



RESEARCH BRIEF

No. 07 - 2016

HOUSEHOLD SURVEY: Midline



Knowledge, Evidence & Research

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



Methodology

The Household survey used both quantitative and qualitative methods. 12 households per State were selected purposively, and all 10 (former) States had the same sample size, to ensure adequate representation. Within each selected household, quantitative surveys were conducted with guardians and in-depth interviews were conducted with 1 parent or guardian, 1 older child (13-18), and 1 younger child (6- 12). Focus group participants were selected based on a purposive sample of community members with children of school age. A total of 87 quantitative surveys, 279 in-depth interviews and 29 focus group discussions were conducted in nine States. An upsurge in conflict meant that data could not be collected from (former)

Unity State and was limited in (former) Central Equatoria.



Household Survey Objectives

The objective of the Household survey is to get an in-depth picture of the sensitive and complex nature of household decisions about money, gender relationships and power structures that affect education, as well as the experiences of students. In particular, the Household Survey captured data in the following areas:

- Financial management by households and girls;
- Educational choices by households and girls; and
- Barriers to attending school.

Executive Summary

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

of Capitation Grant money; Cash Transfers to girls have reduced pressure on guardian spending on both education related and non-related items and the Our School radio programme has encouraged children regarding the importance of working hard and attending school regularly.

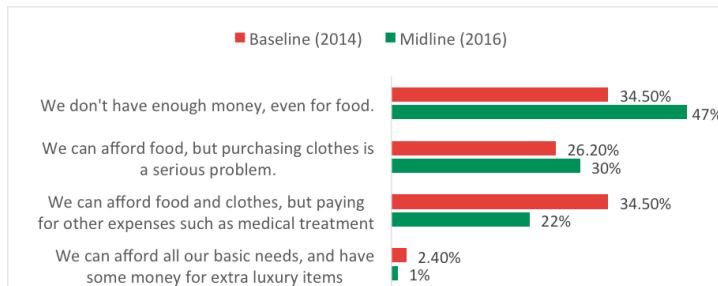


Key Findings

Average reported cost (in SSP) of schooling in 2016 is 400% of the equivalent figure in 2014, but education remains a priority for household spending, despite increasingly fragile household finances

95% of guardians reported 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 risen significantly. Additionally, 63% (n=55) of guardians said that they had observed a noticeable increase in school fees over the last 2 years. Despite the high costs, education remains on average the second highest priority for household spending after food, even though the average household's financial situation has become more fragile since the Baseline.

Comparison of Household financial situation between Baseline and Midline, as reported by guardians



Lack of money, domestic responsibilities and marriage are reasons for drop-out; sickness main reason for absence

Both guardians and older children cited financial constraints as a major barrier to attending school regularly. Lack of money was the most common reason cited by guardians for why both boys and girls drop out of school. The second most common responses were gender specific to girls; 68% of guardians said that girls may drop out because of domestic responsibilities, and 69% cited marriage. It is likely that marriage is an economic coping mechanism for households. The most common reason for absence is sickness, although absence, particularly of boys, is also common from May-August due to cultivation. Menstruation was not cited as a reason for sickness absence (this point was specifically addressed with a follow-up question).

As in the Baseline there is limited follow up by schools when

children are absent with 86% of guardians reporting that they had children out of school, but had never received a visit from a member of either the school or local government.

Positive attitudes towards school and teachers amongst guardians, although dissatisfaction with lack of teachers and unqualified teachers

Guardians expressed positive attitudes towards school and there was recognition of the value of education amongst guardians, often stated in contrast to not having valued education when they were of school-age themselves.

"I didn't know that school will be this important (or) I wouldn't have left school."

Female guardian, (former) Jonglei

There was recognition of teachers working despite low salaries, with some suggestion that Cash Transfers should be extended to teachers alongside students. However, although 85% of guardians stated that they believe the teachers at their child's school to be 'good', lack of teachers and unqualified teachers were key areas of guardian dissatisfaction.

Positive attitudes to school linked to future aspirations of children; physical punishment and absent teachers the main dissatisfactions

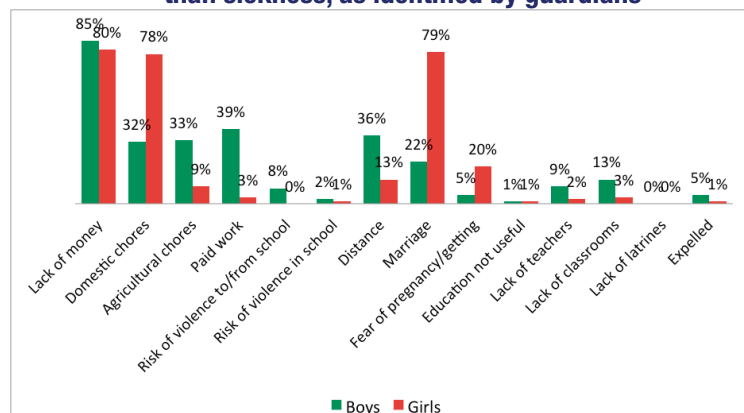
Children also had a positive attitude towards education with future benefits of education on family and employment opportunities cited as major reason why they like going to school. 'Learning' and 'playing with other children' were identified by younger children as things they like about school.

"School give you the opportunity to interact with many people, it makes it easier to get a job, and it instils discipline."

- Girl, (former) Eastern Equatoria

Physical punishment and absent teachers were most common reported dissatisfactions with school.

Reasons why boys and girls might miss school other than sickness, as identified by guardians





Evidence to suggest GESS initiatives have had a positive effect on household financial situations, improving learning environments and encouraging children in terms of their education.

Guardians reported notable differences in school facilities and an increase in the number of teachers as a result of Capitation Grant money.

Qualitative interviews suggest Cash Transfers to girls have had a positive, tangible impact at the household level and have 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 benefited the whole household and reduced the burden of paying for school fees, scholastic materials, soap and gender-specific items such as sanitary pads for girls.

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.

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.
- Personal and family sickness was the main reason reported for absence, and this matches findings from the School Survey. A logical recommendation would be to 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 practical step.
- Households that can, confirm that they listen to, and value Our School: Continue broadcasting of behavioural change communications and increase coverage of Our School programme, in more languages, and by looking into 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.

INSPIRE EDUCATE TRANSFORM



AIM

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

MANAGEMENT

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

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