



Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS) will transform the lives of a generation of children in South Sudan – especially girls – through education.

GESS will contribute to improving the lives of a generation of South Sudanese children by ensuring the provision of equitable, accessible and essential support to the education sector in South Sudan, with a particular emphasis on girls. The GESS programme receives GBP £70 million through UK aid from the British Government, and CAD \$19.2 million through Global Affairs Canada (GAC) from the Canadian Government.

The Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI) oversees the GESS programme, supported by Consortium Partners, which provide technical advice. The partners include the lead, Cambridge Education which is part of the Mott MacDonald group; BBC Media Action; Leonard Cheshire; Montrose; and Windle Trust International. At the state and county levels, the State Ministries of General Education and Instruction (SMoGEIs) take the lead in Programme implementation, supported by partner organisations, which we call the GESS 'State Anchors'.



'Our School' producer interviewing a student in Juba, Central Equatoria State.
This photo was taken pre-COVID-19.



Capitation grants enable schools to buy vital resources such as textbooks.

The outcome of the Programme will be an improvement in girls' educational attainment, above what was achieved in the first phase of GESS - building further gains on school enrolment, reducing barriers to education and promoting equity in access for all children, with a focus on those with disabilities.

Activities

The innovative design of the Programme includes a range of integrated activities that are tackling barriers to girls' education simultaneously, supported by technology and informed by research.

GESS's radio programme, 'Our School', inspires communities to support the education of girls and children with disabilities. Our School is broadcast weekly in 9 local languages, on 28 partner radio stations that broadcast locally and nationally across South Sudan. Each 15-minute episode features real-life stories and interviews with girls, parents, school managers and community members.

Our School highlights the benefits of girls staying in school and addresses negative cultural attitudes and practical challenges, such as travelling to school safely and budgeting for school fees, that can affect a girl's education. We have already reached our end of Programme target by reaching an estimated audience of 2.3 million listeners.

Community Mobilisers bring the radio programmes to rural communities through solar powered wind-up radios loaded with the Our School radio programme on SD cards. The Mobilisers organise radio listening clubs and community dialogues about girls' education, supplemented by visual storytelling materials. In one such activity in Eastern Equatoria, parents listening to the 'journey to school' episode decided their children would walk to school together in a group - an idea sparked by the radio programme. By the end of the second phase of GESS, we hope to reach 2,700 school communities across all of ten states of South Sudan.

Direct Empowerment

GESS also empowers girls directly by paying Cash Transfers to eligible girls enrolled in, and regularly attending, classes Primary 5 to Secondary 4.

More than 680,000 individual girls have received a Cash Transfer to date, exceeding the end of Programme target of 575,000 individual girls.

The Cash Transfers address poverty barriers to education as they supplement household incomes, so parents can better afford to send their daughters to school. Upon receiving the money, the girls decide how to spend it. Our research shows they choose wisely - mainly purchasing shoes, uniforms, learning materials or sanitary items.

Evidence indicates that Cash Transfers have a real impact on girls' enrolment and attendance. Our research shows that girls who receive Cash Transfers remain in school longer and attend school more frequently than those who do not.

The GESS programme collaborates with the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI) at all levels. MoGEI supports primary schools with Capitation Grants through GESS, whilst UK aid and Global Affairs Canada support secondary schools. This collaboration ensures ownership and the sustainability of the Programme. By the end of the second phase of GESS, we hope to have reached 4,300 primary schools and 380 secondary schools with at least one Capitation Grant. To date, we have reached 3,899 primary schools and 192 secondary schools with Capitation Grants.



A Cash Transfer beneficiary in Juba receives her 2020 Round 1 payment whilst following strict COVID-19 protocol.



A Cash Transfer beneficiary follows COVID-19 health and safety guidelines by washing her hands before receiving the money.

School Capitation Grants aim to improve the educational environment for girls and boys alike. Schools must meet a number of governance and reporting requirements to be eligible – including having a school governance body in place, and making a school development plan and budget.

Capitation Grants allow schools to set their own priorities for development, and to respond to their own needs. Schools have invested in renovations to classrooms and other physical infrastructure, as well as learning materials. GESS also encourages investments that boost the enrolment and attendance of girls, such as providing sanitary pads to female learners.



Free SMS reporting enables teachers to use their mobile phones to submit enrolment and attendance data in real time.

During the 2019 Academic Year GESS collected details of more than 2.18 million learners.



Innovation

A key innovation is GESS' use of mobile phone technology to capture individual pupils' and teachers' attendance in real-time through SMS reporting into an online database called the Schools' Attendance and Monitoring System (SAMS).

It is also used to determine the number of girls eligible for Cash Transfers, as well as schools eligible for Capitation Grants.

Another innovative aspect of the Programme is its conflict-resilient, decentralised implementation structure. Working with community-based programme managers and county-level staff, the Programme is able to operate and deliver, even in conflict-affected and hard-to-reach areas.

Opportunities

The Knowledge, Evidence, Research & Learning (KERL) component of GESS aims to generate knowledge on best practices in education to discover what works and does not work when promoting girls' education in South Sudan. The KERL component seeks to develop an evidence base for GESS interventions, linking inputs to outcomes and impact, as well as acting as a broader information hub on girls' education.

The second phase of the Programme will target children with disabilities – giving them the chance to benefit from a quality education and the opportunity for full participation in society.

Disability inclusion will be mainstreamed throughout the whole Programme. As well as addressing stigma and access to schools, we will help to improve learning for children with disabilities. Improved learning will be done through the promotion of disability inclusion in teacher training, developing appropriate training and school materials, and championing disability inclusion across all of GESS' quality education activities.

We will ensure that our data is disaggregated, including by disability, and that all Programme research effectively captures unique issues that affect learners with disabilities.

Quality Education

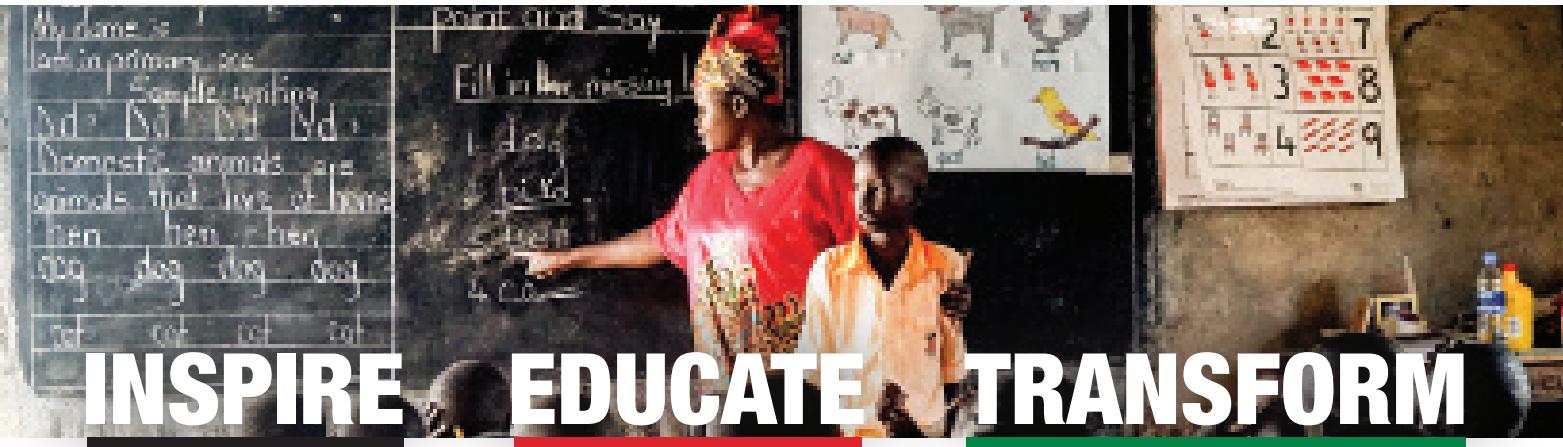
Practical support to schools, teachers and education managers.

This part of the GESS programme is about improving the quality of education and learning outcomes. Members of a community are encouraged to join school governing bodies and are trained to take an active part in the school development process. School supervisors are supported through on the job coaching.

Teachers are receiving school-based, practical and contextualised professional training, and girls in secondary schools and select primary schools participate in a mentoring programme which encourages them to stay in school and trains them in life skills. Providing practical support to schools, teachers and education managers is crucial. Factors that impact the quality of education include the consistent loss of instructional time, language of instruction, low capacity of teachers and limited access to teaching and learning materials.

GESS's practical support to schools, teachers and education managers is realised through the following five innovative strategies:

- 1 Raising the quality of teachers**
- reaching 2,500 with teacher training
- 2 Improving school governance** -
reaching 4,500 School Management Committees
- 3 Mentoring of girls and boys** -
reaching 70,000 mentees
- 4 Supporting Alternative Education System** - reaching approximately 50,000 Accelerated Learning Programme and Accelerated Secondary Education learners
- 5 Building capacity of Education Managers** - reaching 1,500 Education Managers



INSPIRE EDUCATE TRANSFORM

“What I can add is when the country is in crisis, it doesn’t mean it is the end of the world. When the country is in crisis, people have to encourage themselves so that we get on with education even though you have a problem. You have that chance of education. You have to study.”

Participant in user-testing research, Juba



Girls listen to an episode of the GESS 'Our School' programme on a solar-powered wind-up radio at a session in Juba led by a peer mentor.

Consortium Partners



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Girls' Education South Sudan



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