

Introduction

School enrollment rates for girls in South Sudan are alarmingly low: in 2012, an average of seven girls for every 10 boys were enrolled in primary school, while an average of five girls for every 10 boys were enrolled in secondary school¹. Girls’ Education South Sudan (GESS) is a six-year programme by DFID that initiated in 2013 with the aim to increase access to quality education for girls in South Sudan. GESS provides cash transfers for girls in schools to overcome economic barriers to education, and capitation grants for schools to improve the learning environment. GESS is implemented through a consortium structure composed of a fund manager (Mott McDonald), three consortium partners each responsible for a specific programme output (BBC Media Action Group, Charlie Goldsmith Associates (CGA) and Winrock International) and 13 implementing partners working directly with schools.

Upon request from DFID, IMPACT Initiatives provided short-term monitoring and verification from January 2017 through May 2017 of the cash transfer and capitation grant components of GESS implemented by CGA. This factsheet summarises the key findings of a monitoring

Figure 1: Photo of Bor PoC Primary School



and verification visit to Bor Protection of Civilian Site (PoC) Primary School implemented through Food for the Hungry (FH) in Bor South County, Jonglei on 30 May 2017.

School Overview for 2016²

Facility Name	Bor PoC Primary School
Type of Facility	Primary School
Grades	Nursery, Primary Grades 1 - 8 ³
Location	Bor Town, Bor South County, Jonglei
Hours of Operation	Morning Session: 8:15-12:45 Evening Session: None
Infrastructure	13 temporary classrooms ⁴
Staffing	22 teachers in total (all volunteer ⁵) Volunteer teacher stipend: 900 South Sudanese Pounds (SSP)⁶/month
Enrollment	332 girls enrolled in total
Test Scores	4 girls reportedly passed the Primary Leave Exam (Grade 8) in 2016

Monitoring Methodology

- IMPACT utilised the following methodologies to assess this project:
- Review of project documents (including proposal, logframe and midline data collection tools) to build understanding of programme structure
 - Two Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with FH County Liaison Officer (CLO) and Bor PoC Primary School Head Teacher (HT)
 - One Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with caregivers of recipients of cash transfers
 - GPS mapping and physical observation of key GESS documents (e.g. School Development Plan, 2016 School Budget) and items purchased with capitation grant at the school site

Summary of Findings

Overall, most respondents reported that cash transfers provided a financial incentive to overcome economic barriers to education, while the capitation grant reportedly improved school facilities and incentivised teachers. However, both funding streams suffered from delays in payment, which coupled with the continuing devaluation of the SSP, reduced the purchasing power of both the cash transfers and the capitation grant. Further, physical access to banks to collect the funds remained a major challenge, as a result of long distances for schools outside of town and due to perceived insecurity of traveling into Bor Town from the PoC. To mitigate against these two factors, both the HT and CLO suggested that payments be made in USD and at field-level.

CLO and HT noted that the disbursement of cash transfers at the end of the academic year (November) increased the likelihood of these not being used for their intended purpose, which could be addressed through earlier disbursement of funds (February or March). The CLO noted that many of the physical access challenges to schools outside of Bor Town could be mitigated if the timing of various programme activities was re-designed to allow for enrollment, monitoring and accountability visits to schools to take place before the start of the rainy season in September. Further, all respondents expressed a need for either more regular provision of cash transfers or an increase in the amount provided, to improve the overall effectiveness of the programme and keep girls motivated to attend school. With regards to the capitation grant, the CLO recommended a single tranche payment to reduce the time-intensive accountability checks, given the limited staffing capacity and the high number of schools (100) under the responsibility of the CLO. Additionally, there is an opportunity to better examine how the capitation grant is spent based on reported barriers to girls’ enrollment and attendance.

Table 1: Reported Barriers to Girls’ School Attendance in Bor South County

Factors	Barriers identified by KIIs
Economic	- HT, CLO and FGD respondents reported that a lack of financial means to purchase hygiene items for menstruating girls regularly led to absenteeism due to perceptions of shame amongst girls without access to hygiene items. Key Informants (KIIs) also mentioned a lack of female teachers who could play an important role in promoting menstrual hygiene management among girls as a challenge. - Some students were reportedly unable to purchase school materials and supplies despite the cash transfer programme, as inflation had lowered the purchasing power of the funds. - Many households were reportedly dependent on dowry payments as a resource to cover basic needs; the practice of child marriage of girls resulted in reduced school enrollment. - FGD respondents identified early pregnancy as an issue for school attendance, as unmarried girls were not financially supported by family members and would leave school to provide for or care for their child. - Government teacher strikes over lack of salary payments resulted in many classes being suspended in Bor South County in late 2016, however, classes have since resumed in 2017.
Cultural	- HT, CLO and FGD respondents reported that despite increased sensitisation through the GESS programme, perceptions of the role and responsibilities of girls as household care-takers remained an obstacle to school attendance. - FGD respondents stressed that girls were often perceived as a financial resource due to dowry payments.
Security	- Outside the PoC, in many areas of the county, fears over cattle raiding and child abductions resulted in low attendance rates, in particular during times of high inter-community tensions and in locations which were reportedly more vulnerable to attacks such as Jalle and Baidit. - Displacement following December 2013 and July 2016 crises led to girls dropping out of school. In the context of the PoC, the HT noted that some girls who were enrolled in the PoC school had returned to Greater Akobo in 2015 (as part of UNHCR-assisted returns from the Bor PoC). Some of these girls were reportedly unable to continue their education in their return location.
Infrastructure	While not an issue in the PoC, CLO reported that distance to schools in other parts of the county discouraged some girls from attending due to a lack of time and protection concerns for girls on the long journey. During the wet season, attendance was generally perceived to be lower due to increased difficulties in reaching schools.

1. Education in the Republic of South Sudan – Status and Challenges for a New System – World Bank 2012.

2. As site visits took place mid-way through the school year, at which point many schools had not yet received GESS funding, the findings presented here relate to the 2016 school year.

3. Primary school grades are labeled 1 through 8 (P1-P8) and secondary school grades are labeled Senior 1 through 4 (S1-S4).

4. A temporary classroom is a shelter made of temporary materials such as bamboo, plastic sheeting or grass.

5. In 2016, teachers were paid by Intersos, under funding from UNICEF.

6. As of site visit date (30 May 2017), exchange rate was 152 SSP to 1 US Dollar (USD) based on REACH SSD daily exchange rate monitoring.

GESS2 Project Factsheet: Bor PoC Primary School

Third Party Monitoring for DFID Essential Services Team

Cash Transfers

The cash transfer component of GESS aimed to reduce economic barriers to girls' school enrollment and attendance.

- Recipients:** 14 girls received cash transfers for the 2016 academic year. Notably, for this school, the CLO reported that the school applied for and received funding for the 2016 school year. However, the HT provided a conflicting report, indicating that the school had not applied for or received funding for cash transfers or capitation grants in 2016, although he reported collecting the second tranche of the 2015 payment in February 2017.
- Attendance Reporting:** HT reported that each class teacher took attendance before the start of lessons. According to this KI, the school did not use the Daily Attendance Register and attendance figures were not reported to the South Sudan School Attendance Monitoring System.

Strengths ⁷	Challenges
- Cash transfers reportedly alleviated economic burdens on parents for girls' school attendance. - Cash transfers reportedly motivated girls to focus on their education. - FGD respondents reported a positive spill-over effect on younger siblings and girls not enrolled in school, who were reportedly also motivated to receive the money to go to school.	External - Inflation had increased the price of common goods, decreasing the monetary value of the cash transfers. - According to HT, South Sudan School Attendance Monitoring System was reportedly not reachable by SMS. - HT reported that, following disbursement of funds, there were some complaints from girls not included in the programme, while it was unclear to the school administration why these girls had not been selected. - CLO reported that the timing of the validation period for cash transfer applicants (2,000 to be validated in two weeks) was too short given distances to various schools in the county; similarly, disbursement of funds to remote payams, such as Jalle, was challenging due to access challenges during the rainy season, resulting in delayed fund provision. Internal - HT and FGD respondents reported lack of information and communication from FH on the frequency of payments and overall modalities of the programme. - All respondents stated that cash transfer funds were disbursed late (November 2016), thus in some cases funds were likely not used for intended purposes.

Capitation Grant

The capitation grant component of GESS aimed to reduce supply-side barriers to girls' school enrollment and attendance (e.g. inadequate Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), facilities) and to equip schools with the resources to deliver quality education (i.e. improving learning environment).

- Amount:** 46,000 SSP
- Tranches Received:** first tranche of 32,000 SSP in November 2016, second tranche of 14,000 SSP in December 2016⁸

Strengths	Challenges
- HT reported that the capitation grant had improved school facilities, as an office as well as a storage room had been constructed. - CLO described that the provision of teacher incentives led to a decrease in teachers' absenteeism. For other schools in the county, the CLO noted a positive contribution of the capitation grant in improving access to learning and teachers' aids, as well as improved learning environments through repairs that schools had made with the funds.	External - Inflation had increased the price of school materials, decreasing the monetary value of the capitation grant. - HT reported challenges in accessing funds because the bank was located in Bor Town, which required school representatives to leave the PoC. CLO echoed that physical access to the bank was challenging for other schools outside of Bor Town. - CLO indicated that the bank was regularly short on cash, leading to further delays in grant disbursement. - CLO noted that high teacher turnover contributed to a delay in applying for the capitation grant. Additionally, the number of schools within the CLO's catchment area, particularly given the distance of schools, also contributed to delays in this process. - CLO reported that schools in remote locations had only limited access to markets, making it difficult to spend funds on physical inputs. CLO also noted accountability issues related to the absence of receipts in most rural markets. Internal - CLO reported delays in disbursement of two tranches, with HT noting a lack of communication on the anticipated timing of the payments.

Physical verification of GESS activities

An important part of this monitoring exercise was verifying that schools had the documents in place to receive the capitation grant and that funds were spent as reported to CGA. To this effect, IMPACT physically verified programme documentation, receipts of purchase and physical items purchased under the 2016 capitation grant.

Table 2: Items Purchased with Capitation Grant in 2016

✓ Physically verified items or receipts of purchase during site visit

Verified	Items Reportedly Purchased	Quantity	Total Amount (SSP)
✓	For contruction of office (half of which served as storage): ironsheets, timber, nails, poles, labour, transport	14 ironsheets, 18 timber, 12 kg nails, 50 poles, 7 days labour, 2 x transport	39,950
✓	Teaching aid/stationary: dictionary, correction pens, paper binder	1 dictionary, 3 correction pens, 1 paper binder	1,410
✓	Teacher incentive	22 volunteer teachers	4,400
✓	Other: bank charges, document photocopies	2 x banking charges, 1 photocopy	1,193

Table 3: Key Document Verification Checklist for 2016⁹

✓ Physically verified during site visit

Verified	Document
	School Development Plan
	School Governance Body (School Management Committee/Parent Teacher Association) Meeting Minutes
✓	Pupil Registry
	School Budget
	Cash Transfer Enrollment Forms
✓	Cash Transfer Payment List

7. The below listed overview on strengths of the cash transfer programme refers to statements by the CLO and FGD respondents as the Head Teacher did not attribute any positive effect to the cash transfers.

8. HT reported money was collected from bank in February 2017 due to delays in accessing the bank.

9. HT and School Officer were unable to present most of below listed documents during the site visit. However, according to follow-up with the CLO, the school was in possession of below listed documents.