Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS): Household Survey Endline Report

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Knowledge, Evidence and 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, lessons learned to inform future programmes and other contexts. The KER programme 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 Schools' Attendance Monitoring System (SSSAMS), twice yearly through Longitudinal Qualitative Survey (LQS), yearly through the School Sample Survey, and then has set piece Baseline (2014), Midline (2016), and Endline (2018) survey waves.

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List of Abbreviations

ARCISS	Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan

BoG	Board of Governors
CED	County Education Department
CES	(former) Central Equatoria State
CG	Capitation Grant
CT	Cash Transfer
DFID	UK Department for International Development
EES	(former) Eastern Equatoria State
ESOMAR	European Society for Opinion and Market Research
ETMC	Education Transfers Monitoring Committee
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GESS	Girls' Education South Sudan programme
GRSS	Government of the Republic of South Sudan
GUN	Greater Upper Nile
IDI	In-Depth Interview
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
JGL	(former) Jonglei State
KER	Knowledge, Evidence and Research
LKS	(former) Lakes State
LQS	Longitudinal Qualitative Survey

MoGEI	Ministry of General Education and Instruction
NBG	(former) Northern Bahr el Ghazal State
OOS	Out of School
PEO	Payam Education Office
PES	Payam Education Supervisor
PLE	Primary Leaving Examination
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
SCE	Secondary Certificate Examination
SMC	School Management Committee
SMoGEI	State Ministry of General Education and Instruction
SPLA-IO	Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition
SSP	South Sudan Pound
SAMS	South Sudan Schools' Attendance Monitoring System
TPD	Teacher Professional Development
UNS	(former) Upper Nile State
UTY	(former) Unity State
WBG	(former) Western Bahr el Ghazal State
WES	(former) Western Equatoria State
WRP	(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 GESS programme aims to transform a generation of South Sudanese girls by increasing access to quality education. One of the strategic objectives of MoGEI is to eliminate barriers to girls' education and promote gender equality throughout the education system.

Research for the overall Programme has taken place in three phases: Baseline (2014), Midline (2016), and Endline (2018). This report summarises the findings from the Household Survey. For the sake of comparability, the structure of the Endline survey remains very similar to that of the Baseline, incorporating recommendations and additions developed through discussions with MoGEI.

This Endline report presents the combined findings of the quantitative and qualitative Household Survey and the findings of community focus group discussions 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.

Key Findings

Household financial decisions and cost of education	Average reported costs in South Sudanese Pounds (SSP) for schooling in 2018 are eight times higher than at the Midline; there has been a 2.2x rise in costs of schooling to guardians in effective value terms. Education is still regarded as important by guardians, and despite increasingly fragile household finances, guardians report that spending on education remains a priority.
Impact of Cash Transfers (CT)s and Capitation Grants (CGs)	Comparable levels of awareness of Cash Transfers (CTs), and a slight reduction in awareness of Capitation Grants (CGs) since the Midline. 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. Significant anxiety amongst guardians and children about the end of the GESS programme, and thus the end of CTs.
School-going behaviour	Lack of money the most commonly reported reason for drop-out and low attendance.

(attendance, absence, drop-out, changing schools)	Second and third most commonly-reported reasons were specific to girls: domestic responsibilities and marriage. Sickness most commonly-reported reason for absence.
Attitudes to education	Both children and guardians expressed overwhelmingly positive attitudes towards school. High level of respect for teachers who were working despite low/absent salaries, but lack of teachers, and unqualified (volunteer) teachers a key area of dissatisfaction amongst guardians. Future benefits of education on family and employment opportunities cited as major reason why children like going to school. Guardians would prefer all their children to attend school regardless of gender; in constrained circumstances, guardians are more likely to choose the child they see as the most intelligent or the oldest child to attend.

TABLE 1 KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BASELINE. MIDLINE AND ENDLINE FINDINGS

Baseline	Midline	Endline
Average reported annual cost of sending one child to school is 326.5SSP ($72.5).	Average reported annual cost of sending one child to school is 1,170SSP ($16.72).	Average reported annual cost of sending one child to school is 35,434 ($141.74) SSP[1].
Poor-quality classrooms and few materials were guardians' major criticisms of local schools.	Lack of teachers and unqualified volunteer teachers were guardians' major criticisms.	Lack of teachers and unqualified volunteer teachers remain guardians' major criticisms.
27% of guardians aware of CGs and 13% aware of CTs.	52% of guardians aware of CGs and 89% aware of CTs.	39% of guardians aware of CGs and 86% aware of CTs.
No reported impact of CTs at household level (Baseline was carried out before first CTs were paid).	75% of households who have received CTs said that the money has had a noticeably positive impact at the household level.	All households who have received CTs 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	Families more likely to choose the oldest or the child believed to be the most intelligent as a priority for education.

[1]Using market exchange rate of USD 1:4.5 SSP from mid-2014, USD 1:70 SSP from mid-2016, and USD 1:250 SSP from April 2018

	school, most notably in former Eastern Equatoria State (EES).	

Key Recommendations

- CTs have a major impact on household choices about schooling: ensure CTs are funded and delivered in the transition to GESS2, particularly in the context of the reported increasing fragility of household finances compared to Midline and Baseline, and specifically in the context of the limited remaining time to deliver 2018 CTs. Look to increase value amounts and sustainability of CTs to girls under GESS2, and explore the option of providing similar CT for more year groups, and for boys who are marginalised/vulnerable.
- School fees persist in government schools despite MoGEI directives, indicative of the few sources of funding available to these schools in the context of depreciating CG value amounts: consider increasing school CG value amount levels to help to reduce the high cost barriers to education.
- Despite overall improvements in reported attitudes to girls' education from households (corroborated by teachers in the School Survey), positive attitudes are still weighted towards primary level; in the same vein, the costs of education were reported to be much higher by older children than younger ones. Consider providing more support for secondary school girls, who have higher monetary needs and face more pressure to drop out.
- Personal and family sickness was the main reason reported for absence, which has been consistent since the Baseline, and 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.
- Hunger was one of the most commonly-reported reasons for disliking attending school, and on average, households report having enough food on only 3.97 days out of 7. Given the increasingly fragile economic situation of most households, consider linking educational programmes more closely with nutrition programmes and school feeding.
- More training is needed for 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, and operational resources to actually do so; in qualitative interviews from Round 3 and 4 of the Longitudinal Qualitative Survey (LQS),

teachers and School Management Committee (SMC) members report that follow-up from teachers/SMC members on absent children is effective at limiting drop-out rates.

- A commonly reported reason for disliking school was poor quality of education and absence of teachers. To reduce teacher absence and staff turnover in schools, provide specific training for volunteer teachers, and pathways into longer term service, as well as increasing the frequency and depth of Teacher Professional Development (TPD) training to ensure what is being taught is of high quality.
- Households that can, confirm that they listen to and value the "Our School" radio programme: continue broadcasting behavioural change communications, increase the coverage of the "Our School" programme, in more languages, and consider the provision of low-cost radios for schools to increase opportunities for children who do not have access to a radio at home to join in with "Our School" programming.
- During the Endline, we added questions which attempted to tease out attitude changes amongst guardians and learners in more detail. Overall, since the Baseline there have been positive movements in guardians' attitudes towards girls' education specifically, and the value of education more broadly, which could be a product of GESS behaviour and social change programmes.

1. Background

1.1 The GESS programme in South Sudan

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 MoGEI and funded by UK aid. 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 Mott MacDonald/Cambridge Education (lead), BBC Media Action, Charlie Goldsmith Associates and Winrock International.

GESS 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 the Government of the Republic of South Sudan (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. Knowledge, Evidence and Research (KER) - increased knowledge and evidence of what works to promote girls' education in South Sudan.

The GESS programme was designed in 2012, shortly after South Sudan gained independence, and was officially launched in April 2013. The Programme is monitored and evaluated on the basis of several tools, including the Household Survey.

1.2 An update on the South Sudanese context since the Baseline and Midline Reports

The security and economic situation in South Sudan has deteriorated significantly since the Baseline. Despite this, enrolment has increased by 800,000 over the last five years; however, up to 2.4 million South Sudanese children are still not in schools within the country.[2]

The context in which GESS operates has deteriorated since 2014, as the dynamics of the conflict that broke out in December 2013 have shifted, and the economy has collapsed. Fighting was initially concentrated in the Greater Upper Nile region, but later spread to areas that had previously been relatively stable, in particular the Equatorias and former Western Bahr el Ghazal (WBG) State. This resulted in mass displacement both within South Sudan and into bordering countries, 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, and the intensification of the conflict elsewhere. In July 2018, the number of South Sudanese seeking refuge in neighbouring countries stood at 2.47 million, with an additional 1.74 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).[3]

This deterioration in the security and humanitarian situation has taken place against a backdrop of economic collapse. The fall in oil production has severely eroded the Government of South Sudan's chief source of revenue; meanwhile inflation has accelerated, with the effective South Sudanese Pound (SSP):USD exchange rate increasing from 4.61:1 in September 2014 to 76:1 in

[2] https://www.unicef.org/southsudan/media_21715.html
[3] Figures taken from OCHA's South Sudan Humanitarian Bulleting, July 15 2018, available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/20180716_OCHA_SouthSudan_Humanitarian_Bulletin%236.pdf

September 2016, and beyond 300:1 in early 2018. This has had a strongly negative impact on education delivery as a whole, eroding the value of teachers' salaries and affecting the ability of schools to execute their budgets.

While the education sector has continued to operate, its ability to do so effectively has been hampered by the challenging security and economic context. As at August 2018, there were over 4,000 schools open in South Sudan, with 1,705,433 pupils enrolled, taught by around 40,000 full-time teachers, according to data on the SAMS (www.sssams.org - the near real-time management information system developed as part of GESS). However, UNESCO estimates that between 2.2 and 2.4 million children are still out of school in South Sudan, a number that is likely to rise.[4]

A new peace agreement was signed in August 2018 and oil production is set to start again with the support of Sudan. It remains to be seen how the context of the country will change as the GESS programme comes to an end and GESS2 begins.

2. Purpose of Survey & Methodology

2.1 Overall GESS Objectives

The 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:

- Whether the programme is achieving expected outcomes
- How outcomes are being achieved
- Wider areas of interest about what's happening in schools

The overall GESS research is based on the following two overarching questions, which have been developed from the outcome of the Programme:

- Has there been a change in enrolment and retention for girls and boys from Primary 5 to Primary 8 and from Senior 1 to Senior 4, and which aspects of the Programme contributed towards this?
- Has there been a change in the quality of education, as demonstrated by improved learning for Primary 5 to Primary 8 and Senior 1 to Senior 4? What changes in the learning and teaching environment have contributed to this?

The overall objectives of the GESS project surveys are:

[4] Global Initiative on Out of School Children: South Sudan Country Study,UNESCO 2018, available at: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0026/002653/265399e.pdf

- To monitor changes currently occurring in schools, particularly changes related to the GESS programme;
- To identify aspects of the GESS programme contributing towards changes in the enrolment rate among girls and boys Primary 5 to Primary 8 and Senior 1 to Senior 4;
- To identify aspects of the GESS programme that will contribute toward the future measurement of girls' and boys' retention rates between Primary 5 and Primary 8 and Senior 1 and Senior 4.

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. Alongside the Household Survey, three other areas of research were developed to enquire more in-depth information about relationships, activities, and processes linking programme interventions to the outcomes were proposed. These are school and classroom practices, educational choices by households and girls, and management capacity and structures.

2.2 Household Survey Objectives

The objective of this Household Survey is to gain an in-depth picture of the sensitive and complex nature of household decisions about money, gender dynamics, 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 the enrolment and retention of girls in schools.

This Household Survey therefore forms an important part of the KER component of the overall GESS programme, and its in-depth nature is intended to contribute to a broader understanding about what works best in girls' education. The findings will be used as evidence for future programme structures and policymaking.

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

Financial management of households and girls
• **Household choices and priorities for financial management** • **Competing costs to education** • **Attitudes toward CTs and CGs**
Educational choices by households and girls

- **School-going behaviour in terms of attendance, absence, drop-out rates, and changing schools**
- **Perceived value and relevance of education for girls and boys**
- **Levels of parental support toward their children's education**
- **Life prospects and ambitions for girls and boys, with or without education**

Barriers to attending school

- **Gendered perspective on factors that prevent boys and girls from attending school**
- **Perceptions about safety for girls to travel to and remain in school**
- **Prevalence of early marriage and early pregnancy**
- **Distance and means of travel to school**

3. Methodology

Fieldwork was conducted by our research team, who began data collection on 14 March 2018 and concluded on 1 July 2018. In total, 43 quantitative surveys were conducted, alongside a total of 166 qualitative surveys, comprising: 15 Community Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), 43 Guardian surveys, 48 Older Children surveys, 42 Younger Children surveys and 18 Out of School (OOS) child surveys. All ten (former) States were surveyed.

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. All States had the same sample size, despite their different population sizes, 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 March and July 2018. 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 from specific years (Primary 5(P5)/Primary 8/(P8) Secondary 2(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 (aged 13-18), one younger child (aged 6-12) and one further child, older or younger, who was not currently attending school. 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's commitment to child protection, researchers were trained on European Society for Opinion and Market Research (ESOMAR) 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 were participating in the in-depth interviews and quantitative survey.

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

Complementary to the Household Survey:

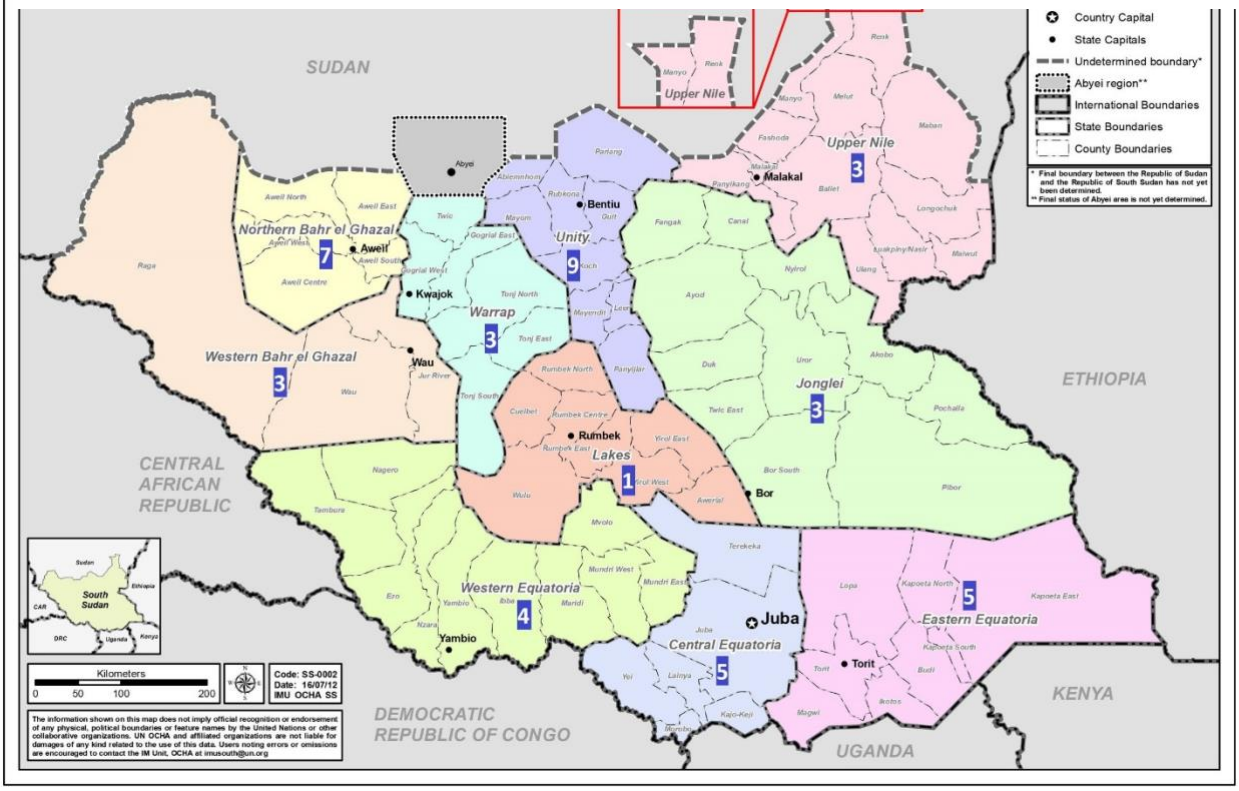
- A detailed School Sample Survey, incorporating interviews with learners, Head Teachers, teachers and representatives of school governing bodies in addition to lesson observations and building assessments was carried out in June – September 2018. The purpose of the survey was to build a picture of the state of schools in South Sudan and understand the educational experiences of pupils – in particular girls – teachers, and managers. The survey, which incorporated questions from the pilot School Sample Survey, also looked at the impact and effectiveness of Capitation Grants (CGs) and Cash Transfers (CTs), as well as the use of Daily Attendance Registers (DARs)
- A Learning Assessment was conducted in the same timeframe. The Assessment is a series of numeracy and literacy tests given 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.
- A County and Payam Education Managers Survey was conducted in the same timeframe, aiming to collect the views and experiences of County and Payam education staff, and the ways their work may have been impacted by GESS.

In-depth Household Surveys were conducted between March and July 2018, using a subset of schools selected for the School Survey to obtain a detailed picture of the sensitive and complex nature of household decisions about money, gender dynamics and power structures, as well as the experience of learners 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, a series of numeracy and literacy tests applied to a sample of 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 Education Manager Surveys were also conducted between March and July 2018 with the purpose of gathering information about the management structure and capacities of CEDs and PEOs.

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 43 households were surveyed.

FIGURE 1 MAP SHOWING THE LOCATION OF HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS



Data collection began on 14th March 2018 and concluded on 1st July 2018.

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 (lowest subnational geographical area). 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's 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 FGD were to be conducted. The sample included household units containing at least two children between the ages of six and 18, one of whom was not in school. Children in key years (P5/P8/S2) were randomly selected from the school register lists, where possible, and their households selected for interview.

If families had moved and were no longer available for interview, new households were chosen using the original criteria used to select the original household. To screen for migration, only residents who had lived in the Boma 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
CES	Yei River	Yei	Yei Child Protection Centre	Primary
EES	Torit	Nyong	John Garang Memorial	Secondary
JGL	Bor	Kolnyang	Agorbaar Mixed Priamry	Primary
JGL	Bor	Bor	Bor Mixed Secondary	Secondary
JGL	Bor	Kolnyang	Malek One Primary	Primary
LKS	Rumbek Centre	Jiir	Gol Meen Primary	Primary
LKS	Cuiebet	Malou	Waibak Primary School	Primary
NBG	Aweil West	Ayat East	Mabior Primary	Primary
NBG	Aweil West	Ayat Centre	Makuoch Primary	Primary
NBG	Aweil West	Mariam West	Riangon Primary	Primary
UNS	Renk	Renk	Renk Girls Secondary School	Secondary
UTY	Ruweng	Panyang	Panyang Primary	Primary
UTY	Ruweng	Panyang	Parieng Secondary	Secondary
WBG	Wau	Wau	Holy Family Co-Basic Nazareth	Primary
WES	Yambio	Yambio	Masiya Primary	Primary
WES	Yambio	Yambio	Naduru Primary	Primary
WRP	Gogrial West	Riau	Panliet 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, which incorporated quantitative questions with qualitative in-depth questions.

IDI 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 would range from four to eight people, and considerations regarding gender, age, job, and status in the community were made to maximise 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 43 quantitative surveys were conducted with 43 guardians. All participants had lived in the Boma for more than six months

TABLE 3 NUMBER OF SURVEYS CONDUCTED PER (FORMER) STATE

Former State	Number of surveys
CES	5
EES	5
JGL	3
LKS	1
NBG	7
UNS	3
UTY	9
WBG	3
WES	4
WRP	3

3.3 In-depth Interviews

A total of 166 IDIs were conducted with guardians and children between the ages of six 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 guardians 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's 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.

3.4 Focus Group Discussions

A total of 15 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

All qualitative surveys are broken down into three separate surveys (guardian, older child, younger child). When disaggregated on the State level, the number of respondents per survey, per State ranged from 1 to 9. Such numbers of observations are 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. In particular, only one household was interviewed in former Lakes State, meaning that no disaggregated State data for Lakes can be considered significant.

Insecurity meant that some target schools had to be replaced. Ongoing insecurity in the former Unity (UTY), Upper Nile State (UNS), and Lakes (LKS) States meant that sample sizes were smaller; in particular, it was difficult for researchers to reach selected Payam's that were far from former State capitals, as roads were insecure.

4. Findings

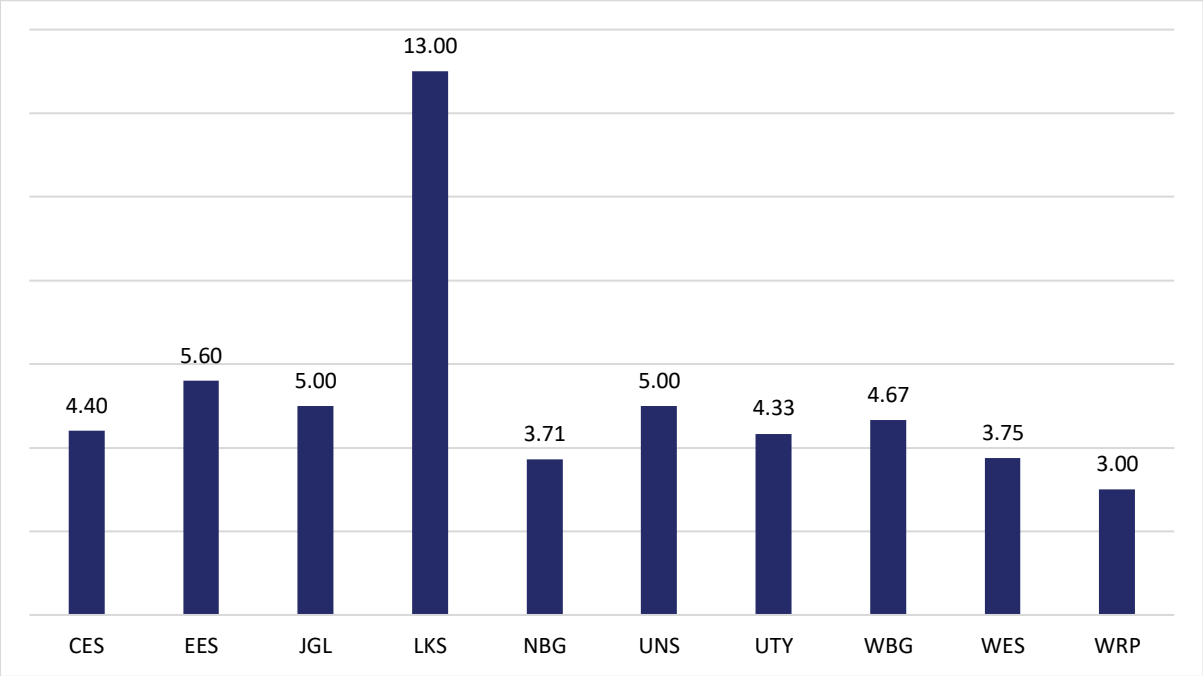
4.1 Demographic

In total, 43 quantitative surveys were conducted, alongside a total of 166 qualitative surveys, comprising 15 Community FGDs, 43 Guardian Surveys, 48 Older Children Surveys, 42 Younger

Children Surveys and 18 of a further Out of School Child Surveys. As in the Baseline, more female respondents (n=96, 64%) were surveyed than male respondents (n=55, 36%), as women were more often to be found at home during the day, whilst men were outside the home. This might have introduced a gender bias into total responses.

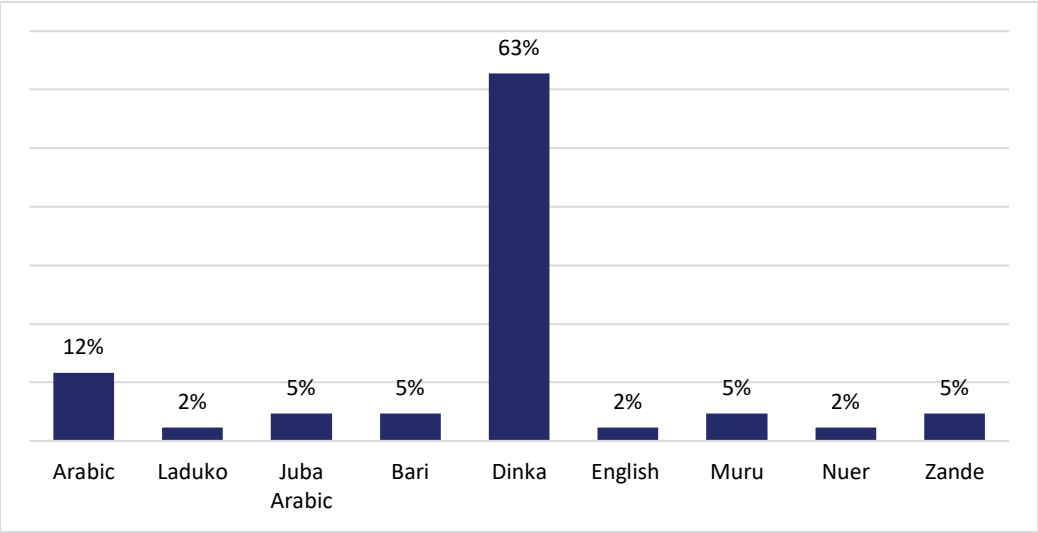
Of the households surveyed, the average household was found to consist of 6.36 people, with an average of 1.8 adults over the age of 18 and an average of 4.56 children under the age of 18, although there were some variances by geographical area, with households in former LKS State having a significantly higher average reported number of children (13) than anywhere else. We suggest the average adults per household is due to confusion about the definition of a household: 58.1% of guardians reported having more than one wife, or being one of several wives, indicating that compounds likely had several more adults than reported here.

FIGURE 1 AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN PER HOUSEHOLD, BY STATE



Just as in the Midline, the majority of households surveyed listed Dinka as the main language spoken within the home (n=27), with the next most prevalent language being Arabic (n=5). Only one household listed English as a main language spoken at home, and only 8 further households reported they spoke English as an additional language at home. Since teaching is supposed to be entirely in English, this indicates that children are likely to have difficulties using English confidently and fluently in an educational setting.

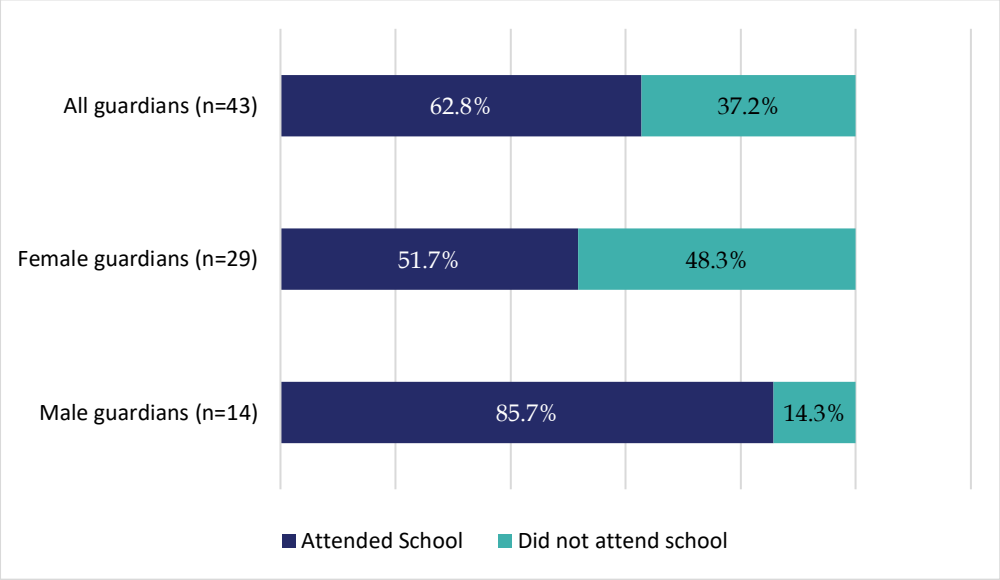
FIGURE 2 MAIN LANGUAGE SPOKEN IN HOUSEHOLDS SURVEYED



Over half (62.8%, n=27) of all guardians surveyed reported having attended formal schooling. Of this number, just under half reported having finished primary level (48.1%, n=13), with only 22.2% reaching secondary school (n=6).

Amongst female respondents, only 51.7% (n=15) stated that they had received some level of formal education, compared to 85.7% of men (n=12). Slightly more men reported completing primary school than women (24.9%, compared to 22.2%), but the only guardian to have attended university was female.

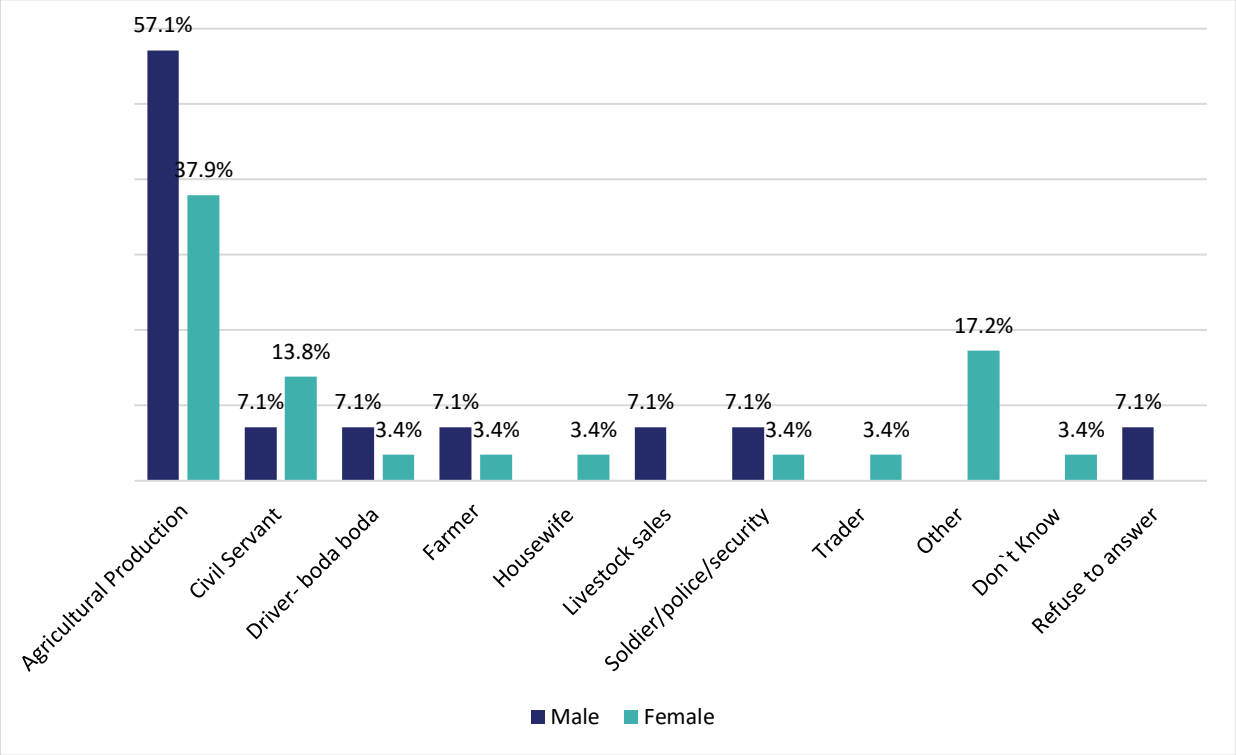
FIGURE 3 PROPORTION OF GUARDIANS THAT REPORT HAVING ATTENDED FORMAL SCHOOLING



As in the Baseline and the Midline, the primary sources of household income *and* the most commonly-reported additional sources of income are informal, which likely makes them unreliable.

As in the Baseline and the Midline, the largest source of income for families came from agricultural production and farming (48.8%, n=21). 41.4% of female and 64.3% of male guardians reported their primary profession to be farming or agricultural production.

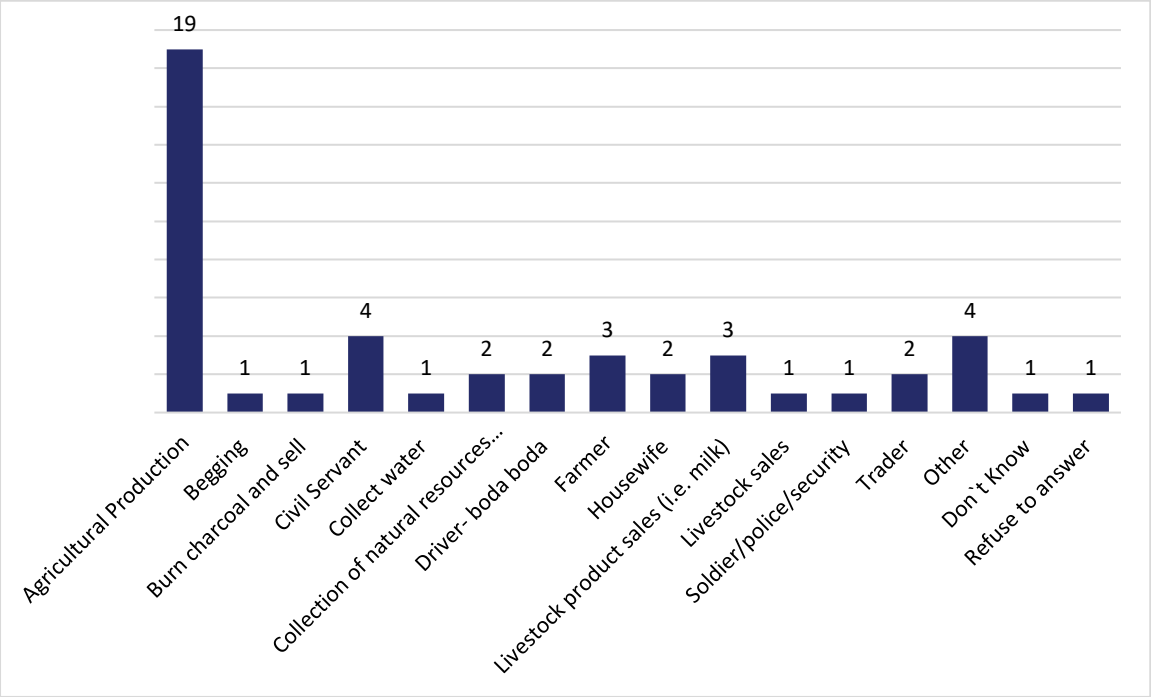
FIGURE 4 PROPORTION OF MALE/FEMALE RESPONDENTS ENGAGED IN EACH EMPLOYMENT TYPE AS PRIMARY PROFESSION



The prevalence of more formal employment was low compared to informal employment, but the proportion of women reporting formal primary professions such as police/security, civil servant or teacher was comparable to the proportion of men reporting the same professions; for example, 11.6% (n=5) of men reported working as a civil servant, compared to 13.8% (n=4) of women.

As in the Baseline and Midline, agricultural production and farming were the most frequently-reported sources of additional income for households. Compared to the Midline, more formal jobs such as civil service and police/soldier were more commonly-cited sources of *additional* income. However, dowry no longer seems to be a major source of income. No guardians reported relying on dowry either as their main or additional source of income, continuing the declining trend from 8 guardians at Baseline, and 2 at Midline. This may represent a positive development, linked to the decreasing likelihood of early marriage for girls for economic reasons.

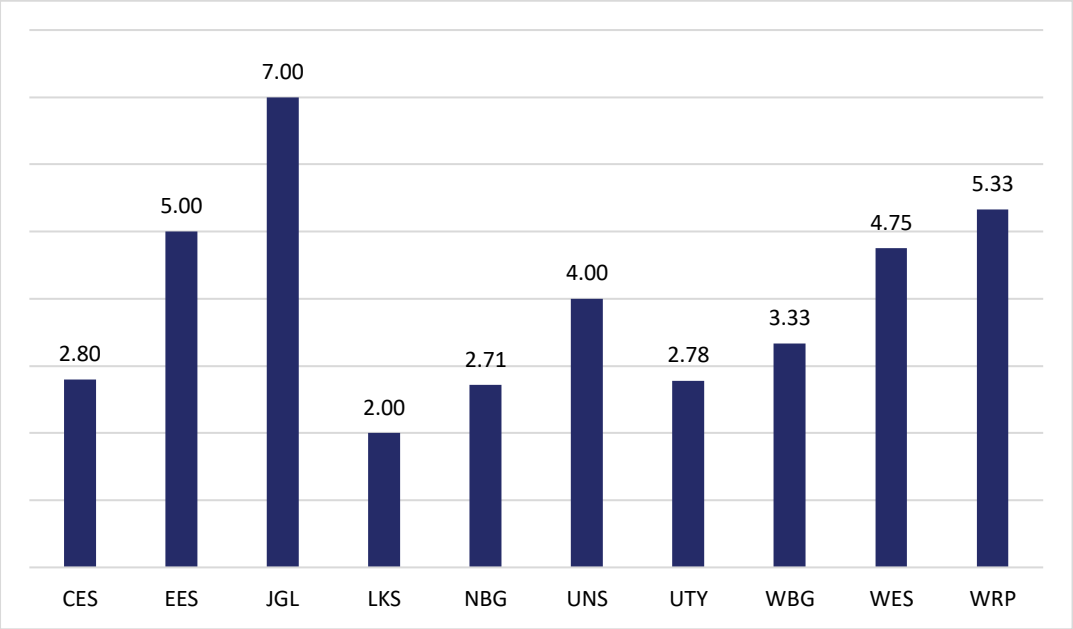
FIGURE 5 ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INCOME, AS REPORTED BY GUARDIANS



As in the Baseline and the Midline, food insecurity remains a major issue, with families on average having enough food to eat only on four days out of seven.

On average, guardians reported that over the last seven days their households had enough food to eat on 3.97 days. There were stark contrasts in responses by State, indicating variable food security across the country. Households in Jonglei reported having enough food to eat every day, whereas former LKS (2 days), former Northern Bahr el Ghazal (NBG) (2.71 days) and former UTY (2.78 days) States reported poor food security. This has changed from the Midline, when former NBG State had good food security. Reliance on agricultural production as a main source of income is likely a factor in this, which will have been affected by the ongoing famine that has been taking place in parts of South Sudan, caused by a combination of drought and conflict, since early 2017 (i.e. since the Midline).

FIGURE 6 AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS HOUSEHOLDS HAD ENOUGH FOOD IN THE LAST WEEK, PER (FORMER) STATE



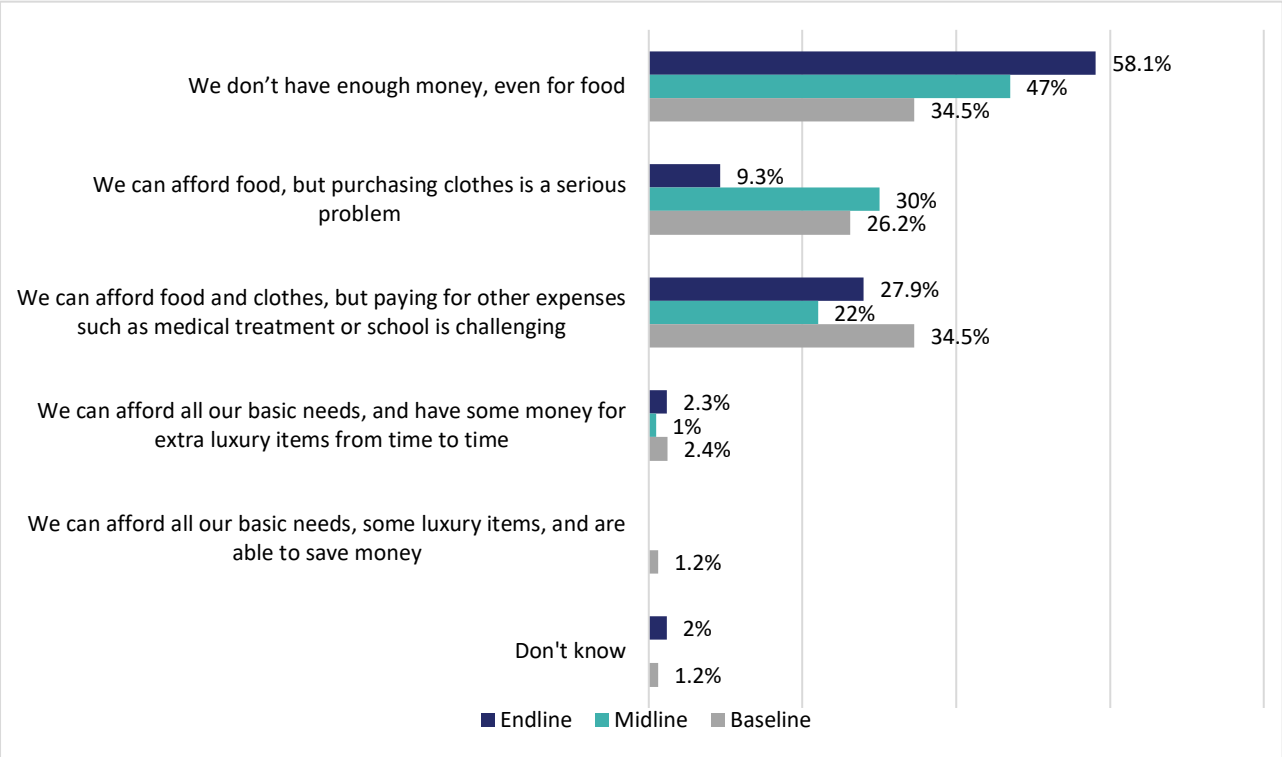
4.2 Household financial decisions and expenditure on education

4.2.1 Household choices and priorities

The Midline reported a worsening financial situation since the 2014 Baseline; the Endline indicates that the financial security of the average household has continued to worsen since 2016.

When asked to describe the current financial situation of their household, over half of guardians reported that they don't have enough money for food (58.1%, n=25). This is an increase on the number of households that reported the same situation during the Midline interviews in 2016 (47%, n=41) and the 2014 Baseline interviews (34.5%, n=29). 37.2% (n=16) reported that, whilst they can afford food, they cannot afford to purchase clothes and/or other necessary items, and only 2.3% reported 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, and the protracted civil war, households are less financially secure than in both 2014 and 2016. In addition, households' 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 7 COMPARISON OF HOUSEHOLD FINANCIAL SITUATION BETWEEN BASELINE, MIDLINE AND ENDLINE, AS REPORTED BY GUARDIANS

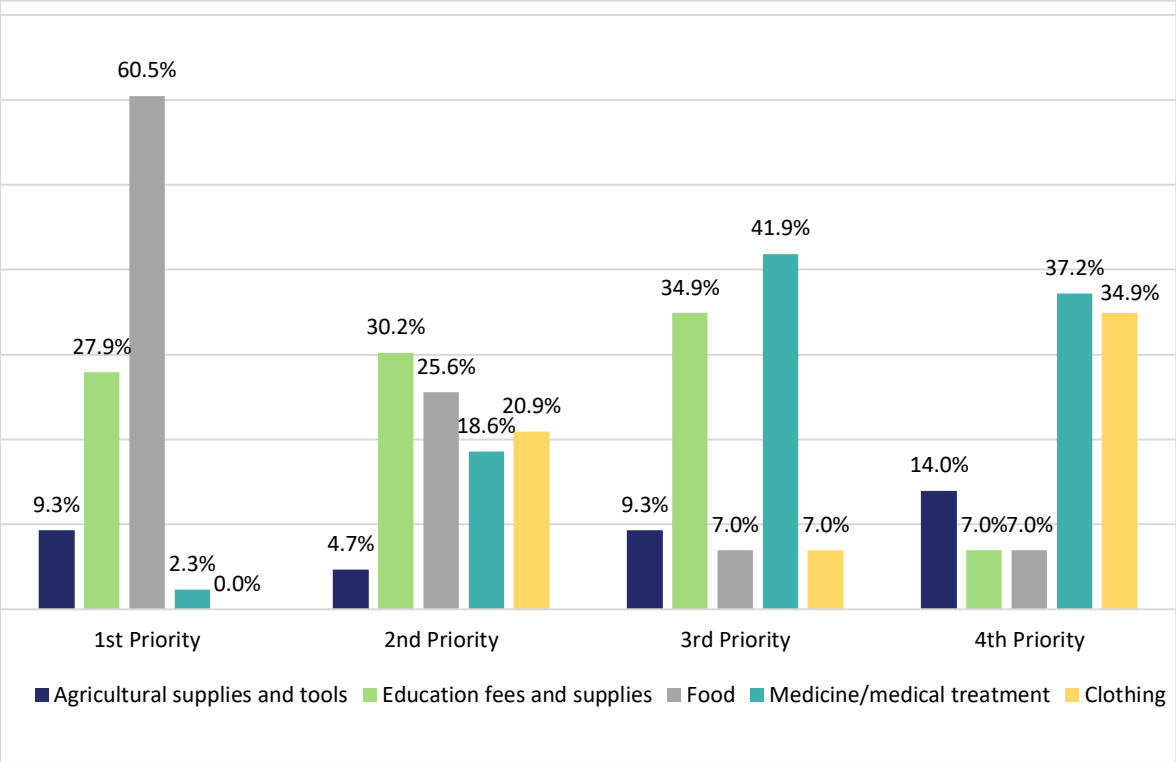


Despite food insecurity and the low income of the majority of households, education remains the second highest priority for household spending, after food.

The majority of households (60.5%, n=26) reported prioritising spending money on food above all other items, which has been consistent since the Baseline. Interestingly, during the Endline, 27.9% (n=12) of guardians reported their first priority for spending was on education, an increase on both the Midline (15%) and the Baseline (16.7%). This increased priority for education, in the context of the worsening economic situation across South Sudan (see section above) and the reported increases in the cost of education (discussed further in section 3.2.2), demonstrates the increasing importance placed on education by households, and the continuation of positive attitudes towards education by guardians.

Spending on medicine and medical treatment remains a low priority, with only 2.3% of households (n=1) prioritising spending, whereas for 41.9% of households (n=18), medical care is their third priority. This is interesting given guardians and children report the most common reason for children's absence from school is sickness, but may reflect the reactive nature of much medical spending.

FIGURE 8 TOP FIVE ITEMS THAT HOUSEHOLDS REPORTED SPENDING THE MOST MONEY ON



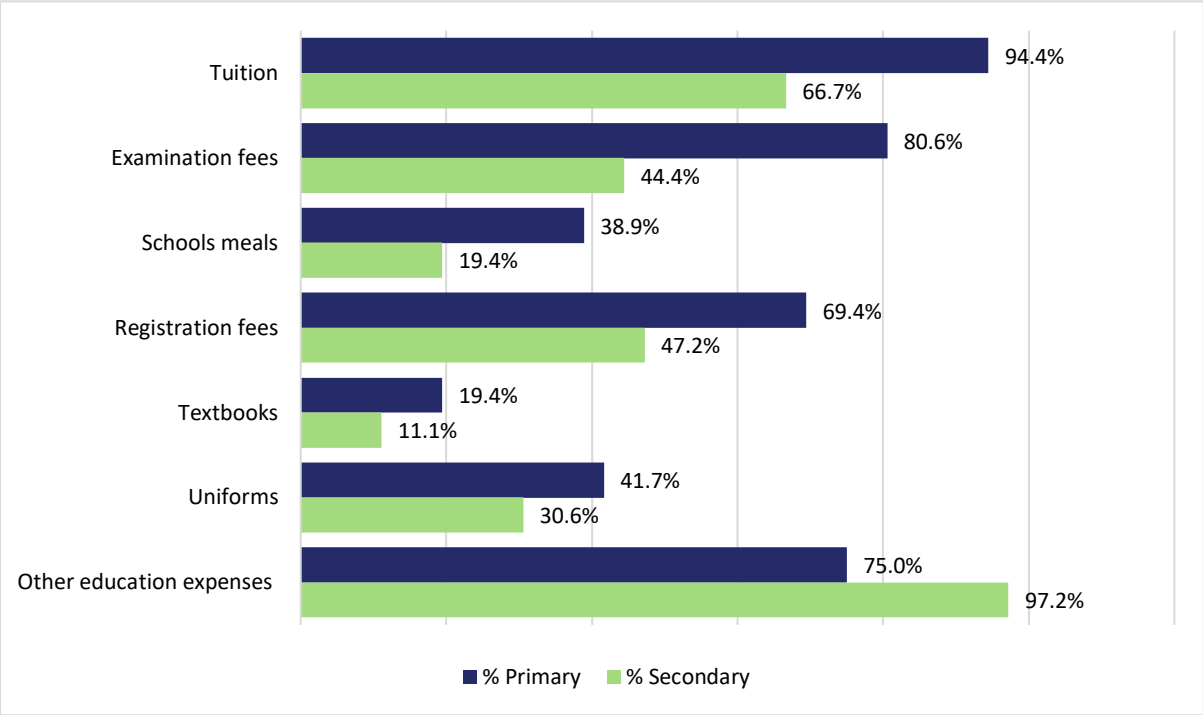
4.2.2 Financial costs of education

Continuing the trend identified in the Midline, guardians report that the overall cost of education has noticeably increased since 2014, despite the CT and CG programmes.

The three most common levies that guardians reported paying for, at both primary and secondary levels, were tuition fees, examination fees and registration fees. Overall, a higher percentage of guardians reported paying each levy at primary level than at secondary level. 60% of all surveyed schools were government schools, and, despite clear MoGEI directives that government schools should not charge school fees, 94.4% of guardians report paying primary school fees, while 66.7% report paying secondary school fees. This may in part reflect the late payment of CGs in the school year, as well as the reduced effective value of CGs, giving schools little choice as to where else to leverage funding other than through tuition fees from parents and guardians.

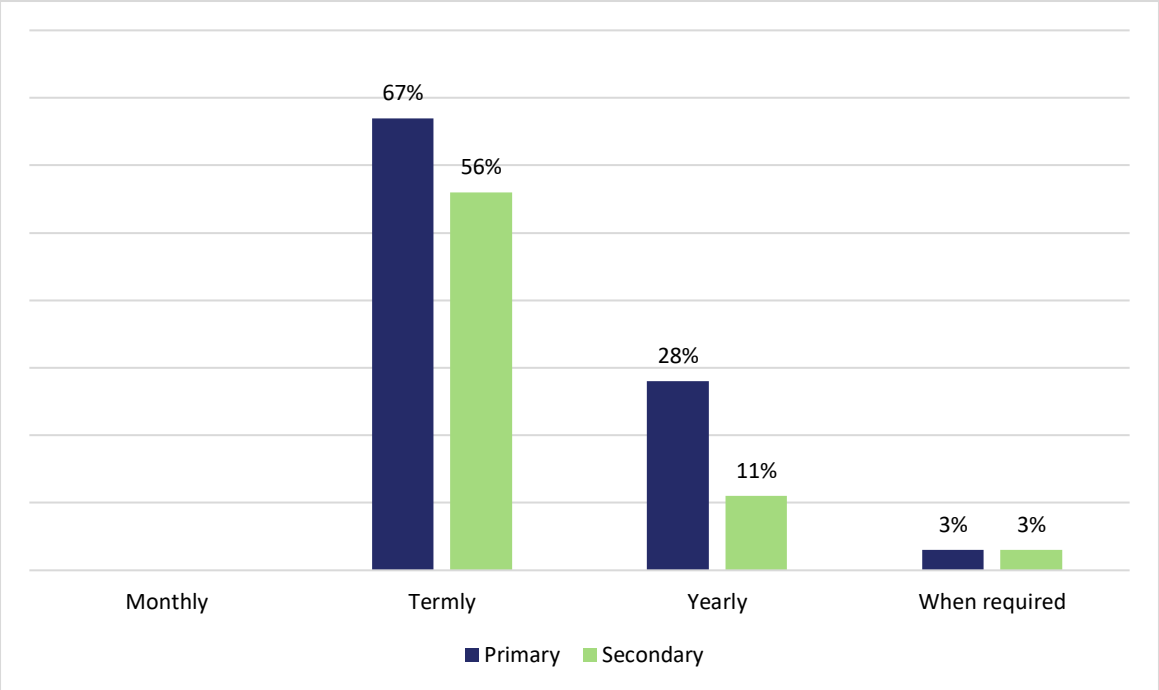
At secondary level, 97.2% of guardians reported paying other educational expenses, compared to 75% for primary, indicating that there are additional costs associated with sending a child to secondary school that are beyond the categories outlined below.

FIGURE 9 PERCENTAGE OF GUARDIANS WHO REPORT PAYING DIFFERENT SCHOOL LEVIES



The majority of guardians who pay tuition fees at both primary and secondary levels reported paying them termly. The below table gives a breakdown of the frequency with which guardians pay school fees. During qualitative interviews, guardians mentioned that they liked schools which allowed them to pay fees on a termly basis or in instalments, as it reduced pressure on them at the start of the school year.

FIGURE 10 FREQUENCY WITH WHICH GUARDIANS PAY TUITION FEES



At the Midline, data was gathered on the amount charged for different categories, but not on the frequency of payment. During the Endline, we gathered data on the frequency with which payments were made. This allows us to calculate more precisely the actual cost of education for guardians over a year. Average reported costs in SSP for schooling in 2018 are eight times higher than at the Midline, and ranges have also increased, demonstrating the variety in the costs of education across the country. Converting to USD using the April 2016 and April 2018 market exchange rates shows there has been a 2.2x rise in the cost of schooling to guardians in effective value terms. The rapid devaluation of the SSP has contributed to this change; at the time of the Midline, 1 USD was equivalent to about 70 SSP, whereas at the time of the Endline, 1 USD was about 250 SSP.

In qualitative interviews, the majority of guardians reported that the overall cost of sending their child to school has noticeably increased since 2016, as costs levied by schools, such as tuition, registration, and examination fees, as well as the cost of supplies in the market, such as school uniforms, stationery and exercise books, have risen significantly. As outlined above, despite the real rise in costs for households, education remains the second highest priority for household spending after food, even though the average household's financial situation has become more fragile since the Baseline, and the average household can only provide enough food on 3.97 days out of 7.

TABLE 4 COSTS OF ESSENTIAL PRIMARY SCHOOL ITEMS/FEES, AS REPORTED BY GUARDIANS

Levy	Average SSP per School Year: Endline (2018)	Average SSP per School Year: Midline (2016)	Nominal cost increase	Average USD per School Year: Endline (April 2018 market rate)	Average USD per School Year: Midline (April 2016 market rate) Real Increase from Midline[5]	Effective value cost increase
Tuition Fee	2892	152	19x	$11.57	$2.17	5.3x
Examination Fee	442	52	8.5x	$1.77	$0.74	2.4x
School Meals	2398	219	10.9x	$9.59	$3.13	3.1x
Registration Fees	2525	85	29.7x	$10.10	$1.21	8.3x
Textbooks	180	87.5	2x	$0.72	$1.25	0.57x (decrease)
Uniform	1250	296	4.2x	$5	$4.22	1.2x

[5] Using USD 1:70 SSP from mid-2016, and USD 1:250 SSP from April 2018

Other costs	25,748	3528	7.3x	$102.99	$50.4	2x
Total cost per year	35,434	4419.5	8x	$141.74	$63.13	2.2x

A third of guardians report making non-financial contributions to their child's primary school.

During the Endline, we asked additional questions about non-financial contributions to school, recognising that not all costs associated with sending a child to school are financial. 36% of guardians reported making non-financial contributions to their child's primary school. Of these, 54% contributed to the construction of new buildings, 23% assisted with maintaining buildings, and 23% cooked for learners in schools. Conversely, only 8% of parents reported making non-financial contributions to their child's secondary school.

4.2.3 Prevalence and impact of Capitation Grants and Cash Transfers

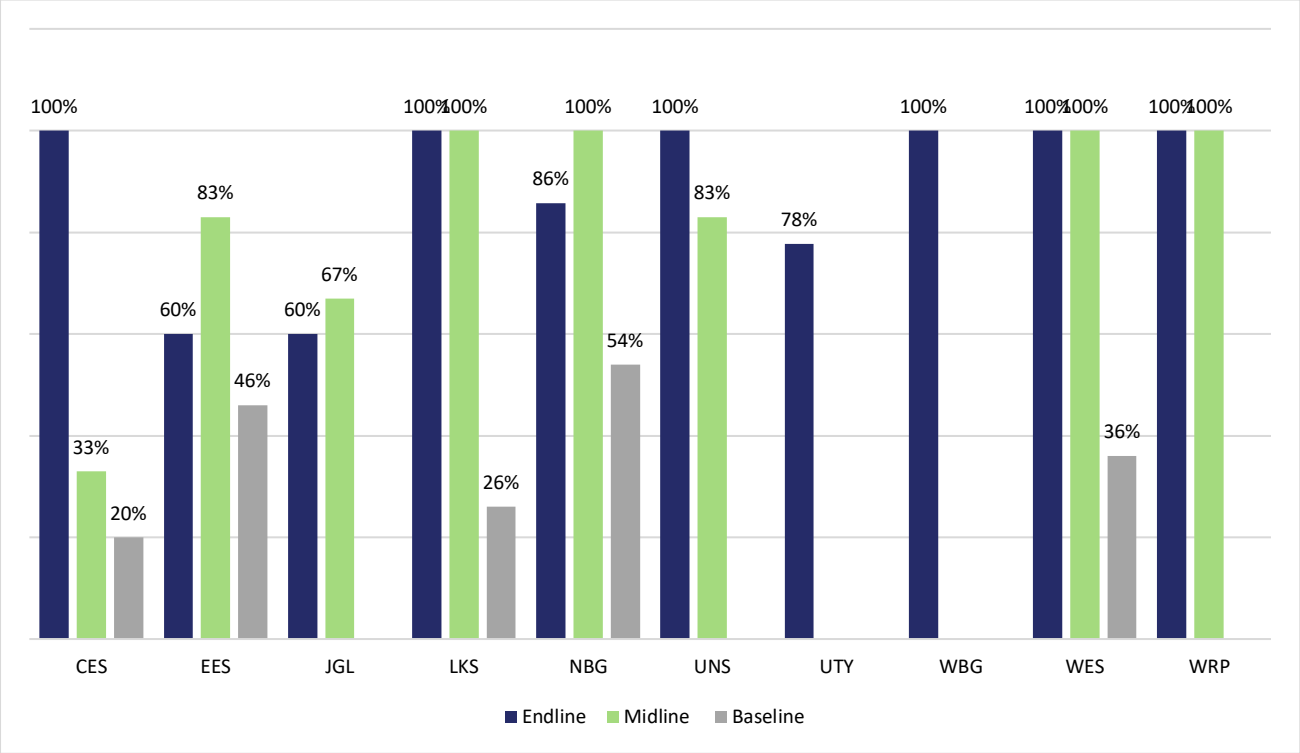
More guardians are aware of Cash Transfers than Capitation Grants.

Generally, guardians displayed a much higher awareness of CTs than CGs: only 39% of guardians had heard of CGs, compared to 86% who had heard of CTs. This is not surprising given the visibility of CT payments to the community, compared to CGs, as CGs are given directly to schools, whereas CTs are paid to girls. Levels of awareness of CGs were highest in the Equatorias, with 67% of guardians aware of CGs in former Western Equatoria State (WES), and 56% in both former Central Equatoria State (CES) and former Eastern Equatoria State (EES). Within this, women displayed marginally more awareness than men: 38% of female guardians said they had heard of CGs, as opposed to 30% of male guardians. This is a reversal of the Midline findings, when men were more likely to have heard of CGs.

There seems to be significantly less confusion about what CGs are at Endline than Midline. During the Midline, probing in qualitative interviews revealed that many parents had confused CGs with CTs. At Endline, enumerators probed guardians similarly, and all those who had heard of CGs were able to list a variety of improvements to their child's school resulting from CGs, including improvements to the learning environment, such as the construction of pit latrines, fences, and classrooms, as well as less tangible benefits such as children enjoying school more and concentrating harder. The majority of guardians who had not heard of CGs still reported noticing improvements to their child's school since 2014. Given the tenfold reduction in absolute values of CGs since the Baseline, this finding suggests that the social impact of CGs 'punch above their weight' in absolute financial amounts. In addition, since only 35% of guardians reported visiting their child's school (see section 4.4.4), this suggests discussions surrounding schools and education are taking place in communities, and between parents and children. Findings from the PFM survey indicate schools are now spending less of their CG money on capital projects and more on operational costs; however it seems likely that capital projects will be more noticeable to households.

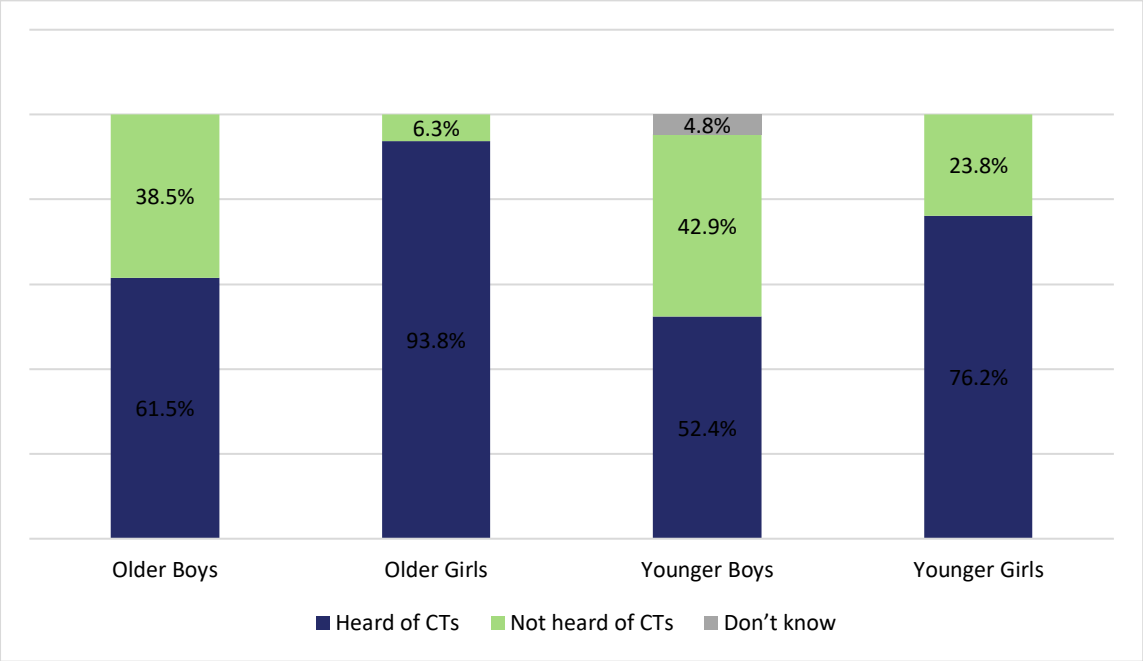
86% of guardians had heard of CTs. In every State, awareness of CTs is higher at Endline than it was at Baseline, with 100% of guardians having heard of CTs in six States at Endline (although the sample size is too small in former Lakes for this to be significant). Qualitative interviews reveal that guardians believe CTs have had a positive, tangible impact at the household level, with households who have received CTs reporting that they have notably reduced pressure on guardians' spending on both education-related and non-related items, such as food and medicine.

FIGURE 11 PERCENTAGE OF GUARDIANS WHO ARE AWARE OF CASH TRANSFERS, BY RESEARCH CYCLE



Awareness of CTs amongst children was, as expected, higher amongst girls than boys, but the gap was less pronounced for younger children than for older children. For all four categories, more children were aware of CTs than not.

FIGURE 12 PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN WHO ARE AWARE OF CASH TRANSFERS, BY GENDER AND AGE



Guardians and children were highly appreciative of GESS interventions. However, there was general anxiety about the end of the CT programme and its effect on aspirations amongst girls interviewed.

In qualitative interviews, guardians and children reported that they had heard that the GESS programme was ending. Guardians and girls in particular expressed anxiety about the end of the CT programme, with guardians noting that if the CT money was to stop, they would continue to 'struggle' for their daughters, but keeping them in school would become significantly harder. Many used the qualitative interview to request that researchers pass messages onto GESS and the donor.

> *"The Cash Transfer money have help my daughters to cover up the expenses that I may spend for their school requirements and this is how it has help my household...If the cash transfers stopped, then nothing can be done because it was the support given by the international community to our girls. But I appeal that if there is way for you to continue helping our daughters as a request to your office."[sic]*
>
> (male guardian, former NBG)
>
> *"[If the CT stopped] I will try my best to do something to make sure that my elder son can go university, and my daughter have to get married."[sic]*
>
> (Female guardian, former Jonglei (JGL) State)
>
> *"[Becoming a doctor] will only be achieved with the support of GESS."*

(Older girl, former EES)

This was also noted in the FGDs, where several discussions revolved around the end of the GESS programme. For example, *"The government should try to renew the contract like GESS. When someone starts to help you, they cannot leave you in the middle. If they do this then the help was not useful."* (FGD, former NBG).

Most guardians think CTs should remain restricted to girls and other vulnerable children.

Whilst acknowledging that the costs of schooling are commonly too much for parents of boys to bear, about half of guardians agreed that CTs should continue to be restricted only to girls. For example, one male guardian in UNS argued that the CT *"should be for girls only, not for all, because girls have no option of how to get money"*. This was a view reflected by many guardians:

> *"Yes, the Cash Transfers should be receive only by girls and that is the only group that should be given and not for everyone. Because girls are much behind in term of education and there is much needs for the international community to support so that it can encourage families to send their children to school."[sic]*
>
> (male guardian, former EES)

However, guardians also stated that the CT programme should be expanded to include other vulnerable children, regardless of gender: orphans and/or children who have lost their father, drop-outs and disabled children were commonly mentioned. Participants in FGDs noted that it used to be difficult for girls to go to school, but after the introduction of the CT programme this has become much easier. Most also noted that boys do not receive this support and it can therefore be hard for them to attend school.

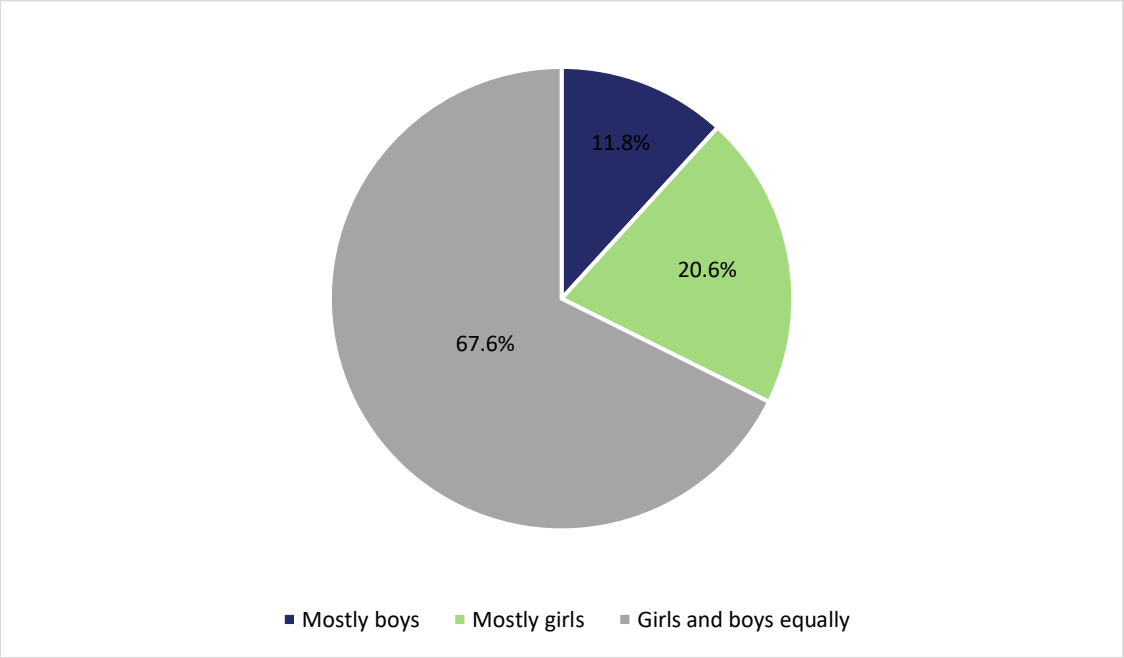
4.3 School-going behaviour

4.3.1 Enrolment and Attendance

32.6% (n=14) 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 27.9% (n=12).

79.1% (n=34) of guardians said that there were children out of school in their area, which is an increase from 69% (n=60) at the Midline. 20.6% of guardians thought girls were most likely to be out of school, compared to 11.8% who thought boys were; the majority, 67.6%, thought boys and girls were equally likely to be out of school. At Midline, 48% of guardians thought girls were more likely to be out of school than boys, indicating guardians perceptions of girls' attendance in school has improved.

FIGURE 13 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.

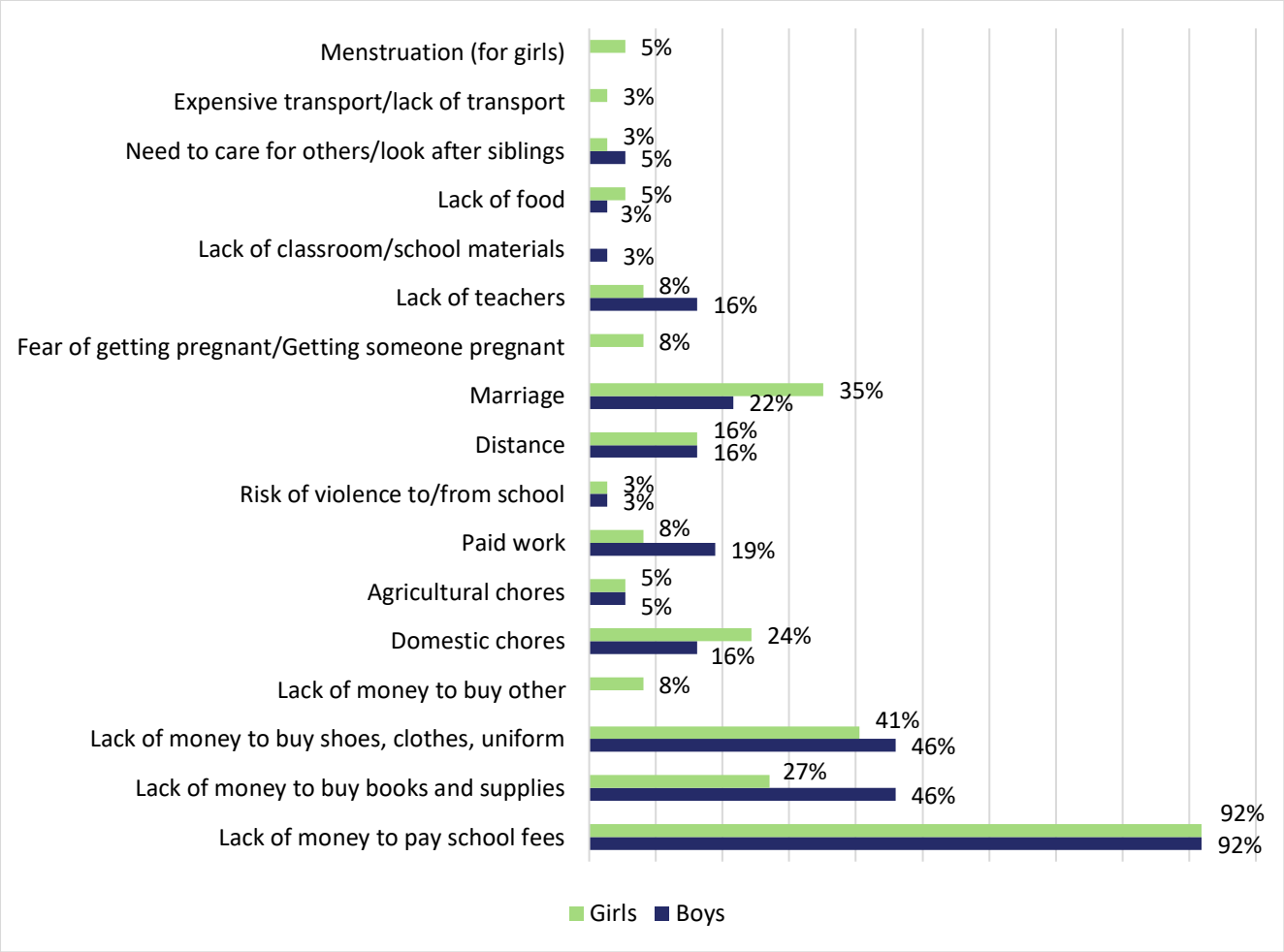
Consistent with the Baseline and Midline, sickness is the main reason identified by guardians and children as to why learners do not attend school regularly, alongside financial constraints

Both guardians and older children cited sickness as the main reason children miss school; 43% of children had missed more than two days of school in the past 12 months, and of these, 52.9% said they had missed school due to personal sickness. This finding is corroborated by the results from the School Survey, which found that 50% of boys and girls reported that they had been absent because of sickness in the previous year.

Consistent with the Midline and Baseline, guardians and older children cited financial constraints as a major barrier to attending school regularly for those enrolled in school. 100% of guardians

stated that a lack of money was one of the top three reasons why both boys and girls might miss school. Follow-up questions asked guardians to explain what specifically they lacked money for; for both boys and girls, 91.9% of guardians cited lack of money to pay school fees. The number of guardians reporting a lack of money to buy books and supplies, and shoes / clothes / uniforms as a barrier to education for girls was smaller than those reporting the same for boys. This is likely to be linked to the effects of the CT programme, since the School Survey demonstrate that the most commonly-reported items girls bought with the CTs were uniforms, shoes and bags (at 77%, 54% and 44%, respectively).

FIGURE 14 REASONS WHY BOYS AND GIRLS MIGHT MISS SCHOOL OTHER THAN SICKNESS, AS IDENTIFIED BY GUARDIANS

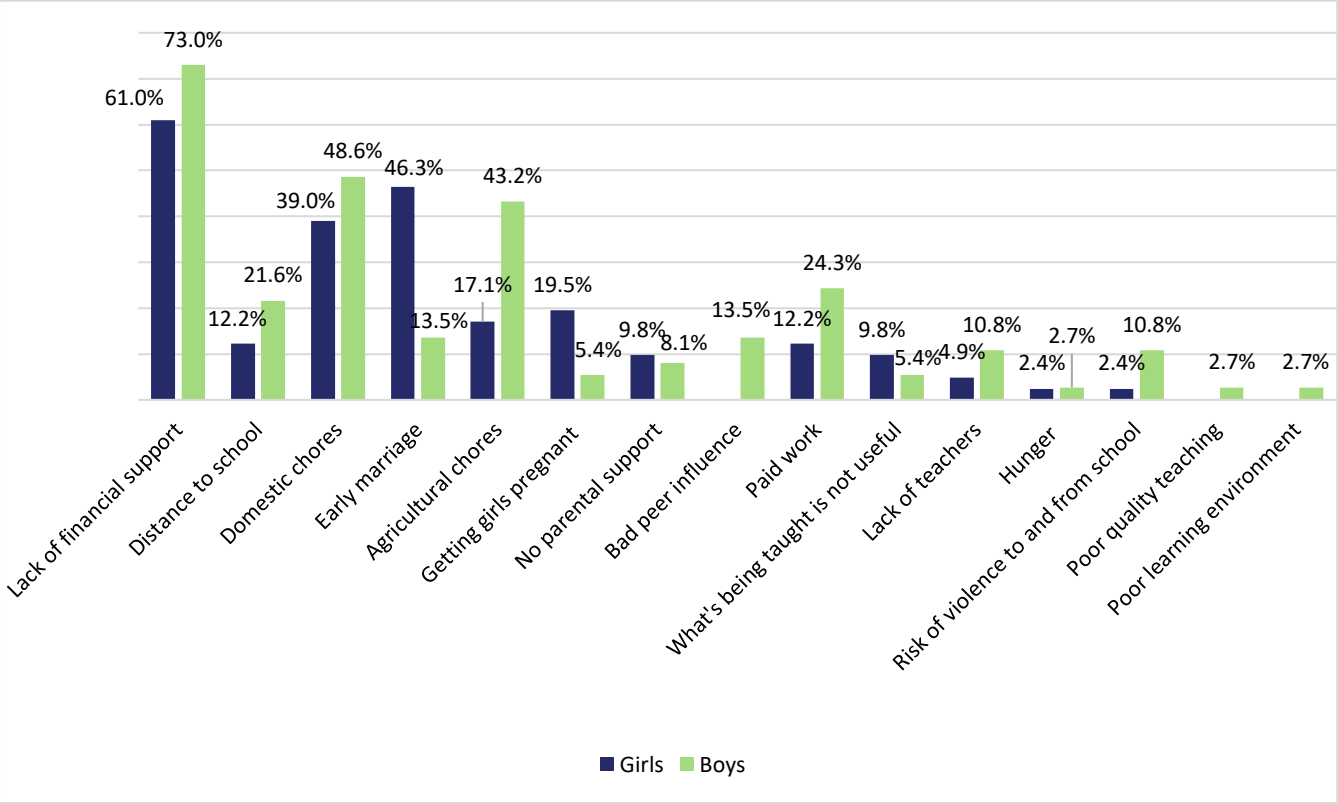


The reasons reported for absence remain gendered, with girls citing caring for sick relatives, menstruation and domestic responsibilities as major reasons for absences.

As in the Midline, girls were more likely than boys to be off school due to domestic responsibilities and marriage. 24.3% of guardians said girls might miss school for domestic duties compared to 16.2% for boys. Interestingly, at Endline more boys than girls were reported to be expected to remain home to care for other siblings. In the qualitative interviews, 26.5% (all girls) said they had missed school to care for a sick relative, again consistent with findings from the School Survey. 14.7% (all girls) said they had missed school due to menstruation, which is consistent with the Midline; during the Baseline, researchers were concerned that children and guardians were euphemistically reporting menstruation as sickness, and specific follow-up questions in the Midline and Endline revealed small numbers of girls this affected. During the

Endline qualitative interviews, a few girls mentioned missing school because of menstruation, and when asked the worst thing about going to school, one girl from former EES stated "*shame about menstruation".* In a change from the Baseline and Midline, where guardians reported agricultural chores as a reason why boys would miss school, at the Endline, an equal proportion of guardians reported this for girls as for boys (5%). In contrast however, children reported that this was still gendered; when asked to list the top 3 reasons why boys and girls might miss school, 43.2% stated boys would miss for agricultural chores, compared to 17.1% who thought the same for girls.

FIGURE 15 PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN WHO CHOSE EACH OF THE FOLLOWING IN THEIR TOP 3 REASONS WHY GIRLS AND BOYS WOULD BE ABSENT FROM SCHOOL



4.3.3 Dropping out

Financial constraints remain the main reported reason for drop out; beyond this, reasons for drop out remain gendered, with children and guardians citing pregnancy/marriage, and domestic responsibilities as the main reasons for girls dropping out, and agricultural chores for boys.

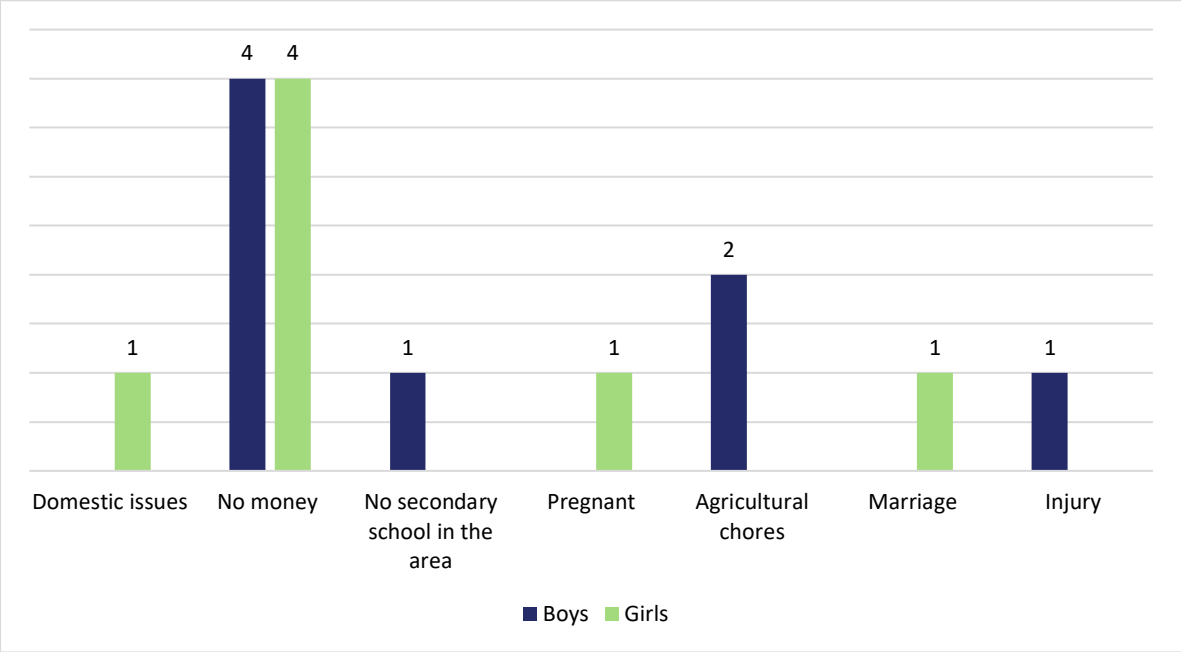
Of the 17 children interviewed who had dropped out of school, 47.1% (4 boys, 4 girls) said that the primary reason was because their families could no longer afford the school fees. 23.5% (n=4, all boys) said the primary reason they had dropped out was due to agricultural demands, predominantly to tend their family's cattle and goats. All of those who had dropped out reported that their days were now spent helping their parents cultivate, look after livestock, or, in the case of girls, engage in domestic chores and look after younger siblings. 17.6% (n=3, all girls) had dropped out because they became pregnant and/or got married.

Lack of financial resources was also gendered. In FGDs in former UTY State, participants mentioned that *"girls need more things than boys to support themselves"* in school, leading to higher attrition rates due to financial constraints. In FGDs in former JGL State, participants noted that they were *"more likely to pull out the girl and allow the boy to remain if you have to pull one out",* because *"girls can help in other areas of life"* such as domestic duties. Similarly, boys were withdrawn from school to help with agricultural chores.

> *"I drop out of school because of domestic issues, I took care of the family kitchen in [the absence] of my mother. Nobody influenced me to drop out of school, this was my decision to come back to help the family, because it was my obligation as a girl in the family."[sic]*
>
> (OOS girl, former JGL)[6]
>
> *"I dropped out of school because we have a lot of goats and there is no one to take care of them. My father made the decision for me to stop going to the school because I have to look after goats. If there is someone to look after the goats it would enable me to attend school."*
>
> (OOS boy, former EES)

When children drop out of school to assist with agricultural or domestic chores, this is commonly due to economic pressures on the household: both due to the absolute financial costs associated with school, and also the opportunity cost of remaining in school. Similarly, girls dropping out of school to marry can be viewed as an economic decision to secure a dowry payment. This therefore supports the conclusion that the biggest barrier to school attendance remains financial, and logically the recommendation that providing CTs and CGs to learners and schools to reduce the costs of education can prevent drop-out.

FIGURE 16 PRIMARY REASON FOR DROPPING OUT, AS REPORTED BY OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN



[6] OOS = Out of School

After lack of money to pay for various items, marriage was the most commonly-cited reason why girls might drop out of school (35.1% n=13). Despite also being the second most common reason at Baseline and Midline, this is a significant reduction in percentage; at the Midline, 79% (n=69) of guardians reported this, and the Baseline, where 64.3% (n=54) of guardians did. In one FGD in former WBG, participants discussed what circumstances would cause a girl to drop out of school, and agreed that if a girl was failing to perform at school, then it would make sense for her parents to remove her from school so she could marry instead. Of the OOS children, one reported dropping out because of marriage and one dropped out because of pregnancy

> *"When I deliver successfully, and the baby grew up at the age of two then I may go back to school. Am not feeling good [about not being in school] because it was my mistake."[sic]*
>
> (Pregnant OOS girl, former NBG)
>
> *"Nothing can allow me go back to school, since I am now a mother, better my kids to learn."[sic]*
>
> (OOS girl, former UTY)
>
> *"No girl drop out except one who was pregnant by the school teacher, but he married the girl."[sic]*
>
> (male guardian, former EES)

However, despite these low quantitative numbers, qualitative interviews and FGDs reveal the preoccupation guardians have with marriage and pregnancy as reasons for drop-out. When asked why boys and girls might drop out of school, FGD participants overwhelmingly expressed fear that their girls might get pregnant at school, citing prevailing cultural attitudes surrounding girls getting 'spoiled' at school. These attitudes could still be a barrier for some parents to sending their girls to school.

Financial reasons for drop-out are more commonly reported by older children than younger ones.

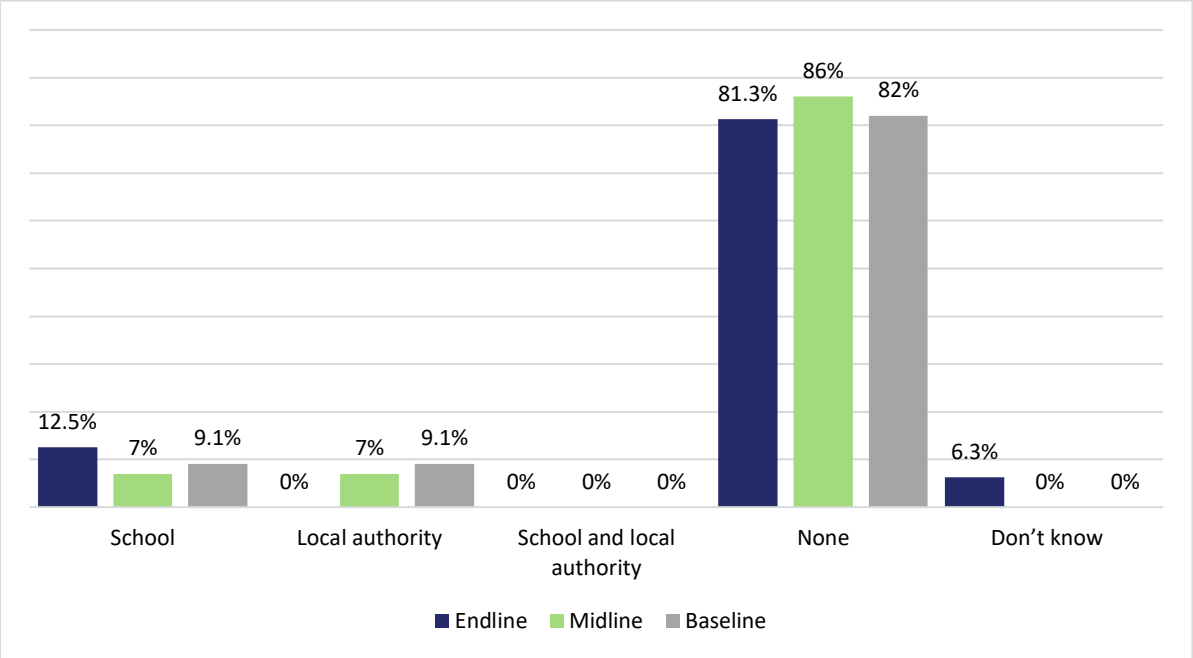
The high costs of education were more commonly reported by older children than younger ones as reasons why children might not attend school (56% and 18% respectively). Whilst not all of these older children were attending secondary school, due to most children in South Sudan starting primary schooling late, this finding is indicative of both the higher financial costs associated with attending secondary school and the higher opportunity costs incurred by older school-going children of both sexes.

Consistent with the Baseline and Midline, 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. Of the 16 guardians who said that they had children out of school in their

household, 81.3% (n=13) said that no one had ever come to ask why their child was not in school. This is consistent with findings at the Midline, when 86% had never received follow-up, and the Baseline, where the figure was 82%. At Endline, 12.5% of guardians (n=2) had received a visit from the child's school to follow-up on absence or drop-out, but nobody reported having been visited by local authorities. This indicates that the follow-up capacity of both schools and local government has not increased over the last five years.

FIGURE 17 PERCENTAGE OF GUARDIANS REPORTING FOLLOW-UP ON ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL AND LOCAL AUTHORITY



4.3.4 Changing schools

Cost and conflict are the main reasons for a child changing school; no guardians reported moving their child due to poor quality teaching, unlike in the Midline.

Very few guardians or children mentioned changing schools. Those that had changed schools reported moving because conflict in their area had forced the entire family to flee. Only two guardians reported changing their child's schools because the fees became too high, and no guardians reported poor quality of teaching as a reason for moving a child. Given the reported high costs of education, as well as poor quality teaching being a primary reason for guardians' dissatisfaction with the schools in their area, this finding suggests that guardians do not feel able to make decisions to move their children, or that they believe that all schools have comparable levels of fees and educational quality.

4.4 Attitudes and education-related choices

4.4.1 Guardians' attitudes toward school and education

Similar to Baseline and Midline 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. This is in line with the results from the Baseline and Midline. Conflict, lack of available schools nearby and lack of money to pay school fees were all reasons why some guardians had not been able to attend school when they were younger. Many guardians mentioned that school was not valued in their communities when they were growing up.

Female guardians also reported that cultural attitudes towards girls' education were different in the past, with one female guardian in former NBG State noting that, *"I did not go to school because by then my parents don't have interest of sending girls to school".* Cultural trends towards girls getting married early were also mentioned; for example, a female guardian in former JGL State stated: *"I never attended formal school because during our time, ladies are only to be married but not to study, because if you go for studies your family will remain poor so one must go for marriage if you want your parents' happiness"*.[sic] These attitudes are similar to those expressed during the Midline, and 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 to over the life of the programme.

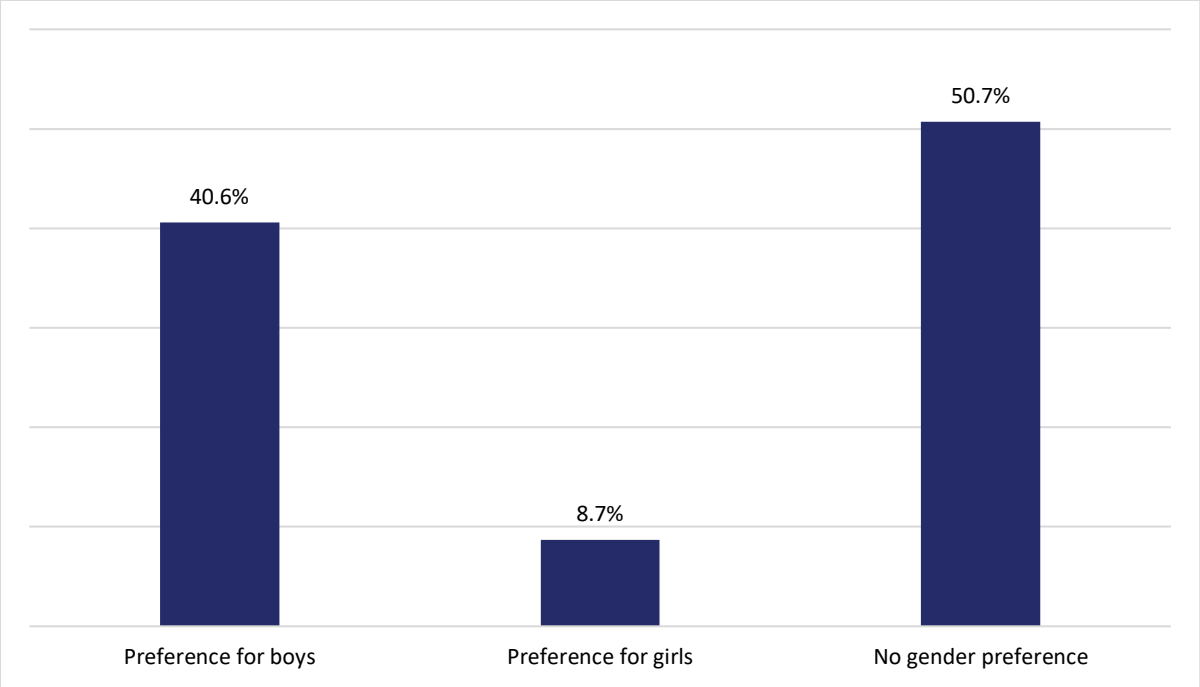
The vast majority of guardians want all their children to attend school; according to the majority of guardians, when households are faced with limited resources, they will prioritise the eldest or the child they believe to be the most intelligent, regardless of gender.

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 that guardians have the financial capacity to send all their children to school is low. At both primary and secondary level, if guardians noted a preference for gender, more indicated that boys would be prioritised over girls (40.6% for boys, 8.7% for girls). However, the majority of guardians indicated that they had no gender preference (50.7%). When guardians indicated a preference for educating male children, they typically referenced the future earning potential of the child in the qualitative interview, especially related to the child's ability to provide for his younger siblings in future: "*I choose a boy because he may pass his exams and go to university and later get job and help the little brothers and sisters"[sic]* (male guardian, former EES) or *"later he will take care of the young ones"* (male guardian, fomer UTY).

> *"As a parent, I have to send my children to school so that they become good citizens in future. Even if I have multiple wives, I will make sure that all my children have an access to education"*

(male guardian, former UNS)

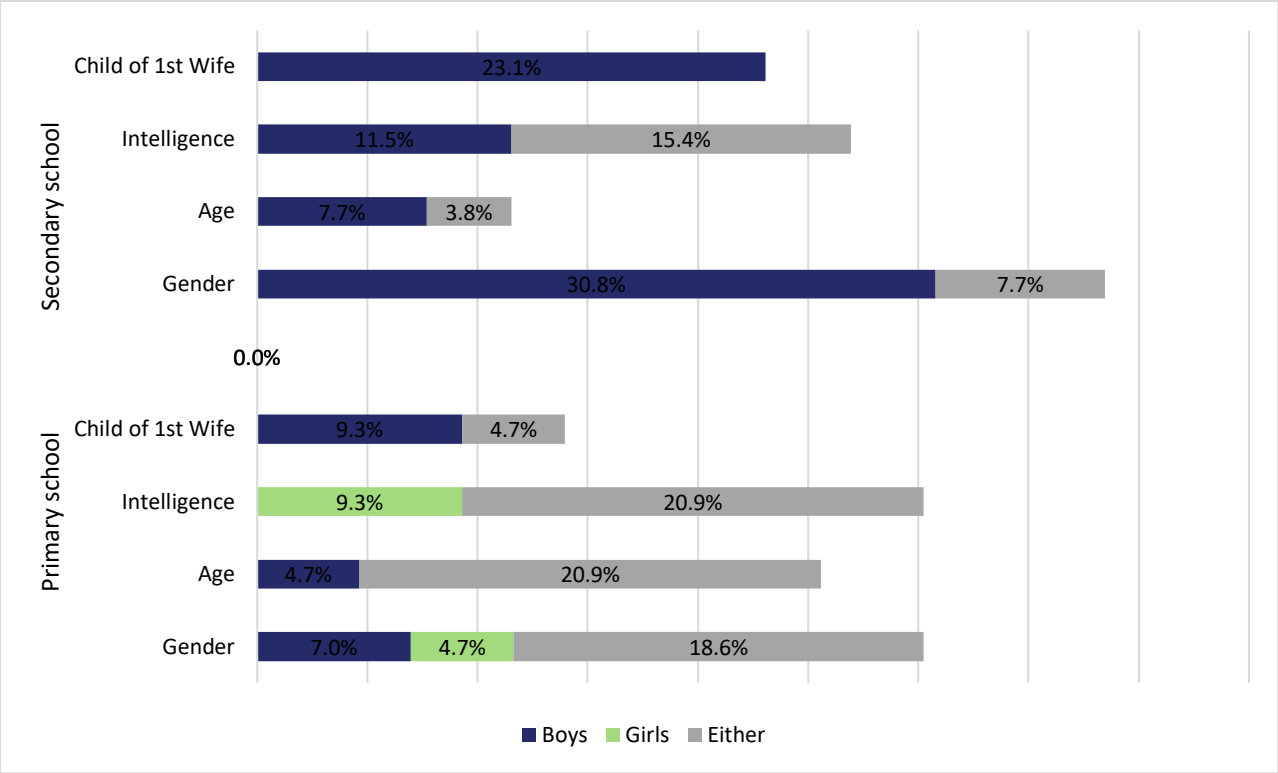
FIGURE 18 PERCENTAGE OF GUARDIANS REPORTING PREFERENCE FOR CHILDREN OF DIFFERENT GENDERS TO ATTEND SCHOOL



Compared to the Midline, the Endline tried to pinpoint more accurately, through the inclusion of new category responses, the reasons behind the decisions guardians make as to who attends school. For guardians who expressed no gender preference, intelligence was the most commonly-cited reason for choosing a child to attend school, at 39.9% of guardians. This is backed up by the qualitative interviews, which demonstrate that guardians tend to make decisions not on abstract categories such as gender, but based on the specific characteristics of each of their children, most commonly related to commitment to learning and intelligence, for example: "*My third child's education is a priority because he's the one who loves education*" (male guardian, former EES).

Parents were more likely to express a preference for boys over girls at secondary school level, with 30.8% of guardians stating they would always prioritise a boy's secondary education over a girl's, and 73.1% in total prioritising boys in general, including subsets of the oldest boy, the most intelligent boy, or the first wife's son. At primary level, only 7% of guardians would always prioritise a boy's education over a girl's, and 20.9% in total would prioritise boys in general, including subsets of the oldest boy, the most intelligent boy, or the first wife's son. Qualitative interviews revealed these guardians would not prioritise the education of a girl at secondary level due to the likelihood of early marriage: *"because girl are likely to get married earlier than boys"[sic]* (female guardian, former WES) or because *"girls have limited time for education based on the age"[sic]* (male guardian, former EES), and *"girls need to get educated before 15 because they should be married by 18"* (FGD, former WRP). The graph below shows the reported preference by guardians at primary and secondary level, broken down by gender.

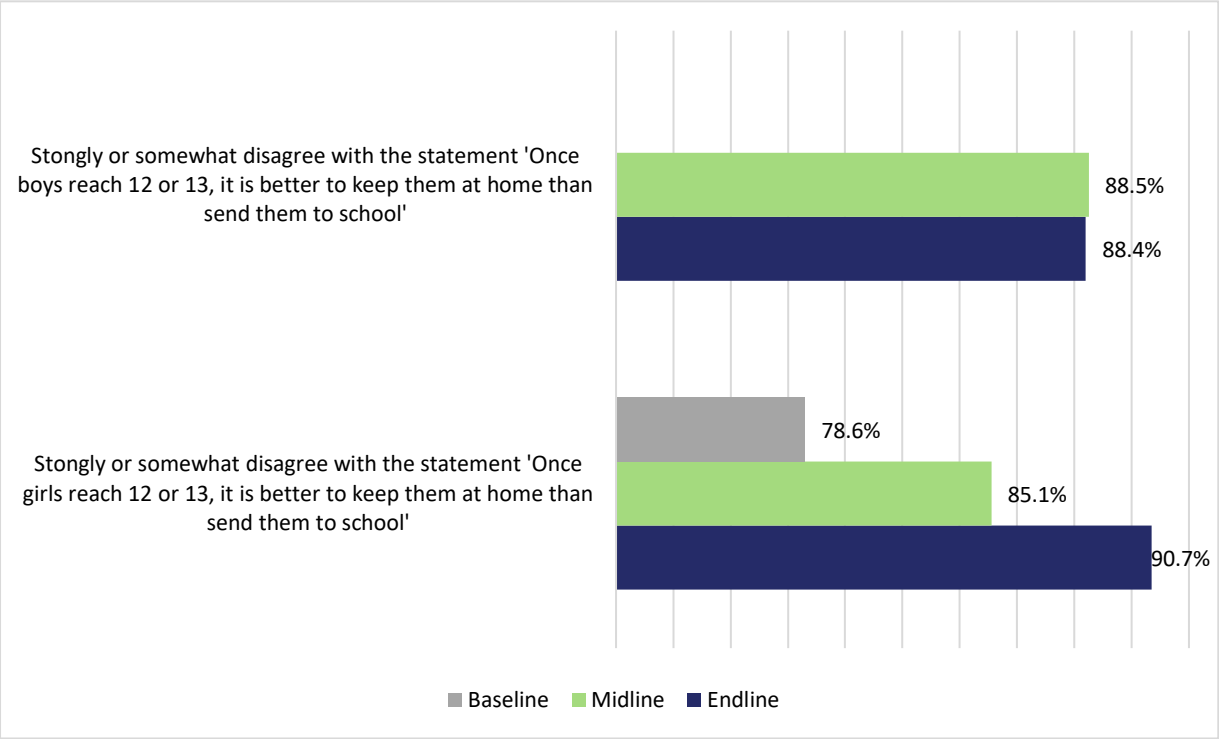
FIGURE 19 WHOSE EDUCATION IS A PRIORITY, BY PRIMARY AND SECONDARY, AS REPORTED BY GUARDIANS



In one FGD in former WBG participants discussed whether boys and girls performed at the same level at school, and concluded that it depends on *"who works harder and who is smarter. It doesn't depend on the sex of the child".* This is all evidence that it is predominantly financial constraints that force a family to withdraw a child from school. During the FGD in former UTY, participants argued that *"not all children can be supported equally because there is not always enough money to support all, but this is not dependent on the sex of the child"*. This supports the conclusion that financial constraints remain the ultimate barrier to schooling. When questioned about gender preferences, 90.7% of guardians strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement that girls aged 12-13 should stay at home, compared to the 88.4% who had the same opinions for boys. The percentage of guardians disagreeing with this statement has grown since the Baseline, while the percentage of guardians who disagree with this statement for boys has remained consistent since the Midline.[7] This indicates that GESS interventions may have contributed to changing social attitudes towards girls' education.

[7] Data for the Baseline on boys was not collected.

FIGURE 20 PERCENTAGE OF GUARDIANS WHO STRONGLY DISAGREE OR SOMEWHAT DISAGREE WITH STATEMENTS, BY RESEARCH CYCLE



In the Endline, an additional question was added about older girls, in order to gauge whether age played a role in keeping girls at home. When asked to respond to the statement *"girls aged 15-16 should stay at home",* 83.7% of guardians strongly or somewhat disagreed, compared to 90.7% of guardians for the same question for boys. This is indicative of an attitude amongst a minority of guardians, backed up in the qualitative data, which shows guardians are more likely to prioritise girls' primary education than secondary (see section 4.1.2).

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

In both the Baseline and Midline, 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. As per the recommendations from the Midline, during the Endline, an additional question was asked about a 15-year-old son and daughter to see if the responses were any different for children closer to perceived "*marriageable age*".

Almost every guardian commented that the child should remain in school, regardless of gender, with slightly more guardians stating that the girl should stay in school than those stating that the boy should remain in school. For example, one female guardian in JGL said the 12-year-old son should work after school, but that the daughter should be left to study. At 15 years, the same woman said the boy should be sent to an alternative education school

(AES), whereas again the girl should remain in school. There was little difference between the answers given by male and female guardians: male guardians were more likely to state that they would make the decision for their daughters whilst their sons could decide for themselves, but all of them still said they would tell their daughter to remain in school. This suggests that beliefs in the value of female education have pervaded even strongly-held cultural beliefs surrounding fathers' control over their daughters.

There was little difference in guardians' responses for 12 years and 15 years for either boys and girls. Many guardians expressed frustration with the questions, answering the first question about a 12-year-old boy, and then replying, "*the same*" to all the other options; one guardian in former CES said "*why would I answer these questions differently?*" The future returns of education were cited frequently, with guardians indicating an awareness that education would bring in higher returns for work in the future. None of the guardians mentioned removing girls from school for marriage, and only one (female) guardian mentioned education as a means to command a higher dowry for a female child, continuing the positive trend highlighted in the Midline.

TABLE 5 SAMPLE ADVICE GIVEN BY GUARDIANS WHEN ASKED WHETHER A 12-YEAR-OLD BOY OR GIRL AND A 15-YEAR-OLD BOY OR GIRL SHOULD REMAIN IN SCHOOL OR GO TO WORK

Response to 12-year-old son	Response to 12-year-old daughter	Response to both
"The man should allow the child attend school first then do work later after completing school, because education is the key" (male guardian, former CES).	"He should keep the daughter to school for future life, and he cannot take the child out of school because of work" (male guardian, former LKS)	"The man has to ask the boy whether he want school or work, so if the boy chooses school he should be left to go and study. For the case of a girl, I will be the one to decide for her whether to go to school or work" (male guardian, former EES)
"[I would] rather advise the man to always send his son to attend school full-time, because education is the key to future dignified life" (male guardian, former NBG)	"He should let his daughter stay in school because it will be like a child abuse to make underage girl go for work" (male guardian, former WBG)	"The man should stop over-working the son and daughter, he should instead focus on his education" (female guardian former JGL)
"He should let his son stay at school instead of work, because after he graduates, his son will help him through a better job" (male guardian, former WBG)	"[I would] advise the man to take his daughter to school and get educated because educated ladies are married with a high dowries" (female guardian, former UTY)	"He should leave the child to go to school other than working because education benefits all" (female guardian, former JGL)

Response to 15-year-old son	**Response to 15-year-old daughter**	**Response to both**
"He should be sent to an AES school" (Female guardian, former JGL)	"For the case of girls it will depend on the performance of the girl. She can be sent to school if she can manage and perform a good result" (Female guardian, former WBG) "I will tell the man to surrender the girl to school than doing full time work that will ruin her future" (Female guardian, former WES)	"He should let the boy work if he's the only boy, but if the boy is not the only one, the elder brother can do that. The same for a girl" (Male guardian, former JGL)

Pressure from the community to send children to school continues to be less of a motivating factor amongst guardians since the Baseline, but guardians have internalised the benefits of education; guardians view education as a means to enable higher earning potential in the future, but also as a way to create good citizens and develop other positive qualities in their children.

In the Baseline, and to a lesser extent the Midline, many guardians cited the social consequences of not sending their child to school as a motivating factor, stating that they would be criticised as bad parents by the community. This has declined in the Endline, with only two guardians out of the 33 who answered the question noting lack of respect from the community as a motivating factor: "*Socially, many friends who send their children to school may laugh or undermine you for that"* (Male guardian, former EES). Interestingly, almost every guardian who answered the question instead noted negative personal consequences for an uneducated child, or long-term negative consequences for their community and South Sudan at large. Guardians mentioned that if uneducated, their children would live in poverty, and wouldn't have a "*good future"* (male guardian, former WES), a "*free future*" (male guardian, former UNS) or that "*their future is uncertain*" (male guardian, former WBG). Guardians also discussed the impact on their communities, stating that uneducated children would lack empathy for others in their community and be unable to understand their community's culture, that there might be an "*increase in crime rates due to idleness"* (male guardian, former WES), that it would bring "*poor citizens into society*" (male guardian, former EES), and that children "*may become street children, thieves, or even prostitutes*" (female guardian, former EES). This is backed up by the FGDs, in which participants commonly mentioned that education is a long-term benefit to the community.

> *"The main consequence that I may face when I don't send my children to school is that my children would know nothing about what is happening in the world"*
>
> (female guardian, former EES)

"I will not have peace of mind at all"

(male guardian, former WBG)

"I don't need consequences, I send my child to school because of their future"[sic]

(female guardian, former JGL)

This suggests that the behavioural change aspects of GESS have been successful, ensuring that guardians have developed strongly positive attitudes towards education.

The FGDs particularly demonstrate that most guardians see education as a means to an end; i.e. they see a value in education because in the long run they know it will enable their children to get better jobs and therefore support their parents. When FGD participants in former JGL were asked what they wanted their children to be when they grew up, the consensus was: *"[to have] a job that will enable them to support their family. Children are born in order to support their families when they grow up".* Other FGDs concur, for example: *"there are no situations in which parents should take their children out of education. Once the child has finished school they can help support the family and their parents as they reach old age*" (FGD, former NBG), and *"it is good to send children to school to make sure they can care for parents and communities in the future"* (FGD, former UTY).

"*The Chief of the village says, he didn't go to school but he recognises how important education is so he started the primary school. Educated people have a liberated mind and have a mind of humanity. They know how to look after the poor and themselves, and elderly people in the community. It is essential for getting these jobs."*

(FGD, former NBG)

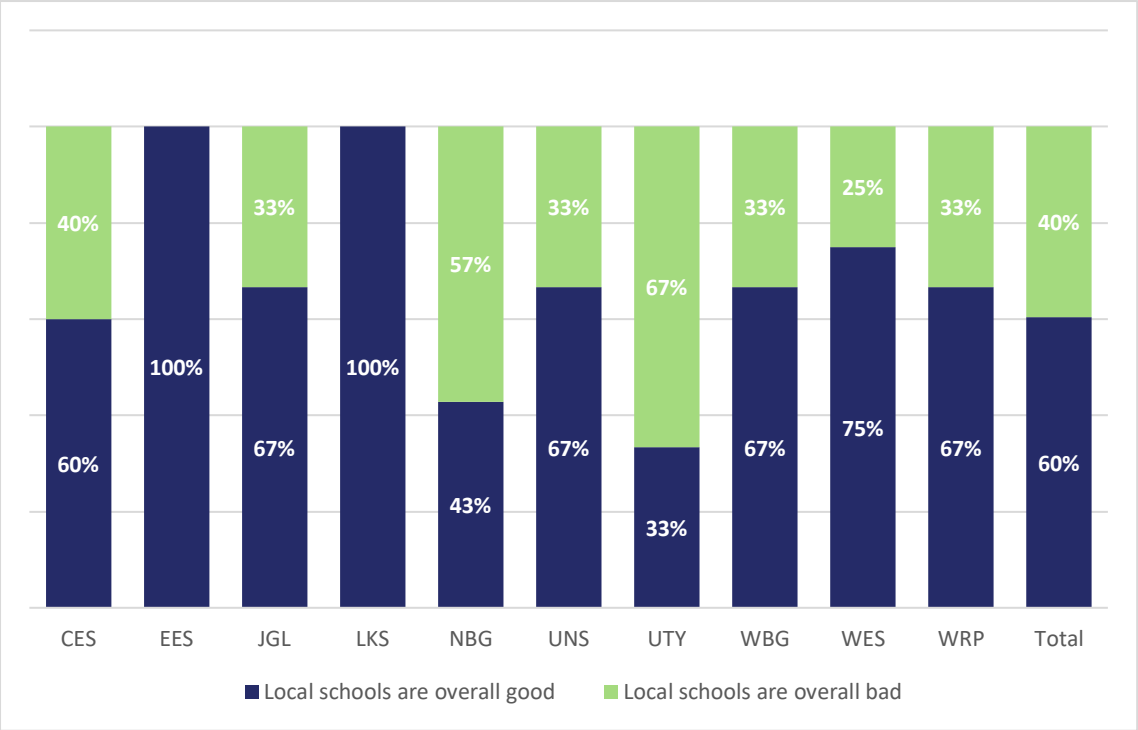
4.4.2 Guardians' perceptions of school

Most guardians think the schools in their area are good and offer a good quality of education; guardians like the proximity of schools, well-built classrooms and other structures, and feeding programmes.

In total, 60% of guardians reported that the schools in their area were good overall. In former EES and former LKS, 100% of guardians reported this (although again, former LKS is too small to be representative). Percentages were lowest in former UTY, where only 33% of guardians said the schools were good, and former NBG, where 43% did.

72% of guardians mentioned the close proximity of primary school as a key reason why the school was good, because it meant that children can easily come home to eat at lunch time, and that it is relatively safe for children to travel to school. However, given the purposive sampling method of choosing households close to the schools in the sample, this is both unsurprising, and unlikely to be nationally representative.

FIGURE 21 PERCENTAGE OF GUARDIANS WHO BELIEVE THE SCHOOLS IN THEIR AREA ARE GOOD



Guardians have a high opinion of teachers' levels of commitment to education, but believe low salaries for teachers and a lack of qualified staff are the worst things about schools.

Overall, guardians tended to have a high opinion of teaching staff, mentioning their commitment to the profession and the students. In FGDs, guardians reported thinking teaching was a good profession, and stated that they would be happy for their child to grow up to be a teacher. In a FGD in former WBG, a male participant told a story about a plane in difficulties which only had one parachute: "*the people in the plane give the parachute to the teacher to make sure that the teacher can teach the nation.*"

Few guardians explicitly mentioned poor quality teaching as a bad thing about school, instead noting that too many teachers are volunteers without the requisite qualification levels. Guardians were on the whole appreciative of volunteer teachers who have given up their time to ensure their children received an education. However, guardians are clearly aware of the growing prevalence of volunteer teachers across the country as more and more qualified teachers leave the profession due to low or absent salary payments. Indeed, several guardians made direct reference to the lack of teachers' salaries as the main reason why teachers are absent or underqualified:

> *"[I like the local school] because teachers can volunteer teaching even if they are not paid"[sic]*
>
> (female guardian former NBG)
>
> *"They offer good quality education, only that there is lack of teachers due to delay in salaries and low pay[sic]*

(female guardian, former CES)

"The school in this area lack professional teachers and [they have] underpayment of teachers"[sic]

(male guardian, former CES)

Guardians also cited a lack of teachers as a problem, often related to overcrowding concerns, and the lack of permanent structures in which to conduct lessons. A lack of school feeding programmes was also cited several times, with guardians questioning how children who had not eaten could learn; this is consistent with the finding that the second most common thing learners disliked about school was hunger.

At primary level, guardians commonly cited overcrowding and poor learning environments as factors they disliked about school, whilst at secondary school level, the most commonly-cited answers by guardians were high school fees and distance. This corroborates data from the School Survey, indicating the higher cost of secondary education, as well as the data on SAMS about the scarcity of secondary schools across the country.

Guardians' top priorities for school improvement relate to the number and quality of teachers.

Enumerators asked guardians what changes could be made to schools in their area to improve them. As in the Baseline and Midline, the most common responses related to teaching: increasing the salaries of teachers (n=34 responses), increasing the number of teachers in schools (n=30 responses), and increasing the level of qualifications for teachers (n=28). The number of guardians citing the value and frequency of teacher salaries as an area of potential improvement has increased since the Baseline, when only 13 guardians mentioned this, reflecting increasing delays in payment and decreases in the real value of teachers' wages since 2014. In addition, several guardians had heard of IMPACT[8] incentives, but complained that these were also inconsistent. Many guardians cited specific GESS programmes that should be continued or extended. Several guardians had heard the GESS programme was ending, and expressed concern about this. The third most common area of potential improvement mentioned by guardians was capital projects, including construction of classrooms, and provision of resources, with the most commonly-cited items being textbooks and uniforms.

TABLE 6 RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION "WHAT COULD BE DONE TO MAKE SCHOOLS IN YOUR AREA BETTER?"

Teaching	Programme support	Equipment and buildings
"Bringing more qualified teachers, and teaching and learning materials. Increasing salaries of teachers and paying the salaries of teachers on time"	"Increase in girls' incentives, introduce a school feeding programme, and increase teachers' salaries and the monthly [IMPACT] payment in time" (male guardian, former EES)	"The school should be fenced. Build teachers' quarters and a computer lab. Establish a school health centre" (female guardian, former WES)

[8] European Union-funded programme that is paying incentives to primary school teachers.

(female guardian, former EES)		
“Tell the government to bring more teachers to the school to improve the teaching programmes” (male guardian, former UTY)	“The girls’ education should continue the paying to girls, otherwise the schools will be very bad, and all boys again” (male guardian, former CES)	“In the secondary school, classrooms not renovated since the time when Sudan was one, there is no school library, no science teachers or science lab and limited text books” (female guardian, former WES)
“Bringing more qualified teachers, PTA must be active, and the school should be attached to community programme” (male guardian, former UTY)	“Cash Transfers and Capitation Grant to come on time. GESS and IMPACT to pay the money direct to the beneficiaries, no middle people like the government” (male guardian, former WBG)	“The bad thing is that the school fees is too much for me to pay for all of them. They should reduce the school fees and they should built more classrooms” (male guardian, former EES)
"The community should motivate the teachers so that they can teach well” (female guardian, former UNS)	“What I would like is that let the government or other partners continue to give real support to girls’ education because the world is changing” (female guardian, former JGL)	“Provision of school uniforms and government to provide text books for the learners” (female guardian, former JGL)

4.4.3 Children’s attitudes toward school and education

Future benefits of education for family and employment opportunities were cited as major reasons why children like going to school.

When asked what they most liked about school, the majority of children cited learning and gaining knowledge. The children expressed 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 for having good careers. Children also related the importance of staying in education for their long-term family and employment aims.

> *“Education can take away the suffering one is going through.”*
>
> (younger girl, former WBG)

"My life will be different from other relatives in the household, because I am educated and [I will] live proud and happy."

(older girl, former WES)

"Children of now days will have better future than of their parents. This is because they are educated."[sic]

(older girl, former CES)

"Education is the key to success. When get educated, one will get good job and live a happy life unlike those who did not study"

(older girl, former EES)

Children were in general appreciative of their teachers, and felt supported. Most reported liking their teachers: *"Yes, I like the teachers at my school, because they impart knowledge into us and advise us concerning future"* (younger boy, former NBG). When the children reported not liking their teachers, it was because the teachers beat students or were cruel and laughed at pupils who didn't know the answers. "*Learning*" and "*playing with other children*" were identified by younger children as things they liked about school, whilst older children frequently explained that education would allow them to get a good job and live better lives than their parents. Children not attending school talked about being "*jealous*" of their school-going peers; 78% of out-of-school children said they would like to attend in the future.

Just as in the Baseline and Midline, children who wanted to gain employment after school cited wanting professional and white-collar jobs above all else. 26% of children wanted to be doctors, followed by 16% who wanted to be pilots and 12% who wanted to be teachers; these three career choices have consistently been in the top three since the Baseline. In qualitative interviews, children mentioned education allowing them to get better jobs than their parents, and avoid having to carry out agricultural and domestic work for their whole lives.

"Education will allow me to get a white-collar job"

(older girl, former CES)

Girls also noted that education would give them control over when they decided to marry and have children. The average age that girls wanted to get married and have children was 26, the same as reported by boys.

My age-mates [who are not in school] will be having many more children than me, and will feel bad about it, because uneducated person lacks control of family planning"

(older girl, former WES)

Supportive families are key to success in school: children and guardians report that large numbers of chores keep boys and girls from achieving their full potential, and consistent with other household findings, these chores are highly gendered in type and demand.

The majority of older children in school reported having supportive families, with almost all mentioning an older sibling, or other school-age older relative they could ask for help with their studies and talk to about what happened at school. Most children said their mother or father would also help if they could. Some children reported being excused from chores if they were studying: "*my mother is usually helping: if she knows that I have homework she will not let me do anything [domestic chores], she does the work herself*" (older girl, former EES). Corroborating the findings about drop-out and absence due to agricultural and domestic chores, children who did not report having supportive families described how they were expected to complete many chores, to the detriment of their studies after school:

> *"I don't study after school because I wash utensils and bath my younger sisters when I come back from school, and look after the baby too."*
>
> (younger girl, former WBG)
>
> *"I don't have time to study after school, after school I do some of the household activities like taking goats for grazing."*
>
> (younger boy, former EES)
>
> *"Coming back from school, I grind the sorghum and go fetch water and start cooking supper for about three hours. Then go to bath and sleep; with tiresome body cannot have time to revise books."[sic]*
>
> (older girl, former JGL)

This was corroborated by FGDs. When asked who performs better in school, several participants noted that whilst there were no innate differences in intelligence or work ethic between boys and girls, girls would often do worse in school than boys because they were expected to do more domestic chores: *"…boys do better. Because sometimes girls are not given the time to read because they are expected to do domestic work at home. However, they would be capable of performing the same if they were given the support needed to dedicate to their studies*." (female participant, FGD, former JGL); "*girls' performance is sometimes worse than for boys because they are expected to do domestic chores as well and this reduces the time available for learning*" (FGD, former WBG). The importance of domestic tasks in some households was confirmed by guardians who indicated they were less supportive of sending their children to school:

> *"The school is bad because they teach our children for long, to the extent that our children don't perform their duties at home…The school should release the pupils to come back home early to do the household activities."*
>
> (male guardian, former EES)

Supportive parents enabled children to feel like they would be able to complete their schooling and achieve whatever they wanted:

"My life will be different from the life of my mother, because my father promised me until I complete my studies he will struggle to sponsor me at school. I feel my life can be better than his because I am clever at school and I know what I want."

(older girl, former WBG)

Corporal punishment remains the main aspect of school which children dislike; children also dislike hunger and absent or unskilled teachers.

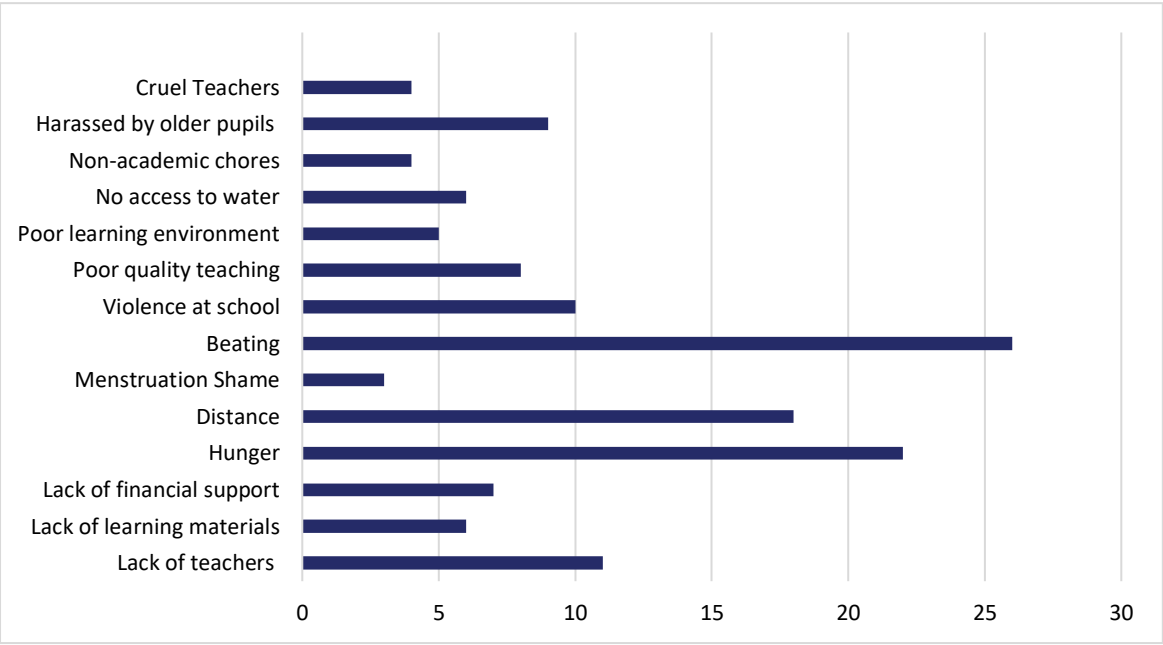
Physical punishment and hunger in school were the most commonly-reported causes of dissatisfaction with school among children, by a wide margin. Learners also reported violence at school, teacher absence and poor quality of teaching as the things they disliked most about school. There were a range of reasons why children stated they had been punished, including being late to school, fighting, and not wearing uniform. The most common form of punishment reported was cleaning the school compound, with 43% of children having been forced to do this as a punishment. Corporal punishment is the second most commonly-cited punishment children received, with 37% of children reporting having been beaten by a teacher. Despite not being the most commonly-reported punishment, "*beating*" was the most commonly-reported reason why children do not like school (n=26), just as in the Baseline and Midline.

The second most commonly-reported reason for disliking school was hunger, with 22 children reporting experiencing hunger at school. This corroborates findings that households only have enough food on 3.97 days a week on average (see section 4.1). Children also reported not feeling safe in school for a variety of reasons, with 10 disliking violence at school, and 9 reporting being harassed by older pupils, of whom 6 were girls who reported being harassed by boys.

"[The worst things about school are] lack of teachers in the school, because few come for lessons, and excessive punishment."

(younger child, former EES)

FIGURE 22 REASONS CHILDREN DISLIKE SCHOOL, AS REPORTED BY OLDER AND YOUNGER CHILDREN



Some older girls reported sexual harassment from boys at school, with several stating that without a brother present they felt like a target: "*the worst thing about schools is boys disturbing you if one don't have a brother*" (older girl, former UNS). Pregnancy as a result of attending school is a concern for guardians and children; one male guardian in former CES said the worst thing about the local schools was "*sexual immorality*".

Whilst radio access is low, children who have listened to the "Our School" radio programme gave very positive feedback.

Whilst the majority of children surveyed reported that they did not have access to a radio at home, of those children who reported listening to the radio (n=29), 55% said they had listened to the "Our School" radio programme, and of the 19 guardians who had access to a radio, 52% had listened to "Our School". Children who had listened to "Our School" reported enjoying the programmes, with children particularly highlighting how the programme had encouraged them to attend school and work hard. One male guardian who took part in an FGD stated that after listening to "Our School", his attitude to education had completely changed: *"I encouraged the people in my community to send their girls to school because times are changing and girls must not just be married off anymore. Education is important*" (male participant, FGD, former WBG).

4.4.4 Guardians' involvement in children's education

The proportion of guardians visiting their children's school at least once has dropped signficiantly since the Midline.

Only 35% of guardians reported visiting their child's school, down from 75% at the Midline. 20% of guardians had been visited by someone from the school, slightly down from 26% at the Midline. This is not necessarily evidence of low parental involvement in education. As mentioned above, in the qualitative interviews, guardians largely expressed a commitment to their children's education, and reported being supportive. 36% of parents made non-financial contributions to their child's primary school, indicating they had spent some time there. The qualitative research suggests that the vast majority of guardians regularly discuss their children's education with spouses or extended family members, as well as with the children themselves, believing these discussions to be important.

30% of guardians reported being a member of the SMC or Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) (no guardians reported being on a Board of Governors (BoG), only marginally down on the 33% reported at the Midline. For those who were not members, when asked why not, 63% reported that they didn't have enough time because of paid employment or domestic or agricultural chores, whilst 13% reported that it was difficult for them to access meetings. In addition, the relatively low proportions of guardians who went to school as children themselves mean that they are in a weaker position to help explain or translate difficult concepts to their children than elder siblings, who are more likely to have been to school and may be able to provide more useful guidance.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

With the cost of education continuing to rise, despite government directives, household poverty remains the key barrier to accessing education.

The average reported costs in SSP for schooling in 2018 are eight times higher than at the Midline. Converting to USD using the April 2016 and April 2018 market exchange rates indicates that there has been a 2.2x rise in the costs of schooling to guardians in effective value terms. Education is still regarded as important by guardians, and despite increasingly fragile household finances, guardians report that spending on education remains a priority.

As in the Baseline and Midline, the disparity between household income and the rising cost of education makes financial concerns a significant barrier to education. The reduction or removal of school fees would make it easier for families to afford education. 94.4% of guardians report paying primary school fees, and 66.7% report paying secondary school fees. Fees persist in government schools despite MoGEI directives, indicative of the few sources of funding available to these schools in the context of depreciating CG value amounts. An increase in CG value amounts under GESS2 should be considered to help to reduce the high cost barriers to education.

Cash Transfers have had a positive and tangible impact at household level, in the context of increasing financial insecurity.

The Household Survey has highlighted significantly higher levels of awareness of CTs amongst guardians since the Baseline. CTs have a major impact on household choices about schooling, and guardians have demonstrated that they believe CTs have had a positive and tangible impact at the household level. In this context, CTs should be funded and delivered in the transition to GESS2, particularly in the context of reported increasing fragility of household finances compared to Midline and Baseline, and in the context of the limited remaining time to deliver 2018 CTs, and their key role in household finances. GESS2 should consider increasing the value amounts and sustainability of CTs to girls, and explore the option of providing similar CTs to more year groups, and for boys who are marginalised/vulnerable.

The most commonly-cited reasons for dropping out of education were financial.

The lack of financial resources amongst households was the most commonly-reported reason for drop-out and low attendance amongst students, as many children are simply unable to pay tuition fees and the related costs of education. Sickness was also regularly reported as a cause of absence, amongst both girls and boys. The other most commonly-reported reasons for drop-outs and low attendance were gender-specific, with girls caring for sick family members and completing domestic responsibilities, and boys completing agricultural work.

Personal and family sickness was the main reason reported for absence, which has been consistent since the Baseline, and 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.

Despite overall improvements in reported attitudes to girls' education from households (corroborated in the School Survey by teachers), positive attitudes are still weighted towards the primary level; in the same vein, higher costs of education were reported by older children than younger ones. More support for secondary school girls should be considered in GESS2, as these girls have greater financial needs and face more pressure to drop out.

Up from the Midline, hunger was one of the most commonly-reported reason for children disliking attending school; given the fragile economic situation of most households, educational programmes should be linked more closely with nutrition programmes and school feeding.

There continues to be little follow-up from schools and County or Payam Education Offices when children are not in school. Qualitative interviews from Round 3 and 4 LQS reveal that teachers and SMC members feel that following up on absent children is effective in limiting drop-out rates. More training should be provided to school management structures and County and Payam education officials on the importance of following up on absences, alongside practical guidance on the process for doing so, and operational resources to actually do so.

Attitudes to education remain very positive among both children and guardians.

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 for family and employment opportunities were the major reasons why children stated that they enjoy going to school. The majority of guardians would like all their children to go to school, regardless of gender, but are forced to make difficult decisions in constrained financial circumstances.

There remains a high level of respect for teachers and their teaching performance, which reflects the fact 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 try their best to improve the quality of education. However, commonly-reported reasons by children for disliking school was the poor quality of education and the absence of teachers. To reduce teacher absence and staff turnover in schools, specific training for volunteer teachers should be provided, and pathways into longer term service should be offered, as well as increasing the frequency and depth of teachers' professional development to ensure that what is being taught is of high quality.

Households that have access to radios confirm that they listen to and value "Our School", with both children and guardians reporting that it provides motivation to prioritise education.

Behavioural change communications should continue, and the coverage of the “Our School” programme should increase, with more languages being provided, and by looking into the provision of low-cost radios for schools to increase opportunities for children who do not have radios at home to join in with “Our School” programme.