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.

GESS’ Quality Education component takes a holistic approach, including school-based teacher professional development training, community-based school governance, supportive school supervision and school-based mentoring for girls. Actors and interventions in the education sector require education managers and officials at all levels to take responsibility for change in the education sector. At the Payam level, this responsibility falls to the Payam Education Supervisors (PESs).

The 2014 GESS Baseline study helped to build an understanding on the role and capacity of the PESs; prior to this information was scarce. The findings of the Baseline and a workshop held with the GESS State Anchors (state-based NGO partners), provided the basis on which GESS designed the Supportive School Supervision (SS) component, to provide appropriate administrative support, skills, and knowledge to enable PESs to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

The GESS Supportive School Supervision component focuses on capacity building for the PESs and their assistants. Hands on support is provided by the State Anchor County Education Officer (CEO) through on-the-job training in:

1. Quality Assurance of School Development Plans (SDPs) and School Budgets (SBs);
2. Lesson Observation; and

CEOs also co-lead training sessions for School Management Committees (SMCs) in Primary Schools and Boards of Governors (BoGs) in Secondary Schools alongside the PES, as part of the GESS’ School Governance component. PESs will then take the lead on this for the sustainability of the Quality Education component at the end of the GESS programme.

Throughout the GESS programme, 500 PESs have been trained and 1,000 training materials on school governance and supervision have been distributed across the ten former States of South Sudan. Through these activities, 2,665 schools have been reached.
Drawing on the experiences of GESS, this document provides an introduction to the design and implementation of a school supervision programme. With the package of GESS services in mind, this document is best viewed in conjunction with the publications on GESS Teacher Professional Development, School Governance and Mentoring.

**Designing and Implementing a School Supervision Programme**

When designing and implementing a SS programme there are three key considerations that need to be taken:

- Needs assessment
- Logistics and staffing
- Adaptive programming

**Needs Assessment**

When designing a SS programme, the first consideration must focus on what supervision structure already exists, if any. This should include mapping where officials operate, chains of communication and chains of command. Once this is established, a needs assessment should be conducted to ensure that areas of high capacity are positively recognised and reinforced, and where appropriate replicated, and that areas of low capacity are prioritised in the programme design. The needs assessment should include various stakeholders to ensure that the findings are robust and as holistic as possible.

Prior to the GESS programme, MoGEI had PESs in place to monitor the progress that schools were making against the standards set by MoGEI. It was also the responsibility of the PES to translate and disseminate education policies into the school context.

In 2014, GESS conducted a Baseline study - a County and Payam survey - and a workshop was held with State Anchors, in addition to observations and field visits conducted by GESS secretariat staff. The needs assessment tools aimed to further understanding the PES, including their roles, responsibilities, status, capacity, and expectations held of them. Prior to this, there was no known research on this area.

The needs assessment found that 99.3% were previously teachers, and 85.9% had school leadership experience. 98.9% were found to speak English, and 85.1% Arabic. The vast majority of Payam officials had limited or no computer skills. In addition to the roles and responsibilities of payam officials, the survey also focused the capacity of PESs. The majority of PESs did not have copies of key education documents in and guidelines, including guidelines regarding the school development planning and budgeting process, and were not aware of their duties towards schools they supervise.

The findings also showed that PESs had limited knowledge about school governance and had not been trained as trainers for schools.

The design of the SS programme should be based on findings of the needs assessment. The GESS SS programme used the findings to design a comprehensive and skill building training for PESs, alongside other components such as writing PES job descriptions and clarifying roles and responsibilities and developing a PES school visit record.

**Logistics and Staffing**

It is important to give consideration to the logistics and staffing of any school supervision programme. Key questions to consider include:

- How many schools can one official (the PES, in South Sudan) regularly support and supervise?
- How should schools be clustered, if at all?
- How should officials be trained?
- What is the most appropriate chain of command and accountability?
- Facilitation

In the GESS programme, with a team of two assistants, PESs were responsible for supervising all schools in their Payam, each covering at least 10 schools per month. Depending on the administrative structure in which a school supervision programme operates, the number of schools might be greater. Where this is the case, it might be more effective and efficient to cluster schools, assigning responsibility to different officials, or increasing the number of PES assistants specifically to take charge of formal education blocks in big town councils with a wide range of schools. Clustering of schools should consider the distance and time required to travel between schools. The capacity of the officials should also be taken into consideration when deciding how many schools they should be responsible for.

The type and content of training should be based on the needs assessment, focusing on the existing capacity of the individuals to be trained. As the GESS needs assessment found PES capacity to be low, a blended learning model was used. This included a 5-day comprehensive training with handbooks and other learning materials, and continuous on the job training delivered by the CEO.

A strategy should be put in place to ensure that any PES taking up their post after the start of the programme receives appropriate training and support to catch up on what they might have missed. For example, ensuring access to the initial 5-day training, and making sure there are enough funds to produce more handbooks.
In the GESS model, the PES was supported by the Assistant Supervisor for School Inspection, and the Deputy Assistant Supervisor for Special Programmes. The PES was responsible for setting and ensuring implementation of their work plans, as well as providing technical advice and feedback on the quality of their work.

All staff involved in a SS programme should be given education policies and handbooks to use on the job, which outline their roles and responsibilities.

It is important to ensure that officials are facilitated sufficiently to carry out their roles and responsibilities. The method of facilitation is also an important consideration. The funds that GESS provided as a PES operational grant for facilitating the supervision programme went through the government structures, from the national level, through to the State and County levels and finally to the Payam. In some instances, the funds that reached the Payams were delayed, which had a knock-on effect on implementation. If possible, it would be more efficient for funds to go directly to the Payam from the National level. Funds should also be allocated to the office space and equipment of the PES, for example providing motorbike fuel, computers with internet access and computer training if needed.

Adaptive Programming

It is critical that a school supervision programme is responsive to the context, which in a Fragile and Conflict Affected State (FCAS) context can often be dynamic and volatile. Recruitment should be conflict sensitive, taking into account any affiliations of the local staff member and the area they are to be stationed. Different strategies should be designed on a needs basis to ensure the safety of all staff and that duty of care is upheld. In the GESS programme, formal authorisation was applied for and approved by local leaders and State Anchor staff were accompanied by persons of authority in the area of conflict.

In GESS, the on the job training model was altered slightly in one payam in order to ensure staff safety. The County Education Officer was unable to visit a particular area of the payam due to conflict, although the PES was able to do so. The PES and the CEO met in a safe area together to go through the training modules together that the PES was to deliver, and then the PES travelled to deliver the training on his own. After the training, the PES returned to the CEO and provided a debrief and notes on the activity.

In another Payam, the PES was local to that area and introduced the CEO to local chiefs. The chiefs protected the CEO whenever he travelled to those areas. The local chiefs joined the CEO and the PES and travelled together to ensure safety and protection of staff.

County and Payam Research Reports are available on the GESS website.¹

¹ [http://girlseducationsouthsudan.org/research-reports-2]
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.

AIM

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