



Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH) Research Brief

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Knowledge, Evidence and Research

The **Knowledge, Evidence, Research & Learning (KERL)** component of the **Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS)** Programme 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.

To support decision-making, accountability and continuous programme improvement, GESS research employs longitudinal, point or cross-sectional and large-scale nationally representative surveys across all ten states and three administrative areas of South Sudan.

From August to December 2020, GESS, in collaboration with the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI) conducted a Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) assessment across all states and three administrative areas that aimed to inform the re-opening of schools following school closures in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



WASH Research Objective

The WASH Assessment was carried out to ascertain the current provision of WASH facilities in schools and their functionality and accessibility for all children, including those with disabilities.



Methodology

The assessment employed a mixed methods approach to collect data on the WASH status in 5,500 schools across all ten states of South Sudan as per the 2020 enrolment data captured through the South Sudan Schools' Attendance Monitoring System (SAMS). Due to accessibility issues at the time of conducting the survey, 75% (4,159 schools) of the target schools were visited as part of the assessment.

A team of enumerators was deployed to schools between September-October 2020. Data was collected through the Kobo Collect mobile application. The survey was largely quantitative, with structured questionnaires administered to Head Teachers. Qualitative methods were also utilised through direct observation of WASH facilities in schools, including data on the provision and functionality of toilet facilities and handwashing facilities, and the availability of water, including the accessibility of these facilities for children with disabilities.

Headlines

- Actual adequate sources of water were only available in 72% of the schools assessed, with boreholes the most common adequate source. However, only 45% of these boreholes lay within the vicinity of the school. The remaining schools might have had access to water, but they were reliant on sources which were both outside their direct control and/or of dubious quality.
- 40% of the assessed schools had no toilets. Where there were toilets, access for children with disabilities was found to be extremely low, with only 40% accessible to learners with disabilities.

- The assessment established that the availability of handwashing facilities in schools was low with only 33% of schools assessed having a functional handwashing facility available at the time of the survey.



Key findings

Access to Water

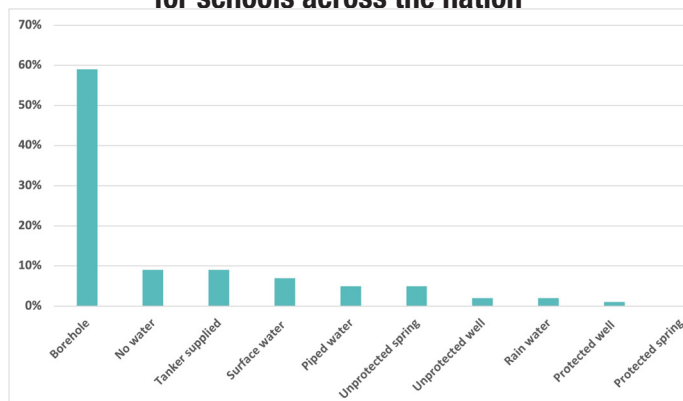
Adequate sources of water were available in 72% of the schools assessed (2,994), with boreholes the most common adequate source, but where only 45% of these boreholes lay within the vicinity of the school. The remaining schools had access to water, but were reliant on sources which were outside their direct control and/or of poor quality. Most of these schools were located in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Western Bahr el Ghazal, Lakes, Western Equatoria and Jonglei States. 9% of schools (357) had no access to any type of water source.



A borehole at Dangagi Primary School in Maban County, Upper Nile State

In general, boreholes were found to be the most common source of water for schools in South Sudan. 59% (2,468) of the schools assessed had access to a borehole. The second most common water source was a water tank, of which 9% (357) of the schools had access.

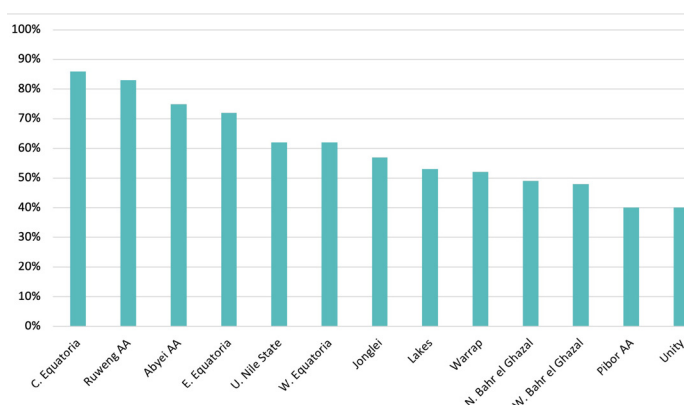
Graph 1: Percentage distribution of water sources for schools across the nation



Access to Toilets

Of the 4,159 schools assessed, 60% (2,478) had toilets. The availability of toilets was much higher in urban areas, compared to rural areas. There was also a large difference in the availability of toilets between states, with the lowest in Unity State (40%) and Pibor AA (40%) and highest in Central Equatoria State (86%) and Ruweng AA (83%).

Graph 2: Percentage distribution of schools with toilets per region



Of the 2,478 of schools with available toilets, 98% (2,419) had a toilet with a pit, making them the most common type of toilet. Out of these pit toilets, 78% (1,894) had a slab while the remaining 22% of pit toilets (525) did not have a slab. Access to toilets for children with disabilities was found to be extremely low. Only 40% (672) of available toilets were accessible to learners with disabilities, which constitutes 16% of the overall 4,159 assessed schools.



Comboni Primary and Secondary School in Old Fangak, Jonglei State

Additionally, the assessment established that 84% of the schools with toilets had separate toilets for girls and boys, with no striking differences between different states, school

ownership, or between rural and urban schools. However, only 19% (316) of all schools with functioning learners' toilets had menstrual hygiene components, meaning toilets were equipped with buckets, soap, and proper waste disposal facilities.

Handwashing Facilities

The assessment established that the availability of handwashing facilities in schools was as low as 33% (1,366). A higher percentage – 53% (719) of 1,358 urban schools, as opposed to 23% (647) of 2,801 rural schools, had handwashing facilities available.

Only 28% (730) of the 2,651 government schools assessed, and 11% (3) of all 28 NGO schools, had handwashing facilities. Availability of these facilities was much better in private schools at 59% (113). 56% (256) of the 454 faith-based schools and 32% (264) of all community schools had handwashing facilities.

Of the 1,366 schools with handwashing facilities 81% (1,107) had water available while only 49% had soap available at the time of assessment.



Handwashing facilities at Darling Wisdom Academy in Juba

Recommendations

Every child and school staff member have the right to a safe and healthy learning and teaching environment, including access to adequate WASH facilities, especially in the light of the pandemic.

There is also growing evidence that there is a correlation between improving access to WASH facilities in schools and positive health and educational outcomes for learners (Erhard et al 2013).

Therefore, the need is for the Government to invest in improving the WASH facilities in schools based on this WASH assessment. With this in mind, actions are required in three main areas: the provision of water, toilet facilities, and handwashing facilities.

Required water

- Ensure that all schools have access to an adequate water supply with a focus on the 28% of schools without access to an adequate supply.
- Focus on the schools where access to a borehole is outside the vicinity of the school.

Toilet Facilities

- Construct disability-friendly and gender separated pit toilets with slabs in schools with no toilets.
- Construct slabs for pit toilets without slabs in assessed schools and ensure they are constructed with accessibility for those with disabilities.
- Incorporate menstrual hygiene components in all the toilets for girls.

Handwashing Facilities

- With overarching support from the Education Cluster, establish or improve handwashing facilities in all assessed schools.
- Ensure that all handwashing facilities are disability-friendly.

The full report is available on our website:

www.girlseducationsouthsudan.org

INSPIRE EDUCATE TRANSFORM

AIM

Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS) is an inclusive programme that will transform the lives of a generation of children in South Sudan – especially girls and those in the margins of society – through education. The second phase of the GESS programme will run between May 2019 – March 2024.

The outcomes of the Programme will be an improvement in girls' educational attainment from that already 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.

MANAGEMENT

The GESS programme receives £70 million (GBP) of UK aid from the UK Government and \$19.2 million (CAD) from the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada. The GESS programme is led in collaboration between the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI), the UK Government and the Government of Canada and implemented in a consortium led by Cambridge Education/Mott MacDonald, including BBC Media Action, Montrose, Leonard Cheshire and Windle Trust International.



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