



# School Financing Research Brief



## 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.

A key aim of GESS is to improve the quality of learning spaces and reduce barriers to enrolment through the direct provision of financial resources in the form of capitation grants. These payments include a fixed amount per school and a variable amount per capita. However, the purchasing power of CGs has been eroded significantly since the commencement of payments in 2014.

This study was commissioned jointly by GESS and the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI) to understand the needs of schools and estimate the financial investments necessary to ensure adequate resources for schools to provide an enabling learning environment and disbursement and distribution options to enhance equity, efficiency and effectiveness.



## Research Objective

The overall objective of the school financing study is to better understand the gaps between available resources and needs at the school level. The study aims to provide an evidence-based benchmark for capitation grants that significantly closes these gaps as well as protocols for allocating capitation grants that enhance equity, efficiency, and effectiveness.



## Methodology

The research applied a mixed methods approach combining comprehensive literature review, quantitative analysis, and key informant interviews with key actors in education policy, school management and practitioners.

These methods included:

- Primary and secondary literature review of Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GRSS) and MoGEI policies and plans.
- Review of trends in school-level budget priorities and spending using the South Sudan Schools' Attendance Monitoring System (SAMS) and the School Budgeting and Reporting Tool (SBRT) database, with data from the years 2018 and 2019 from approximately 4,000 schools.
- A survey sample of 837 schools (pre-schools, primary schools, secondary schools and teacher training institutes) across all ten states and three administrative areas was using a structured questionnaire. A team of enumerators used the KoBo Collect mobile app to collect the data.

- A resource-cost methodology to convert policy and planning expectations into monetary estimates of per-pupil financial requirements incorporating study activities, school characteristics and expectations of provision of services.
- 11 key informant interviews were used to validate school-level minimal conditions for learning and capitation grant utilisation.

## Headlines

- The capacity of schools to generate financial resources is extremely limited. The current capitation grant allocation formula provides significantly more revenue than schools can generate even if all students comply with current fees and charges.
- While the survey showed that remote and conflict-affected schools tend to have fewer financial resources, the differences between schools are not large. Therefore, financial needs were estimated using benchmarks of minimally adequate conditions and allocations to all schools via a single formula.
- The resource-cost model to estimate financial requirements shows that the annual financial requirement for schools is GBP 12.26 per primary and GBP 19.44 per secondary student, at the GBP-SSP exchange rate for May 2019 and May 2022.



## Key findings

### Financial resources

Schools' capacity to generate financial resources is extremely limited and the current capitation grant allocation formula provides significantly more revenue than schools can generate even if all students comply with current fees and charges. This lack of capacity is more pronounced for remote schools and schools affected by conflict. The formulas for allocating the resources have significantly reduced the inequities in the availability of financial resources in not-for-profit primary and secondary schools.

Inequities in the level of cumulative financial support through capitation grants persist despite the adoption of the capitation grant strategy. However, most of the differences between schools with respect to the cumulative resources received from capitation grants are caused by school characteristics not readily observed from SBRT or schools' survey data. More fragile and hard to reach schools have more difficulty meeting qualification requirements or adequately reporting grant utilisation.

### Human resources

While schools report having an adequate numbers of teachers, only about 30% of teachers were certified and on MoGEI payroll. There is a legitimate concern that the quality of schools and teaching is poor and continues to deteriorate due to economic conditions. Schools in extreme remote schools and schools affected by conflict were less likely to have at least one formally appointed teacher.

### Material resources

School facilities (classrooms and sanitation amenities) have largely become the responsibility of the communities and development partners, with MoGEI demonstrating little financial capacity to expand school facilities to meet teaching and enrolment demands. Almost all reported expansions and/or renovations of classrooms had been provided by the community and through development partners' support.



Gumbo Basic Primary School in Central Equatoria State bought textbooks with their capitation grant.

Despite efforts from MoGEI to provide textbooks, 86 per cent of the surveyed schools report needing 50-100 per cent additional textbooks to meet current enrolment needs. Capitation grants were intended to enable schools to provide materials. Using the 2019 budget submissions, the study shows primary and secondary schools budgeted roughly GBP 1.23 and GBP 2.50 per student respectively.

### Requirements for minimally adequate conditions

The survey results and SBRT review demonstrated that, while remote and conflict-affected schools tend to have less financial resources and are disadvantaged with respect to facilities and having formally appointed teachers, the differences are not significant. Instead of distinguishing between schools, the recourse-cost model calculates school-level financial needs utilising benchmarks of minimally adequate conditions.

The resource-cost model incorporates the school-level material and financial needs of government and community primary and secondary schools. Included are, amongst others: elements for the costs of learning spaces, costs of teachers, learning and teaching materials, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities. Importantly, the model converts estimates of necessary funds to have and maintain adequate learning spaces and WASH facilities over time.



Mary Immaculate Primary School repaired the school borehole using the GESS capitation grant.

The framework shows an overall annual funding requirement of schools of GBP 12.26 per primary student and GBP 19.44 per secondary student.

## Annual funding requirements

Smaller schools will have higher per-student costs than larger schools, due to the lower ratio of students to learning spaces, toilets, and teachers. Therefore, the allocation needed per school is determined by a single formula with a fixed amount per school and a variable amount based on enrolment. The overall per-student estimated requirements were used to develop two 'best fit allocation formulas' that meet the benchmarks for primary and secondary schools.

These formulas are:

**Primary schools = GBP 1,000 + GBP 8 per student**

**Secondary schools = GBP 1,400 + GBP 12 per student**

## Recommendations

**Financial needs of schools:** While there can be large differences in the conditions in schools, most public schools in South Sudan, regardless of location and characteristics, do not have the financial, human, and material resources necessary to provide minimally adequate conditions. With the sizeable revenue that it has, and 'best fit allocation formulas'

provided, Government is called upon to allocate and execute an appropriate budget to each school.

### **Increase spending on management and supervision:**

Government should consider increasing spending on management and supervision with greater accountability up to the national level which could improve the efficiency of resource utilisation in schools.

**Diversify resource allocation:** The financial capacity and needs of both primary and secondary schools in South Sudan do vary but that the variation within any group (for example among the most remote schools) is nearly as large as the differences across groups (for example comparing "remote" and "not remote" schools). Thus, the system for providing financial resources to schools should incorporate differences in the needs of schools, providing more resources to schools that encounter high costs in order to ensure that minimally adequate conditions because of location are provided. Government is thus encouraged to develop and implement the system for diversified resource allocation where it is required.

**Addressing school characteristics:** A system for providing financial resources to schools would ideally incorporate the differences in the needs of schools, including those affected by conflict, remote access, and schools with low capacity to generate resources from the community. The variation within any group of schools with the same characteristics, was nearly as large as the difference within the group, while there were large differences in schools when grouped by county.

The research suggests that the current education data in schools' surveys or EMIS do not capture the historical and contextual differences between schools.

In conclusion, a system that provides levels of financial support based on needs would not offer any efficiency or equity improvements over the simple formula based on a fixed grant per school and per student variable portion. This is due to the reality that most schools in South Sudan do not have the financial, human, and material resources necessary to provide minimally adequate conditions.

**The full report is available on our website:**

[www.girlseducationsouthsudan.org](http://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.

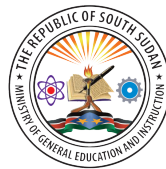
The outcomes of the Programme will be an improvement in girls' educational attainment from that already achieved in the first phase of GESS: building further gains on school enrolment, reducing barriers to education and promoting equity in access for all children.

## MANAGEMENT

The GESS programme receives funding through UK aid from the UK Government, the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the European Union (EU), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and Norway Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At the time of the research, GESS was funded by UK aid from the UK Government, the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada, USAID and the EU.

The Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI) supports the GESS programme, which is managed by implementing partners who provide technical advice. These implementing partners include Cambridge Education/ Mott MacDonald as the consortium lead, BBC Media Action and Windle Trust International.

At State and County level, the State Ministries of General Education and Instruction (SMoGEI) take the lead in programme implementation, supported by partner NGOs, or what we call 'GESS State Anchors'.



[www.girlseducationsouthsudan.org](http://www.girlseducationsouthsudan.org)

**For additional information, contact:**

