



Lessons from Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS)

Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS) is an initiative of the **Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI)** of the **Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GRSS)**, funded by **UK aid from the UK government**, and GRSS. GESS will transform the lives of a generation of children in South Sudan – especially girls – through education.

In order to realise its strategic objectives of eliminating barriers to girls' education and promoting gender equality throughout the education system, MoGEI is supported by a consortium, led by **BMB Mott MacDonald/Cambridge Education**, and including **BBC Media Action, Charlie Goldsmith Associates** and **Winrock International**. GESS works at the local level through six State-based NGOs, referred to as State Anchors.

Through the Cash Transfer (CTs) programme, GESS has supported 284,160 individual girls¹ by providing them with unrestricted, conditional CTs, dependent on their enrolment in classes Primary 5 – Senior 4.

GESS CTs have helped families overcome the economic barriers of sending their girls to school. Our research found that for 75% of surveyed CT-recipient households, the money received benefitted the whole household, reducing the burden of paying school-related, and other, costs. Further, it found that schools with CT recipients reported increased enrolment by between 7-8% the following year. Combined with GESS' Community Mobilisation activities, these transfers promote gender equity in the home and at school, encouraging families to prioritise girls' education as much as boys'.

**HOW TO DESIGN AND
IMPLEMENT A CONDITIONAL
CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMME
IN A FRAGILE AND
CONFLICT AFFECTED
STATE**

Social and cultural norms in South Sudan emphasise the role of girls as wives and mothers, placing the burden of domestic work almost exclusively on their shoulders, reducing the time available for girls' education². These pressures are exacerbated by economic collapse, food insecurity, and ongoing conflict throughout South Sudan, which, among other things, increase the risk of underage girls being married to older men in exchange for a dowry. Such examples help explain why transition into secondary education for girls in South Sudan is so limited .

Drawing on the experiences of GESS, this document provides an introduction to the design and implementation of a cash transfer programme. With the package of GESS services in mind, this document is best viewed in conjunction with the publications on GESS Capitation Grants and the South Sudan Schools Attendance Monitoring System (SSSAMS).

Determining and Measuring the Eligibility Criteria

When designing a cash transfer programme, the first consideration must focus on which individuals the programme should target and to what end. The GESS CTs programme seeks to increase girls' enrolment and continuous attendance in school between Primary 5 and Secondary 4 levels – the grades that see the highest levels of dropout amongst female learners. As a result, GESS CTs are available for girls between

1 <https://sssams.org/ct/profile.php>

2 Bubenzer, F. Hope, Pain and Patience. Orly Stern. Pp. 5. (2012); Human Rights Watch, "This Old Man Can Feed Us, You Will Marry Him" - Child and Forced Marriage in South Sudan, Pp. 39 (2013), Available online: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5139b3ba2.html>

Primary 5 and Secondary 4 and are conditional on their enrolment and regular attendance in school. Upon determining eligibility, a system must be developed that measures whether the potential cash transfer recipients can demonstrate their adherence to your criteria.

During the GESS programme:

- Girls are required to enrol on the Pupil Attendance Register (PAR) at the beginning of the academic year to provide evidence that they are enrolled in school. These registers are filled in by teachers and are delivered to and from schools by our State and Payam-based colleagues. The information from these registers is then uploaded onto SSSAMS, an online database that is part of the South Sudanese Education Management Information System, where it can be easily accessed and analysed.
- Secondly, girls are required to sign a Cash Transfer Enrolment Form (CTEF) and to provide a form of personal identification. In FCAS, access to a form of personal identification can be limited and so flexibility regarding this is important. For the GESS programme, for example, a letter from the community leader that confirms the identity of the girl is accepted. GESS teams conduct unannounced spot visits to schools with students enrolled on the PAR throughout the academic year to collect these documents. The unannounced nature of these visits intends to ensure that only students who are regularly attending school throughout the academic year receive CTs.
- Finally, girls are required to be present on the day of payment. Dates for payment visits are kept confidential in order to reduce the risk that girls who were not regularly attending school would come to school on the day of the Cash Transfer payment, and to reduce the security risks, both towards our staff and the girls themselves, associated with transporting large quantities of cash.

Conducting Cash Transfers

It is important to ensure that the method by which cash is transferred to the recipient:

- Maximises convenience;
- limits risks such as threats of theft or fraud; and
- is accountable and allows for ease of tracking.

In the first year that the GESS CTs programme ran, money was sent directly to school bank accounts. Head Teachers, under the supervision of the School Management Committee (SMC) and our State-based partners, would distribute the money to

all girls on the list of eligible students. However, the GESS programme managers were concerned that this technique could result in some girls not receiving their full CTs due to informal taxation carried out by members of school staff. As a result, GESS redesigned their method of transfer for the second year of programming.

During the second year of the Programme, GESS outsourced payments to a bank, which was then distributed to eligible girls through payment teams. The amount of money sent to the bank for each school was determined by the number of girls who were eligible to receive CTs. Bank officials, accompanied by monitoring teams comprised of local implementing partners, GESS, and the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI), conducted unannounced payment visits to schools with eligible CTs recipients. During these visits, girls who could produce a CTEF received their CT.

In order to account for cases where conflict or other factors could have prevented banks from operating, we recommend developing a contingency plan that allows cash payments to be distributed via pre-existing social structures. For example, cash could be delivered through local implementing partners.

Ensuring accountability

Paper Accountability

In order to ensure accountability during the payment of CTs, every girl enrolled on the PAR and present on the first visit from our monitoring teams is required to fill in a CTEF. This form includes personal information, such as the girl's name, and allocates each individual a unique identification number.



Cash Transfer beneficiaries in Yambio, Gbudwe State, hold up their Cash Transfer Enrolment Forms (CTEFs)

implementation partner, and the third to the school so that a copy can be produced if the girl loses hers. On the day of payment, each girl is required to present her CTEF to the payment teams who crosscheck each CTEF before payment is made, to ensure that only eligible girls received the money.

To improve accountability regarding this process, we would recommend that future projects issue identification cards to recipients on the day of registration if they do not already possess them.

Success of the GESS Cash Transfers Programme

By the end of the first phase of the GESS programme in 2018, more than 200,000 individual girls will have benefitted from at least one CT, and half a million payments will have been made.

Research suggests that CTs are already having a positive impact on gender equality and girls' education. A survey carried out in September 2015 by the Programme shows it



Cash Transfer recipients in Juba, Jubek State, hold up bags that they purchased with the grant

Online monitoring system

An online system of attendance monitoring provides a straightforward and accessible way to track eligibility, payment, and accountability. As part of the GESS programme, SSSAMS - an online system that collects enrolment data disaggregated to individual pupils (and teachers) - was developed.

The information collected includes, among other things, their name, gender, age, year group, and a track of their education career. Such a system helps make a nationwide programme possible by collating all the data in one place.

Incident Tracker

In order to ensure accountability after payments have been made, GESS launched an incident hotline and email address. These allow any individual to report incidents of malpractice to the GESS programme. Each reported incident is documented and followed up, where necessary.

was consistently the case that the intended recipient girl had received the CT, received the full amount, and in almost every case had been able to spend the money herself, typically on education-enabling items.

The findings also suggest that girls who receive CTs remain in school for longer and attend school more frequently than the historic norm. A rigorous independent analysis³ by Lee Crawford (University of Sussex and Centre for Global Development) on the impact of GESS 2014-16 found that Capitation Grants and Cash Transfers make schools more likely to remain open, increase their enrolment numbers, and increase attendance rates despite the prevalence of substantial ongoing levels of violence and conflict.

You can find this report, and all of our research, on our website.⁴

³ <http://girlseducationsouthsudan.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Cash-Grants-Impact-on-Enrolment-and-Attendance.pdf>

⁴ <http://girlseducationsouthsudan.org/research-reports-2>

INSPIRE EDUCATE TRANSFORM



AIM

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

MANAGEMENT

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

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