

Evaluation of the Accelerated Secondary Education Programme in South Sudan

A Programme implemented by Windle Trust International through the Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS) Programme

September 2023

Report by
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on behalf of



Windle Trust
International



Top: Wau first cohort with AES staff



Middle: One young participant whose mother is an ASEP student

Bottom: ASEP learners in the Yambio ASEP Centre

The GESS programme receives funding through UK aid from the UK Government, the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the European Union and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

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

CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS	3
1. The challenge: Teachers and MOGEI's policies	4
1.1 Routes to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)	5
1.2 National Teacher Education Curriculum for QTS	5
1.3 Entry Requirements.....	6
2. The development and implementation of the Accelerated Secondary Education Programme (ASEP) ..	6
2.1 Development	6
2.2 Implementation	7
2.3 Management of the ASEP centres	7
3. Purpose of the ASEP evaluation	8
4. Executive summary – findings and recommendations	8
4.1 Introduction	8
4.2 Methodology	9
4.3 Findings: successes and challenges (See also Annexes 1 and 2)	9
4.3.1 Successes of the Accelerated Secondary School Programme	9
4.3.2 Challenges facing the implementation of the Accelerated Secondary School Programme... 10	
4.4 Recommendations	11
5. Sustainability: the role and support of MoGEI, AES Directors and State Ministries	12
6. The role and support of present and future funding partners	13
6.1 Current funding	13
6.2 Future Donor and Government Funding.....	14
7. Pathways for ASEP graduates to achieve Qualified Teacher Status once graduated successfully – draft General Education Sector Plan.....	15
8. ASEP tutors, qualification, orientation, incentives and motivation	16
9. ASEP Learners – effectiveness of the Intensive English Language and study skills courses, schemes of work, learning materials, tutors, timing, and transport.....	17
10. Other partners delivering ASEP – useful lessons learnt by the first pioneer Accelerated Secondary Education Programme	18
11. Wider interest in ASEP beyond teachers.....	19
12. Conclusions	20
ANNEX 1 – SAMPLE RESULTS FROM THE ASEP LEARNER QUESTIONNAIRE.....	22
ANNEX 2 – SAMPLE RESULTS FROM THE ASEP TUTOR QUESTIONNAIRE.....	24
ANNEX 3 – KEY REFERENCES AND SOURCES	26
ANNEX 4 – FULL SECONDARY EDUCATION EXAMINATION RESULTS FOR ELEVEN ASP CENTRES.....	27

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AES	Alternative Education Systems
AET	Africa Educational Trust
AfDB	African Development Bank
ALP	Alternative Learning Programme
APEPT	Alternative Primary Education Programme for Teachers
ASEP	Alternative Secondary Education Programme
CEC	County Education Centre
DG	Director General
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EFASS	Education for All South Sudan
GESS 2	Girls Education South Sudan Phase 2
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IEC	Intensive English Course
MoGEI	Ministry of General Education and Instruction
NTTI	National Teacher Training Institute
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
SOW	Schemes of Work
WBG	Western Bahr-EI Ghazal
WTI	Windle Trust International

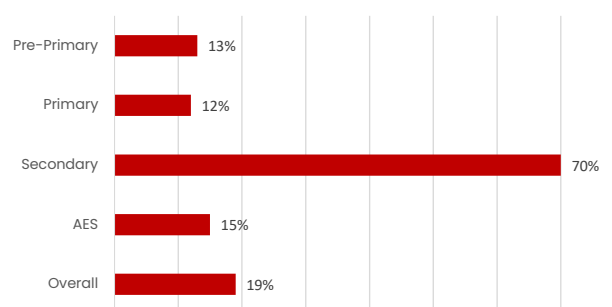
1. THE CHALLENGE: TEACHERS AND MOGEI'S POLICIES

A major challenge for the South Sudan education system is both overall lack of sufficient teachers, and the lack of qualified trained teachers. Of more than 60,000 teachers currently in the system, only 19% have the required diploma teacher status for teaching in primary schools and lower secondary. The combination of years of conflict between Northern and Southern Sudan, followed by internal conflict in the newly independent (2011) South Sudan resulting in displacement and refugees, alongside poverty and limited access, has meant that thousands of schoolchildren could not attend secondary school or dropped out after one or two years. It is estimated that at least another 60,000 teachers are needed for a balanced pupil-teacher ratio throughout South Sudan. This situation is summed up by the table below, which shows that most teachers have either a primary certificate or secondary certificate but no teacher training qualification. A secondary certificate is a minimum requirement to teach in primary schools and to enrol in a teacher training course, so there are still thousands of primary teachers needing to complete their secondary education certificate.

		Level of students taught				
		ECE	Primary	Secondary	AES	Overall
Highest qualification held	Primary Certificate	572	12,351	23	729	13,675
	Secondary Certificate	2,948	28,695	1,971	2,039	35,653
	Diploma	306	2,295	1,327	198	4,126
	Degree	120	1,482	3,116	129	4,847
	Other	92	1,959	207	152	2,410
	Total	4,038	46,782	6,644	3,247	60,711

MANAGEMENT / DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS – QUALIFICATIONS HELD

Percentage of teachers with at least a diploma



The National General Education Policy, 2017-2027, has prioritised Teacher Training and a part-time route to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) for serving teachers as one of the policy pillars in relation to teachers in the Republic of South Sudan. It outlines the following policy priorities for QTS programmes. The Ministry will implement the following policy reforms:

- (i) In-Service Teacher Training shall be an entitlement of all serving teachers throughout the Republic of South Sudan.

Evaluation of the Accelerated Secondary Education Programme in South Sudan

- (ii) The Ministry of General Education & Instruction will develop a policy on professional development of teachers to cover both pre-service teacher training and in-service teacher training to be implemented by all the State Ministries of Education and other institutions throughout the country.
- (iii) The National Ministry of Education will ensure that the policy on professional development of teachers is implemented consistently throughout the country.
- (iv) The Ministry will also ensure The National Professional Standards for Teachers, developed in 2012, are used as the basis for all teacher training and development programmes in the Republic of South Sudan.
- (v) The Ministry will develop teacher training and development programmes based on the national professional standards for teachers and ensure such programmes are implemented throughout the country. The Ministry will also provide appropriate learning resources including digital learning resources to ensure that teachers have easy and flexible access to rich learning resources at their leisure.
- (vi) Establish a 3-year diploma programme for secondary school teachers in NTTIs.
- (vii) Concepts and best practices of inclusive education and other cross-cutting issues will be an integral component of the teacher training programmes.

The Government has prioritised the implementation of these policy reforms as a matter of urgency to address the issue of the shortage of qualified teachers in the country as quickly as possible.

1.1 Routes to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)

There are four key routes to QTS according to the Ministry of General Education and Instruction:

- Pre-service Certificate for ECD and Primary Teachers
- In-service Certificate for ECD and Primary Teachers (a part-time two-year course for serving unqualified teachers) and now a three year course for unqualified Secondary Certificate holders for Diploma Level
- Post-graduate Certificate in Education
- Secondary Teacher's Bachelor of Education

1.2 National Teacher Education Curriculum for QTS

All Teacher Training programmes leading to QTS shall follow the officially approved National Teacher Education Curriculum. This Curriculum shall translate the 2012 National Professional Standards for Teachers

in South Sudan, into a learning programme that will ensure that all pre-service teacher training programmes are uniform or comparable and there are no gaps in the competences of teachers.

1.3 Entry Requirements

The minimum qualification for entry into a teacher training programme leading to QTS shall be the Certificate of Secondary Education of the Republic of South Sudan or its equivalent. If there are insufficient applicants with this qualification, successful completion of an approved accelerated or 'catch-up' programme may be deemed equivalent. The draft National Teacher Education Policy 2023 further confirms the same paths to Qualified Teacher Status.¹

2. THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACCELERATED SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME (ASEP)

2.1 Development

In 2019 Windle Trust International (WTI), in an effort to support teachers' access to a formal qualification and regular training (typically available only for teachers with secondary education) and in collaboration with the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI), designed an Accelerated Secondary Education Programme (ASEP). WTI engaged education experts in the Ministry, including teachers and partners, in discussions on whether the ASEP programme is worthy of implementation in South Sudan. The government found it very worthwhile. South Sudan already had a policy recognising the role and potential of accelerated learning programmes in the country. However, the alternative education policy was previously confined to the provision of primary education. It included no reference to secondary education. WTI organised a workshop in May 2019 in which the principle of expanding the accelerated programme to secondary was agreed. When the ASEP programme was authorised by MoGEI, WTI deemed it important to secure an amendment to the existing 'Alternative Education Systems Policy' so as to include secondary education. Working with the Directorate of Alternative Education Systems, a series of workshops, with funding from GESS 2, were organised and the policy was revised to include an accelerated secondary education programme (ASEP). The revised Alternative Education Systems (AES) policy was presented to MoGEI and this was approved as it reflected the Education Act (2012) article 9.2 which states that the goal of Alternative Education Systems in the Republic of South Sudan is:

¹ National Teacher Education Policy (Draft) 2023 p. 30.

Evaluation of the Accelerated Secondary Education Programme in South Sudan

“to provide learning opportunities for learners who have missed out on their formal education in the basic education system and for those who never joined basic education...”

Targeted beneficiaries for the ASEP were agreed by stakeholders as adult teachers who have successfully completed their primary education through either the formal or non-formal systems but were unable to continue to the secondary level. Therefore, ASEP was designed to serve unqualified teachers who did not transition to, or who, due to their economic circumstances or age, dropped out of secondary school but are now in South Sudan schools teaching. It also targets other groups in similar situations and occupations and in all cases prioritised vulnerable women, especially mothers.

2.2 Implementation

With the approved AES policy that includes ASEP and selection criteria and funding from GESS 2, WTI recruited a consultant who then worked with the MoGEI Directorate of Curriculum and subject experts to develop schemes of work (SOW) that planned how the four-year secondary school curriculum would be condensed and delivered in 2 to 2.5 years. With the MoGEI-approved SOW and funding through GESS 2, in 2020 WTI established 51 ASEP Centres throughout the 10 States and 3 Administrative Areas of South Sudan. The established ASEP centres started their classes with the provision of tailor-made Intensive English Language and study skills courses for the participants to prepare them to take secondary education. However, by March 2020 all the centres were closed due to the outbreak of COVID 19.

As a result of COVID 19, only 13 ASEP centres were re-opened in 2022 with funding from UNICEF. 571 learners who had completed at least two years of secondary education initially enrolled in the programme with 418 of these learners (275 males, 143 females) sitting the South Sudan national secondary school's examination after 9 months in March 2023.

In November 2022, with funding from GESS2 restored, WTI reopened 38 centres. There were now at least 5 centres in each state and administrative area, accommodating 2,117 primary teachers (1,383 males, 734 females), bringing the total back to 51 centres.

2.3 Management of the ASEP centres

ASEP classes are taught by existing secondary school teachers and run mainly on weekday afternoons and Saturday mornings. In most cases, ASEP centres are under the administration of a secondary school and

have access to secondary school facilities. Where this is not possible, then local facilities are identified that have access to a nearby secondary school for guidance and facilities such as science equipment and support. Students who completed only one year of secondary school before dropping out are treated as Level 5 (covering S1 and S2 syllabuses) while those who dropped out after two years of secondary school are treated as Level 6 (covering S3 and S4 syllabuses). The ASEP centres were all selected jointly with the State Ministries of Education and GESS State Anchors. Each ASEP centre has its own administrative structure with its own lead teacher. This may be the deputy or senior teacher appointed by the Head Teacher, but often the lead ASEP tutor takes on this responsibility. ASEP centres are monitored by AES State Directors and staff from the local State Ministry, Ministry of General Education and Instruction, and WTI staff to ensure the success of the programme and learn lessons prior to any further rollout.

3. PURPOSE OF THE ASEP EVALUATION

This evaluation is intended to assess the relevance, performance, management arrangements, success, challenges and impact of ASEP on the participants and the education system of South Sudan. The evaluation also looked at the sustainability of ASEP including its possible contribution to capacity development of teachers across the country. The evaluation identified and documented lessons learned and has made recommendations that MoGEI, project partners and stakeholders might use to improve the design and implementation of ASEP and related programmes, and the conditions of ASEP learners.

4. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Introduction

The ASEP initiative is important and a key education intervention in South Sudan for 3 main reasons: increased equity, increased access and improved quality of education. The development of a qualified teacher workforce is a major priority for MoGEI if overall standards are to be improved. ASEP provides huge motivation for teachers to become fully certified for teaching at primary level, and to apply for both diploma and degree courses in teaching once they obtain the secondary education certificate. For girls and young women, it can provide access and empowerment, reducing the tendency for early marriage and pregnancy, as only about 18% currently access the 4 year secondary education cycle, many of whom have dropped out.

In fact, although ASEP is designated for current serving teachers in primary schools, women who want to become teachers but are not presently doing so, have been allowed to enrol in ASEP, to boost the numbers

Evaluation of the Accelerated Secondary Education Programme in South Sudan

of females. In Yambio for example, in a centre managed by Africa Educational Trust (AET), only female students have been enrolled. Not only does this approach increase the likelihood of role models for girls but, especially in rural areas, women tend to be more stable in their locations and less likely to relocate than male teachers. In addition, it has increased access overall for boys as well as girls to complete secondary education, as many of them could not now afford the 4 year cycle. It is also expected that primary teachers who have gone through the Intensive English Course, study skills and the core subjects covered in the ASEP schemes of work will have better content knowledge and be more effective teachers in their own classrooms. There are however, still a number of challenges which are outlined below along with the detailed findings and recommendations.

4.2 Methodology

In carrying out this evaluation, key reports and documents were consulted (see Annex 3). Meetings were held with Undersecretary and DG AES at MoGEI prior to travelling to Lakes State (Rumbek), Western Equatoria State (Yambio) and Western Bahr-EI Ghazal State (Wau). In each State meetings were held with State Ministry of Education officials including senior AES staff and in two cases with State Ministers. ASEP centres were visited, and interviews held with members of the first cohort who had already taken the secondary examinations, with ASEP tutors and with current ASEP students. Questionnaires were administered to tutors and students and additional documentation collected. On final return to Juba, a short briefing meeting on findings and recommendations was held with the Undersecretary and AES DG at MoGEI, and on the final day, a PowerPoint Presentation summarising the evaluation, and the main findings and recommendations, was presented to the GPE LEG in the presence of the Undersecretary, which was attended by senior Ministry officials, development partners and WTI staff.

4.3 Findings: successes and challenges (See also Annexes 1 and 2)

4.3.1 Successes of the Accelerated Secondary School Programme

- ASEP learners rated the tutors' subject teaching performance as Very Good, and the Intensive English and Study Skills courses as extremely helpful and useful.
- ASEP learners really appreciated the fact that it was free education, the support they got for transport and stationery in 2022, and the textbooks that were available.
- ASEP learners all indicated that they felt their own teaching had improved due to greater knowledge of subject content, and especially in the teaching of English grammar.
- ASEP learners all indicated that they intended to take the part-time diploma teacher education training to become a fully qualified teacher if they got their secondary certificate.

- ASEP Tutors rated the initial training they received from Windle Trust International for delivering the ASEP lessons as Very Good and the condensed schemes of work as Very Helpful.
- ASEP Tutors praised the positive attitudes, enthusiasm and commitment of the ASEP learners, especially in terms of regular attendance, time-management and respect, despite transport, childcare, and financial challenges.
- ASEP Tutors were keen to have refresher training courses at least once a year, and hoped they could teach Level 5 students next year (those who only managed one year of secondary school).
- AES DGs and Directors, state ministries and secondary school administrations were mostly very supportive of the ASEP programme. WBG State Ministry is funding its own additional centres.
- Female teachers are attending in large numbers which is a breakthrough.
- Huge demand for ASEP programme from teachers but also non-teaching personnel in other sectors.

4.3.2 Challenges facing the implementation of the Accelerated Secondary School Programme.

- Some school administrators and state ministries are more supportive than others, and not all have been made fully aware of or included in the importance of the programme.
- Classrooms may sometimes be locked or not available immediately, thus reducing the already limited time available for learning in the afternoons.
- Transport may be limited and costly to the centres resulting in late arrivals, particularly for female teachers with family and domestic responsibilities. Support for transport is no longer included.
- Textbooks, materials, and stationery such as chalk, exercise books, wall charts, equipment are often in short supply. Availability of textbooks in CRE, Geography, Citizenship plus Agriculture, Additional Maths, Commerce and Accounting is particularly limited.
- No science laboratories and equipment are available for ASEP learners, so the subjects have to be learnt theoretically. Alignment between syllabuses, textbooks and schemes of work can be variable.
- Number of ASEP Centres is still limited and some existing county centres are too far from many teachers' schools. Yet there is a high demand for the ASEP programme.
- Some tutors and ASEP learners feel there is not enough time to adequately cover the accelerated syllabus and schemes of work with the 5 afternoons plus a Saturday session.
- Tutors have mixed reactions to the monthly \$100 incentive. Some lead tutors and those handling more than one subject or many lessons feel they should get an additional amount for the added responsibility.
- AES DGs and Directors would appreciate support to travel to monitor and quality assure the ASEP centres.

4.4 Recommendations

ASEP is one of the most important interventions for improving the quality of education in South Sudan through upgrading teacher's subject knowledge and qualifications and providing a major platform for career development, especially for female teachers. With this, I recommend that:

- 4.4.1** MoGEI should ensure continuity of the ASEP programme for primary teachers to achieve their secondary certificates for the next 10 years at least.
- 4.4.2** MoGEI should seek future funding for ASEP possibly through the forthcoming World Bank teacher education programme, the GPE systems transformation grant (or capacity building grant) or other partners involved in AES such as BRAC, to cover costs such as tutors' incentives, stationery, laboratory equipment, monitoring by AES officers, support where needed for transport costs, and creches for female teachers.
- 4.4.3** More State Ministries should partner with the ASEP initiative by funding the operation of additional centres where needed and tutors' incentives, and eventually sustaining the programme by taking over full financial responsibility for ASEP.
- 4.4.4** MoGEI, with the World Bank, should undertake an assessment of the potential numbers of primary teachers whose qualifications can be upgraded to secondary certificate through ASEP, along with new recruits from secondary schools, to determine future qualified teacher workforce staffing needs.
- 4.4.5** State Ministries and secondary schools with ASEP centres should ensure that both teachers' and students' textbooks are available in sufficient numbers for all ASEP learners.
- 4.4.6** MoGEI and the main donor should consider covering all or at least 50% of the exam fees for primary teachers taking the ASEP course.
- 4.4.7** Education for All South Sudan (EFASS), the successor to GESS 2, or other partners should consider whether to include needy female teachers in a similar cash transfer programme to the one for girls at school, to support childcare, hygiene and related transport costs.
- 4.4.8** Capitation grants for secondary schools should include provision for ASEP centres, to ensure availability of basic stationery, teaching aids, and cleaning of rooms.

- 4.4.9** MoGEI, WTI and GESS 2 should review the current tutors' incentives in terms of levels of responsibility, actual teaching hours and performance, and consider the viability of a revised formula. In addition, sponsorship of outstanding untrained tutors for diploma or degree teacher training should be considered.
- 4.4.10** MoGEI and future ASEP partners should explore the potential of blended learning (where there is connectivity) by using digital devices like tablets or smart phones to download syllabus content to allow ASEP learners more self-study time in addition to face-to-face classes.
- 4.4.11** As more female teachers obtain secondary certificates, the number of female ASEP tutors should be actively increased as role models for the female primary teachers.
- 4.4.12** MoGEI should ensure that State Ministries and AES Directorates have sufficient funds to monitor, and quality assure the performance of ASEP tutors and learners. They should plan for dedicated AES provision in existing County Education Centres that can provide more facilities and equipment for science, ICT and technical subjects for ALP, APEPT and ASEP.

5. SUSTAINABILITY: THE ROLE AND SUPPORT OF MOGEI, AES DIRECTORS AND STATE MINISTRIES

In all three states visited there was clear understanding of and support for the ASEP programme from the AES team in the State Ministries of Education. In some cases, AES Directors and support staff are also participating as tutors in the nearby centres. Their role is critical in ensuring the host school administration provides the right level of support to the afternoon classes, especially making sure classrooms are available, unlocked, and in a reasonable state of cleanliness. This is not always the case in all schools, and further work is needed by both State and National Ministries of Education to ensure that school principals and staff are fully supportive of the ASEP classes. AES DGs, and Directors would like more financial support to enable them to travel to all ASEP centres to monitor the attendance, performance and commitment of both tutors and learners, as well as the conditions of the ASEP facilities.

However, in the longer term, the success of the ASEP programme, as with other alternative education initiatives, will depend on the ability of State Ministries of Education to take on not only the responsibility for supervising and monitoring their performance, but the financing of ASEP. Now, these aspects depend heavily

Evaluation of the Accelerated Secondary Education Programme in South Sudan

on development partner support, particularly for the \$100 monthly incentives paid to the tutors. Another sustainability issue will be the turnover in ASEP schools of master trainers and tutors, so there will be a need for regular training of teachers who want to become tutors through the orientation courses.

In Western Bahr-El Ghazal the State Ministry of Education and the AES team there have shown the way. In addition to the Level 6 classes in centres funded through GESS 2 and managed by Windle Trust International, they have opened an additional five Level 5 classes consisting of 205 learners (119 male, 86 female). For each class, they are providing incentives for the tutors of SSP 10,000 which is about \$10 compared to the \$100 incentive paid by GESS 2, and the money is not always delivered on time each month. The AES team have done a wonderful job of persuading the Level 5 tutors to support their brothers and sisters in the teaching profession, but maintaining their motivation may be a long-term challenge. Therefore, it is important that MoGEI, together with Ministry of Finance, find ways to improve both the funding of AES departments for transport, supervision and tutor incentives, but also equipment like laptops, printers and stationery to increase the quality of their support.

Finally, provision of only 5 centres per state is inadequate for the demand coming from primary teachers. The distances are often too great and many counties in each state are not served by ASEP centres. Over the next 5 years National and State Ministries of Education, together with development partners, should begin to scale up the provision of more ASEP centres where secondary schools or suitable learning facilities exist.

6. THE ROLE AND SUPPORT OF PRESENT AND FUTURE FUNDING PARTNERS

6.1 Current funding

Through GESS 2, the UK FCDO agreed to fund 51 centres throughout the country. The impact of COVID 19 came with a reduction of UK development budgets and a suspension of funding for the programme. UNICEF agreed to take over support for 13 centres, allowing a cohort of **418** to complete the course and take the national secondary examinations. GESS 2 has now resumed the funding of 51 centres, with 2,117 primary teachers now enrolled on the programme. In Yambio, one of the centres is entirely for female students and supported by African Educational Trust.

As part of the GESS 2 consortium Windle Trust International has led the initiative and carried out the orientation of tutors. This included the provision of Intensive English Courses and study skills training. Save the Children have provided many of the student textbooks, but most tutors use the teachers' guides provided by MoGEI to the host secondary schools. The funding provided goes towards stationery for the students, \$100

monthly incentives for tutors, and half the cost of the secondary certificate exam fees. GESS 2 also provides capitation grants to those secondary schools who host the centres to help with facilities and materials. These are identified through the National and State Education Technical Management Committees, based on criteria.

One consideration that may need to be taken on board by the forthcoming programme Education for All South Sudan (EFASS), the successor to GESS 2, is cash transfers to support the young women to access and stay in the ASEP programme. The EFASS programme needs to look at work opportunities for girls who have completed primary school but could not access or otherwise dropped out of secondary school due to poverty, pregnancy or early marriage. Many of the female teachers undergoing ASEP have families to support and that increases both childcare and transport costs. More than one class observed had young children in attendance with mothers because of such difficulties. The potential numbers are not that large, and it would be a sensible extension of the cash transfer programme.

6.2 Future Donor and Government Funding

In the medium-term future, further donor support to ASEP will be required. The EFASS programme could include direct support to ASEP, although, as mentioned above, there is the potential for some cash transfer support to female primary teachers. The World Bank is planning to provide major support to both pre-service and in-service training of teachers to professionalise the teacher workforce and could consider support to ASEP as part of their overall strategy. There are options too through the GPE Compact Agreement, which is still to be finalised and submitted, and either the systems transformation grant or the capacity building grants might be utilised for the purpose. There are also several partners such as BRAC or Save the Children who have supported other AES programmes such as Community Girls Schools or the Alternative Learning Programme, who might also step in to continue the ASEP initiative.

At some stage the government will need to take over capitation grants for secondary schools from the GESS programme, along with increasing support to State Ministries of Education budgets for tutors' incentives, stationery, and learning materials.

One of the most critical areas for financial support are the secondary certificate examination fees of SSP 7,000 which have to be paid when registering for the exams. The average monthly salary of many primary teachers is around SSP 7,000 and the majority have families to support. It is essential that government and partners consider jointly covering these fees for the ASEP learners.

7. PATHWAYS FOR ASEP GRADUATES TO ACHIEVE QUALIFIED TEACHER STATUS ONCE GRADUATED SUCCESSFULLY – DRAFT GENERAL EDUCATION SECTOR PLAN

Although it is hoped that most primary teachers will return to their schools when they get their secondary certificate through ASEP, they will have the option of applying for diploma or degree teacher training in order to achieve Qualified Teacher Status. They can also opt for other professions, jobs and even start businesses. The current low salaries for teachers, even with a 140% pay rise to SSP 40,000 per annum, do not cover inflation, especially of basic commodities. MoGEI have made it clear that they do not want to create some kind of 'bonding agreement' to force ASEP graduates to resume teaching.

If they do decide to continue with teaching and achieve Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), they can either join NTTIs for diploma courses, or universities for a Bachelor's education degree. However, a third option is emerging as an in-service programme has been developed – 2 years for certificate level and 3 years for diploma level. This means that those taking the in-service modules will be able to carry on teaching in their schools and earn their salaries, which also benefits the schools. County Education Centres are being renovated by AfDB, and it is expected that the new World-Bank funded programme will include a focus on the in-service model as the best way to increase a qualified teacher workforce in the shortest time. However, some support will also need to be given to getting the residential NTTIs up and running again.

The draft General Education Sector Plan 2023-27 captures these policy developments as follows:

'The supply of teachers in South Sudan is limited by the low capacity of existing NTTIs. There are only three operational NTIs, which cannot practically serve the vast country. To enhance the capacity of the NTTIs, the plan will facilitate construction of NTTIs in the states without one. Given the extent of the damage to the non-operational NTTIs, and the cost consideration, the technical team proposes that the plan focuses on new construction rather than rehabilitation²

Particular reference is made to the expansion and utilisation of the County Education Centres:

'In addition to expanding the capacity of NTTIs, the plan will enhance the capacity of County Education Centers, which are instrumental in in-service training, and will be useful for the implementation of the competency-based curriculum. The plan will accommodate the

² General Education Sector Plan 2023 - 27 (Draft) p.41

construction of ten new CECs across selected counties. The technical team will be responsible for identification of counties that need to be prioritized for the new construction. The committee will also provide technical guidance on the elements expected in a new CECs. Alongside the new CECs, the plan will facilitate renovation of Fifty-nine (59) existing CECs.

*The sector has been carrying out training for unqualified teachers towards an ambitious target of having all teachers qualified to teach. In keeping with this ambition, the plan will facilitate the training of 13,000 teachers who the 2021 Annual Schools' Census identified not qualified. The plan will facilitate the training of seven tutors per county by a national team. The tutors will then train the 13,000 teachers in their respective counties in a cascade fashion. The plan will facilitate the logistical needs associated with trainings, including DSA, transport refund, facilitation of trainers as well as allowances for catering.'*³

8. ASEP TUTORS, QUALIFICATION, ORIENTATION, INCENTIVES AND MOTIVATION

Most of the tutors teaching in ASEP centres are diploma trained teachers based in the secondary schools where the ASEP classes are held. The rest are a mixture of untrained secondary certificate holders and one- or two-degree holders. They teach normal secondary classes in the morning and ASEP learners for 3 hours in the afternoon, which makes for a long day, often in the heat of the afternoon. In general, through the initial orientation by master trainers organised by Windle Trust International, tutors indicated that they felt well prepared to deliver both the Intensive English Course and study skills course to ASEP learners, manage the condensed schemes of work, and handle adult learners. However, the majority requested refresher courses at the beginning of new classes, which would also be a useful opportunity for feedback to the master trainers and WTI.

In terms of selection of tutors, it appears that not all school administrations were fully involved, and it would increase their inclusiveness, participation, and positive support if their role in tutor selection was common practice in all secondary schools. In terms of tutor performance, there are limited quality assurance mechanisms in place, except when either the AES Director, lead tutor or headteacher of the school is prepared to take on this role. This is perhaps a key weakness in the present ASEP programme.

Although the \$100 monthly incentives would appear to almost triple tutors' normal salaries, there were still very mixed views on their adequacy. High and rising market prices were often quoted as challenges with the

³ General Education Sector Plan 2023-27 p. 41-42

Evaluation of the Accelerated Secondary Education Programme in South Sudan

cost of living plus transport. In addition, some master trainers, lead tutors, and tutors teaching more than one subject or a greater number of lessons, felt there should be differentiated amounts. It appears that weekly lesson loads for ASEP tutors range from 4 hours to 12 hours for different teachers depending on their subjects (for example English and Maths generally had more lessons). Lead tutors in many centres have, in fact, taken on the role of managing the centre activities and overseeing tutors' attendance and delivery, and only in Yabongo Secondary School in Yambio was it observed that the headteacher took responsibility for management of the centre. In other centres too, some female teachers have taken on the role of looking after the needs of the female learners. However, in practice, it might be difficult to create a sliding scale of payments while ensuring that the right tutors got paid the right amounts, and it could easily lead to more dissatisfaction. Increasing the \$100 incentive also makes it even more challenging for State Ministries to match the amounts through their own limited budgets.

As the tutors are key to the success of the ASEP programme it will be important to maintain motivation, and this may not be through financial incentives alone. For example, outstanding tutors who have not yet acquired QTS could be sponsored for part-time or in-service diploma teacher training (AET have supported their tutors in this manner). Those who already possess a teacher training qualification could be considered for diploma or degree teacher training jobs, promotion to school principals, or to directors in State Ministries. If the tutors see this as a viable career path, then the issue of financial incentives may be less crucial than the possibility of upward mobility.

9. ASEP LEARNERS – EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INTENSIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND STUDY SKILLS COURSES, SCHEMES OF WORK, LEARNING MATERIALS, TUTORS, TIMING, AND TRANSPORT.

The overall assessment by ASEP learners in the centres visited for the evaluation was praised for the performance of their tutors, and appreciation for adequate coverage of the syllabuses, despite the constraints of time and length of only 9 months to cover S3 and S4 subject content. They had certainly benefitted from the initial orientation weeks where an Intensive English Course and Study Skills guidelines were introduced, and the learners exhibited some confidence both in speaking and writing in English during the evaluation. They were genuinely happy for the opportunity created to complete their secondary education certificate and felt it had not only boosted their morale but opened up possibilities for further studies and advancement.

Several challenges were outlined in all the centres and states visited by the learners. Transport and related costs were a real headache for many, especially with afternoon classes often ending late. Female learners also had to contend with childcare and domestic duties as a balancing act with attendance at the centres, and quite often had to bring smaller children with them into class. There was also considerable variation between centres in terms of adequate provision of stationery such as chalk, exercise books, preparation books, and student textbooks. Shortages were particularly acute in Agriculture, Commerce, Principles of Accounting, Additional Maths, and in some cases Literature. There were also cases of teachers not being available to handle subjects such as Commerce, Accounting, and ICT. Access to laboratory equipment for practicals was non-existent, so science subjects were covered largely theoretically.

Although the most recent cohort had managed to cover most of the curriculum content before taking the secondary school examinations, there was a general consensus that the combination of 3 hours every weekday afternoon and Saturday morning was still not enough time to fully complete the topics likely to be tested. Although it may not be practical in areas where internet connectivity and power is limited and also in terms of costs, MoGEI and partners could consider the option of providing blended learning where learners could download content on smartphones or tablets and take home for private study outside the formal lessons.

9.1 Measuring the impact of ASEP on primary teachers' performance in their primary schools

In every centre visited for the evaluation ASEP learners asserted that what they learnt in the lessons delivered by the tutors was helping to improve their own teaching in primary schools, both in subject content and in pedagogy. For example, they noted greater confidence in English grammar. It could be worth conducting a separate survey to see if the learners' subjective assessment of their improved teaching could be corroborated by an independent assessment. If proved to be accurate it would provide further evidence of the value of the ASEP initiative.

10. OTHER PARTNERS DELIVERING ASEP – USEFUL LESSONS LEARNT BY THE FIRST PIONEER ACCELERATED SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME.

The UK NGO African Educational Trust (AET) started a small pilot of a similar accelerated secondary education programme in Rumbek in 2017 with a condensed course over two years, focusing especially on girls and young women (not necessarily teachers), who in some cases had never been to secondary school. The key learning outcomes were achieved, although the cohort were only entered for the Arts subjects, and in fact the centre scored 1st in the State in terms of examinations performance, and 9th nationally.

Evaluation of the Accelerated Secondary Education Programme in South Sudan

Building on the useful lessons learnt, the programme was replicated in Yambio in 2018. The centre is located in the AET compound, with a custom-built facility, and expanded to classes of 50 girls and young women in morning and afternoon sessions teaching the two-year programme at Level 5 and Level 6. The tutors are specially selected from local secondary schools in the area, and, where needed, have been sponsored for diploma teacher training in Kyambogo and Kampala International Universities in Uganda. AET has also provided in-service training at the centre itself and engaged the Catholic University of South Sudan for further training as needed. There is a full-time headteacher managing the centre, paid by AET, alongside ongoing mentorship support from tutors, and a female teacher appointed to provide a strong safeguarding environment with counselling and gender inclusive approaches. Two child minders have been hired to provide a crèche for young mothers' children in morning and afternoon sessions. Although no science laboratories are available, two science laboratories have been developed in Yambio and Maridi respectively, and there is also a community library that the girls and young women can access.

The incentive approach is different from the WTI-operated ASEP in that \$100 is provided on delivery of actual lessons per subject in the month based on expected numbers of lessons to be completed in a month and tutor attendance. There is a much more rigorous assessment of the quality of the tutors' performance based both on lesson observation and mid-term tests taken by learners. In addition, those tutors that have a larger number of lessons due to the nature of their subjects (e.g. English and Maths) are paid \$150 on satisfactory completion of their expected number of subject lessons for the month.

Clearly it would be difficult to replicate the intensive AET model in a scaled-up version across all 10 states as done by Windle Trust International, but MoGEI and Windle Trust International might like to consider ways to improve the initial selection of tutors, quality assurance of the tutors' performance, and further support to teacher training of unqualified tutors. On their side, AET are willing to provide support to tutors from other ASEP centres in Yambio and beyond to improve their performance. They are also planning to become a 'centre of excellence' supporting up to 125 students from 5 secondary schools through additional evening classes, to improve their chances of passing the secondary certificate examinations.

11. WIDER INTEREST IN ASEP BEYOND TEACHERS

Despite the current prioritisation of primary teachers for ASEP, there is already huge clamouring from different areas of the population, including the armed forces, to be included in the ASEP programme. This is especially from those who dropped out of secondary or never made it there. While this demonstrates a

positive spirit towards completing secondary education for more people who missed out, there is a danger that ASEP could be seen as a replacement altogether of the 4-year secondary programme. Western Bahr el Ghazal State Ministry has included some nurses in their ASEP centres to support another aspect of basic services, however, it would be wise to continue to prioritise primary teachers before opening up ASEP too widely and finding centres swamped by numbers and facing shortages of tutors. It will be several years before ASEP can be phased out, so Ministry and partners will need to address this particular challenge.

12. CONCLUSIONS

The key pioneers, funding agencies and implementers of the Accelerated Secondary Education Programme should be congratulated for taking the important steps of upgrading primary teachers and providing a second chance to girls, young women, boys, and young men to complete their secondary education certification. While Windle Trust International supported the formalisation of the accelerated secondary education programme through policy review, condensing the secondary school curriculum and launching a country wide programme the Ministry of General Education and Instruction, the Alternative Education Directorates have taken a lead and supported and encouraged this important intervention. The initial funding support from UNICEF, and that now provided through the UK's GESS 2 programmes, along with successful implementation by Windle Trust International, has already resulted in a significantly good examination performance in several centres for the first cohort of 2022, as can be seen in Annex 4.

Given the many thousands of students who missed or dropped out of secondary school due to the challenges of poverty, conflict, and climate change, it will be important to sustain this programme probably for another 10 years, and for South Sudan's government to gradually take over both the funding and implementation through the 10 State Ministries of Education and 3 Administrations. Primary teachers should still be prioritised for the time being, but other key public sector workers such as health centre staff should also be considered. There are large numbers of marginalised children who have been forced out of school due to reasons already mentioned. One crucial issue that would really help the current ASEP learners would be support for payment of the examination registration fees.

The recommendations made in 4.4.3 and expanded in sections 5-11 are clear, and, if implemented, could help to improve the quality, impact and sustainability of the programme. It was encouraging to see one centre where the headteacher and learners had agreed to purchase uniforms in the form of T-shirts with the centre name. Where this is possible it helps to forge a strong sense of identity and can assist with some of

Evaluation of the Accelerated Secondary Education Programme in South Sudan

the examination regulations where uniform is preferred for sitting exams. Two of the centres observed also included ASEP learners with disabilities and this was a very encouraging development.

I will conclude this evaluation report with a quote from one of the ASEP primary teacher learners in Yabongo Secondary School in Yambio:

"I want to thank all the partners involved for being innovative to come up with such a project that has two sides – positive impact on the teachers, and also on the pupils in the various schools where we teach."

It is hoped that government and international partners will respond positively to this innovative approach to improving the equity and quality of the teacher workforce with additional funding.

Richard Arden OBE

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July 2023

ANNEX 1 – SAMPLE RESULTS FROM THE ASEP LEARNER QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How do you rate the quality of the tutors/teachers of your subjects? (Please circle your choice)

1	2	3	4	5
Very poor	Poor	Quite Good	Very good	Excellent

Any additional comments?

Tutors very active, committed and supportive

2. How helpful was the intensive English Language course ? (Please circle your choice)

1	2	3	4	5
Very difficult	Quite difficult	Quite helpful	Very helpful	Extremely helpful

3. How useful was the study skills course ? (Please circle your choice)

1	2	3	4	5
Not useful at all	Fairly useful	Quite Useful	Useful	Very useful

Any additional comments ?

Would be good to have a refresher course

4. How has been the availability of textbooks and learning materials ?
(Please circle your choice)

1	2	3	4	5
Very poor	Poor	Quite Good	Very good	Excellent

Any additional comments ?

S2 and S4 textbooks tend to be in short supply

Sufficient textbooks for each student not available Need more library books

5. How good are the facilities/classrooms in the school where your ASEP is taking place ?
(Please circle your choice)

1	2	3	4	5

Evaluation of the Accelerated Secondary Education Programme in South Sudan

Very poor	Poor	Quite Good	Very good	Excellent
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Any additional comments ?

Sometime classrooms can be locked and materials removed without informing students

No science laboratory facilities for practicals

Need a dedicated AES centre for ALP, ASEP etc

Not always suitable for maths, accounting and commerce

6. Have you had teachers/tutors for all the subjects you wanted to cover ?

YES / NO

Give details of any subjects where teachers were missing :

Mostly YES but there were teacher shortages recorded in Commerce, Accounting, Agriculture, ICT , Additional Maths and Fine Art. In one or two cases teachers were rated as overburdened – i.e. teaching multiple subject

7. Have you faced any difficulties in attending the ASEP course and in managing the subjects ?

Lack of transport – distance from teaching school to ASEP centre Cost of transport

Challenges around examinations – preparations, guidance, venues Exam fees

Female teachers face more challenges in terms of time, childcare and domestic duties

Lack of textbooks in certain subjects

Insufficient teaching/learning time for some subjects

8. Why are you taking the ASEP course ?

Improves future life chances Upgrades qualifications

Increases number of female teachers

Opportunity to qualify for university

Raise level of educational attainment

The course is largely free and effective Improves intellect and knowledge

Helps those who left school a long time ago and do not have the financial resources

9. Is it helping to improve your own teaching in your school ? How is it helping ?

Provides better knowledge and skills in the subjects we teach

Helps in preparing own lessons for teaching in primary schools

Improves knowledge of English – especially grammar – for teaching of English

10. Do you want to become a qualified diploma teacher ? YES / NO

All respondents wanted to become a qualified diploma teacher at least

Any further comments on ASEP ?

The opportunity to obtain the secondary certificate was very highly appreciated
 Grateful thanks to Windle Trust International
 The support given for transport for the first ASEP cohort was highly appreciated
 Very important to continue support for the 2023/24 ASEP group and maintain the programme for years to come to support all unqualified primary teachers
 Female teachers in particular need more financial support
 Continue support for teachers to take the diploma or degree teacher training courses
 Have a dedicated AES centre in towns with facilities like laboratories
 Increase time on subjects – (use of tablets/smart phones to load content ?) More centres needed in large counties where distance to one centre is a problem Support to exam fees needed

ANNEX 2 – SAMPLE RESULTS FROM THE ASEP TUTOR QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How do you rate the training you received for delivering the accelerated secondary education programme ? (Please circle your choice)

1	2	3	4	5
Very poor	Poor	Quite Good	Very good	Excellent

Any additional comments ?

It would be good to have a refresher training at least once every year
 The training programme should also cover inclusion

2. How many hours of ASEP teaching per week are you doing ? Are they enough to deliver the content ?

Answers ranged from 4hrs to maximum 24 hrs depending on the subjects covered and related numbers of periods allocated
 For some they were not enough to deliver the syllabus content of their subjects

3. How much time do you spend on preparation for ASEP ?

Because the teachers also taught the same subjects in the main secondary school, preparation varied from 30 mins (presumably for one lesson period) up to 12 hours (presumably over a week).

4. How helpful are the schemes of work for the subjects you are teaching ?
 (Please circle your choice)

Evaluation of the Accelerated Secondary Education Programme in South Sudan

1	2	3	4	5
Not helpful at all	A bit helpful	Quite helpful	Very helpful	Excellent

Any improvements needed ?

Refresher course on handling schemes of work is needed

Schemes on life skills and values need improvement

5. Do you have enough teaching/learning materials to deliver the subjects you teach?

YES / NO Please give details if it is NO :

Majority were in the NO category .

Particular shortages in the Arts subjects – CRE, Geography, Citizenship plus agriculture, commerce and accounting

Additional materials like chalk, flipcharts, preparation exercise books, were also in short supply

Lack of laboratory equipment for science a particular challenge

6. Are the attitudes of the ASEP students to learning positive ?

YES / NO Please give details :

ASEP learners attendance was excellent – turned up regularly

ASEP learners are committed, co-operative and eager to learn.

They show good time management, commitment and respect.

7. Are you happy with the current incentive you receive monthly? Please give details.

While majority really appreciated the \$100 monthly incentive, they complained that inflation and rocketing market prices raised the cost of living so that the incentives were not enough. Others felt there should be additional recognition for lead tutors' extra responsibilities, and those who covered two subjects or more.

One or two complained of delays in payment, and insufficient amount to buy additional teaching materials.

8. Are there any general recommendations you would like to give for improving the ASEP programme?

Refresher training courses for tutors at least once a year

Review tutor incentives allocation e.g. of numbers of subjects taught

Introduce Level 5 as well as Level 6 students.

Supply more stationery and scholastic materials (chalk)

More financial support to female students (e.g. transport)

Sufficient teaching /learning materials, especially textbooks for ASEP learners

ANNEX 3 – KEY REFERENCES AND SOURCES

- 1.** Accelerated Secondary Education Programme – PPT presentation to PMs
- 2.** ASEP Narrative Progress Report – March to May 2022 – UNICEF
- 3.** ASEP Narrative Progress Report – June to August 2022 – UNICEF
- 4.** ASEP Narrative Progress Report – September to October 2022 – UNICEF
- 5.** ASEP Schemes of Work – GESS – 2019
- 6.** Draft General Education Sector Plan 2023-2027 – MoGEI 2023
- 7.** Education Sector Analysis in South Sudan – Preliminary Results- UNESCO 2023
- 8.** Quality Education Intervention Strategy – GESS 2019
- 9.** National Teacher Education Policy (Draft) MoGEI 2023
- 10.** Training guidelines for Master Trainers – GESS 2019

ANNEX 4 – FULL 2023 SECONDARY EDUCATION EXAMINATION RESULTS FOR ELEVEN ASEP CENTRES

□

S/NO	ASEP CENTRES	STATES	TOTAL LEARNERS WHO SAT SSSEC	MALE	FEMALE	NO OF LEARNERS WHO PASSED	NO OF LEARNERS WHO FAILED	PERCENTAGE PASS
1	Yabongo ASEP Centre	WES	56	17	39	55	1	98%
2	AET ASEP Centre	WES	50	0	50	50	0	100%
3	Mbili ASEP Centre	WBGS	56	33	23	31	25	55%
4	Rumbek National ASEP Centre	LKS	52	26	27	40	12	76%
5	Abyei ASEP Centre	ABYEI AA	25	17	8	19	6	76%
6	Kuajok National ASEP Centre	WRP	25	15	10	20	5	80%
7	Aweil National ASEP Centre	NBGS	74	63	11	72	2	97%
8	Bentiu ASEP Centre	US	14	13	1	13	1	93%
9	Sobat ASEP Centre	UNS	57	51	6	38	19	66%
10	Pariang ASEP centre	RAA	24	18	6	9	15	38%
11	Chinese Friendship ASEP Centre	CES	28	10	18	23	5	82%

Published August 2023 by

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Registered Charity Number in
England and Wales:
1092834



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