



# LESSONS LEARNT

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## School Governance



### School Governance Lessons Learned Objectives

The Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS) research has been compiled with the aim of generating increased knowledge and evidence for policymakers of what works to promote girls' education in South Sudan, about programmatic causality and impact, and to provide lessons learned to inform future programmes and other contexts. The Effective School Governance lessons learned brief examines the impact of the School Governance component of GESS and assesses how/if it has contributed to improving the capacity of school management committees; positive changes in their behaviour and practices in schools management; and the creation of a conducive learning environment for learners.



### School Governance Lessons Learned Methodology

The lesson learned findings were drawn from discussions with State Anchor partners, findings of field monitoring visits and review of technical teams' reports. Quantitative evidence was drawn from daily monitoring, 55 consultative meetings held with the GESS technical team and education managers. Furthermore, a diagnosis of the pre/post-training/intervention assessment of School Governance effectiveness has been continuously done to inform what works in delivering an Effective School Governance intervention.

### Findings

The impact of the School Governance intervention is measured in a number of ways - through pre and post training assessment. These assessments have found that 99% of the trained School Management Committees (SMCs)/Board of Governors (BoGs) can be judged as partially effective, 61% of as fully effective.

The effectiveness assessment was conducted focusing on the following eight areas :

1. Inclusiveness of the SMC/BoG members;
2. Keeping Records of SMC/BoG of Monthly Meetings;
3. Prioritizing Girls' Education in the School Development Plans (SDPs);
4. Evidence of Implementation of Activities that Benefit Girls;
5. Financial Management;
6. Keeping Financial Records;
7. Keeping Records of School Assets; and
8. Evidence of Implementation of Planned Activities.

### Student Attendance

A review of a small sample of 20 randomly selected schools shows that the schools with trained SMCs/BoGs are more likely to file an attendance report through the South Sudan Schools' Attendance Monitoring System (SSSAMS) than schools with untrained SMCs/BoGs. Out of the 20 randomly assessed schools, 19 were functional. Out of the 19 functional

schools, 9 had their SMCs/BoGs trained. Amongst the 9 schools with trained SMCs/BoGs there were 9 that reported attendance at least once (100%) between 2015 and June 2017. Amongst the 10 schools with untrained SMCs/BoGs, 5 reported attendance at least once (50%) between 2015 and June 2017. There were 598 daily attendance reports filed by the schools with trained SMCs/BoGs, compared with 203 reports filed by schools with untrained SMCs/BoGs in this sample.

## Inclusion of girl related purchases and activities in the School Development Plans

Out of 13 schools with SDPs in 2016, 11 included girl related purchases and 7 included girl related activities in their plans. This is an improvement from 2015, when none of the SDPs included girl related activities. Of the two schools that did not include girl related purchases in 2016, one has an untrained SMCs/BoGs and the other had its SMCs/BoGs trained but after submission of the SDP for 2016. It is important to note that the progress related to girl related purchases and activities was made possible thanks to the changes in the SDP template, which since 2016 explicitly asks schools to plan for girl and hard to reach children related purchases and activities.

## Inclusion of purchases and activities improving quality of learning

Out of sampled 13 schools with SDP in 2016 reviewed, one did not have purchases related to learning improvements included. Out of the 13 schools with SDP in 2017, four did not include purchases for improving learning quality in their plans and instead prioritized purchase of stationery materials. All of these 4 schools had their SMCs/BoGs trained. This is concerning as purchases related to learning quality in these schools were deprioritised in order to accommodate basic stationery, such as pens for teachers and chalk. This also suggests that schools are financially constrained and that basic materials are missing in schools. It might also suggest that the SMCs/BoGs view stationery as input for improving learning quality.

## Inclusion of activities improving teachers' skills

Two samples of schools were reviewed to judge the level of inclusion of activities improving teachers' skills in SDPs. One sample was random and identical to the sample of schools included in the review of the quality of SDPs. Another sample was purposive sampling of all schools which benefited from the GESS Pilot Teacher Professional Development (TPD) programme. Out of 20 schools (19 functional), in 2015 none of the schools included any teacher related activities in their SDPs. In 2016, five schools (out of 13 with legible SDPs) had teacher related activities included in their plans, and by June 2017, one. Within the sample of 220 schools included in the Pilot TPD programme. 202 Teacher Professional Development

schools with their SDP uploaded on South Sudan Schools' Attendance Monitoring System (SSSAMS) in 2016, 67 (33%) had teacher related activities included in their plans. This is a positive finding, especially that the plans for 2016 were developed only shortly after the introduction of the GESS Pilot TPD programme (in August 2015).



**School Management Committee at Mahad Primary School in Juba do an exercise on how to identify the school's needs**

## Costing of activities in School Development Plans and School Budgets

Of all uploaded SDPs & Budgets for schools in the sample, and for all years, all activities and purchases were costed in detail in the budgets but only some were costed in detail in the plans. The majority of the uploaded SDP showed summary costs (totals), rather than details. This is likely because of the design of the SDP template, which does not leave enough space for the SMCs/BoGs to write details in the SDP. All the uploaded school budgets had the costs assigned to planned activities and purchases were described in detail. In one school, in 2015, the School Budget included purchases related to learning improvements, while the SDP did not. In a great majority of cases the SDP and the school budget carried the same detail. In some cases (6 cases out of 35) the School Budget had more detail about activities than the SDP. This was also observed in a small number of schools reviewed within the GESS TPD sample.

## Quality of School Development Plans over time

The quality of the SDPs is improving, however few plans can be judged as excellent. Many activities prioritised in the SDPs are still basic and (limited to pens, markers, chalk). The link between purchases and improvements to learning outcomes are still weak. The majority of the SDPs' priorities are purchases such as fixing doors, building fences, buying chalk and stationery materials, rather than activities that directly impact quality of learning. Despite this, it is worth noting, the quality of the uploaded school plans and budgets has been gradually improving and is good.



## Quality of Cash Ledgers

In 2015, in four cases (out of 12), SDPs activities featured in the Cash Ledger. In 2016, out of 9 uploaded Cash Ledgers, 4 matched the SDP and the 5 do not. The fact that situation of schools changes rapidly and that the Capitation Grant reaches the majority of schools over six months after the SDPs are written might be the reason why the Cash ledgers do not match the SDPs. On the other hand, it is positive that schools have the freedom to adapt their plans to their current needs and use their funds accordingly.

## Challenges to Effective School Governance

### Frequent Turnover of Education Managers

The frequent transfer and/or dismissals of education managers (County, Payam, school) has in some cases created a gap in the system.

### Delays in the Disbursement of Capitation Grants

As a result in delays in disbursement of Capitation Grants, schools struggle to implement their plans.

**Insufficient/delays in supply of Pupil Attendance Registers, Daily Attendance Registers, and other related documents to schools** by partners entrusted caused a delay in schools accessing Capitation Grant and other support.

## Recommendations

- Delivery through State Anchors works: capacity of the State Anchor staff has been built in the area of School governance. The County Education Officers (CEOs) have developed strong relationships with the schools and got to know the local education context very well. Efforts must be made to sustain that capacity in the education sector and engage the CEOs in future programmes building capacity of the SMCs/BoGs or Payam Education Supervisors (PES).
- Capacity of SMCs/BoGs increased since the start of GESS but for that capacity to be sustained and further increased, regular training should be offered to SMCs/BoGs. Stronger planning and financial management skills must be built within the SMCs/BoGs. SMCs/BoGs need to build stronger understanding of inputs that have a true effect on learning outcomes and start investments into reading and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) materials, visual aids, and school-based training for teachers. Active participation of the Head Boy and the Head Girl in the SMCs/BoGs could be strengthened and participation of women could be improved.
- Continue strengthening the evidence base on the effects the training has on SMCs/BoGs members and the SMCs/BoGs on schools. GESS has contributed significantly

to the knowledge base on school governance in South Sudan however there is a need to continue gathering and analyzing evidence to inform future interventions.

- Continue strengthening mobile monitoring. Mobile monitoring and use of even simple technology requires training and strong logistical support. Technology breaks and with limited ICT skills amongst the staff, even simple problems require support from the technical team. Technology, however, allows the programme to monitor activities regularly and even when periodical insecurities or emergencies occur.
- Low cost training materials and aids work, and are very much appreciated by the communities. Both: the CEOs and SMCs/BoGs enjoy the practical and realistic approach to training, with only basic materials provided. Using low-cost materials encourages creativity and avoids building dependency on the external materials. Trainers and SMCs/BOGs no longer wait for receiving materials from partners or the government, and are more eager to improvise materials.
- Strengthen the capacity of the PES. Ideally the CEOs would (in a few years) be made redundant as the capacity of the PES increases. The PES are the closest stakeholders to the school and it is the capacity of the PES that needs to be built, so that they can continue the school governance training for SMCs/BoGs. The next phase of the programme should aim at developing the PESs into quality trainers of SMCs/BoGs.
- Strengthen the voice of the Head Girl and Head Boy within the SMCs/BoGs. The Head Boys and the Head Girls in many schools have very strong and respected voices. Efforts must be made to strengthen their role within the schools and SMCs/BoGs and build their capacity in representing students' voice at school. A portion of the Capitation Grant could be considered for student led projects, coordinated by the Head Girl and the Head Boy.



Gasmallah Primary School, Maban SMC

The School Governance Lessons Learnt is not part of our Knowledge, Evidence & Research (KER) component. It is a stand-alone piece. All of our research and reports are available at: [www.girlseducationsouthsudan.org](http://www.girlseducationsouthsudan.org)

# 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 2017, 138,578 girls started Primary school, but only 3,816 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 Cambridge Education, and including BBC Media Action, Charlie Goldsmith Associates and Winrock International.

The Programme began in April 2013, and will last until September 2018.



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