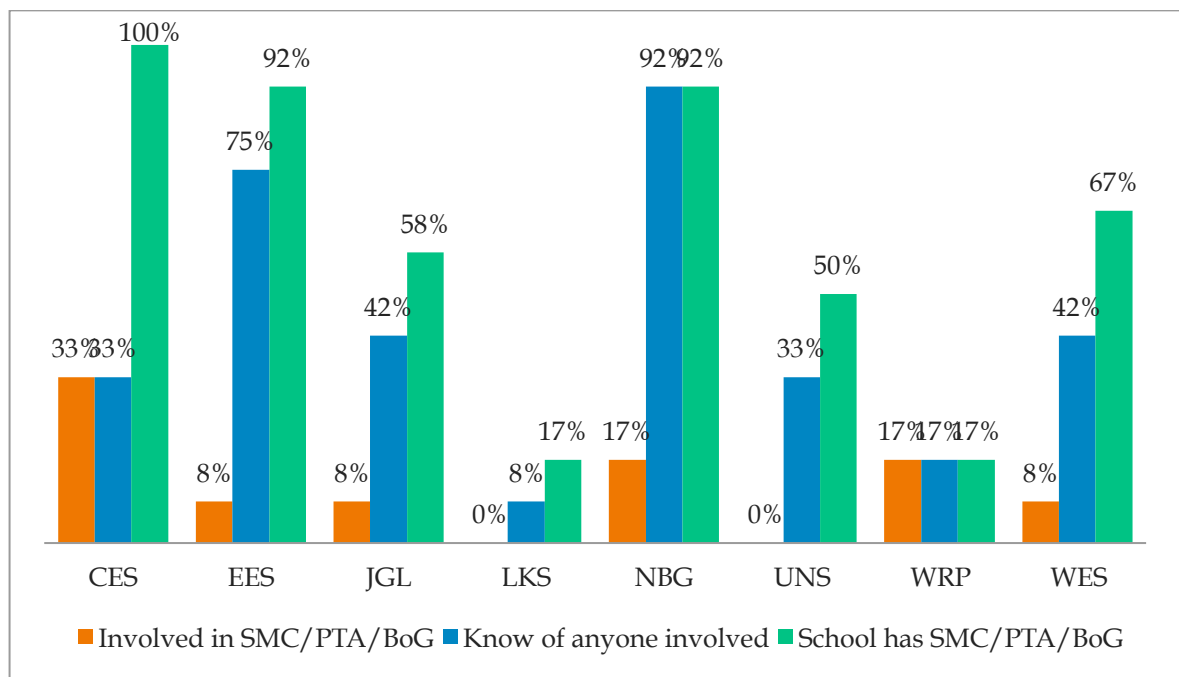
#### 4.4.4 Parent's involvement in children's education

The proportion of parents visiting their children's school at least once remains the same as in the Baseline

75% (n=65) of guardians said they have visited their child's school at least once, a figure which is similar to that of the baseline,. 26% (n=23) had received a visit from a member of the school, most commonly by a teacher (16%, n=14). The low levels of parental contact should not necessarily be interpreted as a lack of interest in their children's studies. The low proportions of parents who went to school mean that they are in a weaker position to help explain or translate difficult concepts than elder siblings, who are more likely to have been to school and be able to provide more useful guidance. In the qualitative interviews, parents expressed a commitment to their children's education, with one parent saying that "Education is the key for them, they can become doctors or even a president for the nation" (Parent from Central Equatoria).

Low parental involvement in school boards does not immediately indicate low engagement, but may be related to parent's education history

FIGURE 25 EXTENT TO WHICH GUARDIANS ARE INVOLVED IN THE SMC/PTA/BOG AT THEIR CHILD'S SCHOOL



Only 17% of guardians (n=15) said that they had heard of the School Development Plan and the number of parents that are involved with the SMC/PTA/BoG are also low. The parents that are involved with the SMC/PTA/BoG participate in a range of activities, including conducting meetings for school development, monitoring students' performance and observing lessons. The low levels of education amongst the parents may suggest they are not confident of being



capable of being formally involved. The qualitative research suggests that the vast majority of parents regularly discuss their children's education with spouses or extended family members. Many parents believed it was important to discuss the education with the whole family, with one father saying, "I always talk with my wife to discuss how important school is and how children should learn to know well the reason why they are sent to school" (male guardian, Northern Bahr el Ghazal)

Outside of the family the community at large is a space which parents use to discuss their children's education and to find out what is happening in schools, particularly through trusted community members, such as church elders, teachers and neighbours. One mother said "I get information about education from people who listen to radio, community leader when there is a ceremony/meeting here in the community. The trusted sources of information are the community leaders" (a mother from Warrap). Some parents do not discuss their children's education outside of the family, believing that family matters should be kept private. However, these parents are in the minority.

Largely direct parental support, such as visits to the school or membership of a school governance body, is low. However, this may be related to parents' education history, or lack of it, and/or lack of confidence in their ability to engage. As highlighted in the above section on 'Guardian's Attitudes toward School and Education', the majority of parents understand education to be very important to their children's future, but their capacity to actively engage with the school is reduced by their own educational ability.

# 5. Conclusions and recommendations

## Household financial decisions and cost of education

The cost of education has increased by almost 400% over the last two years in SSP terms, and 63% (n=55) of guardians reported that school fees had increased over the last 2 years. Given the vast change in the economic climate since the baseline, it is unsurprised that guardians are finding it challenging to send all of their children to school. Education still regarded as important by guardians and, despite the high cost, education is on average the second highest priority for household spending after food. This is an increase from the baseline, where education was the third in household spending priorities. As in the case of the baseline, the disparity between household income and the rising cost of education makes financial concerns a significant aspect of the household survey. The reduction of school fees would make it easier on families to afford educational costs.

## Impact of Capitation Grants and Cash Transfers

This survey has highlighted significantly higher levels of awareness of Capitation Grants and Cash Transfers amongst guardians since the baseline, although there remains some confusion between the components. However, largely guardians were aware of positive changes to school infrastructure.

There is substantial evidence that Cash Transfer money has had a positive and tangible impact at the household level. In particular it has reduced pressure on guardian spending on both education-related and non-related items, including food and medicine.

## School going behaviour (attendance, absence, dropping out, changing schools)

As discussed previously, the lack of financial resources amongst families is the most commonly reported reasons for drop-out and low attendance amongst students, as many children are simply unable to pay for tuition fees and the related costs of education.

The second and third most commonly reported reasons for drop outs and low attendance were specific to girls, namely domestic responsibilities and early marriage. Girls regularly cited arriving to school and skipping days due to domestic duties at home, such as cooking, cleaning and looking after young siblings. Sickness was also regularly reported as a cause of absence, amongst both girls and boys. However, menstruation was not mentioned as a factor, despite follow up by the interviewer. This is in contrast to the baseline, in which it was believed that sickness was used as a euphemism for menstruation. Other than a

few girls mentioning being teased by boys, menstruation was not reported as a major issue for girls in school.

In the case of families with multiple wives, generally most guardians believed this should not affect the prioritisation of which child to send to school. However, those guardians that did believe multiple wives affected child prioritisation, they believed it should be the children of the first wife. This was particularly the case in Eastern Equatoria and Jonglei.

### Attitudes to education remain very positive

Both children and guardians expressed overwhelmingly positive attitudes towards school. Children enjoy going to school, mixing with other children and learning new subjects. Guardians also believe that education is the key to their future, hoping that their children will be able to provide for them in their old age. The future benefits of education on family and employment opportunities were the major reasons why children enjoy going to school.

There is a high level of respect for the teachers and their teaching performance, which reflects that despite the reduced effective value of teachers' remuneration and, in many cases, not receiving salaries for many months, teachers are generally committed to their profession and in trying their best to improve quality of education. That being said, a key area of dissatisfaction amongst guardians and many students was the lack of teachers in the schools and often unqualified, volunteer teachers being depended upon.