

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

Figure 1: Old classroom building of Alawia Abdallah Faraj



grant components of GESS implemented by CGA. This factsheet summarises the key findings of a monitoring and verification visit to Alawia Abdallah Faraj Secondary School in Renk County, Upper Nile on 2 May 2017.

School Overview for 2016²

Facility Name	Alawia Abdallah Faraj Secondary School
Type of Facility	Secondary School
Grades	Senior grades 1 - 3 ³
Location	Renk North Payam, Renk County, Upper Nile
Hours of Operation	Morning Session: 8:30-14:30 Evening Session: None
Infrastructure	8 permanent classrooms
Staffing	12 teachers in total (10 government, 2 volunteer) Teachers in Renk County are paid based on their level of education ⁴ : <ul style="list-style-type: none">Government Grade 10: 850 South Sudanese Pounds (SSP)⁵/monthGovenrment Grade 12: 375 SSP/monthGovernment Grade 14: 280 SSP/monthGovernment Grade 15: 245 SSP/month Volunteer teacher stipend: 30 SSP/lesson
Enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">90 total girls enrolled in total
Test Scores	Not available

Monitoring Methodology

- IMPACT utilised the following methodologies to assess this project:
- Review of CGA project documents (i.e. proposal, logframe and midline data collection tools) to build understanding of programme structure
 - Two Key Informant Interviews (KIs) with Food for the Hungry County Liaison Officer (CLO) and Alawia Abdallah Faraj Secondary 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

All respondents reported a positive impact of GESS cash transfers and capitation grant on girls’ attendance since the beginning of the programme. Caregivers indicated that cash transfers motivated their daughters to stay in school, and noted the positive contribution that cash transfers had on reducing pressure on household spending. Additionally, both the HT and CLO emphasised that capitation grant money had resulted in improvements to the school environment through interventions such as classroom improvement and purchasing of text books (both verified by IMPACT).

However, the late payment of both cash transfers and capitation grant tranches had reportedly limited their impact. Both incentives were delivered towards the end of the school year thus recipients (both students and school management) were unable to use the money on school materials and improvements for the 2016 academic year. Additionally, rising market prices and the declining value of the SSP had substantially reduced the purchasing power of cash transfers and capitation grant tranches. This was particularly an issue for the capitation grant, as schools were required to submit their proposed budget much earlier in the academic year when prices were notably lower.

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

Factors	Barriers identified by Key Informants (KIs)
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">High food prices prevented many households from affording breakfast and lunch. This contributed to absenteeism as children dropped out of school in search of money and food.HT reported that girls were sometimes kept at home to look after younger children while their parents went to work.Against the backdrop of rising food prices and the declining value of the SSP, FGD respondents indicated that some households could no longer afford to pay school fees.
Cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none">FGD respondents reported that child marriage remained a practice in the community, although CLO commented that sensitisation through the GESS programme was helping alleviate this challenge.FGD respondents reported that, in situations of limited resources, boys were prioritised in attending school as girls married and would therefore not need to earn an income.
Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Insecurity had caused some families to flee to Sudan, resulting in children dropping out of school.CLO reported that fighting during 2016 prevented children from attending school for a period of several weeks.FGD respondents indicated that the conflict had increased the number of female-headed households; without the income of their husbands many of these families were unable to pay for school fees.

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. Government teacher pay grades as reported by HT.

5.As of site visit date (2 May 2017), exchange rate was 140 SSP to 1US Dollar (USD) based on REACH SSD daily exchange rate monitoring.

GESS6 Project Factsheet: Alawia Abdallah Faraj Secondary 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:** 90 girls received cash transfers for the 2016 academic year.
- **Attendance Reporting:** HT reported that the School Monitor took class attendance before the start of each lesson.

Strengths	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ HT reported that cash transfers had noticeably encouraged interest in school amongs female pupils.▪ CLO reported that he had observed a notable increase in girls’ school attendance since the beginning of the programme in 2013.▪ FGD respondents indicated that cash transfer money not only allowed the purchase of school materials for their daughters, but also contributed to overall household expenditures, thereby reducing financial pressure on the household as a whole.▪ FGD respondents reported that their younger daughters were excited to continue attending school so that they could receive cash transfers in the future.	<p>External</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ FGD respondents indicated that inflation had increased the price of school materials, decreasing the purchasing power of the cash transfer.▪ HT noted that rising market prices had exacerbated economic barriers to education. For example, many households were now unable to purchase food for breakfast, which affected student concentration and increased the likelihood of dropping out. <p>Internal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ CLO reported that cash transfer funds were disbursed late (November 2016), thus recipients were unable to use the funds to purchase school materials for most of the 2016 academic year.▪ CLO reported that some girls were not included in the list of cash transfer beneficiaries because their names were lost during the validation process.▪ Absence reporting by SMS was reportedly challenging due to lack of understanding among teachers of how to send reports.

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 equip schools with the resources to deliver quality education (e.g. improving learning environment).

- **Amount:** 72,035 SSP
- **Tranches Received:** one in November 2016

Strengths	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ HT reported that the capitation grant had helped the school meet basic needs for service provision, such as simple renovations and purchase of school materials.▪ CLO further indicated that the capitation grant helped the school create an environment more conducive to learning by enhancing classrooms and purchasing textbooks for teachers to improve the structure and content of their lessons, in line with the new South Sudan secondary school curriculum.	<p>External</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Inflation had increased the price of school materials, decreasing the purchasing power of the capitation grant. <p>Internal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The CLO reported that the first tranche of the capitation grant was paid in November 2016 - at the end of the school year. As a result, the school was unable to implement the proposed spending until the new school year began in February 2017, by which time inflation had decreased the purchasing power of the grant. The second tranche of the capitation grant was not received.

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) ⁶
✓	Classrooms painted	4	Not available
✓	Chalk	12 boxes	Not available
✓	Text books	20	Not available
	Incentives for volunteer teachers	6 teachers paid for 3 months	Not available
	Incentives for government teachers	10 teachers paid for 3 months	Not available

Table 3: Key Document Verification Checklist for 2016

✓ Physically verified during site visit

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

6. HT reported that the school had given all financial records to the CLO for safekeeping, and therefore had no record of exact costs of items bought or proof of receipt.