LESSONS LEARNED in ADDRESSING ACCESS to EDUCATION in SOUTH SUDAN

Through Community Engagement, School Governance, Conflict Sensitivity, and Teacher Development

ROOM TO LEARN SOUTH SUDAN

Implemented in partnership with FHI360 and Plan International USA

Contributors

The Room to Learn Technical Reflection Paper was originally four separate papers: governance, grants, school development planning and teacher professional development. These have been integrated and examined through the lenses of community engagement and conflict sensitivity.

Special thanks to the Room to Learn staff, field-based and home office, who made valuable contributions to this document from inception through revision stage. Contributors include:

Iftikhar Ahmad
Pascal Pax Andebo
Katie Appel
Margaret Ayite
Alyssa Cochran
Sora Edwards-Thro
Sue Emmott
Mark Ginsburg
Valerie Haugen
John Jalle
Abdul Hakim Jumason
Cube Caesar Kenji
Emily Koester
Francis Lokong
James Natana
Seth Ong'uti
Zo Rakotomalala
Martha Saldinger
Mojeeb Stanikzai
Joan Sullivan-Owomoyela
Harriet Tino
Katharine Torre DeGennaro
Joshua Willis
Kanju Yakuma

Cover photo: Young girl stands in front of new literacy teaching aids provided by Room to Learn

Acronyms and Abbreviations

5S	South Sudan Safer Schools Support
ADRA	Adventist Development Relief Agency
AES	Alternative Education System
AET	Africa Education Trust
AIT	Activity Idea Template
ALP	Accelerated Learning Program
AU	African Union
BOG	Board of Governors
CAA	Community Assets Appraisal
CEC	County Education Center
CEO	County Education Office
CET	County Education Team
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DFID	Department for International Development
ECEG	Education through Community Empowerment Grant
ECSS&S	Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EiE	Education in Emergencies
FHI360	Family Health International 360
GESS	Girls' Education South Sudan
GoSS	Government of South Sudan
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IDP	Internal Displaced Population
IMP	Instructional Material Package
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MoGEI	Ministry of General Education and Instruction
MOU	Memo of Understanding

Lessons Learned in Addressing Access to Education in South Sudan through
Community Engagement, School Governance, Conflict Sensitivity, and Teacher Development

ii

NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PCO	Peace Corps Organization
PD	Project Director
PEO	Payam Education Office
PES	Payam Education Supervisor
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RFA	Request for Applications
RtL	Room to Learn
SBEP	Sudan Basic Education Program
SBM	School Based Management
SDP	School Development Plan
SoE	Secretariat of Education
SMoE	State Ministry of Education
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics
SMC	School Management Committee
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
TPD	Teacher Professional Development
TTC	Teacher Training College
TTI	Teacher Training Institute
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WSP	War-Torn Society Project
WTI	Windle Trust International

Reading brings together children of all ages

"The challenge of rebuilding war-torn societies is infinitely more difficult and complex than is generally recognized. It exceeds by far the challenges of 'normal' development processes which in countries emerging from war, are amplified by the legacy of conflict (physical destruction, lack of resources and manpower, institutional fragility, political volatility, social trauma) by the urgency of the problems, and by the simultaneous challenges of humanitarian relief and of military security." (War-Torn Society Project, 1999)

Introduction

The South Sudan Room to Learn (RtL) project, which reached 329,529 children in 388 schools and 112 Accelerated Learning Programs (in 11 counties in six states), was one of the first United States Agency for International Development (USAID) education activities developed and implemented under the USAID Education Strategy 2011–2015 to address Goal Three: Increased equitable access to education in crisis and conflict environments for 15 million learners by 2015. The timeline on page 2 highlights the key activities/events and serves as a framework for critical events and corresponding project implementation.

Lessons Learned in Addressing Access to Education in South Sudan through Community Engagement, School Governance, Conflict Sensitivity, and Teacher Development

1

Figure 1: Timeline of key events during Room to Learn (RtL) implementation

	Situation in South Sudan	Month	Key Points in RtL
PROJECT YEAR ONE		OCT '13	**Start up**
		NOV	First work plan. PD resigns
	Hostilities breakout	DEC	Evacuation of staff, office closed for 5 months
		JAN '14	
		FEB	Work plans submitted, not fully approved
		MAR	
		APR	Conflict sensitivity workshop in Washington DC
	Situation stabilises in Juba but many no-go areas across the country	MAY	Office re-opened in Juba, staff return starts
		JUN	1st modification: geographical footprint expanded
		JUL	3-, 4-, and 7-month work plans submitted
		AUG	Work plan partially approved
		SEP	Do No Harm workshop; Wau hub office opened; new staff recruited and oriented
PROJECT YEAR TWO	Steady decline in security across country	OCT '14	**Start of Year 2**
		NOV	New work plan; Adverse Monitoring Framework; State Memorandum of Understanding approved by USAID
		DEC	2nd modification: Revised design & Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP); MOU initiated with states
		JAN '15	
		FEB	First entry to communities timed with school opening
		MAR	
		APR	Last MOU signed with State Ministries of Education
		MAY	
	COMPROMISE PEACE DEAL	JUN	Decision not to proceed with full SSI
		JUL	First grant to community; approach reassessed
		AUG	3rd modification: revised design/organogram
		SEP	4th modification
PROJECT YEAR THREE		OCT '15	**Start of Year 3**
		NOV	
	Highly fluid security overall	DEC	Violence temporarily closes Yambio office. 2nd PMP
	Skyrocketing prices Increasing displacement Increasing attacks in Juba	JAN '16	USAID notifies Winrock of decision to close RtL
		FEB	3rd PMP for closeout
		MAR	Close-Out Plan approved by USAID
	BREAKDOWN OF LAW AND ORDER IN JUBA	APR	
		MAY	
		JUN	
		JUL	Conflict restarts, Juba office closed, staff evacuated
		AUG	Key senior staff remain in Kampala to close down project
		SEP	

The Room to Learn (RtL) technical reflection paper outlines the approach to school development planning, community grants, Parent Teacher Association (PTA) capacity building and teacher professional development in RtL targeted schools. The paper is divided into three phases, which sets the context through the lens of conflict sensitivity and community engagement (decentralization) for the project: Phase 1: Setting the Stage (2011-2013); Phase 2: Departure and Re-entry (2014); and Phase 3: Implementation and Close Out (2015-2016). Lessons learned are summarized and recommendations for each phase are provided.

Phase 1: Setting the Stage (2011-2013)

KEY ACTIVITIES:

- South Sudan Safer Schools Support Project (5S) Request for Assistance document developed [5S was renamed *Room to Learn* (RtL) South Sudan] (2011-2012).

- Winrock International (WI) consortium Cooperative Agreement awarded (August 2013).

- Room to Learn project start-up initiated (September 2013).

OVERVIEW OF SOUTH SUDAN: In 2004, the USAID-funded Sudan Basic Education Program (SBEP) provided technical assistance to the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) Secretariat of Education (SoE) to conduct a functional audit of the education structure and reorganize the national state, county and payam (sub-county) levels in line with the decentralization concept promoted by the SPLM[1] and embedded in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and 2005 interim Constitution. The 2005 SoE structural reorganization focused on an education system responsive to the evolving needs of diverse communities of southern Sudan and ensuring a system that *reflected the needs* of the populace and is *owned* by the populace to promote equity and quality life-long learning opportunities, especially for under-served, disadvantaged, and marginalized populations, namely females (adolescents, youths, and adults), ex-combatants, and remote communities (SoE 2004).

EVOLUTION OF DECENTRALIZATION

The CPA stresses the general principles of "decentralization and empowerment of all levels of government" beyond the GoSS (CPA Power Sharing, Preamble).

The CPA (Power Sharing, 1.3.2-1.3.4) and the Interim Constitution of Sudan (Article 24) establish, with almost identical phrasing, four levels of government: the national level of government, the Southern Sudan level of government, the state governments, and local government. Each level of government should respect the others' autonomy and cooperate accordingly (CPA Power Sharing 1.5.1.4; ICS article 26)." (Aeberli, 2012).

The signing of the CPA between the Government of Sudan (Khartoum) and the SPLM in October 2005 served as the basis for the transition of the SPLM Secretariat of Education to the Southern Sudan Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST)[2] and relocation from the SPLM capital in Rumbek (Lakes State) to Juba (Central Equatoria) between October and December 2005.

---

[1] The Local Government Act of 2009 is the main legal document that reflects the Government of South Sudan's current approach to decentralization.
[2] MoEST was renamed the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI).

Lessons Learned in Addressing Access to Education in South Sudan through
Community Engagement, School Governance, Conflict Sensitivity, and Teacher Development

3

During the CPA period, with virtually no institutional memory and function and very limited trained personnel, the Ministry took on the herculean task of marshaling the SPLM schools, the former Government of Sudan garrison schools, and other non-governmental schools[3] into a unified system.[4]

The situation faced by the education sector was a microcosm of the larger issue facing the transitional government of Southern Sudan, i.e., the need to put in place legal and policy frameworks and national cross-sectoral systems of governance and decentralization to establish a functioning civilian government. The transitional MoEST lacked systems of governance, civil service pay and remuneration scales, and equitable human resource policies as well as a national curriculum and assessment system, policies related to teacher professional development and capacity building framework for education and school-community personnel.

During the CPA (2005-2011) and early post-independence (2011-2013) years, the education system was developed through a balance between political and technical rationality[5] with a focus on addressing the key challenges of:

- "Reconciliation and reintegration of a significant proportion of its populace through the recruitment, selection, and capacity building of personnel;

- The building of a transparent, participatory education system which encourages grass-roots participation; and,

- The development (and refinement) of sectoral policy and legal frameworks within the emerging southern Sudan social policy and legal frameworks" (SBEP, 2005).

Serious challenges faced the education system, including, but not limited to: a lack of clearly defined roles and responsibilities for the County and Payam Education Offices[6] and very limited resources—financial, material and human—in particular at the grassroots levels. During the CPA years, between 80 and 85 percent of the national budget was dedicated to the national government (Juba) with the remaining funds shared amongst the 10 states and 79 counties (Sudd, 2014 and African Union, 2014).

The Sudd Institute in its special report authored by Mayai and Hammond, the *Impact of Violence on Education in South Sudan* (2014) confirmed, "Since the CPA era education has been of little importance to the government of South Sudan, with the current rebellion increasingly exacerbating this problem. South Sudan's budget allocation [for] the education sector has been exceptionally low, standing between 5 and 7 percent [of total government expenditure] per year, and represents the lowest in the world (Good Planet Foundation, 2013). But the actual spending by the sector is closer to only 4 percent. This is in contrast, for example, 40 percent of the total annual budget allocated for the security sector. Before the December 2013 violence, primary education enrollment in South Sudan was exponentially growing at a rate of 5.7 percent, a positive manifestation of peace dividend [Mayai *et al.*, 2011; in GoSS (Government of South Sudan) Comprehensive Evaluation]. However, growth in the student population was met with decreases in the number of teaching staff between 2008 and 2010, indicating government's lack of commitment towards the sector" (Mayai *et al.*, 2011, p 3).

Overwhelming need and limited capacity also affected sector and institutional development. The *African Union (AU) Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan Executive Summary* (2014) noted that "The Commission

---

[3] Schools primarily aided by international and local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) as well as various religious affiliations during the war years.
[4] At the start of 2005 approximately 1,600 schools operated in Southern Sudan on a primarily self-help basis.
[5] Political rationality focuses on relational, institutional and social-cultural aspects of decision-making, favoring compromise to balance power and strengthen legitimacy of actors and institutions. Technical rationality has a more scientific approach, adopting evidence-based solutions (Goulet 1986 and War Torn Society Project 1999).
[6] The Education Act (2012) defined only the roles and responsibilities for the central and state levels of the Ministry of Education.

found that state-building initiatives, which largely took the form of 'capacity building' in the post CPA period, appear to have largely failed to deliver for a variety of reasons. Literacy levels as well as the lack of a skilled cadre have proved to be a major challenge that confronts capacity building initiatives, a major contextual factor that has shaped the state building process. Low levels of economic development have also undermined state building. The comparative limited experience with governance in South Sudan has posed serious challenges for capacity building. Additionally, those involved in state building—perhaps overwhelmed by how needed to be accomplished to establish a semblance of a functioning state—appear to have taken on too much at once" (p. 7).

Another factor that added to the challenge of setting up a system of governance was the lack of a mechanism to promote healing and reconciliation. Ultimately, thus affected the issue of *trust* between the various groups. The AU report (2014) notes that while a policy of amnesty was adopted after the signing of the CPA, no structured process or dialog was established to foster an environment of peace and reconciliation. "It is the Commission's view that it is necessary to establish a structured process to provide an opportunity for South Sudanese to engage with their history, to discover the truth about the conflicts and human rights violations of the past, and to attend to the needs of victims. This is the only way to foster healing, peace and reconciliation in South Sudan, and to forge a common future. Such a body should lead to truth, remorse, forgiveness and restitution where necessary, justice and lasting reconciliation being achieved" (p. 25).

The USAID Request for Assistance (RFA) design, proposal development and project start-up took place within this framework.

RFA: The overarching goal of the *USAID South Sudan Transitional Strategy 2011-2013*—an increasingly stable South Sudan post-CPA—set the context for the RFA. Stability was noted as the "critical precondition for effective development" and was the focus of the Strategy's development hypothesis: If stability takes hold in flashpoint areas where there is significant localized conflict, USAID will be better positioned to multiply the effects of its efforts and South Sudan's viability will be enhanced" (USAID 2011, p 24).

The Room to Learn activity fit under USAID Development Objective 3: Help establish a foundation for increasingly educated and healthy populations through supporting local authorities and civil society organizations (CSOs) in their nascent efforts to extend basic services in conflict-prone area. The initial RtL target area were the five states—Jonglei, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Unity, Upper Nile, and Warrap—that bore the brunt of the conflict during the war and were viewed as potential flashpoints with continuing conflict after the CPA signing. Both the USAID transitional strategy and Sudd report (Mayai, *et al.*, 2014) identified weak service delivery—water, health and education—as a key grievance, and if expectations were not met, instability could result.

The RFA had four main components:

1. Improving and expanding safer education services for children and youth.
2. Enhancing relevance and promoting learner well-being
3. Strengthening quality and management at the payam level to support basic education
4. Responding to crisis affecting the primary education sector (Program Modifier/Rapid Response Mechanism).[7]

---

[7] Component 4 was not activated by USAID during the three years of RtL implementation.

Lessons Learned in Addressing Access to Education in South Sudan through
Community Engagement, School Governance, Conflict Sensitivity, and Teacher Development

5

PROPOSAL: The Winrock-led RtL proposal was premised on a *community-driven and learner-focused program* that built capacity and strengthened resilience to reach 1.1 million children and youth, including those out of school or with poor quality, disrupted, or unsafe education. Components 1 and 2 (education specific activities) were embedded in strengthened functional relationships between communities and local authorities, especially the Payam Education Office (PEO) to build capacity to deliver critical services to communities and schools. In other words, RtL's focus was on increasing access to education opportunities for marginalized and disadvantaged populations through a strengthened grassroots education structure (school-community and payam levels) with targeted education wraparound activities.

A critical assumption, though not explicitly stated but implicitly embedded in the RFA and proposal design, was that the community and payam levels were sufficiently decentralized (had the appropriate degree of autonomy) <u>and</u> were functional with basic infrastructure as well as adequate human and financial resources in place.[8] The RtL development hypothesis asserted that improved and expanded safer education services for children and youth, enhanced relevance of education and learner well-being, strengthened quality and management at the payam level to support basic education, and effective responses to crises affecting the primary education sector will meet the population's education needs and promote stability. The hypothesis was premised on the need that to expand safe, inclusive education opportunities and stabilize communities that nourish RtL schools, communities require access to financial, material, technical, and human resources that will build their resilience.

In retrospect, this was not the case. As will be further elucidated in the implementation phase (2015-2016), structures, such as the County Education Center, County Education Office, and Payam Education Office were often not functional; education staff did not have the requisite capacity; and resources (e.g., transportation or allowances for overnight stays) were seldom available for GoSS staff. The Payam Education Office is a sub-office of the County Education Office (CEO) and, thus, does not act independently but rather acts under the direction of the CEO. In turn, the CEO takes direction from the State Ministry of Education. In order to access the community and payam levels, it was necessary to secure permission first from the national Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI) and then the State Ministry of Education. To reach a significant number of learners it was necessary to actively engage the entire system although initially the premise was that the community and payam would be the main targets.

CONFLICT SENSITIVITY: The first stage of RtL's engagement with the decentralized level consisted of a rapid assessment in five (out of South Sudan's original 10) states[9] that were tentatively identified as RtL targets. Based upon the apparent disinterest of the Upper Nile State Ministry of Education in Room to Learn interventions and informed by the USAID guidance, Winrock agreed to work in Lakes State instead.

The assessment identified common pressure points, which focused primarily on security and accessibility (lack of infrastructure as well as geographical terrain). During the data gathering exercise, state ministerial officials cited community conflict (cattle rustling, inter-clan tensions) and road accessibility (extremely limited mobility to the payams) combined with a prolonged rainy season as critical challenges. For example, in Jonglei State the rainy season lasts approximately seven months and schools are widely scattered. During this time, it is very difficult for teachers to move from their school to the payam center and vice versa, i.e., for education

---

supervisors to visit schools. Thus, the time education officials interact with schools over the course of a school year is limited.

Trust was closely associated with security or lack of security. During the fact-gathering visit to Unity State officials discussed the recent killing of a teacher who was working with a clan different than his own. How to address the 'gun culture' was an ongoing challenge.

Radio and phone coverage as well as local money transfer infrastructure proved to be variable, increasing the challenge of how to effectively reach the populations in these locales. Education officials repeatedly stated that to change the mindset of the community an integrated approach would be required, e.g., provision of livelihood, food security, education and peace-building (trust), not just a singular focus on education.

As cited in the Sudd 2014 special report, *South Sudan's Crisis: Its Drivers, Key Players and Post-Conflict Prospects:* "Ethnic rivalry and poor provision of social services make for a deadly combination. Many areas in the Upper Nile region are inaccessible because they are remote and vast, further isolating communities. The government did little in the rural areas to demonstrate its seriousness in improving people's lives. Many young people, who essentially became the white army, had not had access to formal education or jobs, and it became very easy to arouse their frustrations with the government and provided a fighting force for the rebellions" (p. 8).

On December 15, 2013 a power struggle broke out in the SPLM after a fight between Dinka and Nuer soldiers in the presidential guard in Juba. This sparked widespread ethnic killings. The RtL office was closed and staff were evacuated. At that point RtL understood that the unifying factor of opposition to the common enemy of Sudan during the long drive for independence had served to obscure chronic lines of conflict at subnational level.

SUMMARY: The problems of fragile relationships between people and institutions are related to and compounded by deficits in the political development of the country: unclear divisions of power and emergent political institutions. The advent of peace brings unrealistically high expectations by the people, and this contrasts with the low capacity of the state to deliver. (WSP, 1999).

LESSON LEARNED: RtL's project target raises a fundamental question—*Does the South Sudan education system have the capacity to support and absorb a development-partner funded program that focuses on creating access for 1 million learners?* Are the financial resources available to provide the necessary inputs, e.g., pay teachers' salaries, provide learning materials and other basic infrastructure needs, etc.? Are the requisite policies/guidelines in place? In brief, a development partner funded program may be the impetus and vehicle to help the government access a large population of learners, but ultimately the system must have the resources (financial, human and material) and capacity to retain the learners in the system.

Similar to what the AU (2014) report states about South Sudan's state-building efforts, perhaps overwhelmed by how much needed to be accomplished to provide access to education opportunities for a significant number of learners, and in particular populations who have been highly disadvantaged or marginalized, RtL from the inception/design stage took on too much at once.

Lessons Learned in Addressing Access to Education in South Sudan through
Community Engagement, School Governance, Conflict Sensitivity, and Teacher Development

7

Phase 2: Departure and Re-entry (2014)

KEY ACTIVITIES:

- RtL South Sudan office closed due to hostilities (January-May).
- Re-entered Juba, re-opened field offices and developed workplan for 10 states (May-September).
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with State MoEs (September-December (All MOUs signed by April 2015).

CONFLICT SENSITIVITY: The ensuing conflict kept international staff out of the country for nearly five months with an ordered evacuation declared by the US government. In April, the USAID Senior Conflict Adviser facilitated a conflict analysis with RtL staff, which included a thorough assessment of the drivers of conflict. This resulted in a shared understanding that the magnitude and complexity of the crisis was far beyond the scope of a project such as RtL to address.

One of the key ideas that emerged was the recognition that the landscape had changed, and RtL's geographic approach would also need to change. Room to Learn was conceived with a five-state footprint that would respond to educational needs in some of the least-served states. However, the conflict that erupted in December 2013 led to massive displacement and heightened security risks in areas caught in the conflict. In communities to which Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) fled, there was a burgeoning population including many children and youth whose education was interrupted. With the influx of IDPs, the educational needs in these areas were escalating, while out-of-school children and youth embedded in host communities were competing with them over resources and services, turning some of these areas into flash points due to the increased tension.

The choice of where to work is one of the most sensitive aspects of any program in conflict. RtL understood the significance of such decisions and there is evidence in documentation that the choice of criteria aimed to ensure that RtL was impartial, without bias for or against any ethnic or population group. Important consideration was given how to reach the less accessible non-Dinka groups, which was facilitated through a focus on pastoralist communities.

Although there was no formal agreement with the government, in practice there was consultation with the local education authorities and a joint attempt to identify schools where conflict was negatively affecting education. There are various reasons why officials may prefer to direct a program to work with certain schools rather than others. This may be related to need or, for example, it may reflect the areas they come from or desire to have particular influence in for political or economic reasons. Other criteria of RtL that helped mitigate bias was that the school should already have a School Development Plan (SDP) and have qualified for the government capitation grant. In reality, owing to the gravity of the conflict, final decisions about which school communities to work with seemed to reflect those it was possible to access safely rather than considerations of conflict sensitivity.

In terms of conflict sensitivity, the importance of RtL being perceived to be impartial, not favouring any one political or ethnic group over another, was well understood. This assessment suggested that, whereas the original design had focused on five states, RtL should now aim for a geographical balance across all ten states. This was perceived to be synonymous with ethnic balance. Conflict analysis then informed the selection of pilot counties although it was not the only criterion. Within this selection there were criteria relating to ethnicity.

After RtL resumed its activities in May 2014, following cessation of field activities due to the outbreak of armed conflict between forces loyal to President Salva Kiir and (former) Vice President Riek Machar, six target states were identified: Central Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria, Northern Bahr El Ghazal, Warrap, and Western Equatoria.[10]

RtL's capacity to undertake locally contextualised conflict analysis increased once a Security Director took up the newly created position. The person recruited had several years' experience in South Sudan and had a sound appreciation of the dynamics of and actors in the conflict. In practice, integrating the security analysis with programming was difficult to achieve. One obstacle was the imperative to put in place security guidelines and procedures for safe operation for a large number of staff across many locations.

In August 2014, all Juba-based staff had the opportunity to participate in discussions with USAID Conflict Advisers which utilised the Conflict Assessment Framework. In September two senior staff attended USAID Do No Harm Training. These joint assessments were very important. Subsequently RtL developed the Conflict Sensitivity / Adverse Programming Framework (below) for use in the 30 Phase 1 schools This framework aimed to understand the dynamics of local level conflict by considering five elements:

- inter-communal conflict
- customs and beliefs
- group or individual egotism
- local leadership influence
- NGO ethical conduct

This analysis was subsequently used to plan activities in a way that did not aggravate conflict and might, in certain circumstances, help to mitigate tension. The following table gives some examples of the way in which aspects of analysis about potential conflict informed means of mitigation.

Figure 2: RtL Conflict Assessment Framework

Potential Conflict	Manifestation	Key Points in RtL
Inter-Communal Conflict	Land disputes Cattle rustling Counter-revenge for past killings, rape and other abuse	Select team members from both sides Target peace messages Cross-community training
Community Custom and Belief	Pastoralist belief that education spoils social and ethno-political traditions	Form payam gender advocacy group
Group / Individual Egotism	Self-interest resulting from dependency syndrome	Participatory approach to planning and implementation
Local Level Leadership Influence	Control access to community Personalisation of benefit for political ends Influence staff selection	Generic selection criteria to qualify for support
NGO / Staff Conduct	Drinking Inappropriate behaviour with young boys/girls or married people	Code of Conduct in HR Manual including stating consequences of misconduct

---

[10] Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile were removed as RtL's target states because they were controlled by the opposition group led by Vice President Reik Machar and it was felt that working in such states would pose significant security challenges.

Lessons Learned in Addressing Access to Education in South Sudan through
Community Engagement, School Governance, Conflict Sensitivity, and Teacher Development

9

USAID provided high quality guidance and support in terms of the agency-preferred approach to conflict sensitivity and principles of Do No Harm and there were sincere efforts on the part of senior program staff to understand and incorporate it. This resulted in a shared understanding of context and of how principles were being applied. It also facilitated an understanding that the magnitude and complexity of the crisis were far beyond the scope of a project such as RtL to address. This is important in evaluation of RtL overall in terms of being realistic about what it could or did achieve although this point may be missed when history is retold.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING: With the reopening of the office, activities resumed in earnest. RtL carried out new site visits to Eastern Equatoria, Western Bahr el Ghazal, and Central Equatoria to explore new counties, and eventually settled on establishing the first county teams in: 1) Wau county, Western Bahr el Ghazal, 2) Magwi and Kapoeta South counties in Eastern Equatoria, and 3) Yei in Central Equatoria. The MOU document, based on a template agreed to by the national Ministry of General Education and Instruction and approved by USAID South Sudan, specified the ways in which RtL and the State Ministry of Education would collaborate and cooperate toward achieving the goals of increased access, relevance, quality and safety in education.

Figure 3: MOU Signing Dates

State	Date of MOU Approval
Central Equatoria	December 4, 2014
Eastern Equatoria	November 28, 2014
Northern Bahr El Ghazal	April 10, 2015
Warrap	March 3, 2015
Western Bahr El Ghazal	December 5, 2014
Western Equatoria	March 26, 2015

STAFFING: After the first crisis in 2013 the analysis highlighted the reality that RtL could not be expected to have an impact on the South Sudanese conflict and it supported conflict sensitive decision making at the implementation level. Thereafter, when RtL restarted in 2014, it faced a number of challenges which were related to the context. Increasing insecurity affects the ability of all organisations to recruit and retain staff. After the crisis of 2013 the uncertainty of whether or when the program would resume meant that staff had to be terminated. Five months on (May 2014), several senior members of staff had found other jobs and were not available for re-recruitment.

Program staffing is an interconnected challenge and intimately linked with the program design, scope and setting. A program with the depth and breadth of RtL required a seasoned Program Director, who was experienced in both education and conflict settings, and a strong leader and manager. This resulted in long and repeated rounds of recruitment that were expensive and time consuming yet yielded few strong candidates. Approximately ten months passed between the departure of the first Program Director (PD) and the arrival of the second PD in-country. During the interim period a series of short-term personnel meant that decisions were not made with the speed and flexibility necessary to respond to a rapidly changing environment. While a gap in an on-the-ground Program Director did affect the speed of implementation, as noted in Phase 1 and elaborated upon in Phase 3, the real challenge of RtL related to the complexity of the project and the vast geographic footprint in a country lacking the most basic of infrastructure.

Young student shows confidence as she reads aloud at 2015 International Literacy Day event

In South Sudan, the approach to recruiting staff, for both the central office in Juba and the County Education Teams, was intentionally conflict sensitive. There was an awareness of the importance of recruiting staff in a way that reflected ethnic balance in the country. At local level, having staff of the same ethnic group as the target beneficiaries was also a pre-requisite to gain access to communities. In most conflict affected locales there is a resistance to outsiders, especially where they are perceived to be taking jobs that locals can do. RtL policy, therefore, was to give priority to locals in recruitment for leadership roles provided they could meet the basic requirement of the job. In Juba the office had a majority of staff from the Greater Equatoria region who were, in general, perceived as neutral.

An example of making conflict sensitive decisions related to staffing is the case of Magwi in 2014. This was an area where communities were totally divided by conflict and where it would have been impossible to field staff who could work outside their own communities. For this reason, two separate teams were constituted for the duration of the inputs and the result was positive in that all the intended outputs were achieved.

Working with staff who have experienced much or all of their lives in conflict is challenging. It affects their psychosocial wellbeing and their ability to focus on their job. Many staff—in all agencies—have responsibilities for the security of their families and this can be a major distraction, often leading to significant amounts of time outside the workplace. The endemic nature of violence also creates a tendency to sort out even minor problems with threats and violence. One way or another, the external environment of conflict infiltrates the office and affects it. One way of creating a professional environment within RtL was to bring staff from the provinces together as frequently as feasible so that they could share experiences and have time out of a tense situation.

Lessons Learned in Addressing Access to Education in South Sudan through Community Engagement, School Governance, Conflict Sensitivity, and Teacher Development

11

SUMMARY: "Societies emerging from war face a range of problems on all fronts, all connected and all urgent. But one overshadows and affects all others: the destruction of relationships and the loss of trust, confidence, dignity and faith. More than the physical, institutional or systemic destruction the war brings, it is this invisible legacy, grounded in the individual and collective trauma, that is the most potent and destructive" (WSP, 1999). 2014 was an abbreviated implementation year with the closure of the Juba-based office for the five months and re-entry activities and work planning absorbing the following three months, the last four months focused on putting in place initial community entry processes and conceptualizing the education activities.

LESSON LEARNED: Entrance into payams and communities requires permission first from USAID[11] and then the national and state Ministries in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (or similar document), which takes time and needs to be factored into the overall community entry process. Within the context of a very large (national) program, all levels desire some type of input and given the very limited resources, focusing on the payam/community level and not providing support or inputs to the State and County levels raised questions and requests. This relates back to the issue described in phase 1, ensuring effective and reasonable engagement of the national and state levels to enter into the grassroots levels.

LESSON LEARNED: Being perceived as being impartial is often difficult to achieve in reality. In practice, RtL's attempt to achieve balance in terms of ethnicity (working across all 10 states) would prove to be impossible. There were various reasons but an important one related to areas/locations demarcated for development and Education in Emergencies (EiE) activities. From a conflict sensitivity perspective this had unintended negative consequences in that, from the outset, RtL, a development-oriented activity, was destined to work primarily in areas with a more significant Dinka-focus and other ethnic group minorities. There was limited safe access to Nuer populations, who were present in IDP camps, on which EiE focused.

RECOMMENDATION: In a setting that supports both humanitarian and development activities, a critical question that needs to be examined is *how to ensure balance and synergistic linkages between the two different funding mechanisms?* Different policy focuses and funding streams need to be strategically integrated into one strategic education plan/framework in South Sudan. This goes beyond just coordinating or linking activities (e.g., sharing), and looks at how to synergistically link activities and actions and address the problem holistically.

Women strategize school improvement during community entry

---

[11] The USAID South Sudan lawyer had been evacuated due to the conflict and had not returned, so it was necessary to factor in time for a review of the MOUs with SMoEs by a neighboring USAID country legal advisor.

Phase 3: Implementation and Close-Out (2015-2016)

KEY ACTIVITIES:

- Education and community empowerment grants (78) disbursed.
- Teachers trained in 388 schools and Instructional Material Packages (380) disbursed.
- Teacher training grants (366) disbursed.
- Parent Teacher Association Executive Committee members (2,270) trained to build capacity.

As previously mentioned, the overall goal of RtL was promoting access through the strengthening of the grassroots governance levels (PEO and PTA) with targeted education wrap-around activities: 1) teacher professional development, including a focus on social inclusion, gender and psychosocial awareness; 2) school governance (PTA capacity-building); and 3) community engagement (school development planning and grants) to enhance the learning environment (classroom). The education activities were tailored to fit under the USAID South Sudan (2014) operational framework which focused on recovery, community work and conflict sensitivity, with activities contributing to building the foundation for a more stable and social cohesive South Sudan.

EDUCATION OVERVIEW: South Sudan is the world's youngest and newest country. Its people were subjected to decades of civil war while the country was still part of Sudan and a sudden flare-up in hostilities, which started in 2013 and increased throughout implementation period. The geographical area of South Sudan has had a history of educational neglect and challenges. A study by UNICEF (2008, pp. 14-15; also see Haugen and Tilson, 2010 and Sullivan-Owomoyela and Brannelly, 2009) notes, "during their 90 years in Southern Sudan the British did little for the people in terms of educational development…. When the northerners assumed leadership in the south [after Sudan's independence from Britain in 1953], … the language of instruction was changed from English to Arabic… and this went hand in hand with Islamization of the curriculum and teaching…. These developments led to resentment from people in southern Sudan, resulting in rapid decline of the already poor access and coverage of formal education…."

South Sudan has one of the lowest literacy rates in the world. Only 27 percent (19 percent female and 40 percent male) of South Sudanese are literate (UNESCO/UIS, 2016). This situation means that even teachers may struggle to understand written materials on pedagogy in general and reading literacy in particular or to make effective use of teaching manuals. Many teachers were educated in Arabic and are more likely to be literate in that language than in English. Few teachers have had the opportunity to enhance their own proficiency in English (spoken and written) or become literate in their respective mother tongue. And even fewer teachers have received formal training in either a) using English or the mother tongue as the language of instruction or b) teaching English or the mother tongue as a subject with a specific focus on reading instruction. According to the results of RtL's baseline study conducted between February and September 2015, 21.7% of the teachers in RtL-supported schools had a primary education or had not completed primary school; 68.5% had at least some secondary education, and 10.0% had at least some higher education. 51.1% of the teachers had had no formal pre-service teacher preparation and anecdotal evidence shows that most in-service teachers (including 100% of the "volunteer" teachers in RtL workshops) had had no opportunities for professional development.

The vast majority of teachers in South Sudan in all sub-sectors of education are male. Data from RtL reflect this reality as well. Only 340 (21%) out of the 1,612 P1 to P3 English language teachers, head teachers and non-formal education teachers (from the lower levels of the Alternative Learning Program centers and 19 (16%) out of the 120 payam and county education administrators who participated in RtL workshops were female. This situation means that children, in particular, girls, are not exposed to female role models in the education system and boys are not exposed to female education professionals. The common response to the question about why there are so few females working in education is, "They are not there." To date, despite the Republic of South Sudan policy that 30% of government civil servants should be females, ministries and development partners have not identified and put into effect the types of targeted strategies that would rapidly increase female representation.

Literacy development

South Sudan is host to great diversity of languages; 63 distinct indigenous groups and 68 living (including 58 indigenous and 10 nonindigenous) languages are spoken by about 11 million people; 20 languages dominate about 90 percent of the linguistic spectrum; Dinka, Bari, Nuer and Zande are the mother tongues of about 60 percent of the population (Spronk, 2014).

Figure 4: Ethnologue Map of South Sudan
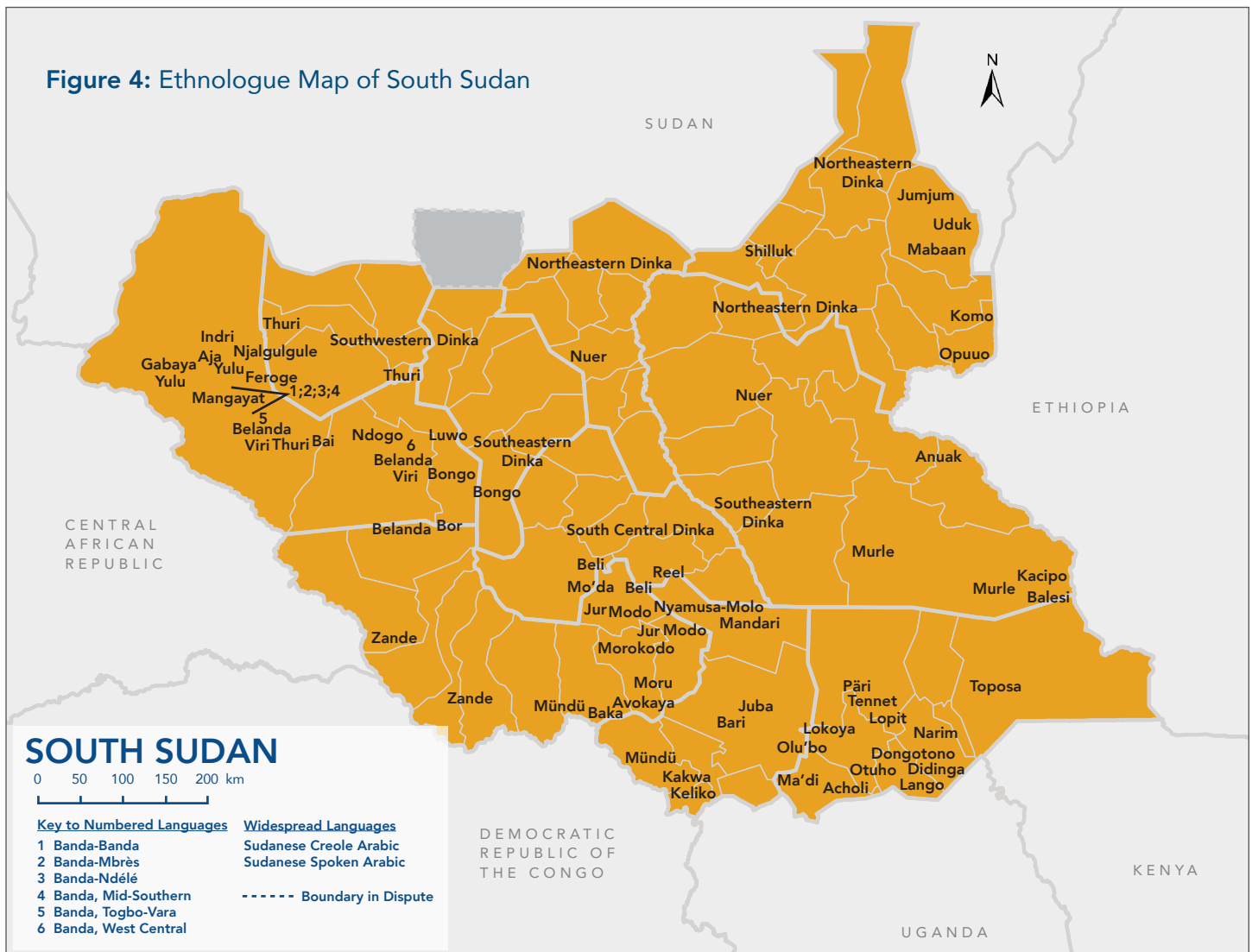
Source: SIL Ethnologue – www.ethnologue.com

Most of these languages do not have writing systems; those that do typically have a limited body of literature, especially for young readers. Few South Sudanese who use a mother tongue that does have a writing system are literate in the respective language.[12] Prior to the CPA era, Arabic was the official language used across the north and south of (then) Sudan, and it also served as a *lingua franca* for Sudan's diverse ethnic groups. During the CPA period, the provisional government in the south introduced English as the official language of government and the language of instruction in schools. Since independence, South Sudan's language policy environment has evolved. The current view of the Ministry of General Education and Instruction is that the language of education should be the mother tongue in primary grades 1 to 3. However, policy makers face enormous challenges in implementing this directive, given the tremendous linguistic diversity and limited human, financial, and material resources.

At the start of the project, discussions about language selection were underway. As noted above, language policy development in education is a typically highly contested and deeply political topic and, as a project implementer, the Room to Learn consortium chose to tread carefully in this delicate area in the interest of conflict sensitivity and an effort to do no harm. Originally, it was intended that RtL would address literacy skills development for two indigenous languages, Bari (Central Equatoria) and Toposa (Eastern Equatoria) that are widely spoken in pastoral areas. However, ongoing discussions with the MoGEI showed that this focus on indigenous languages was not realistic in the context for several key reasons. As mentioned earlier, there is no existing primary education curriculum or grade level teacher guides and student textbooks in the two targeted mother tongues (or in any other mother tongues) across subjects. (The new curriculum is piloting a few textbooks but they are only in English.) A review of literacy teaching and learning materials conducted by Mango Tree (2015) on behalf of RtL found that only two of the eleven sets of materials and methodologies for systematically teaching literacy in the early grades (including resources used in both the formal and the non-formal education systems) included local language resources.

In 2014, with no official selection by the MoGEI on what national languages will be used in the education system, RtL decided to focus on English literacy development. The General Education Act of 2012 states that English is the language of instruction beginning in grade 1. RtL concurred that: 1) aspects of the Teacher Professional Development (TPD) approach for enhancing the general pedagogical knowledge and skills and the specific knowledge and skills for teaching English (for example, positive methods to encourage participation by all learners and the five components of reading) could later be applied to other languages (notably, mother tongues), once teachers had enhanced their capacity; 2) positively exploiting and building on strengths already in the system (English had been promoted as the medium of instruction since the start of the CPA in 2005, the South Sudan Education Act of 2012 states that English is the language of instruction and there is a body of existing materials in English and for English language instruction); 3) a commitment to do no harm (promoting the development of curricula and materials for only some mother tongues in a context so deeply affected by ethnic and religious diversity could exacerbate tensions); and, 4) a variety of resource constraints.

---

[12] The USAID-funded EGRAs in five mother tongues (Dinka, Bari, Nuer, Toposa, and Zande) was challenging to undertake because of the limited number of literate adults and the limited number of places where these mother tongues are explicitly taught. A representative sample of learners and teachers, whose assessment results could be generalized to the population more broadly, was not possible.

Lessons Learned in Addressing Access to Education in South Sudan through
Community Engagement, School Governance, Conflict Sensitivity, and Teacher Development

15

In June 2015, the MoGEI, using the below criteria, recommended that Bari, Dinka, Nuer, Toposa and Zande be the first national languages to pilot the national assessment system and package of literacy support materials.

Figure 5: Criteria for National Language Selection

- Percentage of the population that speaks the language.

- Language's orthography has been developed and there is availability of documents that describe the orthography to be used.

- Availability of a set of basic literacy materials in the selected languages that can complement teaching and learning materials to be developed by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and can be used for teaching literacy in P1-4.

- Ability to pilot the assessment and availability of literacy interventions in pilot communities (availability of an education project in community).

- Language selection sufficiently broad to allow the project to provide the base of a national system through its selection.

- Language selection complies with do no harm principles.

In a context where the subject matter and the medium of instruction are problematic for both teachers and learners, a stronger emphasis on the second language teaching and learning aspects of English language literacy instruction can be beneficial. Development donors and implementing organizations may follow the wishes of a given minister of education with respect to language policy and programming decisions; however, it is incumbent on these development partners to take account of the broader context and the potential for doing harm when only certain languages are targeted for literacy development.

Although the decision was made to focus TPD on English language literacy, RtL also decided to simultaneously begin to address literacy development in national languages. The decision to include national languages was based on the recognition that English leveled readers (i.e. the South Sudan Teacher Education Program readers) are not ideal for early grade classrooms in South Sudan. Leveled English texts assume that learners are already conversant in English and can read connected text. RtL recognized that greater learning gains could be achieved with national language materials that focused on more basic skills, such as phonics and word reading. These materials would build a foundation in mother tongue literacy and enable a transition to English.

The development of national language materials was done through a series of consultancies, as outlined below.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS REVIEW: Mango Tree was contracted in 2015 to collect and review existing instructional materials (in national languages and English) and undertake a gap analysis to provide recommendations for the production of new materials as well as on methods for teaching and assessing literacy.

PASTORAL EDUCATION RESEARCH: Forcier Consulting was contracted in 2015 to conduct a desk review and field-based research on pastoral education to: 1) determine which elements of existing pastoral education activities in South Sudan can be expanded or modified to increase access and quality for pastoralist children and youth; 2) identify material gaps and needs based on study findings; and 3) provide overarching recommendations for pastoralist education.

The desk study reviewed and synthesized existing quantitative and qualitative research studies from South Sudan and the East Africa region, with a focus on pastoral education program delivery systems (rather than learning content). The field research focused on Toposa-speaking nomadic pastoralists in Eastern Equatoria and Dinka-speaking semi-nomadic pastoralists in Northern Bahr El Ghazal.

NATIONAL LANGUAGES SCOPE AND SEQUENCES: Both RtL and UNICEF (on behalf of the GPE through USAID funding) separately contracted South Sudan Summer Institute of Linguistic to produce Scope and Sequences for the national languages: Bari, Dinka, Na'Toposa, Nuer and Zande. The Scope and Sequences were developed to: 1) guide the revision or development of the pastoral education program materials and 2) provide content for instructional strategies for the teaching of literacy skills in both English and a national South Sudanese language. Additionally, the Scope and Sequence may be used as a reference for the development of the national language early grade reading assessments. The Scope and Sequences integrated the different unit themes from the new South Sudan curriculum to ensure the two key documents are compatible.

LITERACY KITS: Using Scope and Sequences, the pastoral education research study and other reference materials, Montrose International produced a range of instructional and assessment materials in Bari and Toposa. This includes: 1) Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and data analyses for Bari and Toposa; 2) Literacy Standards and Benchmarks for Bari and Toposa for Primary classes 1 to 4; 3) Literacy Teaching Kits for Bari and Toposa; and 4) Training of Trainers Manual on Utilization of Literacy Teaching Kits for Bari and Toposa.

Teacher Professional Development

The Room to Learn approach to Teacher Professional Development (TPD) was designed to be underpinned by an iterative cycle that consisted of two main streams of support: face-to-face workshops for teachers from a cluster of contiguous schools and school-based support for teachers who had participated in the workshops. However, due to time constraints and early closure of the project, RtL was only able to conduct one round of professional development workshops with the teachers and education administrators and no follow-up school-based support for teachers.

RtL developed and field-tested three key tools, which were used during the first round of TPD and Education Administrators Professional Development workshops:

- *Teacher Training Intervention Manual:* The Manual serves as the basis for a five-day training that focuses on the teaching of foundational literacy skills (specifically, the five components espoused by USAID: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension), learner well-being (including positive discipline and psychosocial support), and inclusive and gender sensitive approaches in the classroom.

- *Key Information Cards Booklet – Core Information for Teaching:* The Manual is accompanied by the Key Information Cards (KIC) Booklet that consists of simple, step-by-step instructions (accompanied by picture icons to assist low-literate teachers) focused on fundamental skills in teaching reading in English and on learner well-being, including classroom routines, psychosocial support (both of which are especially desirable in classrooms) and gender and social inclusion. This KIC Booklet mirrors the Teacher Training Intervention Manual, but it is meant to be used by the P1 - 3 English language teachers when they are in their classrooms teaching reading.

Lessons Learned in Addressing Access to Education in South Sudan through
Community Engagement, School Governance, Conflict Sensitivity, and Teacher Development

17

- *Teacher Professional Development for Basic Literacy Skills Trainers' Manual and key information cards booklet:* This training manual is designed to support teachers in their continuing professional development relative to literacy instruction. Sessions are grouped into specific topic blocks to provide teachers the opportunity to learn new instructional techniques to support them in their successful implementation of the National Curriculum literacy strand for lower primary classes. Between sessions, teachers are encouraged to practice their newly acquired knowledge and techniques in their classrooms and to share their experiences at the beginning of the following session.

This Manual is a step-by-step guide for monitoring and mentoring of head teachers and teachers on fundamental literacy skills and methods and learner well-being (including psychosocial support and gender and social inclusion practices) and on the care and use of RtL-supplied teaching and learning materials and other resources. The Key Information Cards Booklet mirrors content found in the Manual. This KIC Booklet is meant to be used by the education administrators when they are in the field and to help these personnel to use the Teacher Training Manual when they conduct their own face-to-face workshops with teachers.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL PACKAGE (IMP): The development and use of teacher-made materials and student materials is feasible within the South Sudan context, provided a project (or the government) is able to provide the necessary basic, "raw" materials such as chalk, scissors, paper, markers, etc., on an ongoing basis. Teachers have legitimate concerns about limited supply of consumable and other materials and this can lead to hoarding of and incremental doling out of materials, which are counter-productive to the teaching and learning process.

Recognizing this important point, the first in-kind grant agreement awarded to school communities was the Instructional Materials Package. This was a standardized package valued at approximately $4,000 per grant that provided over 30 items including: a pocket library[13], steel filing cabinet, portable chalkboards for learners in grades P 1-3, flash boards for teachers, and chalk, as well as a selected group of supplementary readers. The grant included transportation and insurance costs associated with delivery. A total of 380 schools received IMP grants.

TRAINING OF CORE EDUCATORS/MASTER TRAINERS: The MoGEI validated the first TPD manual in May 2015 and subsequently the first master training was conducted in July 2015 at Yei Teacher Training College. In order to train the targeted teachers, RtL utilized both the RtL Master Trainers and a total of six professional training staff from Yei Teacher Training College and Arapi Teacher Training Institute (three staff members from each institute). From

---

TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTES

- In the RTL targeted areas there are six facilities that train teachers:
- Arapi TTI (Eastern Equatoria)
- Maridi TTI (Western Equatoria)
- Rumbek TTI (Lakes)
- Rumule (Juba, Central Equatoria)
- Aweil (Northern Bahr El Ghazal)
- Mbili (Wau/Western Bahr El Ghazal)—only for female trainees

Arapi TTI was constructed in the 1980s by Norwegian Church Aid, and is considered the GoSS flagship (longest operating public) TTI in South Sudan. Arapi TTI classrooms are dated and basic (chalkboard and desks). The TTI has a computer lab with a few desktop and laptop computers and a tutor with some basic IT skills provides assistance. There is also a sparsely resourced library, populated with outdated resource materials.

---

[13] Pocket library was a portable (waterproof) canvas bag with multiple closeable pockets that held levelled readers and other materials/books a teacher/school may use to promote literacy.

July 14-23, RtL provided a two-week orientation and training session to all Master Trainers on teacher training intervention #1. Participants were introduced to participatory approaches like role play, small group discussions like 'think, pair, and share', large group discussions, and demonstrations. Additionally, participants learned new frameworks for teaching literacy, including the five components of oral language (including vocabulary), phonemic awareness, alphabet principles, and fluency and reading comprehension. This training session also acted as a piloting process for the manual and highlighted the need to further contextualize the manual for South Sudan. This included ensuring all practical sessions and tools (such as songs, poetry, stories, etc.) used locally sourced materials so that both teachers and students could better relate to the examples and scenarios. The training materials were revised accordingly and the products were used in the payam-based teacher trainings.

Master trainers. RtL recognized that, ideally, new content and competencies for teachers should be integrated into the existing teacher education system (public and private teacher training institutes/colleges). RtL signed two grant agreements with the Yei Teacher Training College (TTC), private training institute and Arapi Teacher Training Institute (TTI), the flagship government institution, based on the assumption that the six core educators (three each from Yei and Arapi TTCs) would be available on a regular basis to assist with the RtL TPD trainings. However, given the limited staffing at both institutions, the core educators were only available during school breaks. Unfortunately, the challenges within the teacher education system that have long plagued the institutions responsible for teacher preparation and ongoing professional development also affected RtL implementation, and the project ultimately was not able to utilize TTC/TTI personnel.

The project considered using experienced teachers from each school or cluster of schools to take the place of TTC /TTI personnel and function as instructional coaches, but it was not possible to identify teachers with the appropriate level of experience and qualifications necessary to enable them to carry out the role and responsibilities. Consequently, RtL decided to work County and Payam Education officers to undertake the responsibilities of an instruction coach. However, this was also not without challenges. RtL found that the majority of County Education Centers (CECs)[14] in the targeted states were not accessible to most of RtL teachers due to distance. Additionally, all CECs needed maintenance, many had insufficient number of tutors and/or the tutors were not available and all tutors needed intensive training in literacy skills.

Below is a brief summary of the status of CECs in RtL targeted states/counties.

- *Central Equatoria:* RtL teachers in Juba and Yei counties could access Alero CEC in Yei and Rombur TTI in Juba; teachers Kajo-Keji and Terekeka counties had no CEC.
- *Eastern Equatoria:* Kapoeta South county teachers could access Kapoeta South CEC and Magwi county RtL teachers accessed Torit CEC. Teachers in Nimule County could not easily access a CEC due to distance.
- *Northern Bahr El Ghazal:* Pantiit CEC was not functional for training exercises for Aweil West county.
- *Warrap:* Liet CEC was not easily accessible to RtL targeted schools in Gogrial West county.
- *Western Bahr El Ghazal:* Wau Municipal RtL schools could access Wau CEC. Jur River and Bagari counties had no CEC and access to Wau CEC posed challenge due to distance.
- *Western Equatoria:* Yambio county teachers have access to Yambio CEC and Kotobi TTC.

---

[14] CECs are designated resources centers in each county that may be used for trainings and (in theory) have equipment and materials to assist teachers with their endeavors.

Lessons Learned in Addressing Access to Education in South Sudan through
Community Engagement, School Governance, Conflict Sensitivity, and Teacher Development

19

PAYAM-LEVEL TPD TRAININGS: The TPD workshops were facilitated by at least two Master Trainers who would be attached during the period of the training to the RtL County Education Team and were supported by RtL education specialists from the Juba office. The original assumption guiding the TPD workshop was premised on a clustered approach with teachers commuting on a daily basis from their school to the training site. In urban-based settings, such as Juba, Nimule, Yambio, Wau or Yei, this was possible given the relatively short distance. However, outside of urban settings the distance between the school and designated training site as well as security concerns deemed it necessary to establish residential-based trainings.

Facilitators used a range of teaching and learning strategies such as demonstrations, role-plays, presentations, and structured group work. Four core foci of the workshops were: 1) the use and care of teaching and learning materials supplied by the IMP; 2) the development of no- and low-cost teaching aids by participants (such as letter flashcards, alphabet posters, and handmade picture books); 3) the micro-teaching sessions in which participants practiced applying their new knowledge and skills and used their newly created materials along with the teaching and learning materials in the RtL IMPs during two or three micro-teaching rounds;[15] and 4) micro-teaching observations in which participants practiced observing and then providing feedback to their colleagues on the micro-teaching lessons delivered.

The TPD workshops also included pull-out sessions specifically for head teachers and payam education supervisors (PESs) to prepare these individuals to provide school-level support to teachers after the workshops. Session topics included:

- Instructional coaching and mentoring for teachers.
- Integration of the pocket library and teaching and learning games into teaching.
- Use, care and maintenance of the instructional materials provided by RtL.

The extensive body of research on teacher professional development programs shows that face-to-face interventions must be supported by school/classroom-based ongoing support and structures (e.g., instructional coaching, teacher study groups, action research groups, electronic reminders, etc.) to bring about changes in teacher behaviors in the classroom (Leu and Ginsburg, 2011; Schwille and Dembélé, 2007; Zakharia and Bartlett, 2014). When it became apparent that RtL was going to close two years earlier than anticipated, the technical team pivoted and introduced "sustainability of interventions" workshops for county and payam education administrators in order to build their capacity to sustain and disseminate the TPD interventions RtL had introduced.

These sustainability workshops were conducted by RtL specialists from the Juba-based office. Ideally, these administrators would have accompanied RtL personnel on school/classroom-level visits and these individuals, along with head teachers, would have been coached on the job by the RtL specialists in conducting classroom observations and pre- and post-observation meetings (e.g., see LeCzel and Ginsburg, 2012). Unfortunately, the outbreak of armed conflict in early July 2016 during the last quarter of the project prevented Western Bahr El Ghazal counties of Wau, Bagari and Jur River from receiving this training. RtL was not able to do any follow-up on the impact of the sustainability trainings.

---

[15] Micro-teaching is a scaled down teaching encounter in which a teacher teaches one lesson to a small group of participants (5 to 8) for a short period of time (5-20 minutes). Micro-teaching provides an opportunity for an inexperienced teacher to practice new skills and receive feedback from peers and mentors. See Allen and Ryan (1969).

CONFLICT SENSITIVITY: The need to increase the pace of training to cover all 388 schools while simultaneously starting an early close-out affected quality. In the case of the TPD training, what had been planned for two weeks was condensed into one week. As most teachers had received little, if any, training, and had limited English this reduction significantly reduced the impact. In addition, in many areas there was a prevailing mood of fear which meant that neither trainers nor participants felt secure and able to concentrate. Attacks on schools became more common, resulting in greater teacher absenteeism and lower numbers of students attending.

The decision to be seen to be supporting all schools meant that inputs were diluted. Although it was the intention to do a series of trainings and to provide on-going mentoring, the reality was that most schools only had two inputs, i.e., the IMP and a five-day training because the trainers needed to move on in order to get maximum coverage.

Although the conflict affected delivery of the program adversely in many cases, there is anecdotal evidence that attempts to bring teachers together for training had a positive impact. Even though they came from warring groups, careful facilitation led to a degree of willingness to work together as professionals. Peer learning is valuable in most teacher training contexts but it is especially valuable in contexts of conflict.

The design of teacher training aimed to cover a wide range of topics which proved to be too much for untrained teachers to absorb. They struggled particularly with modules on gender and social inclusion and on psychosocial wellbeing which were too theoretical and introduced concepts that could not be translated into local language. When trainers adapted to the teachers' level by doing hands-on training in the classroom, there was more engagement and teachers could experience the potential healing effect of, for example, play therapy.
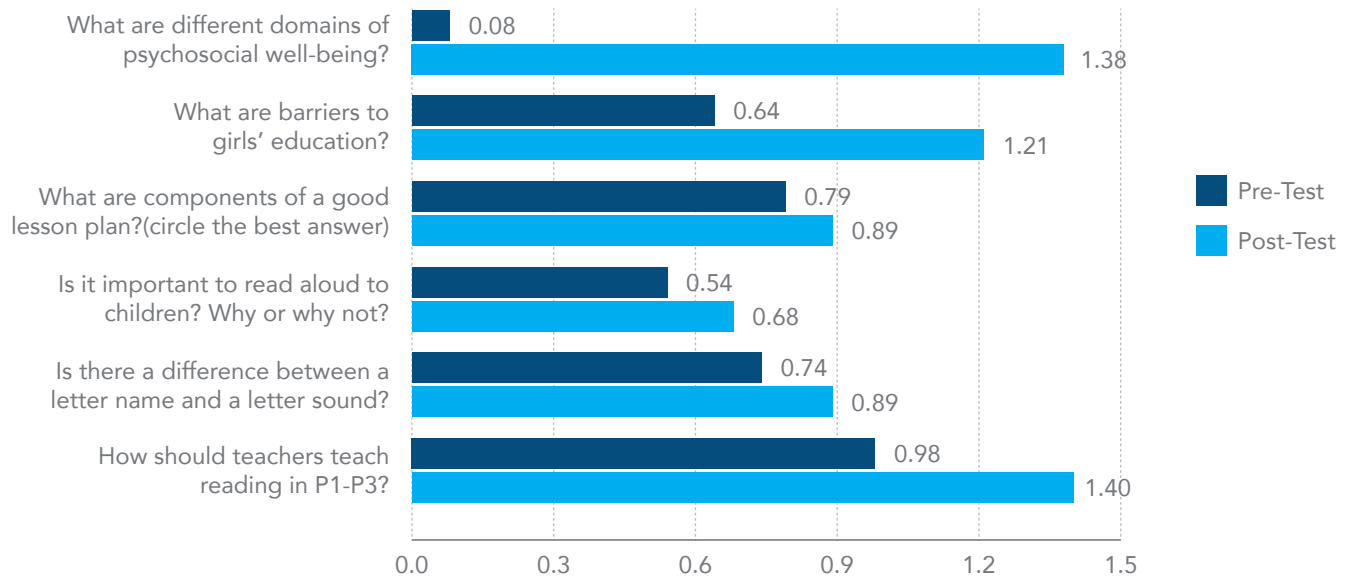
RtL was not the only project that was developing its own material and recognizing this could be a source of confusion and to promote coordination and sustainability RtL hosted a meeting in February 2016 with multiple organizations to consider possibilities for adaption, coordination, and scaling-up for sustainability and wider use of various materials.

RESULTS OF RTL'S APPROACH TO STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF EARLY GRADES TEACHERS:
Ultimately, the aim of any teacher education intervention is to have a positive impact on student learning and outcomes. Although the RtL project scope did not include baseline or subsequent rounds of a standardized student assessment, RtL did utilize a pre- and a post-test of knowledge, attitudes/beliefs and skills at the start and end of the TPD and sustainability workshops. Data was analyzed from 1,526 teachers as well as 16 county education officers and 90 payam education officers. RtL also undertook a structured monitoring exercise that included classroom observations of and post-observation discussions with 91 teachers and interviews of head teachers from 40 randomly selected RtL schools in the states of Central Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Warrap, and Western Equatoria. Results are broadly categorized into classroom material use, pupil inclusion practices and instructional coaching.

Findings from Workshop Pre- and Post-Tests. Analysis of the data from the pre- and post-tests administered during the TPD and the sustainability workshops showed a significant difference on several key elements of its training. In particular, teachers improved on their understanding of positive discipline strategies, their understanding of gender-equitable practices in the classroom, and their estimation of the importance of reading aloud. The point difference between the pre-test score and the post-test score for all items was significant ($p < .01$).
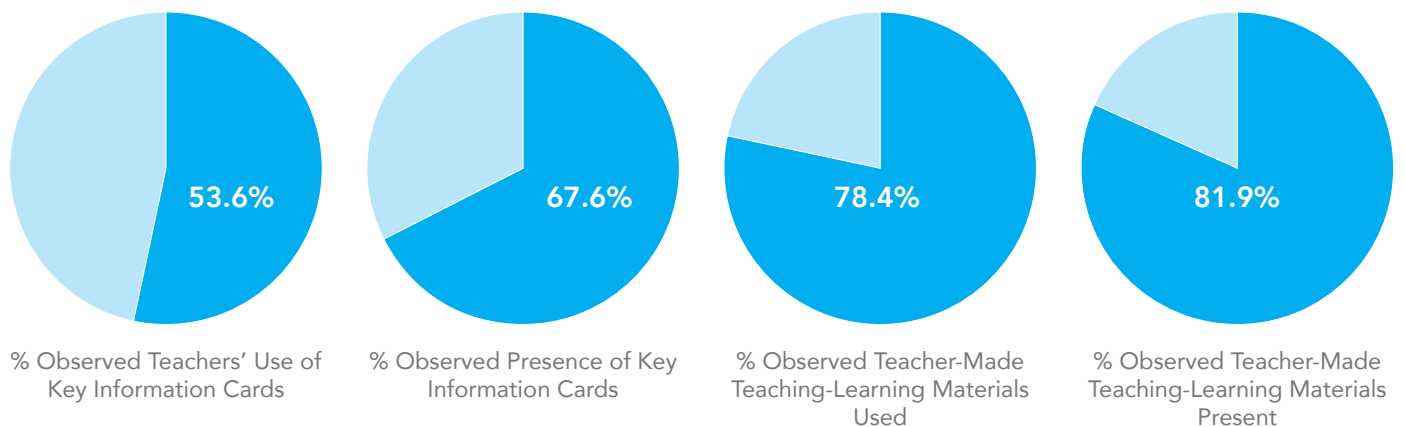
Lessons Learned in Addressing Access to Education in South Sudan through
Community Engagement, School Governance, Conflict Sensitivity, and Teacher Development

21

Figure 6: Composite Measures of Teachers' Pre- and Post-Test Scores

FINDINGS OF STRUCTURED MONITORING EXERCISE: Data from the structure monitoring exercise is below.
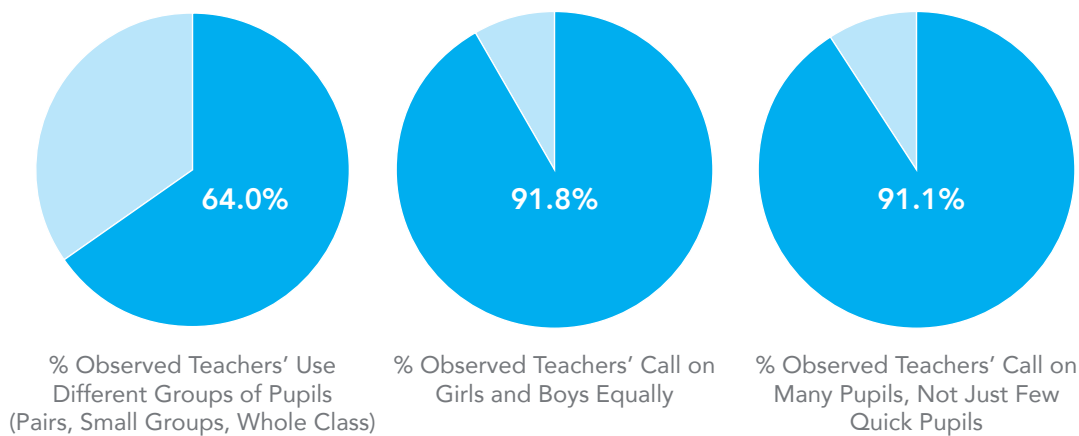
Teaching and Learning Materials. Analysis of the data from classroom observations show that the majority of teachers had adopted and were using Key Information Cards Booklets and teacher-made materials—two important aspects of the RtL teacher professional development workshops. Although teachers participated in only one round of face-to-face workshops, there was still relatively high uptake of both types of materials. As indicated in Figure 7, over half of the RtL teachers used the Key Information Cards Booklets and over three quarters used teacher-made materials during lessons that were observed. Data from interviews with head teachers and teachers corroborate these findings. For example, 85% of head teachers reported that teachers used Key Information Cards and 94.7% reported that teachers used teacher-made materials.

Figure 7: Materials Present in and/or Used in Classrooms During Observations

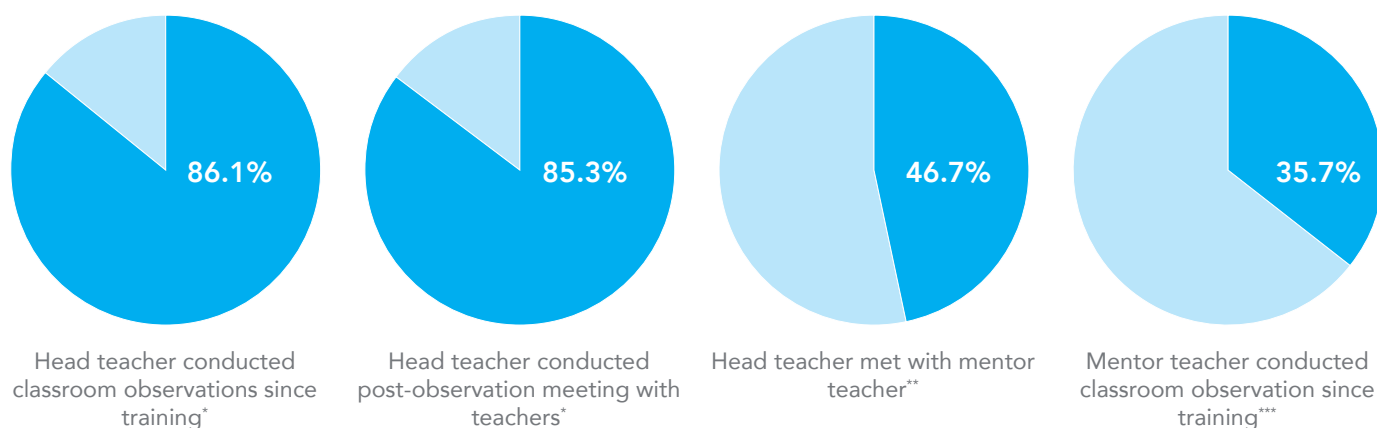| 53.6% | 67.6% | 78.4% | 81.9% |
| % Observed Teachers' Use of Key Information Cards | % Observed Presence of Key Information Cards | % Observed Teacher-Made Teaching-Learning Materials Used | % Observed Teacher-Made Teaching-Learning Materials Present |

Socially Inclusive Classroom Practices. Analysis of the data from classroom observations show that the majority of teachers had adopted and were using three key strategies promoted in the RtL workshops: different groupings (including pair, group, and whole group) of pupils; calling on boys and girls an equal number of time; and calling on a wide variety of pupils rather than a select few. (See Figure 8 below.) Teacher interviews carried out during the same monitoring exercise corroborate the findings of the classroom observation exercise. In "most or all lessons," 65.9% of teachers reported using different classroom groupings, 93.3% reported calling on girls and boys equally, and 86.5% reported calling on many pupils. Overall, it is understandable that using different groupings of pupils was lower than the other two indicators. Whole group teaching and individual learning is the standard approach to teaching in the classroom; smaller and diverse types of grouping in general (and cooperative group learning in particular - see Johnson *et al.*, 1984) is unfamiliar to many teachers and may be challenging in over-crowded classrooms. Nonetheless, the fact that close to two thirds of teachers were attempting varied groupings after a single teacher training is encouraging and shows that such practices are possible in the South Sudan context.

Figure 8: Observations of Teacher Behavior for Socially Inclusive Classroom Practices

64.0%	91.8%	91.1%
% Observed Teachers' Use Different Groups of Pupils (Pairs, Small Groups, Whole Class)	% Observed Teachers' Call on Girls and Boys Equally	% Observed Teachers' Call on Many Pupils, Not Just Few Quick Pupils

Instructional Coaching. Interviews with head teachers showed that the majority of head teachers had conducted classroom observations and met with teachers following the training. It appears that while some mentor teachers were active, results are less conclusive, as there were not mentor teachers in most schools observed. In separate interviews, teachers and head teachers reported that, since attending the teacher professional development workshop, on average approximately three classroom observations and three post-observation meetings had taken place between the head teacher and classroom teachers. Both types of teachers' noted lower frequency of observations and meetings between mentor teachers and teachers. While more research is needed to understand the lack of mentor teachers and the low frequency of their meetings, it is possible that it was simply easier to capitalize on an existing structure (i.e., the head teacher) rather than introduce a new structure (i.e., the mentor teacher) that is not part of the system (and not backed up by government policy or resources). Given RtL's early closure, the time needed to embed such a structure and make it effective was lacking.

Lessons Learned in Addressing Access to Education in South Sudan through Community Engagement, School Governance, Conflict Sensitivity, and Teacher Development

23

Figure 9: Head Teachers' Self-Reports on Instructional Coaching

86.1%	85.3%	46.7%	35.7%
Head teacher conducted classroom observations since training*	Head teacher conducted post-observation meeting with teachers*	Head teacher met with mentor teacher**	Mentor teacher conducted classroom observation since training***

*Based on 38 of 40 head teachers in RtL's Monitoring Activity
**Based on 15 of 40 head teachers indicating presence of mentor teacher in school
***Based on 14 of 40 head teachers indicating presence of mentor teacher in school

There are some limitations to the structured monitoring exercise. The analysis of head teacher interview data showed that head teachers reported a higher degree of compliance with various aspects of teaching and learning that were emphasized by RtL than did the data from classroom observations and from teacher interviews. The difference may be due to various factors, such as the fact that head teachers were aware of teacher practices over time (rather than in a single instance of observation). Another limitation relates to the classroom observations. In the South Sudanese context, it is not appropriate to undertake random, unscheduled visits to schools or classrooms. In addition, head teachers were contacted and helped to schedule the classroom observations and to prepare the teachers who were to be observed. Consequently, the data collected during the scheduled classroom observations may not be representative of the ongoing situation in classrooms. Nonetheless, despite these limitations, the high level of uptake (based on both observation and interview data) indicates the appropriateness of the intervention for the context, as well as on-the-ground enthusiasm for the RtL interventions.

Strengthening Local Governance and Community Engagement

The interest in school-level governance and local community participation as part of a decentralized education system can be traced back to the early 1980s when parental and community participation "became a major theme in school reform in several education systems" (Abu-Duhou, 1999 p. 17; see also Bray, 2003; Falconer-Stout *et al.*, 2014; Ginsburg *et al.*, 2014). The emphasis on community engagement in the education sector reflects and contributes to what Henkel and Stirrat (2001) call the "participatory turn" in development (see also Kendall, 2007). This trend was elevated to a global directive in 2000 in the *Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All* that called for a "move from highly centralized, standardized, and command-driven forms of [educational] management to more decentralized and participatory decision-making, implementation and monitoring at lower levels of accountability" (UNESCO, 2000, p. 19).

School-based management (SBM) emerged as one of the more popular approaches under decentralization to stimulate, focus and guide the involvement of community members around the governance and management of their local school. The application of SBM in conflict and crisis-affected contexts, such as South Sudan, has a limited body of research. As noted in Sullivan-Owomoyela and Brannelly 2009, p. 19, "Communities, both

during and after conflict, face additional challenges that make positive engagement in education difficult … During conflict the retreat of the state… creates a gap … Communities, recognizing the intrinsic worth of education, are among those who step forward to provide education". During the war years, community-based initiatives, often driven by international or local NGOs, were the backbone of the education system. During the CPA years this trend continued and, in some areas, noticeably increased.

Mobilizing communities and strengthening local governance to support and shape education is particularly important in South Sudan, given the history of neglect and challenges of educational provision in the territory of what is now the Republic of South Sudan. As Sullivan-Owomoyela and Brannelly (2009, pp. 109-110) observe, "a form of community participation existed in Southern Sudan throughout the years of the conflict [i.e., the civil wars between the north and the south, beginning in 1955 and concluding with the Comprehensive Peace Accord in 2005]; however, it was focused primarily on direct aid to the local learning environment through the donation of in-kind items,…food for teachers, local materials for school construction and labour for building of schools, instead of on qualitative improvements …[Moreover, because] these activities were often driven by NGOs or other external organizations, communities became increasingly dependent on external aid …, and as a result, organizations found it necessary to focus on ways to encourage locally generated participation." Based on an analysis of qualitative data from field research and anecdotal evidence, Haugen *et al.* (2010) reported that while state and county education administrators and local community members believed that parents and other community members lacked a sense of ownership of the schools, elderly individuals could recall a time when this was not the case and could provide examples of how communities mobilized to provide local solutions for challenges in education.

There had been a conscious focus in South Sudan on enhancing local level community participation to expand opportunities and address challenges facing the education sector at the local level during the war and CPA years and this trend continued with independence. National level strategic plans and the legislative and policy framework for the education underpin and support the focus on community engagement in order to expand community members' participation in school governing bodies such as the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), School Management Committee (SMC) and Board of Governors (BOG).

The Republic of South Sudan's first *Education Strategic Plan 2012-2017* notes that one of the objectives under the strategic goal of "improving the quality of general education" is "improving school management, leadership and governance (Republic of South Sudan, 2012, p. 57). And South Sudan's first *General Education Act*, signed in 2012, defines the Parent and Teacher Association as "a body of teachers and parents that mobilizes resources from the community on behalf of a primary or secondary school, and participates in passing the school's annual plans and budget" (Ministry of Justice, 2012, p. 5). Furthermore, the Ministry of General Education and Instruction *Handbook for School Governing* Bodies (meant for members of Parent Teacher Associations, School Management Committees and Boards of Governors) states that "involving the community helps the school and community to: 1) build trust and a supportive relationship; 2) support education for all children and youth; 3) bring the community together to help the school; 4) help find ways to keep learners and teachers safe; and 5) support student learning" (MoGEI, 2016, p. 40).

APPROACH: The Room to Learn project design initially placed heavy emphasis on the grassroots level, particularly the payam (an administrative unit beneath the county) and local school community. During the last year of implementation, based on lessons learned about the need to ensure a more robust involvement of all levels of the system, a focus on ensuring the Country Education Office was also sufficiently engaged with the Payam Education Office emerged.

Lessons Learned in Addressing Access to Education in South Sudan through
Community Engagement, School Governance, Conflict Sensitivity, and Teacher Development

25

Given the situation in South Sudan (as described in the above section), RtL sought to (re)vitalize community engagement in efforts to increase access, quality, and safety of education through a series of activities: school-community entry process, education and community engagement grants and building the capacity of PTA Executive Committee.

STATE ASSESSMENTS: During each rapid assessment, three to five RtL staff members traveled to the state and over a 2-to-5-day period held meetings with the Minister and department directors of the State Ministries of Education, county education officials, and NGOs working in the state. The rapid assessments aimed to:

- Explain RtL's design and approach to the key education decision-makers.
- Gain insight regarding:
  - Functionality of formal education primary schools, non-formal education programs (alternative education system programs), county and payam education offices and PTAs.
  - Students, out-of-school children/youth, and internally displaced and returnee families.
  - Conflict and natural disasters (e.g., flooding).
  - Education development partners, including emergency/cluster group.
- Collect available quantitative data on the education sector in the respective state.
- Inquire about the situation in the state with regard to the components of RtL activities.
- Discuss possible counties on which to focus initially.
- Establish a Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) between RtL and each state ministry (days or weeks after the rapid assessment).

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PRE-ENTRY STAGE: Once counties, payams, and school communities within a state had been identified in consultation with state education officials and the respective MOU had been signed, the school community pre-entry stage began and took place on rolling basis from February to December 2015. The purposes of the school community pre-entry process were to formally connect with the relevant county, payam and school education authorities to collect specific data and lay the groundwork for the school-community entry activity. RtL county staff carried out the respective activities and processes associated with this stage through brief face-to-face meetings and telephone conversations to:

- Officially introduce the scope and focus of the RtL project.
- Determine whether a school community had an Alternative Education System program in addition to a primary school.
- Collect information on the status of each school community's PTA.
- Coordinate arrangements for the school community entry stage.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY ENTRY STAGE: The school community entry stage consisted of RtL's efforts to collect data for the Baseline Study, help community members to conduct a Community Assets Appraisal (CAA), facilitate a discussion (including good school visioning) to create or revise a School Development Plan (SDP) and identify the focus for a proposed RtL grant.

INITIAL DESIGN FOR SCHOOL COMMUNITY ENTRY: Between February 15 and April 30, 2015, RtL pilot tested the five-day following school community entry process in 30 school communities located in four counties (Kapoeta South, Magwi, Wau, and Yei). The initial community entry process was for five consecutive days.

Day 1—Baseline Study: In each of the pilot 30 school communities, a team of three RtL county team staff members and one enumerator collected baseline study data through individual interviews with head teachers, teachers, PTA Executive Committee members, and students. As part of the Baseline Study the team conducted individual interviews with the head teachers, all teachers, all PTA Executive Committee members, and four students in primary grades P4-P8 and four students in each Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) level (L1-L4)[16]. The Baseline Study indicators were grouped into the five categories as outlined below, which helped inform the Safer School Index.

The county teams found that reporting selected findings from a baseline study that is focused on aspects of education access, quality and safety to school community members can help school community members during deliberations about priorities for school improvement.

Figure 10: Categories of Findings from Baseline Study Shared with School Community

- **Physically safe and healthy learning environment and surroundings** included: the percent of permanent learning spaces, latrines with adequate structures and latrines clean and maintained, the female student-latrine ratio; distance to water source; school grounds safety index and student safety to/from school index.

- **Psychosocially positive and friend learning environment** included: the extent to which the education program promotes learner well-being, the extent to which the education program promotes social cohesion, and the frequency of teachers using various forms of corporal punishment.

- **Emergency preparedness** included: an index measuring whether an emergency preparedness plan and an early warning system existed and whether teachers, students and parents had participated in emergency/disaster preparedness training.

- **Quality of education** included: an index measuring the relevance of the education program, the textbook-student ratio and the student-teacher ratio.

- **Access to education** included: recording the number of female and male students per grade or level, student gender parity, teacher gender parity, the number of out-of-school children/youth joining school, the number of 6-13 year olds not enrolled and the number of 14 to 25 year-olds who never attended school.

Day 2—Community Assets Appraisal: The team facilitated discussions amongst school community members, head teacher, teachers, PTA Executive Committee members, as well as groups of women, youth, and community leaders, with the total number of participants typically ranging from 35 to 70 persons. This discussion was the basis for the "community assets appraisal," identifying the community's financial, material and human resources that could be used improve educational access, quality and safety. In facilitating the Community Assets Appraisal process, the RtL team asked community members assembled to identify resources in six categories: 1) human resources (e.g., teachers, carpenters, brick makers/layers, farmers, health care workers); 2) natural resources (e.g., water, sand, timber, stones); 3) agricultural and animal resources (e.g., fish, goats, cattle, crops); 4) institutions (e.g., church or mosque, police department, health units, local governed offices); 5) organizations

---

[16] Not all schools had ALP

Lessons Learned in Addressing Access to Education in South Sudan through
Community Engagement, School Governance, Conflict Sensitivity, and Teacher Development

27

or associations (women's groups, community-based organizations, non-governmental organizations); and 6) local market (e.g., cement, iron sheets, desks, building materials, dry goods). School communities that, on first sight, have few assets were able to identify, find and/or mobilize resources in support of increasing education access, quality and safety, even in a resource-constrained and conflict- and crisis-affected context.

Day 3—School Vision: The team facilitated discussions among a similar set of school community members concerning a vision of what constitutes a "good school" and how the one in the community measured up to that standard (drawing in part on a summary presentation of key indicators derived from the Baseline Study). This activity was followed by a discussion identifying priorities for a SDP. RtL found it possible to involve school community members from diverse backgrounds, including individuals with no or limited formal education, in conceptualizing what a good school is and defining goals for improving schooling through a school development plan.

Day 4: School Development Plan: The RtL county staff members facilitated discussions of the head teacher and a small number of school community members (mainly teachers and PTA Executive Committee officers) to finalize the SDP. The SDP included the school vision and mission and identified area(s) of improvement, actions required, associated materials and costs, timeframe and point person(s).

To promote a unified SDP format throughout South Sudan, RtL coordinated with the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID)-funded Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS) project. If a school had a GESS-developed SDP, RtL used the existing document and assisted the school in reviewing and revising accordingly, based on information gathered during the CAA. If a school did not have an SDP, RtL assisted the school in developing one following the agreed upon SDP format. RtL ended up developing the majority of SDPs because while a school may have engaged previously in such an exercise few head teachers or schools had actual hard copies of this document to reference.

Day 5—Activity Idea Template (AIT): The RtL county staff members also guided discussions amongst the head teacher, a selected teacher representative and a small number of influential school community members to identify the key elements to be included in the Activity Ideas Template (AIT). The AIT identified resources requested from RtL by the school community as well as resources the school community would contribute. These resources were meant to help enable the school communities to implement their SDPs. The AIT content was then incorporated into a grant proposal between RtL and the school community. The grant proposals were to be submitted to USAID for review and approval. (See the section Education through Community Empowerment Grants (ECEG) for more information.)

REVISED DESIGN FOR SCHOOL COMMUNITY ENTRY: After reviewing the results of the school community entry pilot stage, RtL made adjustments to the processes and activities, reducing the number of days from five to two. The intent of the original entry process was to assist the school-community with a step-by-step process to identify school needs and issues and develop plans and corresponding proposals to receive grants. After the initial pilot, RtL recognized this was not a feasible approach and would take significant human and financial resources, given the large number of schools, if this level of effort was continued.[17] With such an intensive focus on this activity, other activities, such as teacher professional development and PTA capacity building, would receive minimal, if any, attention.

---

[17] RtL estimated that it would take approximately three years to complete this activity.

The new community entry process, employed by RtL between May and December 2015 was undertaken over a period of two rather than five days. Elements of the school-community entry process that worked well and were retained included:

- *Day 1* consisted of: 1) identifying the school vision, 2) what worked and what were the school needs, and 3) the local resource mapping (CAA) exercise. Approximately 40-45 community members and school staff attended.

- *Day 2* focused on the SDP and AIT development with influential community leaders and key school staff (Head Teacher, Deputy and teacher representative). This typically did not exceed 10 individuals.

The following changes were made to the Baseline Study exercise:

- The number of enumerators was expanded from six to 72, so that 18 teams of four enumerators could conduct the interviews in the remaining school communities for the Baseline Study (during May-September 2015).

- The Baseline Study was conducted on a separate day 5-10 days before the three-member RtL county staff teams entered the school communities to carry out the activities specified in Day 2 above. The information was analyzed and shared with the county teams.

- Data from the Baseline Study were analyzed and a summary was provided to the county teams to use during the Good School Vision discussion with school community members.

EDUCATION THROUGH COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT GRANTS (ECEG): The activity idea template (AIT) served as the basis/proposal template for the ECEG. Originally RtL had three types of ECEGs:

- Quick start: low-risk grant up to $1,000 for school-level projects.

- Mentored grants: after completing a successful quick-start grant, school communities qualified for more complex grants of up to $20,000 to develop and implement SDP activities.

- Independent grants of up to $50,000 to design and implement SDP activities (under RtL monitoring and guidance).

Building upon a lesson identified in phase 1, i.e., the assumption the school-community would have the requisite capacity to manage (financially and technically) a cash grant, in particular a cash grant of $20,000-$50,000, did not hold, and eventually in-kind and not cash-based grants were disbursed.

The Education through Community Empowerment Grants (ECEG), delivered by national, state or local South Sudanese NGOs, were very slow to get off the ground. Although RtL commenced in October 2013 the first entry to communities didn't take place until February 2015 and the first grant wasn't made until July 2015, almost two years later. There were various reasons for the slow pace—not least insecurity—but the cumbersome process defined in the first Grants Manual was an important one. There were too many steps, too many levels of approval and the procedures were not understood by most community members. By the time it was recognised that processes and procedures needed to be simplified there was no Project Director.

At field office and community level there was considerable frustration because the grants were inflexible. For in-kind grants there was often more than one grant, each of which required at least two visits for signature. The result was that it was necessary for staff to go back and forth to communities many times. Not only did this put staff at greater risk as insecurity increased but it also created confusion in communities who thought that staff

were coming four or five times for the same purpose. In a context of conflict these kind of unclear procedures tend to fuel suspicion that corruption is taking place. This, in turn, affects the trust communities have in staff and, as communities are a source of security for staff, a lack of trust potentially increases risk.

It also proved very difficult to align the grants with technical education inputs such as teacher training and materials distribution. This was partly a feature of the design of the grants but it was also a result of the consortium arrangement in which grants were delivered by Winrock, education inputs by FHI360, and psychosocial and disaster preparedness by Plan International and the overall complexity of the design of the project. With all partners trying to navigate their way between ambitious targets and a logistically challenging environment, attempts to coordinate across a variety of management structures were difficult and, at times, frustrating for stakeholders.

Flexibility is particularly important when the context changes. This applied in the early stages when the outbreak of civil war entirely changed the context. At the very time when maximum flexibility was needed to adapt grants processes and procedures to the new reality it proved particularly hard to achieve. The result was that grants continued to be overly complex and rigid when, to be fit for purpose in conflict, the grants process needed to be simplified to the point that only the essential accountability was in place and the documentation was appropriate for a largely non-literate population.

The sequence of grants distribution was also an issue. Some of the first communities, which were entered during the pilot phase (February-March 2015), were amongst the last to receive ECEGs and IMPs. Grants were first distributed in the Equatorial states, followed by northern 'Dinka' areas. Although this sequence was planned largely to cope with logistics challenges it had the effect of creating a perception that the Equatorias were favored. Avoiding such perceptions may not be possible but this experience indicates the need to consider conflict sensitivity at every decision making point in implementation. Once communities were mobilised this raised expectations which could not always be met and led to a loss of trust. A lesson learned was that once the community had been entered it was necessary to follow up quickly.

STAFF TRAINING: The County Education Team (CET) consisted of three key staff—Community Mobilizer, Materials Planner (for grants) and Education Quality and Social Inclusion Specialist. Using the RtL Community Mobilization Guide as the key resource tool, CETs' capacity was built by an initial two-week Juba-based workshop and periodic refresher trainings, as well as ongoing technical support through field visits by Juba-based technical specialists. Each CET worked with approximately 15-20 schools. The goal was to cover all schools in a county and thus, urban areas (with more schools), such as Wau Municipality or more stable counties, such as Yambio or Yei, had multiple teams. Teams were brought on in phases, as the number of schools increased. The original six CETs expanded to 15 CETs during the second wave of entry which started in May 2015. During the life of RtL, a total of 23 CETs worked in 11 counties.

The first entry into a community and subsequent planned iterative annual community re-entry included collecting and reporting data from a survey that addressed various dimensions of education, facilitating a community assets appraisal (CAA), creating or revising a school development plan, and compiling information (i.e., filling out an "Activity Ideas Template" - AIT) for a grant proposal and producing a grant proposal. Between annual school development planning processes, involving wide representation from various community subgroups, RtL's approach was to support school communities in implementing their school development plans, including providing (in-kind) grants and organizing capacity building (e.g., for PTA Executive Committee members). However, because of various challenges, most notably early project closure, RtL only undertook a first round

of engagement activities and was not able to provide ongoing support as school communities sought to implement their school development plans.

FINDINGS FROM ANALYSES OF DATA FROM RTL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT APPROACH: As a consequence of RtL's activities described above, school communities created school development plans, proposed resources to be covered by RtL grants, and made commitments to contribute labor and other resources toward achieving the objectives identified in their school development plans. Each of these will be discussed below.

School Development Plans. An analysis of the data from 368 primary school head teachers interviewed for the Baseline Study and specific to the status of School Development Plans at the point of RtL entry into the school community revealed the following:

- 86.1% of the school communities had school development plans (SDPs) prior to RtL's involvement. 75.1% of these school communities had developed their plans during 2014.
- SDP planning had largely occurred through the DFID/Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS) project
- GESS provided an SDP form and school community members checked off items on the form[18]
- While head teachers, teachers, and PTA Executive Committee members had participated in more than 90% of the school development planning processes; students and other community members had participated in fewer than 40% of these processes.
- Most head teachers and school-communities did not have a physical copy of the SDP.

The implications of these findings were that although RtL had anticipated working with many school communities to revise their SDPs, project staff ended up assisting community members to create a new SDP since there was no SDP on hand that could be used as a starting point. Moreover, RtL's approach went beyond GESS's school development planning approach by engaging a broader set of community members (e.g., also including children, youth, and women) in discussions about their vision of a good school and their priorities for school improvement.

FINDINGS FROM RTL-FACILITATED SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLANS: An analysis of the data contained in 200 of the 368 RtL-facilitated SDPs developed showed that they focused on basic school infrastructure, health-related infrastructure, safety-related infrastructure, and arts and sports infrastructure. See Figure 12 for details of main items under these categories and the percentage of school communities including the item in the SDP).

As shown in Figure 11, a majority of school communities indicated in their school development plans that they wanted to acquire school furniture (64%) and to build or repair classrooms (51%), areas that could contribute to increasing education access, quality, and safety. The next most frequently specified areas in the school development plans were musical instruments (42%) and sports equipment (40%), things that could contribute to providing psychosocial support for students. Note also that two of the safety-related infrastructure items were included in approximately one-third of the SDPs, with school fencing (35%) serving to keep unwanted animals or people from the school grounds and tools (30%) being used to clear the school compound of plants or unsafe objects. Finally, approximately one-fifth of school communities identified elements categorized under

---

[18] GESS's School Development Plan template provides space to "tick as a school priority area" a number of "school development targets" organized under the following categories of "areas of effectiveness": access, teaching, curriculum, care and guidance, parents and community, and leadership and management. In addition, the template provides space to describe activities planned to address the selected priorities as well as identify "what items and resources will be needed."

Lessons Learned in Addressing Access to Education in South Sudan through
Community Engagement, School Governance, Conflict Sensitivity, and Teacher Development

31

health-related infrastructure, with hand-washing facilities (28%), latrines (23%), and water facilities (17%) being considered as contributing not only to health and safety but also encouraging school attendance, especially for girls.

Figure 11: Focus of School Development Plan by Infrastructure Categories

Basic School	Health-Related	Safety-Related	Arts & Sports
• School furniture (64%) • Classrooms (51%) • Office block (16%) • Storage facility (11%) • Temporary learning spaces (10%)	• Hand-washing facilities & soap (28%) • Latrines (23%) • Water facilities (17%) • School kitchen (6%)	• School fencing (35%) • Tools for grounds maintenance (30%) • Trees for shade (2%)	• Traditional musical instruments (42%) • Sports equipment (40%)

DEMAND-DRIVEN AND SUPPLY-DRIVEN SCHOOL COMMUNITY GRANT PROPOSALS (ACTIVITY IDEAS TEMPLATES): An analysis of a sample of 14[19] (at least one from a primary school from each of the RtL-targeted counties) showed that school communities' requests for in-kind assistance from RtL focused on basic school infrastructure, health-related infrastructure, safety-related infrastructure, instructional materials and resources, and arts and sports infrastructure.[20] See Figure 12 (below) for details of key items under these categories and the number of school communities for which the item was included in the AIT.

Figure 12: Focus of Activities Idea Templates by Categories

Basic School	Health-Related	Safety-Related	Instructional Resources	Arts & Sports
• Classroom & office furniture (14) • Classrooms or offices (5) • Solar panel or generator (2) • Bed sheets (1)	• Health, hygiene, & sanitary materials (7) • Food or ingredients (3)	• Tools for grounds maintenance (5) • Supply locks for classroom doors (1)	• Teacher incentives (6) • Instructional materials (4) • School uniforms (3) • Computer equipment (3) • Exam fee payments (1)	• Sports & recreation equipment (9) • Bicycles for teacher transport (6)

In addition to specifying the physical resources being requested from RtL, the Activity Ideas Templates identified the financial, material and human resources that the school community pledged to provide as a cost share. The sample of 14 school communities pledged to contribute various types of human resources/labor as well as some material resources and financial resources. See Figure 13 for details of the types of resources pledged (with the number of school communities promising each type of resource in parentheses).

---

[19] An AIT was analyzed from each county, and from this initial analysis key themes emerged. Given the time constraints and relatively standardized responses (with minimal variation), the decision was made not to analyze a larger sample.

[20] At the time the "activity ideas templates" were written up, the estimated total budgets for these in-kind grants ranged from SSP 13,400 (USD $4,240) to SSP147,160 (USD $46,569), though most were in the range of SSP 50,000 (USD $15,822) to 75,000 (USD $23,734). During this time, the official exchange rate used was 3.16 South Sudanese Pounds per USD 1.

The majority (9 of 14) of the school communities committed to work on increasing access by mobilizing and sensitizing children/youth to attend primary school or ALP. At least one-third of the school communities pledged contribution of human resources to: 1) care for the materials supplied by RtL by a) securing and insuring proper use of materials (7 of 14), and b) helping to offload items when delivered (5 of 14); and 2) improve the safety of the school grounds (i.e., cleaning and leveling land, mentioned by 4 of 14 school communities).

Figure 13: Types of Community Resources Pledged in Activity Idea Templates by Category

Human Resources/Labor	Material Resources	Financial Resources
• Mobilize and sensitize children/youth to attend primary school or ALP (9) • Secure and insure proper use of supplied equipment and materials (7) • Help offload furniture and other items when delivered (5) • Clean and level land for playground, tent, or garden (4) • Recruit youth to serve as volunteer teachers (2) • Provide labor for building or repairing classrooms or offices (2) • Transport RtL-purchased items from market to school (2) • Sew uniforms using RtL-supplied cloth (1)	• Supply shoes for children/youth as part of required uniform (2) • Provide land for school playground (1)	• Provide part of incentives for volunteer teachers (1)

When the supply-driven materials (Instructional Materials Packages) to the 380[21] RtL-supported school communities were delivered, community members contributed human resources to unload the materials and put them in the designated storage place. Based on data gathered from head teachers, the estimated value of the cost-share from the school communities' contribution of human resources in this manner varied per grant sets.

Furthermore, when the classroom furniture (demand-driven ECEG) was distributed to the designated school communities, some members of the community contributed their time and labor to unload these materials. The estimated value of the cost-share from the school communities' contribution of human resources in this manner was $30 per school community. Based on an analysis of the same schools, the cost-share per school community for their contribution to supporting the teacher-training workshop (i.e., providing a space to hold the sessions) was $90.68. This represents another channel through which school community members became engaged in improving educational quality.

---

[21] Due to the July crisis and evacuation, 8 schools did not receive IMPs.

Lessons Learned in Addressing Access to Education in South Sudan through
Community Engagement, School Governance, Conflict Sensitivity, and Teacher Development

33

CONFLICT SENSITIVITY: Identifying partners for procurement depended on the particular conditions in the state and counties. The case of procurement of school desks provides insights into the differences. In some areas, notably the Equatoria states, the selected partners were effective and efficient. The people were hard working, generally not closely associated with the military, and geographical access to schools was favourable. In addition, there was plenty of locally available wood and other supplies could be procured from the Ugandan market which is in close proximity. Overall the success rate was almost 100%.

In contrast, in Bahr el Ghazal[22], where there has been chronic violence and insecurity, the people are more deeply enmeshed with the military and militias[23]. Fighting is the normal way of settling any difference, including disputes related to the passage of goods. Because there is no wood in the province the quantities of goods being moved was greater and the potential for problems rises. In terms of logistics, the state has clayish black cotton soil which is subject to flooding and stickiness in the rains and cracking in the dry season, both of which confound movement of goods for much of the year. In addition, Bahr-el-Ghazal depends on Khartoum and the border with Sudan for its logistical and economic lifeline. Given the troubled relationship between the two neighboring states throughout implementation and repeated intermittent border closures, there were major logistical challenges. The delivery of procured items at times was slower than desired, but schools received their items. Due to the outbreak of violence in July, the final batch of procured items could not be delivered directly to schools, but instead was directed to other implementing agencies that would be able to get them to schools that could make use of the items.

To the extent possible, the procurement team put in place a range of measures in place to mitigate and manage risk. In a context of conflict procurement practices need to be seen to be fair. Staff managed this by ensuring that requests for tender were issued and assessed in a transparent manner. Pre-bid conferences were held so that suppliers could fully understand the requirements and the process and, following award, the successful supplier was provided with capacity development support to ensure that they could meet the required standard. An important element of this was management of trust by not making promises that could not be kept, especially in relation to payment as this can fuel discontent and suspicion of corrupt practice. Timeframes were also made deliberately long so that RtL would be in the position of meeting its obligations early rather than late. These strategies seem to have worked well.

SCHOOL MONITORING AND MENTORING STUDY: RtL examined the progress school communities made in implementing their school development plans through a structured School Monitoring and Mentoring Study in June-July 2016 that involved the head teachers and two teachers who participated in RtL teacher professional development workshops from 40 randomly selected school communities.[24] As shown in Figure 14, 92.5% of the head teachers reported that in their school communities at least some progress had been made in implementing some aspect of their school development plans. Importantly, the aspect of their school development that head teachers most often (67.5%) reported some progress was related to access, that is, increasing enrollment of children in primary schools.

---

[22] Greater Bahr El Ghazal includes Lakes, Northern Bahr El Ghazal, Warrap and Western Bahr El Ghazal states.
[23] This became less true over time as conflict increased in the Equatorias and throughout South Sudan.
[24] These school communities are located in Aweil West, Gogrial West, Kajo-Keji, Kapoeta South, Magwi, Nimule, Terekeka, Yambio and Yei counties.

Figure 14: Head Teachers' Reports on Progress in Implementing SDPs*

Item	Percentage
ANY ASPECT of SDP	92.5%
Construction	
Repairing classrooms	35.9%
Building new classrooms	25.6%
Building more latrines	25.6%
Creating a school kitchen	18.9%
Creating a school storage facility	15.0%
Repairing existing latrines	13.5%
Acquiring lightning rods	10.8%
Establishing temporary learning spaces	10.5%
Building an office block	10.5%
Installing a fence	10.3%
Building (or finding) teacher houses	2.8%
Acquiring Materials	
Planting trees	35.9%
Acquiring sports equipment	18.9%
Acquiring [garden] tools	13.5%
Acquiring school furniture	8.3%
Physical Safety & Emergency/Disaster Preparedness	
Increasing physical safety of school compound	36.8%
Increasing physical safety of area surrounding school compound	32.4%
Developing emergency/disaster preparedness plan	32.4%
Training teachers, pupils, & parents on emergency/disaster preparedness plan	17.6%
Other Goals	
Increasing enrollment of children in primary school	67.5%
Making classrooms more girl-friendly	53.8%
Making classrooms more friendly for all pupils	52.5%
Teacher incentives	47.5%
Increasing enrollment of girls in primary school	38.5%
Increasing enrollment of youth in Alternative Learning Programs (ALPs)	37.5%
Increasing enrollment of girls in Alternative Learning Programs (ALPs)	19.4%

*Based on responses of 40 head teachers

Additionally, at least 30% of the head teachers reported progress in implementing the following aspects of their school development plans: 1) making classrooms more girl-friendly; 2) making classrooms more friendly for all pupils; 3) providing teacher incentives; 4) increasing enrollment of girls in primary school; 5) increasing enrollment of youth in Alternative Learning Programs; 6) increasing physical safety of school compound; 7) repairing classrooms; 8) planting trees for shade; 9) increasing physical safety of area surrounding school

Lessons Learned in Addressing Access to Education in South Sudan through
Community Engagement, School Governance, Conflict Sensitivity, and Teacher Development

35

compound; 10) developing emergency/disaster preparedness plan; and 11) building new classrooms.

Although RtL was not able to support building or repair of classrooms or to provide funds for teacher incentives, it is noteworthy that school communities made progress in implementing aspects of their school development plans—progress that RtL encouraged through its PTA training workshop and other activities (e.g., community entry, activating Gender and Social Inclusion subcommittees of the PTA, and teacher training). All of these aspects were oriented toward increasing education access, quality, and/or safety.

That RtL contributed to enhancing community engagement in improving access to and the quality and safety of education in South Sudan is also signaled by the findings in Figure 15 (below), which also are derived from the responses of 40 head teachers collected as part of RtL's School Monitoring and Mentoring Study conducted during June-July 2016. Out of the resources head teachers reported to have been used in implementing school development plans, RtL's in-kind grants were the resource category most often mentioned (by 62.5% of the head teachers).[25] This resource likely was seen to contribute to efforts to increase enrollment as well as improving quality of education. It is also important to note that more than one fourth of the head teachers reported that their school communities had used resources from capitation grants (39.5%), land donated by community members (52.5%), PTA Executive Committee members' labor (47.5%), parent' labor (45.0%), other community members' labor (34.2%), and teachers' labor (52.5%).

Figure 15: % of Head Teachers Who Reported Using Various Elements to Implement SDPs[*]

Item	Percentage
Financial Resources	
Capitation Grant Funds	39.5%
Financial Support from Other Projects	22.5%
Other Community Members' Financial Contributions	22.2%
Funds Raised by PTA	15.4%
Material Resources	
Room to Learn In-Kind (Supply-Driven) Grant	62.5%
Land Donated by Community Members	52.5%
Material Resources from Other Projects	36.1%
Materials Donated by Community Members	25.6%
Human Resources/Labor	
Labor Contributed by Teachers	52.5%
Labor Contributed by PTA Executive Committee Members	47.5%
Labor Contributed by Parents of School Pupils	45.0%
Labor Contributed by Other Community Members	34.2%

[*]Based on 38 of 40 head teachers targeted who reported they knew about their school's progress on the SDP.

---

[25] Note that compared to RtL's contribution, a much smaller percentage of head teachers mentioned financial resources from other projects (22.5%) and material resources from other projects (36.1%).

Implications of these findings are that although RtL was not able to routinely contact and support school communities, including providing materials requested in the demand-driven grant agreements, the Community Engagement Approach activities and processes (assisting in the CAA and the development of SDPs, providing teaching and learning materials through the supply-driven grant agreements) and organizing and conducting PTA and in-service teacher capacity development workshops likely contributed to the school communities' progress in implementing their SDPs. Had the materials in the demand-driven grant agreements been provided, it is likely that there would have been even stronger results.

RTL'S ACTIONS TO STRENGTHEN SCHOOL-LEVEL GOVERNANCE: To support the achievement of the objective of improving local level participation in school management, leadership and governance, Room to Learn sought to revitalize existing or form new PTAs in the school communities involved in the project. These efforts were directed toward insuring that PTA Executive Committees were functioning, Executive Committee members were aware of and able to fulfill their roles and responsibilities, Executive Committees included female members, and several subcommittees including a Gender and Social Inclusion Subcommittee and an Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee were created and able to lead efforts to incorporate out-of-school children/youth, particularly girls and those with disabilities, and develop emergency/disaster preparedness plans.

During RtL's school community entry process (see Ginsburg *et al.*, 2016), project staff ascertained whether PTA Executive Committees existed and were functional. According to head teachers' responses to survey questions on the RtL School Monitoring Baseline Study conducted during February-September 2015 (see Ginsburg *et al.*, 2015), out of the 359 of 368 school communities from which valid data were collected—36.9% of the PTA Executive Committee members were female (with only 6 out of 359 PTA Executive Committees having no female members).[26]

Although head teachers reported that all school communities had PTA Executive Committees, and that in the vast majority of cases they included female members, many of them indicated that in their school communities the PTA was either inactive or only active only to a limited extent. For example, according to head teachers' responses during the Baseline Study interviews, for the 368 school communities involved in RtL's activities:

- On average, Executive Committees had met 3.7 times out if the minimum required number of meetings (3 meetings or one per term) during the 2014 school year.
- 16 PTA Executive Committees had not met at all during 2014.
- On average, the PTA Executive Committees had the PTA general assembly meet 2.2 times (with 25 PTAs holding no general assembly meetings) during the 2014 school year.

Moreover, head teachers and other PTA Executive Committee members interviewed during the RtL Baseline Study (as well as state ministry and county officials contacted during the rapid assessments and pre-entry phases; see Ginsburg *et al.*, 2016) indicated that there was a need for further capacity development of the PTA Executive Committee members, in terms of knowing and being able to effectively undertake their roles and responsibilities. For instance, 61.1% of the head teachers reported that their PTA Executive Committees had not participated in any training during 2014.

Based on these insights from the RtL Baseline Study, observations during the community entry process, and

---

[26] Unfortunately, the survey did not collect data on the type of position females held in the PTA Executive Committee. Anecdotal evidence post-2015 suggests that only a handful of PTAs had chairpersons who were female.

Lessons Learned in Addressing Access to Education in South Sudan through
Community Engagement, School Governance, Conflict Sensitivity, and Teacher Development

37

information emphasized by officials in MoGEI and State Ministries of Education (SMoEs) during consultations, RtL decided to collaborate with MoGEI and other education stakeholders to develop a *PTA Training Manual*.[27] As Abdullah Ali Abdullahi, Director General of the Directorate of General Education (MoGEI), stated in the preface to the *Parent Teacher Association Training Manual* (Room to Learn, 2015, p. 2), the general goal of the capacity building is to enable PTA Executive Committee members to "demonstrate knowledge and skills in the creation and maintenance of healthy school-community relationships and in spearheading development in their respective schools." The *Training Manual* was informed by and drew on the 2012 *General Education Act* (Ministry of Justice, 2012) as well as the draft of the *School Governance Policy* (MoGEI, 2014).

More specifically, the capacity development program framed within the *PTA Training Manual* (Room to Learn, 2015, p. 6) is designed to enhance the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed by PTA Executive Committee members' to:

- Effectively perform their roles and responsibilities.
- Differentiate between roles and the responsibilities of the PTA and the two school management bodies (the School Management Committees for primary schools and the Boards of Governors for secondary schools).
- Understand the basic roles of school administration and the roles the PTA plays in supporting school management.
- Implement appropriate educational advocacy actions that promote access, retention, and attendance in education programs at different levels.
- Understand and seek to address factors affecting participation of girls, disadvantaged children, and children with disabilities in education.
- Identify hazards that could impact on the continuation of learning and develop a school emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction plan.

RtL committed to building the capacity of, on average, six office-bearing members of the PTA Executive Committee from 388 school communities[28] in RtL's six target states (Central Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Warrap, Western Equatoria and Western Bahr el Ghazal). To expedite the implementation of the first round of the capacity building workshops and to increase the likelihood that such capacity building could be continued beyond the project's life cycle, RtL invited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to submit proposals to implement the workshops and to provide follow-up coaching and monitoring at the school community level. In consultation with MoGEI, RtL selected five NGOs to implement the PTA capacity building initiatives:

- Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA)
- Africa Education Trust (AET)
- Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan (ECSS&S)
- Peace Corps Organization (PCO)
- Windle Trust International (WTI).[29]

[27] RtL also took the lead in developing a Manual for Facilitators Training PTAs.
[28] The 388 included 368 school communities on which RtL focused all or most of its activities and 20 school communities that had been selected as comparisons or controls for a planned (but not implemented) USAID evaluation of the RtL project. Eventually, these 20 'impact evaluation school communities' were provided with the full range of RtL support when it was decided to drop the impact evaluation activity.
[29] Note that RtL staff conducted the PTA workshops for 49 of the targeted 388 focal school communities. This figure includes the 20 school communities that had previously been identified to serve as a comparison group for an external evaluation.

The participatory sessions with school-community members during the first phase of the Community Engagement Approach (see Ginsburg *et al.*, 2016) showed that level of proficiency in spoken and written English was low and many adults had had limited (if any) access to a formal education and that a focused effort was needed to ensure participation of various groups within a community. These realities presented challenges that the RtL and MoGEI staff needed to consider in the development of materials and the approaches used in the PTA capacity building workshops. The content and layout of the *PTA Training Manual* and the learning approaches conformed to adult learning principles and practices informed by these contextual features found in most communities in South Sudan. The Manual itself was developed to be user-friendly (visuals, simple language, straightforward (not dense) prose, contextualized examples, sensitive to gender and social inclusion, etc.) and the methods used reflected cultural practices (ample opportunities for discussion, limited written content). Once the Manual was ready in draft form, RtL and MoGEI staff conducted a 5-day workshop to orient and prepare the trainers from the NGOs as well as county and payam education officials to conduct the PTA Executive Committee capacity building workshops using the *PTA Training Manual* and to undertake follow-up coaching and monitoring. During the training of trainers' workshop, participants discussed and identified solutions to matters related to PTA members' limited English language proficiency, limited formal schooling and gender and social inclusion considerations that were likely to show up in the PTA workshops.

The trainers (NGO and RtL) conducted 90 three-day workshops for 2,270 (1516 male and 754 female) office-bearing Executive Committee members from 388 PTAs. Typically, approximately five PTAs were clustered together in one workshop. Figure 16 shows the number of workshop participants disaggregated by sex and state.

Figure 16: Number of PTA Representatives Trained by State and Sex
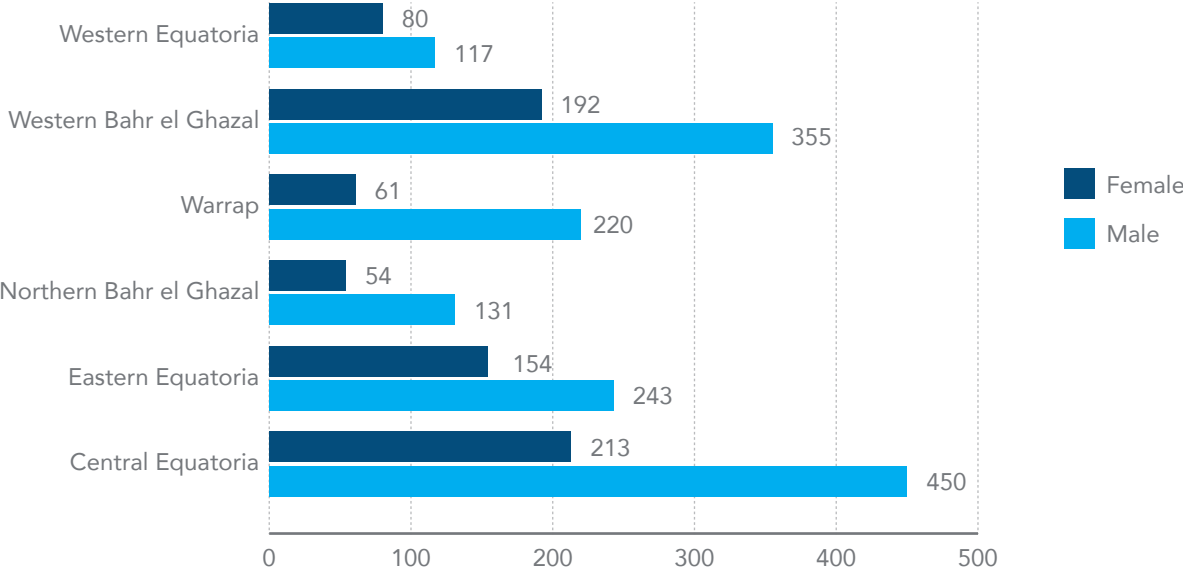
RtL had planned for the NGOs to conduct follow-up sessions with the PTA Executive Committee members at the school-community level in order to help coach the members in the application of the workshop material and to monitor progress in applying the learning. Unfortunately, the school-community level follow-up and subsequent rounds of structured workshops were not possible due to the early closure of the project and the outbreak of armed conflict (July) in the last quarter of the project. Thus, the PTA Executive Committee members were unable to benefit from ongoing guidance and support to reinforce what was taught during the workshop and to help the groups brainstorm how to address any challenges they faced. The conflict also prevented the

structured monitoring exercise to examine the extent to which PTA Executive Committee members were able to apply their new knowledge.

As part of the implementation of the PTA capacity building initiative, RtL was instrumental in helping to produce the *Handbook on School Governing Bodies* (MoGEI, 2016), a reference guide for members of PTAs, SMCs and BOGs that they could have on hand to help them in their day-to-day responsibilities. The Handbook includes the following chapters: 1) School Governance: Overview; 2) Setting up a PTA and SMC or BOG; 3) Duties of the PTA and SMC or BOG; 4) Engaging the Community; 5) School Development Plan; 6) Sample Goals and Activities for the School Development Plan; and 7) Managing School Funds: An Overview. As with the *PTA Training Manual*, RtL placed a strong emphasis on certain features that would make the *Handbook* as user-friendly as possible for PTA members with limited English language proficiency and limited exposure to print materials: controlled vocabulary and sentence structure, a simple lay-out, visuals to provide cues, etc.).

RESULTS OF RTL'S APPROACH TO STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF PTA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS: As noted above, RtL was unable to conduct a formal monitoring exercise of the application of PTA workshop participants' use of their new knowledge and skills; consequently, the results reported here are based on the data recorded on a pre- and post-workshop test that reflected the knowledge, skills and attitudes that RtL expected PTA members would gain as a result of participating in round one of the PTA workshops. The pre- and post-test was administered to all workshop participants. A cleaned sample of tests completed by 390 (266 males and 124 females) out of the 2,270 PTA Executive Committee members who participated in the workshops was selected and the data were analyzed. The results of the analysis are discussed below. RtL was also able to analyze data pertaining to PTAs taken from Key Informant Interviews with head teachers from 40 school communities in Aweil West, Gogrial West, Kajo-Keji, Kapoeta South, Magwi, Nimule, Terekeka, Yambio and Yei counties. These data were collected during a structured monitoring exercise of the effectiveness of the Teacher Professional Development approach that was undertaken prior to the outbreak of armed conflict on July 8.
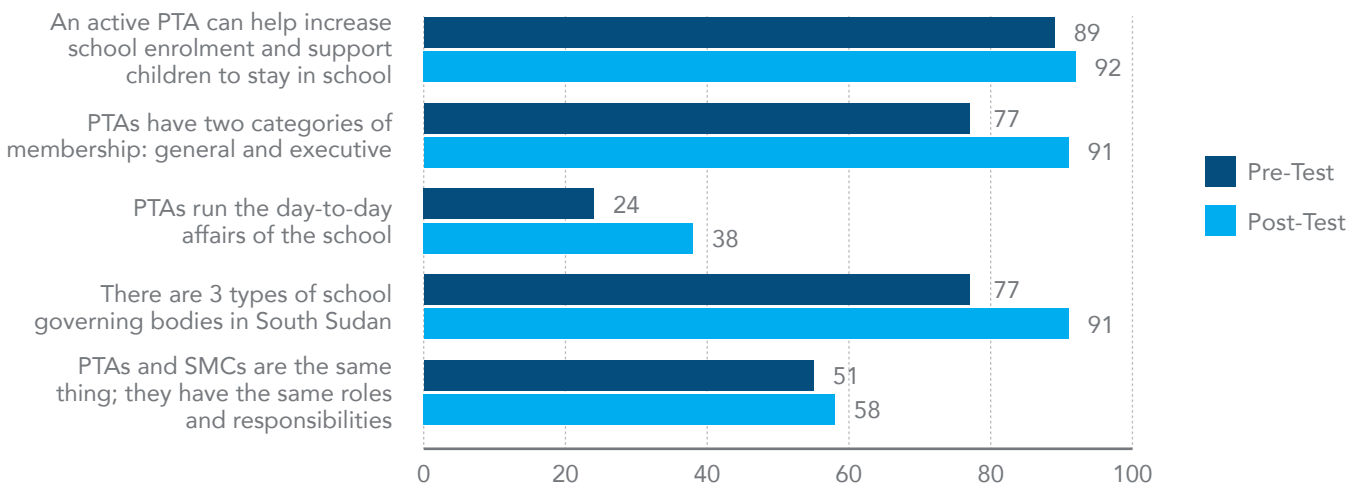
FINDINGS FROM PTA WORKSHOP PRE- AND POST-TEST DATA:

Roles and Responsibilities. Five pre-/post-workshop test items concerned the roles and responsibilities of PTAs, as defined in South Sudan policy documents. Participants showed a significant increase (p<.01) in correct scores on four of the five test items:

- PTAs have two categories of membership: general and executive (from 24% to 38% answering "yes").
- PTAs run the day-to-day affairs of the school (from 77% to 91% answering "no").
- There are three types of school governing bodies (from 77% to 91% answering "yes").
- PTAs and SMCs are the same thing; they have the same roles and responsibilities (from 51% to 58% answering "no").

Only one of the five items—*An active PTA can help increase school enrollment and support children to stay in school*—did not show a significant gain between the pre- and post-workshop test scores, because 89% of the participants answered the item correctly on the pre-work test. See Figure 17.

Figure 17: Percent Correct Responses to Pre-Workshop and Post-Workshop Test Items about PTA Roles and Responsibilities

An active PTA can help increase school enrolment and support children to stay in school — Pre-Test: 89, Post-Test: 92

PTAs have two categories of membership: general and executive — Pre-Test: 77, Post-Test: 91

PTAs run the day-to-day affairs of the school — Pre-Test: 24, Post-Test: 38

There are 3 types of school governing bodies in South Sudan — Pre-Test: 77, Post-Test: 91

PTAs and SMCs are the same thing; they have the same roles and responsibilities — Pre-Test: 51, Post-Test: 58

Gender and Social Inclusion. Five pre-/post-workshop test items concerned gender and social inclusion. Participants showed a significant increase (p<.01) in scores on two of the five test items:
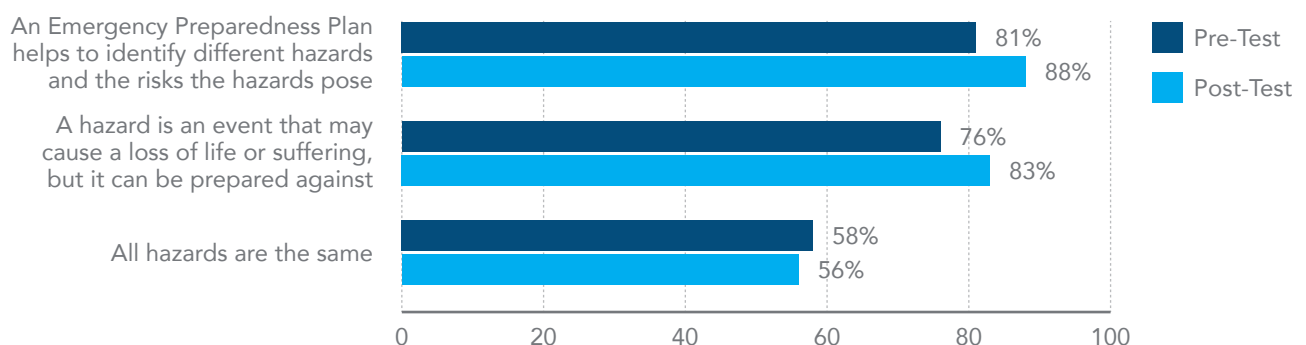
- *When boys perform better than girls in school, it is because they learn more quickly* (from 63% to 71% answering "no")

- *Gender and sex are the same thing; they have the same roles which cannot change* (from 37% to 43% answering "no").

Emergency/Disaster Preparedness. Three pre-/post-workshop test items concerned emergency/disaster preparedness. Participants showed a significant increase (p<.01) in scores on two of the three test items:

- An emergency preparedness plan helps to identify hazards and the risks the hazards pose (from 81% to 88% answering "yes")

- *A hazard is an event that may cause a loss of life or suffering, but it can be prepared against* (from 76% to 83% answering "yes").

There were not significantly higher scores on the post-workshop test for the last test item—*All hazards are the same*. A little more than 50% of participants answered this item correctly on both the pre- and post-workshop tests. See Figure 18.

Figure 18: Percent of Correct Responses to Pre- and Post-Workshop Test Items About Emergency/Disaster Preparedness

An Emergency Preparedness Plan helps to identify different hazards and the risks the hazards pose — Pre-Test: 81%, Post-Test: 88%

A hazard is an event that may cause a loss of life or suffering, but it can be prepared against — Pre-Test: 76%, Post-Test: 83%

All hazards are the same — Pre-Test: 58%, Post-Test: 56%

Lessons Learned in Addressing Access to Education in South Sudan through Community Engagement, School Governance, Conflict Sensitivity, and Teacher Development

41

In the back, a school inspector observes a teacher utilizing RtL teaching techniques

FINDINGS FROM SCHOOL MENTORING AND MONITORING STUDY – HEAD TEACHER INTERVIEWS: Fifty-five percent of the head teachers interviewed reported that the PTAs in their school communities had met more than once per term and 35% reported that the PTAs had met once per term, while only 10% reported that the PTA had not met at all during 2015-2016.

The analyses presented above provide clear evidence that participants in the PTA capacity-building workshops gained knowledge about the structure and responsibilities of the PTA and increased their understanding of issues related to gender, social inclusion and emergency/disaster preparedness. Further evidence of the (perceived) value of the capacity-building workshops can be found in the requests by those who participated in the workshops for additional copies of the English language version of the *PTA Training Manual* and requests for the *Manual* to be provided in local/national languages. Participants said that having the *Manual* on hand would allow other PTA Executive Committee members as well as themselves to refer to the manual on an ongoing basis. In addition, one of the NGOs, the Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan (ECSS&S), that was contracted to conduct PTA capacity building using the *PTA Training Manual* decided to translate the *Manual* into Bari based on the experiences during the workshops and the feedback from PTA members and county and payam education officers that a local language version of the *Manual* would be even more effective. This translation was completed with assistance from RtL specialists.

Further evidence that the *PTA Training Manual* and the *Handbook* are perceived as a valuable resource was also signaled during a February 2016 School Governance Coordination meeting where the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI) and other education stakeholders decided that this manual along with the School Management Committee Manual developed by the UKAid DFID GESS project, and existing MoGEI policy documents should become part of a comprehensive school governance document for South Sudan.

CONFLICT SENSITIVITY: The decision to work with PTAs was a sound choice for the original objective of supporting development and with a timeframe of several years. However, with the changed context and pressure to deliver, a number of issues arose. In most communities the PTA members are illiterate and the community constitutes their world. This meant that they had difficulty understanding the complex grants mechanism as well as the obligation placed on them to be accountable in the RtL definition.

Living life at the margins, frequently without basic needs being met, and having been on the receiving end of many broken promises, communities have little interest in or concern for targets. As a PTA, even after training, they do not necessarily grasp their role. This becomes even more challenging where some of the tasks ascribed to them by RtL overlap with the role of the School Management Committee. Although RtL made efforts to coordinate with the GESS program, which worked with SMCs, having two programs may be confusing at the community level. Added to this, most parents see the government as responsible for the provision of education and can become confused about their role, and that of a project, in relation to the government.

USE OF NGOS: The choice of partners was largely made on the basis of which ones had access to communities. This meant that most partners needed to be local to the area and, although this carried a degree of risk in terms of impartiality and ability to monitor, those selected were the only realistic options. Owing to the early closure, the process of building the capacity of partners was cut short. For example, training of trainers was reduced from the planned two weeks to one. Aside from the shortened time, in some states the training took place in an environment where the context was changing rapidly, leaving both staff and trainees afraid and unable to concentrate fully. In one instance, fighting surrounding the training locale broke out and the training had to be cancelled.

SUMMARY: "The challenge of rebuilding after war is essentially a development challenge in the special circumstances of a war-torn society" (War-Torn Society Project, 1999).

RtL was designed for a relatively settled environment in which development was considered possible and desirable. Following the outbreak of civil war, the decision to expand RtL's geographical footprint was made partly to remain relevant in a changed environment. Subsequently, as conflict steadily increased, there were adjustments that reduced the scope of activities.

For a project to remain relevant it needs to address the most important issues at the time. RtL was certainly addressing important issues but there is no evidence that it sought to prioritise what might be *most* important related to the context. On the contrary, it is a project that had a complex design, not only in terms of the breadth of activities but also in the management arrangement and the modalities.

On the technical side it spanned teacher training, curriculum and materials, and infrastructure. Each of these is a massive undertaking which tends to take countries decades to achieve with quality. Each also probably requires a full partnership with the government rather than delivery in parallel. In terms of modality, providing community level grants in such a low capacity context reduced relevance especially as communities became harder to access.

LESSON LEARNED: The RtL literacy package focused on working solely with supplementary materials, not the core curriculum. "Supplementary materials" is a broad term that can include books to read aloud, decodable books, leveled texts, flash cards, letter tiles, and more. While these materials are important elements in a classroom, without a curriculum or teacher guide they cannot be relied on to provide systematic and explicit

instruction, or to cover all five reading skills. Additionally, with a limited knowledge and skill base, it was challenging for the teachers to translate the methodology into classroom practice. For future programming it is important to reflect on what realistic gains can be achieved if the literacy work does <u>not</u> include working with the main curriculum but instead focuses solely on supplementary materials.

A clear and consistent definition of "literacy" at the program level should be articulated during the design stage and any modifications in the parameters of that definition should be well-documented and well-socialized among all project personnel and a wide range of education stakeholders. The RFA required that there be a pilot project focused on literacy, but a more robust literacy activity was requested by USAID at award. The lack of a clear and consistent definition of "literacy" at the program level can create confusion and negatively affect program implementation and achievement of the program objectives and selection of relevant indicators. For example, the indicator—Proportion of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text—is oriented towards programs which work with the core curriculum and are primarily reading programs. This did not accurately reflect the type of work that was the focus of RtL.

RECOMMENDATION: Undertaking too much at one time in an environment in South Sudan has significant limitation. Future programming should consider a specific education activity/focus in a targeted area rather than multiple activities which are undertake nationwide. A focus on specific states or sites, in coordination with the humanitarian funded activities, and a narrower focus will likely have a longer and more specific impact. Given the great education needs in the country a focus on alternative education systems (AES), and in particular pastoral education, instead of the formal education system is recommended. [Of the 11.3 million residents of South Sudan, roughly 83% live in rural areas and depend on agricultural pastoralism for their livelihoods.[30] Additionally, although there is no census data on nomadic pastoralists, it is estimated that approximately 67% of the South Sudanese population can be categorized as such.[31]]

As noted in the AU report (2014), literacy levels as well as the lack of a skilled cadre have proved to be a major challenge that confronts capacity building initiatives, a major contextual factor that has shaped the state building process. Focusing training on the most critical basics of teaching literacy and numeracy is strongly recommended. The new curriculum is piloting a few model textbooks, in English only; the need to address national languages is significant and it is recommended that the following actions be taken:

• Language Mapping/Research needs to be done to assess which languages are being used in which schools. This could be done through a question on the EMIS questionnaire. This is a necessary step to making decisions as to which languages to add in the next phase of the implementation of National Languages. It is also necessary in terms of making informed, evidence based decisions about the printing and distribution of materials and training for these first phase languages. This will also assist the printing of the existing (34) national language materials developed by SIL, through the GPE.

• The Scope and Sequence work needs to be "fleshed out" and developed into Learner's Books (Primers/ Readers which include decodable text) and Teachers' Guides which set out more explicitly what and how teachers should be teaching on a daily basis. Once these materials are fully developed, teachers need to

---

[30] Government of Southern Sudan. 2010. *Southern Sudan Counts: Tables from the 5th Sudan Population and Housing Census*, 2008. Juba: Southern Sudan Center for Census, Statistics and Evaluation. See also, International Labor Organization (ILO). 2013. *Child Labor and Education in Pastoralist Communities in South Sudan*. Geneva: International Labor Organization International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC). World Bank. 2015. South Sudan Overview. http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/southsudan/overview. Accessed July 23, 2015

[31] Netherlands Development Organization. *SNV Practice Brief number 2*, January 2012. http://www.capacity.org/capacity/export/sites/capacity/documents/topic-readings/SNV_Practice_Brief_2_.pdf http://www.snvworld.org/.

be trained in their use. As the Scope and Sequence is tied to the new curriculum, these newly developed materials would become the National Languages Subject materials. These materials are necessary for learners to actually learn the essential Five Components of Reading.

- The heart of literacy is meaning and teaching how to get meaning from the printed word. Teachers need to be trained on how to use the existing literacy materials in national languages (including the supplementary teaching and learning materials). Teachers with English skills or previous training are often given priority but strong consideration should also be given to training teachers who may not have the appropriate teaching qualifications and are limited in English but have been teaching for years and are conversant in a national language. These teachers often have the commitment and cultural understanding of the more marginalized and disadvantaged areas, where AES programs may be more relative. Additionally, this teacher training needs to become part and parcel of the National Teacher Education, which is offered at TTIs.

Effects of Conflict on RtL

RELEVANCE: For USAID, the decision to terminate RtL was, in part, because the project was no longer perceived to be relevant within a changing policy framework. With the events of July 2016 and the collapse of the 2015 Peace Agreement it is fair to say, with the benefit of hindsight, that closure was a reasonable decision. The subsequent commitment by the US Secretary of State in August 2016 to add $138 million humanitarian assistance, whilst emphasizing that continued aid would be contingent on political progress, suggests an assessment by the United States Government that the time is not right for development assistance.

On this basis it is reasonable to conclude that, as the conflict spiraled out of control, RtL became increasingly less relevant. Although there continued to be demand for RtL services, especially where some support had already been provided, at community and school level the most urgent priorities and needs for a large portion of the population are survival and these are best met by humanitarian partners and projects.

EFFECTIVENESS: The effectiveness of RtL was deeply affected by the conflict. Staff, partners, beneficiaries, and wider stakeholders all faced deteriorating security. Access was increasingly constrained and there was a rise in attacks on international staff and looting of compounds, property and vehicles.

Effective implementation was most challenged by the scope of the project. The decision to work in all states may have increased relevance (doing the right thing) but it resulted in a large staff based in different geographical locations. This is very difficult to manage technically as well as logistically (doing it well).

The technical design and consortium arrangement resulted in separate teams working with the same communities on teacher training and grants to PTAs. There were also specialised inputs on gender and social inclusion, psychosocial wellbeing, school safety, and disaster preparedness aimed at teachers, schools and PTAs. In a context of insecurity, as well as one of low absorption capacity, it would have been more effective and efficient to have one team working on fewer topics but cross-trained to deliver all components.

Spreading thinly across so many counties in several states meant that each team—procurement, grants, technical and operations—was working in, and seeking to address the challenges of, a wide range of logistics scenarios. With no time for reflection the teams were unable to consolidate their knowledge of the particular

context. Having fewer locations to deliver to and fewer suppliers to manage might have improved RtL's ability to develop fewer but deeper partnerships and thereby reduce pressure and risk.

Managing security of staff was very challenging and having staff in several locations, each facing different contextual risks, had the potential to become unmanageable. If two crises happen at the same time, such as happened with violence in Wau and Juba there is an even greater risk of catastrophe.

All these factors are challenging to manage in a single organisation. Managing a consortium has the additional challenge of coordinating inputs and activities if the Project Director does not have full authority over the performance of staff.

EFFICIENCY: Many factors affect efficiency in a project and some of these are linked to aspects of effectiveness as described above. In terms of conflict sensitivity, the most relevant efficiency concern is management of risk.

As cited in earlier sections, the hardest risk to mitigate concerned RtL's reputation. Damage was undoubtedly suffered when staff could not deliver on expectations they had raised and promises they had made. Having entered many schools, they did not return to provide ongoing support they had promised. The same applied to communities and the confusion over grants had the added effect of sowing seeds of suspicion about motivation.

OUTCOMES AND IMPACT: The design of RtL does not make explicit exactly what outcomes and impact are expected. At the general level RtL sought to expand education opportunities that were inclusive and promoted social cohesion. From the outbreak of civil war, through a short period of uneasy peace, the country has descended into a state that again resembles civil war. Far from being able to support increased access RtL has operated in a context in which access is declining.

As the condition under which people lived became more and more precarious, RtL staff were in the position of asking communities to express their needs whilst not being able to meet them. An example was the case of food. A community in Kapoeta South faced chronic food insecurity and had its own slogan "no food, no school", which encapsulates the fact that schools cannot function when children have no food to eat. RtL had a signed agreement to provide food to ten schools in order to promote attendance and encourage teachers to be present at training before realizing this could not be approved by USAID because it was against Congressional directives for the use of Basic Education funding. This anecdote demonstrates how basic the needs of communities are and the importance of having an understanding between all partners and staff about what may and may not be approved to ensure all partners and staff members share a common understanding. It also points to another solution of using diversified funding to address related needs that fall outside the core funding parameters.

SUMMARY: Drawing conclusions from this analysis is difficult. In order to assess conflict sensitivity, it is necessary to have a grasp of the whole project and that is impossible given the complexity of the RtL operating environment. More challenging is separating out conclusions and lessons that relate specifically to conflict sensitivity rather than general lessons that might be true in any context. What has become clear from this analysis is how interconnected all the factors that contribute to conflict sensitivity are.

The design of RtL as a development project for a relatively stable context became less relevant over time. Although conflict analysis had been thorough in the early days, as time passed the priority and time afforded to it declined as most attention shifted to dealing with the many challenges of implementation. At no time does there seem to have been a desire or an opportunity to undertake a re-assessment of how the conflict was

changing the way in which the project was being delivered and whether the design was still appropriate and realistic. Various warning signs suggested that it was not.

The scope of the program was too ambitious in relation to context. There were too many components which, in part because of the consortium arrangement, were delivered in parallel rather than in phased sequence. Too many and too complex activities were planned relative to the absorption capacity of communities and teachers. The mechanisms for delivery, in particular the procedures for grants, were not well suited for the context and became increasingly problematic as security deteriorated and fewer areas could be accessed safely. These factors, amidst intense pressure to deliver after a slow start-up, tended to obscure the issue of RtL's continuing relevance

In a context of conflict there are chronic dilemmas with no resolution rather than problems with solutions. Many questions arise concerning the what, where, who and how which have no easy answers. One common dilemma in similar contexts is whether a program should provide 'some for all' or 'all for some'. Providing some for all may achieve the conflict sensitive objective of being seen to work with all sides equally but it confounds the development imperative to focus efforts in order to achieve impact. Another dilemma concerns speed versus quality, with various imperatives conspiring to ensure that speed triumphed at the expense of quality. Both these dilemmas can be seen in RtL. A third dilemma is whether to work with or in parallel to the government, given the limited capacity of the education structure/system.

As noted in phase 1, the design of RtL appeared to be based on a more stable, developed environment with the grassroots levels having significantly more capacity (stronger human resource base and more financial resources) than in reality existed or could be built within the program. If this had existed a community-driven approach to achieve the education objectives may have been more successful. However, as noted previously, the majority of PTA Executive Committee members had limited literacy skills and given the environment often had more pressing concerns than the quality and inclusiveness of the school. Literacy amongst the teaching staff varied and the majority were not sufficiently trained. Moreover, the community did not have the skill base to manage significant cash-based grants as originally envisioned. This contributes to the recommendation on page 44, i.e., a more targeted education focus with a smaller geographic footprint. For example, if USAID should decide to focus on pastoral education, assisting the government to develop all aspects of the system and then piloting this in one or two states would likely have a greater long-term impact than a wide-spread, multi-faceted education project.

Open-ended demand-led offers to communities have the potential to undermine trust. As access was complicated by insecurity on the one hand and difficult climatic and infrastructural logistics on the other, the range of inputs that could be reasonably delivered to communities was highly constrained. The RtL approach was to facilitate communities to identify their needs in an open-ended way and given the great needs of a community as previously noted, this sometimes resulted in unrealistic demands. Compounded with grants procedures that communities could not understand, and which were cumbersome and slow, the ground was inadvertently laid for mistrust in a context where trust is paramount to the establishment of relationships and the achievement of impact.

As with conclusions, drawing lessons that are specific to conflict sensitivity is not straightforward. The following lessons therefore have general dimensions as well. They are organised discretely for the purpose of clarity but it is important to note that they are all inter-related.

Lessons Learned in Addressing Access to Education in South Sudan through
Community Engagement, School Governance, Conflict Sensitivity, and Teacher Development

47

LESSONS LEARNED:

Design. The design of a program needs to be simple with a small number of clear and realistic objectives that all stakeholders can understand. If conflict sensitivity is an important cross cutting objective, it needs specific indicators so that processes of monitoring and evaluation capture the kind of evidence that can inform decision making. Indicators which may be appropriate for a more stable environment with an existing infrastructure, such as radio and phone coverage, may not be relevant and need to be contextualized to a conflict-setting.

Review. Where a project is designed as a development intervention the context needs to be regularly reviewed. Conflict analysis is useful but, where there are multiple contexts that might be changing rapidly, it soon becomes outdated. A process of regular and systematic review at local and national level is particularly valuable to support decision making that aims to ensure the project remains relevant over time.

Flexibility. In order to cope with the effects of conflict a project needs a high degree of flexibility. This requires procedures that are designed to be fit for purpose in a context where there is pressure to deliver quickly and where insecurity can restrict access without warning. Failure to adapt systems and processes results in excessive workload for project and donor and undermines development of relationships of trust with communities.

Delegated management. Linking to flexibility, in a context which poses so many management challenges it is crucial that senior managers can make decisions in country without the need to revert to home office for approval. Mistakes will inevitably be made but the advantages of being responsive usually far outweigh the disadvantages of caution and remote control.

Managing expectations. Encouraging communities to identify their needs when there are significant barriers to a project meeting those needs is counterproductive. Before designing the process and entering communities it is important to understand donor policy. The offer to communities needs to be logistically feasible and take account of security risks. Where the context changes, ways of working with communities also need to change in a way that supports maintenance of trust.

References

Abrahamsen, R. (2000). *Disciplining Democracy: Development Discourse and Good Governance in Africa.* London: Zed Books.

Abu-Duhou, Ibtisam. (1999). *School-Based Management.* Paris: UNESCO IIEP.

Aeberli, A. Decentralisation Hybridized: A Western Concept on its Way through South Sudan. Graduate Institutes Publication. 2012. http://books.openedition.org/iheid/506

African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan Executive Summary. Addis Abba. October 2014. http://www.peaceau.org/en/article/executive-summary-final-report-of-the-african-union-commission-of-inquiry-on-south-sudan

Allen, D. D. and K. Ryan. 1969. *Microteaching.* Boston: Addison-Wesley Publishing.

Altschuler, D. (2013). How Patronage Politics Undermines Parental Participation and Accountability: Community-Managed Schools in Honduras and Guatemala. *Comparative Education Review*, 57 (1): 117-144.

Alvarez-Valdivia, Ibis et al. (2012). Parental Involvement and the Academic Achievement and Social Functioning of Cuban School Children. *School Psychology International.* Available at: http://spi.sagepub.com/content/early/2012/11/19/0143034312465794.

Arnstein, S. (1971). Eight Rungs on the Ladder of Citizen Participation. In E. Cahn and B. Passett (Eds.), *Citizen Participation: Effecting Community Change* (pp. 79-91). New York: Praeger.

August, D. E., and T. E. Shanahan. 2006. *Developing Literacy in Second-language Learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language Minority Children and Youth:* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Ball, J. 2011. *Enhancing Learning of Children from Diverse Language Backgrounds: Mother Tongue-based Bilingual or Multilingual Education in the Early Years.* Paris: UNESCO.

Barnett, E. (2013). *An Analysis of Community Involvement in Primary Schools in Malawi. International Journal of Educational Development*, 33, 497–509

Barrera-Osorio, Felipe et al. (2009). *Decentralized Decision-Making in Schools: The Theory and Evidence on School-Based Management.* Washington, DC: World Bank. Available at: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1099079877269/547664-1099079934475/547667-145313948551/Decentralized_decision_making_schools.pdf.

Beattie, K., and J. Hobbs. 2016. Conducting an Early Grade Reading Assessment in a Complex Conflict Environment: Is It Worth It? *Understanding What Works in Oral Reading Assessments: Recommendations from Donors, Implementers and Practitioners.* Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/what-works-oral-reading-assessments.pdf

Boston College. 2016. *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS).* Boston: Boston College, USA. timssandpirls.bc.edu/pirls2016/downloads/P16_FW_Chap1.pd

Bray, M. (1999). Control of Education: Issues and Tensions in Centralization and Decentralization. In R. Arnove and C. Torres (Eds.), *Comparative Education: The Dialectic of Global and Local* (pp. 207-32). Boston: Rowan and Littlefield.

Lessons Learned in Addressing Access to Education in South Sudan through
Community Engagement, School Governance, Conflict Sensitivity, and Teacher Development

49

Bray, M. (2001). *Community Partnerships in Education: Dimensions, Variations and Implications.* Paris: UNESCO.

Bray, M. (2003). Community Initiatives in Education: Goals, Dimensions and Linkages with Governments. *Compare* 33 (1): 31-45.

Bruns, B., Filmer, D. and Patrinos, H. (2011). *Making Schools Work: New Evidence on Accountability Reforms.* Washington, D.C: World Bank.

Burde, D. (2004). Weak State, Strong Community? Promoting Community Participation in Post-conflict Countries. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 6 (2): 74-87.

Caldwell, B. and Spinks, J. (1992). *Leading the Self-managing School.* London: Falmer Press.

Carnoy, M. (1999). *Globalization and Educational Reform: What Planners Need to Know.* Paris: UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning.

Dickinson, D. K., and P. O. Tabors. AQ: Provide additional names2001. *Beginning Literacy with Language: Young Children Learning at Home and School.* Paul H Brookes Publishing

Di Gropello, E. (2006). *A Comparative Analysis of School-based Management in Central America.* World Bank Working Paper 72. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.

Du Plessis, J., et al. 2016. The Yemen Early Grade Reading Approach: Striving for National Reform. *Understanding What Works in Oral Reading Assessments: Recommendations from Donors, Implementers and Practitioners.* Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/what-works-oral-reading-assessments.pdf.

Edwards Jr., D. B. (2012). The Approach of the World Bank to Participation in Development and Education Governance: Trajectories, Frameworks, Results. In C. Collins & A. Wiseman (Eds.), *Education Strategy in the Developing World: Understanding the World Bank's Education Policy Revision*, pp. 249- 273. London: Emerald Group Publishing.

Edwards Jr., D. B. and Klees, S. (2012). Participation in Development and Education Governance. In A. Verger, M. Novelli and H. Kosar-Altinyelken (Eds.), *Global Education Policy and International Development: New Agendas, Issues and Programs.* New York: Continuum.

Falconer-Stout, Z., Kalimaposo, K. and Simuyaba, E. (2014). The Role of Active Parent Community School Committees in Achieving Strong Relative School Performance in Zambian Community Schools. *Southern African Review of Education* 20 (2): 59-79.

Fantini, M. (1968). Community Participation. *Harvard Educational Review*, 38(2), 160-75.

Flórez Guío, Ana, Chesterfield, Ray and Siri, Carmen. (2005). *The CERCA School Report Card: Communities Creating Education Quality.* Final Report. Washington, DC: Academy for Educational Development and USAID/Civic Engagement for Education Reform in Central America (CERCA).

Geo-Jaja, M.A. (2004). Decentralization and Privatization of Education in Africa: Which Option for Nigeria? *International Review of Education*, 50 (1), 289–305.

Ginsburg, M. (Ed.) (1991). *Understanding Educational Reform in Global Context: Economy, Ideology and the State.* New York: Garland.

Ginsburg, M. et al. (2014). Engaging Community Members in Enhancing Educational Quality: Studies of the Implementation of the Primary School Improvement Program in Malawi. *Southern African Review of Education* 20 (1): 30-57.

Girls' Education South Sudan Project. 2016. South Sudan Education Sector Statistics.

Global Reading Network. 2016. *List of Research References.* Bethesda, MD: University Research Company. https://globalreadingnetwork.net/publications-and-research.

Harber, C. and Davies, L. (1997). *School Management and Effectiveness in Developing Countries: The Post-Bureaucratic School.* London: Cassell.

Hart, B. and T. R. Risley. 1995. *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experiences of Young American Children.* Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing.

Hart, B., and T. R. Risley. 2003. "The Early Catastrophe: The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3." *American Educator*, Spring, pp. 4-9. http://www.aft.org//sites/default/files/periodicals/TheEarlyCatastrophe.pdf

Hammond, H and Ting Mayai, the Impact of Violence on Education in South Sudan. Sudd Institute. January 2014. https://www.suddinstitute.org/publications/show/the-impacts-of-violence-on-education-in-south-sudan

Haugen, V., Tilson, T. et al. (2010). *Gender Equity through Education (GEE) Project Midterm Evaluation.* Washington, DC: Management Systems International.

Haugen, V. R. 2016. *An Inclusive System of Education in Lao PDR: A Review of the Implementation of the National Strategy and Plan of Action for Inclusive Education 2011–2015.* Vientiane, Laos: Ministry of Education and Sports Government of Lao PDR.

Haugen, V. R. 2016. *National Strategy and Plan of Action Framework 2016 – 2020: Accelerating the Development of an Inclusive System of Education.* Vientiane, Laos: Ministry of Education and Sports Government of Lao PDR.

Haugen, V.R., and T. Tilson. 2010. *Gender Equity through Education (GEE) Project Midterm Evaluation.* Washington, DC: Management Systems International.

Haugen, V.R. *et al.* 2009. *Final Evaluation of the South Sudan Technical Advisors Program (TAP).* Juba, South Sudan: Management Systems International.

Henkel, H. and Stirrat, R. (2001). Participation as Spiritual Duty: Empowerment as Secular Subjection. In B. Cooke and U. Kothari (Eds.). *Participation: The New Tyranny?*, pp. 168-184. London: Zed.

IASC. 2007. *IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings.* Geneva. www.who.int/mental_health/emergencies/guidelines_iasc_mental_health_psychosocial_june_2007.pdf.

Inter-Agency Commission. (1990). *World Declaration on Education for All.* (Document adopted by the World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs, Jomtien, Thailand, 5-9 March, 1990). New York: Inter-Agency Commission.

International Network for Education in Emergencies. 2010. *Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery.* New York, NY.

Jimenez, Emmanuel and Sawada, Yasuyuki. (1999). "Do Community-Managed Schools Work? An Evaluation of El Salvador's EDUCO Program." *World Bank Economic Review* 13 (3): 415–41.

Lessons Learned in Addressing Access to Education in South Sudan through
Community Engagement, School Governance, Conflict Sensitivity, and Teacher Development

51

Johnson, D., 1984. *Cooperative Learning in the Classroom.* Association for Supervision and Curriculum.

Kamat, S. (2002). Deconstructing the Rhetoric of Decentralization: The State in Education Reform. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 2(2): 110-119.

Kendall, N. (2007). Parental and Community Participation in Improving Educational Quality in Africa: Current Practices and Future Possibilities. *International Review of Education* 53: 701-708.

Leithwood, K. and Menzies, T. (1998). A Review of Research Concerning the Implementation of Site-Based Management. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement* 9 (3): 233-285.

LeCzel, D. and Ginsburg, M. (2012). *School Management and Leadership Development: EQUIP1 First Principles Compendium.* DC: EQUILexzP1, American Institutes for Research, and FHI 360.

Lokong, F. and Ginsburg, M. (2015). *Room to Learn Baseline Study Report.* Juba: Winrock International, FHI 360, Plan International, and USAID.

Leu, E. and Ginsburg, M. (2011). *Designing Effective Programs for In-service Teacher Professional Development: First Principles Compendium.* Washington, DC: EQUP1 and American Institutes for Research. Available at: http://www.equip123.net/docs/E1-FP_In-Svc_TPD_Compendium.pdf.

Lewis, M. Paul, Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig (Eds.). (2016). *Ethnologue: Languages of the World, Nineteenth edition.* Dallas, Texas: SIL International. Online version: http://www.ethnologue.com

Lopate, C. *et al.* (1970). Decentralization and Community Participation in Education. *Review of Educational Research*, 40 (1): 135-50.

Lynch, J. (1997). *Education and Development: A Human Rights Analysis.* London: Cassell.

Machel, G. (1996). *UN Study on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children.* New York: United Nations.

Malen, B. Ogawa, R., and Kranz, J. (1990). What Do We Know about School-Based Management? A Case Study of the Literature – A Call for Research. In W. Clune and J. Witte (Eds.) *Choice and Control in American Education, Volume 2: The Practice of Choice, Decentralization and school restructuring.* London: Falmer Press.

Mayai, A.T. and H. Hammond (2014). The Impacts of Violence on Education in South Sudan. Policy Brief. Juba, South Sudan: The Sudd Institute. https://www.suddinstitute.org/assets/Publications/572b7eb3 dc51e_TheImpactsOfViolenceOnEducationInSouth_Full.pdf

Mugo, John, Kabutha et al. (2016). Assessing Children in the Household: Experiences from Five Citizen-Led Assessments. *Understanding What Works in Oral Reading Assessments: Recommendations from Donors, Implementers and Practitioners.* Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/what-works-oral-reading-assessments.pdf

Nakabugo, M.G. (2016). What and How to Assess Reading Using Household-Based, Citizen-Led Assessments: Insights from the Uwezo Annual Learning Assessment. *Understanding What Works in Oral Reading Assessments: Recommendations from Donors, Implementers and Practitioners.* Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/what-works-oral-reading-assessments.pdf

National Reading Panel. (2000). Report of the National reading panel: Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction: Reports of the Sub-Groups. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institutes of Health.

Nielsen, H. D. (2007). Empowering Communities for Improved Educational Outcomes: Some Evaluation Findings from the World Bank, *Prospects* 37: 81-93.

OECD. (2012) *Literacy, Numeracy and Problem-Solving in Technology-Richer Environments: Framework for the OECD Survey of Adult Skills.* Paris: OECD Publishing. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264128859-en

OECD. (2016). *Learning a Living.* http://www.oecd.org/education/innovation-education/34867438.pdf

Phillips, K. (2013). Building the Nation from the Hinterlands: Participation, Education, and the Labor of Development. *Comparative Education Review* 57(4): 637-661.

Polsby, N. (1979). Preface. In L. Sharpe (Ed.) *Decentralist Trends in Western Democracies*, pp. 1-8. London: Sage.

Prew, M. (2010). Community Involvement in School Development: Modifying School Improvement Concepts to the Needs of South African Township Schools. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 37 (6): 824-846.

Pryor, J. (2005). Can Community Participation Mobilize Social Capital for Improvement of Rural Schooling? A Case Study from Ghana." *Compare* 35 (2): 193-203.

Republic of South Sudan. (2012). *General Education Strategic Plan, 2012-2017: Promoting Learning for All.* Juba: Republic of South Sudan.

Republic of South Sudan Ministry of General Education and Instruction. (2016, July draft). *The Handbook on School Governing Bodies: A Guide for Members of Parent Teacher Associations, School Management Committees, and Boards of Governors.* Juba: Ministry of General Education and Instruction and USAID/Room to Learn South Sudan.

Republic of South Sudan Ministry of Justice. (2012). *General Education Act 2012 (Act No. 30).* Juba: South Sudan Ministry of Justice.

Room to Learn (2015). *Parent Teacher Association Training Manual.* Juba: USAID/Room to Learn South Sudan.

Rose, P. (2003a). Community Participation in School Policy in Malawi: Balancing Local Knowledge, Local Policies and International Agency Priorities. *Compare* 33 (1): 47-64.

Rose, P. (2003b). From the Washington to the Post-Washington Consensus: The Influence of International Agenda on Education Policy and Practice in Malawi. *Globalization, Education and Societies* 1: 67-86.

RTI International. 2015. *Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) Toolkit, Second Edition.* Washington, DC: United States Agency for International Development.

Schubert, J. and Israel, R. (2000). *Report on Democracy and Education On-line Seminar.* Washington, DC: Improving Educational Quality Project and American Institutes for Research.

Schwille, John and Dembélé, M. (2007). *Global Perspectives on Teacher Learning: Improving Policy and Practice.* Paris: UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning.

Lessons Learned in Addressing Access to Education in South Sudan through
Community Engagement, School Governance, Conflict Sensitivity, and Teacher Development

53

Shirzad, Homayoon and Magee, Aine. (2016). Administering an EGRA in a Post- and an On-going Conflict Afghanistan: Challenges and Opportunities. *Understanding What Works in Oral Reading Assessments: Recommendations from Donors, Implementers and Practitioners.* Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/what-works-oral-reading-assessments.pdf

SIL. (2016). *Ethnologue: Language of the World.* http://www.ethnologue.com/country/SS

Southern Sudan, Secretariat of Education. Secretariat of Education Organogram. 2004.

Spronk, T. (2014). Addressing the Challenges of Language Choice in the Implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Bilingual Education in South Sudan. *Multilingual Education*, 4(16), 2-10.

Sudd Institute. South Sudan's Crisis: Its Drivers, Key Players and Post-conflict Prospect. March 2014. https://www.suddinstitute.org/publications/show/south-sudan-s-crisis-its-drivers-key-players-and-post-conflict-prospects

Sullivan-Owomoyela, J. and Brannelly, L. (2009). *Promoting Participation: Community Contributions to Education in Conflict Situations.* Paris: UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning. Available at: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001833/183364e.pdf.

Tse, L. (2001). Resisting and Reversing Language Shift: Heritage Language Resilience among U.S. Native Bi-literates. *Harvard Educational Review*, 71, 677-709.

United Nations. (2015). Sustainable Development Goals. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs

United Nations Education Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO). (2013). *United Nations Literacy Decade* (2003-2012). New York: United Nations.

United Nations Education Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO). (2000). *The Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments.* Text adopted by the World Education Forum Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April. New York: UNESCO.

United Nations Education Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO). (2003). *EFA Global Monitoring Report: Gender Equality and the Leap to Equality.* Paris: UNESCO.

United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF). (2008). *A Report on the Study on Socioeconomic and Cultural Barriers to Schooling in Southern Sudan.* Juba: UNICEF and Government of Southern Sudan's Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. Available at: http://www.unicef.org/sudan/SOCIOECONOMIC_AND_CULTURAL_BARRIERS_TO_SCHOOLING_IN_SOUTHERN_SUDAN.pdf.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). (2016). *Literacy Data Release.* http://www.uis.unesco.org/literacy/Pages/literacy-data-release-2016.aspx

UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). (2016). *Understanding What Works in Oral Reading Assessments: Recommendations from Donors, Implementers and Practitioners.* Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/what-works-oral-reading-assessments.pdf

USAID Education Strategy 2011–2105. February 2011. http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pdacq946.pdf

USAID South Sudan Transitional Strategy 2011-2013. June 2011 www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1860 /south_sudan_transition_strategy_full.pdf

Wessells, M. G. (2009). Do No Harm: Toward Contextually Appropriate Psychosocial Support in International Emergencies. *American Psychologist*, 64(8), 842.

Weiler, H. (1989). *Education and Power: The Politics of Educational Decentralization in Comparative Perspective*. Stanford: Center for Educational Research and Studies, Stanford University.

Winkler, D. (1989). *Decentralization in Education: An Economic Perspective*. Working Paper No. 143. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Vavrus, F. Bartlett, L. (2013). Teaching in Tension: International Pedagogies. National Policies, and Teachers' Practices in Tanzania. *Pittsburg Studies in Comparative and International Education*. Pittsburgh, PA: Sense Publishers.

Winrock International. (2015). *South Sudan Literacy Instructional Materials Literature Review for the Room to Learn Project*. Juba, South Sudan: Winrock International.

World Bank. (2003). *World Development Report 2004: Making Services Work for Poor People*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.

World Bank. (2007). *Guiding Principles for Implementing School-based Management Programs*. Washington, DC: World Bank. http://www.worldbank.org/education/economicsed.

World Bank. (2008). *What Do We Know about School-Based Management?* Washington, DC: World Bank.

World Bank/Independent Evaluation Group. (2006). *From Schooling to Access to Learning Outcomes: An Unfinished Agenda – An Evaluation of World Bank Support to Primary Education*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Zakharia, Z., and Bartlett, L. (2014). *Literacy Education in Conflict and Crisis-Affected Contexts*. Washington, DC: JBS International.

Lessons Learned in Addressing Access to Education in South Sudan through
Community Engagement, School Governance, Conflict Sensitivity, and Teacher Development

55

Students enjoy a light-hearted moment in class

WINROCK'S MISSION IS TO EMPOWER THE DISADVANTAGED, INCREASE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND SUSTAIN NATURAL RESOURCES ACROSS THE GLOBE.

All images are from Room to Learn and are copyrighted by Winrock International.

WINROCK INTERNATIONAL