



# HEALTH, EDUCATION AND RECONCILIATION (HEAR)

FINAL REPORT

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## USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO SUDAN AND EASTERN CHAD



**SUDAN**  
UNMIS Briefing Map



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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In January 2005, the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), ending Africa's longest civil war. Displaced Southern Sudanese began returning to their homes with high expectations for reaping the benefits of peace. However, a lack of basic infrastructure and institutional capacity constrained economic and social progress. The Three Areas between Northern and Southern Sudan (Abyei, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile) had been especially affected by the war and were particularly vulnerable during this transitional period. One of USAID's main objectives during this period was to avert and resolve conflict to support the implementation of the CPA by focusing on basic economic and social infrastructure, establishment of key governance institutions, and the return and resettlement of IDPs.

Within USAID's overall framework, the Health, Education and Reconciliation (HEAR) project was designed to provide tangible peace benefits to target communities through the delivery of critical social services, including health and education. By demonstrating observable changes on the ground and visible symbols of progress, the project aimed to rebuild communities and reduce tensions, thereby contributing towards greater stability in the area.

The HEAR project was funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) as a Task Order under the Assistance to Basic Education-Linkages in Education and Health (ABE-LINK) IQC. Awarded by USAID on October 1, 2006, HEAR initially targeted school-aged children in Sudan's Three Areas: Abyei, Southern Kordofan, (Kauda) and Blue Nile (Kurmuk). After South Sudan's independence in July 2011, HEAR was expanded to support IDPs and returnees in the Republic of South Sudan's zones of Agok as well as the surrounding states bordering the north: Northern Bahr el Ghazal (Aweil), Western Bahr el Ghazal (Wau), Warrap (Turalei and Kwajok), and Unity (Leer) from 2012-2013. Ultimately the project spanned seven years, from October 1, 2006 – September 29, 2013, with a total ceiling of \$11.5 million. The project was managed by Creative Associates International and was implemented in collaboration with two main international partners: the Education Development Center (EDC) (2006 to 2011) and John Snow, Inc (JSI) (2006 to 2010).

The HEAR project took an integrated approach to education service delivery supported by communities. It addressed several elements common to increasing the quality of education: teaching, school management, parental and community participation, and responsiveness to children's physical and psychological needs. Through this holistic approach, HEAR was able to contribute to increased local capacity and engagement in education and health, as well as a reduction of tension within target communities.

### **A. Project Description**

The goal of the HEAR project was to provide essential basic education and health services in the target areas with the aim of promoting peace and reconciliation and laying the foundation for strengthened education and health systems and increased community engagement. By collaborating with education stakeholders at the central, state, and local levels to provide these

services through local capacity building and community engagement, the project aimed to help target communities develop and sustain essential services. The HEAR project had three main components.

**Component 1:** *Improved capacity of county, payam, and school-level service providers to improve the quality of basic education service delivery.*

Under this component, HEAR focused on strengthening the capacity of those stakeholders who impacted the teaching and learning process, and providing materials to support teachers and enhance the learning environment. Working closely with education officers, school administrators, and teachers, HEAR aimed to:

1. Establish Education Resource Centers;
2. Train teachers (HEAR training package, Psychosocial support course, English language course, and Refresher courses);
3. Train head teachers and school administrators;
4. Conduct school visits;
5. Provide instructional materials and school supplies; and
6. Develop a Model School Approach.

The psychosocial support course and English language course were added to the project's scope of work during the extension period in South Sudan from 2012-2013.

**Component 2:** *Increased sensitization around health issues and provision of basic health services to primary school children.*

Recognizing that good health and nutrition are key factors in children's attendance and performance in school, the objective of this component was to promote awareness about health, hygiene and sanitation, and to provide basic drugs to protect children from healthcare dangers common to the target areas, such as malaria, nutritional deficiencies and infections from parasites. Working with community health workers (CHWs), teachers, health officers, and NGOs, HEAR aimed to:

1. Train Community Health Workers (CHWs);
2. Raise awareness within communities on health topics;
3. Distribute Vitamin A and deworming drugs to primary school children;
4. Distribute long-lasting insecticide-treated bed nets to primary school children.

The health component of HEAR was implemented in the Three Areas from 2006-2012 and was discontinued during the project extension in South Sudan from 2012-2013 due to a lack of USAID health funding.

**Component 3:** *Increased community engagement in school improvement and the promotion of peace and reconciliation.*

This component was focused on motivating individuals to become more actively involved in the rebuilding of their communities, thereby also contributing to a reduction of tensions within the target areas. HEAR worked to engage community members in the provision of social services such as education and health. Working with Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and School Management Committees (SMCs), HEAR aimed to:

1. Train PTAs and SMCs on their roles and responsibilities
2. Award and support the implementation of School Improvement Grants
3. Support School Open Days

## **B. Project Results and Accomplishments**

Through its holistic and integrated approach, HEAR was successful in contributing to a positive change in the capacity of education and health service providers, and in increasing community engagement in education. The following is a summary of HEAR's principal accomplishments as of the end of its seven-year contract:

- HEAR has supported 201 schools impacting the lives of 92,904 school children
- Established 3 Education Resource Centers (ERCs) – in Abyei, Kauda and Kurmuk;
- Trained 1,500 teachers, 611 school administrators and head teachers;
- Reached 333 teachers with English language professional development courses during the extension period in South Sudan;
- Reached 345 teachers with a program to support learners' psychosocial well-being during the extension period in South Sudan;
- Provided 37,107 teaching and learning materials to target schools and ERCs;
- Trained 618 community health workers;
- Distributed Vitamin A tablets and deworming drugs to 27,812 children and provided 22,004 insecticide-treated mosquito nets to families with young children;
- Strengthened members of 195 PTAs and completed 68 school improvement projects;

## **C. Project Impact**

The HEAR project's design did not aim to directly measure the impact of the project on health or pupil learning. Given the challenging working environment, limited resources, and low capacity of teachers, it was not realistic to attempt to quantitatively assess gains in teachers' knowledge or improvements in student learning or health. However, over the course of the project, the HEAR team collected anecdotal evidence from beneficiaries as well as stakeholders at the State and Central Ministries on the project's successes. Below are some of the main examples that were cited:

### **Improving the capacity of education service providers:**

- *HEAR Trainings:* After the HEAR trainings and refresher courses, many teachers reported that they were using more pupil-centered instruction. Previously, many of them had not even been familiar with the term. Teachers were finding that engaging pupils in the learning process made teaching and learning more interesting, which in turn has also increased their own confidence in teaching. County Education Officers also stated that they observed improvements in pupil involvement and engagement during their school inspections near the end of the project.

- *Psychosocial training:* Many teachers who participated in the psychosocial support training stated that they previously used to beat children in their classes because they thought the children were not willing to study. The training gave them a better understanding of many of the issues the children were facing and they have greatly improved their relationship with their pupils. Some teachers even formed community groups to help trauma-affected people.
- *English language course:* This course was very helpful for the teachers in the border states of South Sudan, many of whom had previously been taught in Arabic and were not comfortable either speaking or teaching in English. The teachers said that the course had made a good start to helping them improve their English skills. A comparison of the pre- and post- test results revealed that 57% of teachers improved in their English language skills over the course of the project.
- *Materials Provision:* The project provided both print and digital resources to the Education Resource Centers in the Three Areas. The ERCs in Agok, Kauda and Kurmuk were handed over to the local education offices who had been trained by HEAR on how to manage them. In a resource-poor environment, the over 37,000 donated supplementary reading materials and books were much appreciated and being used by teachers in their classrooms.

#### **Increasing awareness around health issues and provision of health services**

- *Creation of an environment for behavior change:* HEAR's integrated health and education model has worked very well. Awareness-raising campaigns by community health workers and training pupils and teachers on the importance of better nutrition and sanitation is very important, but conveying such messages can only go so far by itself. HEAR complemented its trainings by providing schools and communities with practical means to change their behaviors and practices. The provision of mosquito nets allowed families to actively protect themselves from malaria. Through the small grants programs, schools built latrines for boys and girls and purchased water tanks or established water sources to ensure access to clean drinking water for their pupils.
- *Provision of drugs and LLITNs:* Vitamin A deficiency, intestinal worms and malaria have been cited as some of the main health concerns for young children. Local health clinics in the Three Areas noted that 30% of deaths in the area were due to intestinal infections attributed to improper hygiene and sanitation practices. Head teachers attested to the fact that the number of pupils going to health clinics had drastically reduced since they began receiving vitamin A supplements and deworming drugs from the HEAR project, and that children are better protected from contracting malaria through the use of the long-lasting insecticide-treated bed nets (LLITNs).

#### **Engaging communities in education and the promotion of peace and reconciliation:**

- *Filling the gaps through PTA grants projects:* HEAR's PTA training and the small grants component were particularly successful and also much appreciated by the communities because the grants projects met some of the burning needs in these communities:
  - The development of 11 school kitchens and stores has made it easier to prepare food for the pupils during the day.
  - The construction of six sets of pit latrines, segregated by gender, has created a healthier environment and also encouraged girls to come to school.

- Many schools previously had no functional classrooms. Seventeen classrooms constructed through the grants program have made it possible for children to study in a more conducive learning environment, rather than under trees.
  - The fencing of five schools has created safer school environments. Previously, community members and domestic animals used to cut through the school compound during class time.
- *Promoting community ownership of education:* The process of community engagement in the PTA projects also contributed to developing a greater sense of mutual ownership and responsibility for their children’s education. During the small grants process, the PTA members made significant contributions of local materials and their own labor in the implementation of the projects. PTA members stated that they now better understood their responsibilities regarding school management and were more engaged in attending school meetings and contributing to the development of the school.
  - *Reducing tension within the communities:* The School Open Days were cited as very successful in bringing schools and communities together. Because different groups of schools came together for these events, teachers from different schools interacted with one another, which fostered a healthier relationship between them. The PTA trainings were also cited as reducing tensions between teachers and parents, as everyone was clearer on their roles and responsibilities and there was a greater desire to work together to support the school.

## **D. Contributions Towards Stability and Sustainability**

Within USAID’s overall framework of averting and resolving conflict during the CPA, the HEAR project’s education and health interventions were not only implemented for their sakes alone. Rather, through these interventions and using a conflict-sensitive approach, HEAR focused on mitigating potential sources of conflict and developing ownership and resilience at the community level during a period when government capacity for service delivery was still limited. By demonstrating observable changes on the ground and visible symbols of progress and strengthening local capacity, the project aimed to rebuild communities and reduce tensions, thereby contributing towards greater stability in the area. Some of HEAR’s main contributions towards this overall objective of stability are noted below:

### **Contributions towards Rebuilding Communities and Reducing Tensions**

- *Education and health served as a platform for developing local capacity and resilience:* By training education and health stakeholders and PTAs, and conducting significant community awareness activities around education and health, HEAR worked to encourage communities to take responsibility for social service delivery in their areas. Through the PTA grants process, community members gained a sense of mutual ownership and civic responsibility.
- *Interventions addressed the needs of a population emerging from conflict:* HEAR ensured that activities and trainings were directly relevant to the specific needs of the beneficiaries, most of whom were emerging from decades of civil war. For example, the extension period focused on providing psychosocial support and strengthening the

English language skills of teachers working in predominantly Arabic-speaking areas in South Sudan, where English was now the formal language of instruction.

- *Tangible peace benefits provided:* HEAR provided very tangible and visible benefits to the target areas, including the Education Resource Centers in the Three Areas, the provision of vitamin A supplements, deworming drugs and bed nets, and the donation of thousands of supplementary reading materials.
- *Conflict resolution integrated into project activities:* HEAR incorporated the concept of peaceful conflict resolution into all aspects of the project, especially the small grants program. By getting community members involved in a project of mutual interest (such as the improvement of the learning environment for their children), the project created an environment in which people could work together amicably. Beneficiaries noted that grants projects had greatly reduced tensions within communities, and especially between parents and teachers.

### **Contributions towards Sustainability**

Although the main objective of HEAR was not to ensure the sustainability of its interventions, HEAR worked with sustainability in mind from the outset. Given the volatile and constantly fluctuating political situation, it was also difficult to expect a high degree of sustainability. That said, below are some of the key measures taken by the HEAR project to work towards sustaining project interventions.

- *Engagement of all stakeholders:* From the outset, the project worked closely with stakeholders (local education and health authorities, teachers, parents, students, and community members) at all levels to secure their buy in. Getting communities actively involved in the small grants projects also increased the likelihood that they would take ownership of and continue to maintain those facilities.
- *Provision of needed materials:* In a resource-poor environment, HEAR provided as many materials to schools and communities as possible that could be used after the end of the project. The project ensured that a representative from the Education Office was trained by the HEAR team to manage the center after the end of the project. Other resources included thousands of supplementary reading materials for schools, copies of all training manuals and materials for teachers, and MP3 players for teachers to practice their English language skills.
- *Strengthening of Systems:* Finally, HEAR worked closely with local authorities and head teachers to ensure systems strengthening to the extent possible. The team included head teachers and local education and health officials in trainings whenever possible. Gaining the knowledge from the trainings increased their interest and ability to support teachers and also increased the likelihood that they could continue to offer support after the end of the project.

## **E. Recommendations for Future Programming**

Based on the feedback from the HEAR team, focus groups held with beneficiaries at the end of the project, and discussions with Central and State MoE representatives during the project's national close out workshop, HEAR compiled some overall recommendations to USAID for future programming, which are summarized below.

- *Maximize Flexibility:* Working in an environment of political instability and logistical uncertainties calls for a great deal of flexibility in planning and day-to-day implementation of activities. Given that challenges with weather, bad roads and unpredictable transportation schedules are also likely to continue for the near future in South Sudan, all projects need to factor in as much flexibility as possible into their planning schedules, and develop an ability to adapt quickly as needed.
- *Support an integrated approach to the delivery of basic social services:* When working in post-conflict environments such as South Sudan, it is essential to simultaneously address as many factors that inhibit children's development as possible. Developing an integrated model of operation that provides a platform for various sectors to work together is important. Implementing education activities that cut across different sectors allows communities to see the added values of schools as centers of holistic development for their children, not only the development of literacy and numeracy skills, but also the importance of their physical, social, and psychological growth and development.
- *Promote continuous community engagement and empowerment:* Top-down approaches are most effective when combined with bottom-up approaches where communities take part in identifying problems, setting priorities, and planning and implementing interventions. Building systems that can effectively flow down to support people at the community level is a long-term endeavor. In the meantime, it is essential to focus efforts on building capacity and resilience at the local level (families, schools and communities). HEAR's experiences show that the will, ability, and resources for improving education conditions exist within communities and can be leveraged.
- *Ensure inter-agency collaboration and leveraging of external resources:* Inter-agency collaboration is especially important in a context like South Sudan that is challenging from a technical, security, and logistics perspective. While individual projects can develop partnerships and collaborate with other entities on the ground over the course of implementation, USAID should consider establishing Memoranda of Understanding with other donors at the start of projects so that programs are more easily able to leverage one another's resources.
- *Focus trainings on needs of beneficiaries:* Making interventions relevant to the needs of their target audience. This is particularly so in a post-conflict environment, where interventions that work in other contexts may need to be tailored to address the conflict dynamics at hand. Additionally, it is essential for sufficient research to be conducted on beneficiaries' actual needs and capabilities before materials are developed.

**Specific elements of HEAR activities for replication, continuation and expansion:**

- Integrated model of the HEAR approach, and in particular the combination of education and health interventions. This HEAR training package for teachers can be expanded to include more schools in the target areas.
- Provision of basic health resources, such as vitamin A supplements, deworming drugs and bed nets.
- English language course and ensuring that the content is simple and useful for the day-to-day needs of teachers.
- Psychosocial support training. This training and support was stressed as being both much needed and extremely beneficial in the target areas.
- Small grants program as a way to build cohesion with the community. The process of using a small grants project to encourage communities to identify and solve problems in their area is worth replicating in future programs.

## ACRONYMS

ABE-LINK:	Assistance to Basic Education-Linkages in Education and Health
CHW:	Community Health Worker
COP:	Chief of Party
COR:	Contracting Officer's Representative
CPA:	Comprehensive Peace Agreement (
DCOP:	Deputy Chief of Party
ECRIF:	Encounter, Clarify, Remember, Internalize, and Fluent Use
EDC:	Education Development Center
ERC:	Education Resource Centers
HEAR:	Health, Education and Reconciliation
HIV/AIDS:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection / Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
IDP:	Internally Displaced Person
IRI:	Interactive Radio Instruction
IQC:	Indefinite Quantity Contract
JSI:	John Snow, Inc
LEA:	Language Experience Approach
LLITN:	Long-lasting insecticide-treated bed net
LOP:	Life of Project
M&E:	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoEST:	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MoGEI:	Ministry of General Education and Instruction
MSI:	Management Systems International
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOU:	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
OUP:	Oxford University Press
PCI:	Pupil Centered Instruction
PIRS:	Performance Indicator Reference Sheet
PMP:	Performance Monitoring Plan
PSI:	Population Services International
PTA:	Parent Teacher Association
SMC:	School Management Committee
SSIRI:	South Sudan Interactive Radio Instruction

UNICEF: United Nations Children’s Fund  
UNMIS: United Nations Mission in Sudan  
USAID: United States Agency for International Development  
USG: United States Government  
WHO: World Health Organization

# I. PROJECT OVERVIEW/ BACKGROUND

## A. Project Context and Rationale

In January 2005, the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), ending Africa's longest civil war. Lasting more than 20 years, the war left two million people dead and 4 million displaced. The five-year CPA (2005-2011) included protocols to develop democratic governance structures and outline power sharing and wealth sharing arrangements and security agreements between the North and the South. It also demarcated the border between northern and southern Sudan and authorized the new semi-autonomous Government of Southern Sudan to hold a referendum on its independence in 2011.

During this transitional period, displaced Southern Sudanese began returning to their homes with high expectations for reaping the benefits of peace. However, Sudan remained in a very vulnerable state. There was still a lack of basic infrastructure and institutional capacity that constrained economic and social progress. There were many orphans, returning refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) and ex-combatants who were at particular risk. The Three Areas between northern and southern Sudan (Abyei, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile) had been especially affected by the war. Due to their location and natural resources (and in particular Abyei's rich oil reserves), they were of significant political and economic importance to both the North and South, and the presence of both northern and southern troops increased insecurity in the Three Areas. These border areas were also home to multiple and conflicting ethnic groups and the huge influx of returnees and IDPs during the CPA only served to exacerbate latent tensions.

One of USAID's main objectives during this period was to avert and resolve conflict to support the implementation of the CPA by focusing on basic economic and social infrastructure, establishment of key governance institutions, and the return and resettlement of IDPs. USAID's framework included the delivery of crucial social services, including health and education, and the rebuilding of institutional capacity.

It was within this context that the Health, Education and Reconciliation (HEAR) project was designed and implemented. Initially focusing on the Three Areas of Abyei, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, HEAR aimed to provide tangible benefits to the target communities through the delivery of critical social services, including health and education. By demonstrating observable changes on the ground and visible symbols of progress, the project worked to rebuild communities and reduce tensions, thereby contributing towards greater stability in the area. The HEAR project worked in the Three Areas from 2006-2012. After South Sudan's independence, the project was extended and expanded from July 2012- September 2013 to specific locations in the South Sudanese states that bordered the North: Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Western Bahr el Ghazal, Warrap, and Unity.

## B. Strategic Objectives and HEAR Components

The HEAR Sudan project was originally initiated by USAID to respond to the agency objective of *Investing in People* under the program area of Education and Health. When the project was

initially funded in 2006, it was designed to address USAID’s Strategic Objective (SO) 6: “Improved Equitable Access to Quality Education,” which formed part of the USAID Sudan Interim Strategic Plan (ISP). The ISP goal was: “foundation established for a just and durable peace with broad participation of the Sudanese people.” Under the Fragile States Strategy, the USAID Sudan Mission later shifted its strategic objectives and the HEAR project worked to address SO No. 9 “Avert and Resolve Conflict” and SO No. 10 “Promote Stability, Recovery and Democratic Reform.”

After South Sudan’s independence, the HEAR project was extended and expanded in 2012 to contribute to Goal 3 of the new USAID Education Strategy: *Increased equitable access to education in crisis and conflict environments for 15 million learners by 2015*. More specifically, it supported the USAID Transition Strategy for South Sudan 2011-2013, and particularly Development Objective 3 (DO3): *Essential Services (Health, Education, Nutrition, and Water/Sanitation) Developed and Sustained*.

The overarching goal of the HEAR project was to increase access to quality education for healthy girls and boys through community support and action. The original three components of the HEAR project from 2006-2012 were:

**Component 1:** Improved capacity of county, payam, and school-level service providers to improve the quality of basic education service delivery;

**Component 2:** Increased sensitization around health issues and provision of basic health services to primary school children; and

**Component 3:** Increased community engagement in school improvement and the promotion of peace and reconciliation.

During the extension period from 2012-2013, the health component was removed upon USAID’s request (due to a lack of health funding) and the project focused on two main intermediate results (IRs) that contributed to Development Objective 2 (DO3) of the USAID Transition Strategy for South Sudan:

- 1. Intermediate result 1 (IR1):** Improved capacity of county, payam, and school-level service providers to improve the quality of basic education service delivery; and
- 2. Intermediate Result 2 (IR2):** Increased community engagement in school improvement and the promotion of peace and reconciliation.

### **C. Target Areas**

HEAR originally targeted specific geographic locations within the Three Areas of Abyei, Southern Kordofan (Kauda), and Blue Nile (Kurmuk). With the independence of South Sudan in July 2011, the project had to close its activities in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states as they became part of the North. Following the violence in Abyei in 2008, many of its residents fled to the Agok area, and the HEAR project began to actively provide education services there. During the extension period from July 2012- September 2013, the HEAR project continued to support residents of the Abyei/Agok area, and expanded its operations to the Republic of South Sudan’s border states of Northern Bahr El Ghazal (Aweil), Western Bahr el Ghazal (Wau), Warrap (Turalei, Kwajok), and Unity (Leer). The activities conducted in the various target locations are described in more detail in the section below.

## **D. Evolution of HEAR Scope of Work**

### **Original Scope of Work, 2006-2012**

The Health, Education and Reconciliation (HEAR) Project was originally a three-year Task Order under the Assistance to Basic Education-Linkages in Education and Health (ABE-LINK) IQC (October 2006-September 2009). The HEAR project initially targeted school-aged children in geographically defined locations within Sudan's Three Areas: Abyei, Southern Kordofan, and Blue Nile. Working with local authorities, teachers, communities, and other stakeholders, HEAR activities aspired to promote quality basic education and health service delivery and improved school governance through enhanced local capacity and community engagement.

HEAR's activities emanated from Education Resource Centers (ERCs) which were established in each of the Three Areas to provide services to clusters of schools and communities. The ERCs served as project office spaces, training sites for supported schools and libraries with both print and electronic resources for teachers and community members. The breakdown of activities by component was as follows:

*Component 1: Improved capacity of county, payam, and school-level service providers to improve the quality of basic education service delivery*

1. Establishment of Education Resource Centers
2. Training of teachers (HEAR training package, Psychosocial support course, English language course, and refresher courses);
3. Training of head teachers and school administrators;
4. Conducting of school visits;
5. Provision of instructional materials and school supplies;
6. Development of a Model School Approach.

*Component 2: Increased sensitization around health issues and provision of basic health services to primary school children*

1. Training of Community Health Workers (CHWs);
2. Awareness raising within communities on health topics;
3. Distribution of Vitamin A and deworming tablets to primary school children;
4. Distribution of Long Lasting Insecticide Treated Bed Nets to primary school children.

*Component 3: Increased community engagement in school improvement and the promotion of peace and reconciliation*

1. Designing and delivering PTA/SMC capacity building training;
2. Designing and implementing a school improvement grants program;
3. Sponsoring School Open Days.

*Abyei Conflict and Relocation of Hub Office to Rumbek, 2008:*

In May 2008, an armed conflict between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) resulted in the destruction of Abyei town and the displacement of most of its residents to the nearby town of Agok. The HEAR project's office was also completely destroyed and all its assets burned or looted. While Creative was able to ensure the safety of all staff, this incident necessitated that relocation of the main HEAR office to a safer and more secure location. Consequently, the HEAR team relocated its hub office to Rumbek in Lakes

State. Although no HEAR activities were implemented in or around Rumbek, this location was logistically convenient in terms of air access to all three project sites. HEAR worked with USAID and other development partners to begin serving the needs of the Abyei IDPs in Agok, and was able to support without interruption its offices in Kauda and Kurmuk. The HEAR team initially accessed Abyei and Agok from Rumbek through targeted trips, but eventually established a small office and permanent staff in the Mercy Corps compound in Agok. USAID was pleased with HEAR's progress to date and accorded the project a cost extension through September 2011.

#### *Midterm Evaluation, 2010:*

An external midterm evaluation of the HEAR project was conducted in 2010 by Management Systems International (MSI) to review HEAR's performance against expected outcomes, assess its efforts to coordinate with other USAID/Sudan projects and stakeholders and make recommendations for adjustments. The overall findings were very positive and the evaluation revealed that the integration of health and hygiene and disease prevention education at the school and community level was very successful. However, the report noted that the project was weaker in improving the skills of teachers' education skills. The project initially included an Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) component that was delivered by partner EDC. This component was meant to target teachers' use of methodology and basic teaching skills. However, when it was discovered in 2008 that EDC was conducting similar activities in the target areas through its South Sudan Interactive Radio Instruction (SSIRI) program, the IRI component was dropped from HEAR to avoid duplication. This gap had not been sufficiently addressed and the evaluation report noted that the project did not spend sufficient training time on pedagogy and did not address the specific needs of teachers in the target schools. In response to this evaluation, the HEAR team added additional training on pedagogy and methodology as well as other topics which were greatly appreciated by the teachers and seen as being successful inputs by the project. The results of the midterm evaluation are discussed in more detail under Section III, G: External Midterm Evaluation.

#### *Termination of Operations in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, 2011-2012:*

With the birth of the new Republic of South Sudan on July 9, 2011, there were several constraints preventing the HEAR project from accessing its project sites in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States. One of the conditions of the CPA was that in the event of the separation of Sudan and South Sudan, these two states would remain part of the North. As the HEAR project was operating out of Rumbek in the South and had no presence in Khartoum, it would have been extremely challenging to continue project activities in these two regions. Accordingly, Creative received approval from USAID to formally close project operations in Kauda and Kurmuk. At the same time, given that Abyei and Agok were still accessible from the Republic of South Sudan, HEAR continued to support schools and communities in that area. USAID also extended the HEAR project with no additional cost through June 2012 so that the project could continue to provide essential services to the conflict-affected communities in Abyei/Agok.

#### **Expansion to Republic of South Sudan, 2012-2013**

While the HEAR project continued to support the urgent needs of residents in the Abyei/Agok area, the situation in the neighboring southern states was equally dire. With the gradual return of relative stability during the CPA period, there had been an influx of returnees to these areas, especially after South Sudan's independence in July 2011. Additionally, the conflicts in the

Abyei area and Southern Kordofan led to thousands of residents from these areas moving south to Agok, Warrap, Northern and Western Bahr el Ghazal and Unity states. These movements placed an additional burden on the severely constrained resources of the host states. As systems building and institutional development at the national and state levels were long-term development goals, it was necessary to enhance basic education service delivery at the local level in the short term. As part of its commitment to South Sudan, USAID intended to support the Government of South Sudan (GOSS) in rebuilding its education systems by emphasizing decentralized community-based provision of essential services while promoting host-country capacity to assume long-term management.

The HEAR project's model was ideally suited to address the needs of these populations through the rapid provision of education and other services as well as small grant activities to promote peace and reconciliation. Accordingly, USAID awarded the HEAR project a cost extension through September 2013 with a mandate to target IDPs and returnees in Abyei/Agok, as well as the Republic of South Sudan states bordering the North: Warrap (Turalei and Kwajok), Northern Bahr el Ghazal (Aweil), Western Bahr el Ghazal (Wau) and Unity (Leer).

During this extension period, certain aspects of the project were revised or strengthened to cater to the existing systems and structures in the target areas. The main changes were as follows:

- *Education Resource Centers:* As the target areas had better infrastructure than project sites in the Three Areas, HEAR did not construct ERCs. Rather, project staff shared office space with the state MOEs, and trainings were conducted at schools or other rented locations. While materials and resources had previously been housed in ERCs, during the expansion period, such materials were delivered directly to schools.
- *Psychosocial support:* In order to address the special psychosocial needs of teachers and children affected by the recent conflicts, teachers were trained on psychosocial support, positive discipline in the classroom, and the prevention and mitigation of gender-based violence, among other topics. A four-day training program was developed on these topics and included in the HEAR teacher training package.
- *English language instruction:* In order to address the lack of English language skills of teachers in these areas, the project included an English language training course to assist teachers to develop their English language and communication skills and deliver lessons in English with greater skill and efficiency.
- *Health component:* Since USAID health funding was not available for the extension period, the project was unable to conduct health-related interventions such as the recruitment and training of Community School Health Promoters and the distribution of vitamin A tablets, deworming drugs, and long-lasting insecticide-treated bed nets. However, to the extent possible, health education topics were included in the HEAR teacher training package and the project shared information with teachers and pupils on how to access appropriate services.
- *County and payam education officer training:* The project took advantage of the greater structure in the education system in the target states to provide training for county and payam education officers on management of the education system.

The breakdown of activities by IR during the extension period was as follows:

**Intermediate result 1 (IR1):** *Improved capacity of county, payam, and school-level service providers to improve the quality of basic education service delivery.*

1. Training for in-service primary school teachers on the integrated HEAR package, refresher courses, and regular school visits;
2. Provision of a non-intensive English language course for in-service primary school teachers;
3. Training and mentoring of head teachers and school administrators;
4. Training for county and payam education officers;
5. Provision of instructional materials and school supplies.

**Intermediate Result 2 (IR2):** *Increased community engagement in school improvement and the promotion of peace and reconciliation.*

1. Training and capacity building of PTA/SMCs;
2. Implementing a school improvement small grants program;
3. Sponsoring School Open Days.

The target schools in Kwajok, Turalei, Aweil and Wau received the full range of interventions. As the schools in Agok had already received several of the project interventions, they continued to receive support to implement ongoing activities and were included in the new trainings. Given the ongoing insecurity and accessibility constraints in Unity state, the project did not initially plan on conducting the full complement of interventions in Leer. Nevertheless, by the end of the year, HEAR was able to conduct all the activities with the exception of the psychosocial support training and the English language course, which required a greater level of support than the project could provide at the time.

*Focus Group Discussions and Close Out Workshop:* Near the end of the project in August 2013, HEAR held a series of focus group discussions with beneficiaries in all target areas (except for Kauda and Kurmuk which were not accessible). The purpose of the focus groups was to learn from beneficiaries on the ground about what aspects of the project they felt were successful, the challenges they faced, and what elements of the project they felt they could sustain. HEAR also held a national close out workshop in Juba with State and Central Ministry of Education representatives and USAID to discuss the overall successes and challenges of the HEAR project and provide recommendations for future programming. These activities are discussed further under Section V, Lessons Learned and Recommendations for Future Programming.

## **E. HEAR Project Partners**

The HEAR project was implemented by Creative Associates International, Inc. (Creative) as the prime contractor. During the start-up phase of the project, two local partners, Upper Nile Women's Welfare Association and Assistance Mission for Africa, assisted with community level education and health needs assessment and community mobilization. During the original phase of the project, HEAR had two main subcontractors, the Education Development Center (EDC) (from 2006 to 2011) and John Snow, Inc (JSI) (From 2006 to 2010).

EDC's original role was to implement Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) in HEAR schools. However, during the second year of implementation, it was noted that there was overlap and duplication between this activity and work conducted in the same areas by EDC under the USAID-funded South Sudan Interactive Radio Instruction (SSIRI) project. Upon discussion with

EDC and USAID, the IRI component of HEAR was discontinued in 2009 and EDC focused on enhancing education technology support to HEAR's three Education Resource Centers. EDC provided the digital materials and conducted training on their use, and also offered IT support in utilizing the VSAT and other equipment.

JSI initially managed the health component of the project, including hiring and managing the health advisors, designing health-related materials and conducting trainings, and leading the procurement and distribution of vitamin A supplements, deworming drugs and insecticide treated bed nets. In 2009, all health staff members were transferred to Creative for management reasons and JSI focused on providing technical assistance to the health component as needed.

## ***F. Management and Staffing Structure***

### **Original Scope of Work 2006-2012**

The HEAR project opened an office in each target location in the Three Areas. Each office included the following core positions: Education Resource Center Manager/Education Coordinator (Team Leader), Health Coordinator, and Community Mobilization/PTA Grants Coordinator. Since the core team was very small, team members took leadership roles in their specific technical areas but were involved in supporting all of the HEAR trainings. Since the HEAR trainings tried to integrate different technical topics, all team members were able to draw upon their expertise to some extent during each training.

At the start of the program, the project also included an Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) Coordinator at each location, although this position was discontinued when the IRI component was removed from the HEAR project in 2009. From 2010-2012, an Education Technology Specialist position was added to the Kauda location to provide day-to-day management of the digital resources and to lead the computer trainings at the ERCs in Kauda and Kurmuk. The key management team members were initially based in Abyei and later relocated to Rumbek after the Abyei conflict in May 2008. The management office in Rumbek housed the Chief of Party (COP), Finance Manager and the M&E Advisor, who traveled to the field sites frequently to provide technical, logistical and financial support.

### **Expansion to Republic of South Sudan, 2012-2013**

When HEAR was extended to include the South Sudanese border states of Northern Bahr El Ghazal (Aweil), Western Bahr el Ghazal (Wau), Warrap (Turalei, Kwajok), and Unity (Leer), the management and staffing structure was reorganized. The main project office was moved from Rumbek to Juba to make it easier for the management team to access and support the various field sites. Additionally, being based in Juba allowed the management and senior technical leadership to interact and coordinate more easily with USAID, other development partners, and the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST) (now known as Ministry of General Education and Instruction – MoGEI). The management office in Juba was staffed with the COP, DCOP/M&E Advisor, Director of Finance and Administration, and an Administrative Assistant.

Two field offices (one in Wau and one in Aweil) were established and used to access all the field project sites. The field team that had been based in Agok was relocated to Aweil. The project

office in Wau supported activities in Wau, Kwajok, and Leer. The Aweil project office supported activities in Aweil, Turalei, and Agok. The field office locations were selected based on proximity and accessibility by road and air to the various project sites. The Wau and Aweil field offices were staffed with the following positions: Team Leader/Education Coordinator, Psychosocial Technical Coordinator, Training Officer, and Office Assistant.

The core field office teams were responsible for activities at their project site as well as the other project sites under their jurisdiction. Sub-site Coordinators were based in the locations that did not have project offices (Turalei, Kwajok, and Leer) and they coordinated day-to-day and community engagement activities as well as all logistical arrangements for trainings. Sub-site Coordinators reported to the team leader under whose jurisdiction they fell. As Agok had already received many of the HEAR interventions, there was no full-time Sub-site Coordinator based there, and the Aweil team made routine trips to Agok to conduct activities.

Creative made a conscious effort to pay attention to relevant tribal, ethnic, and religious issues when hiring staff. Apart from the expat COP, Creative hired from within the target locations to the extent possible, although there were staff members from other parts of Sudan/ South Sudan as well as some regional staff (Kenyans, Ugandans and Ethiopians). The staffing structure overall was extremely limited due to budgetary restrictions. Despite the extremely challenging conditions under which the teams were working (logistical, security and weather-related), staff members were very dedicated and found ways to work together to accomplish all the project goals.

## ***G. The HEAR Approach***

### ***The HEAR Approach:***

The HEAR project's innovative and successful model promoted an integrated approach to education service delivery supported by communities in a complex, conflict-affected environment. Its holistic approach addressed various elements common to increasing the quality of education: teaching, school management, parental and community participation, and responsiveness to children's physical and psychological needs.

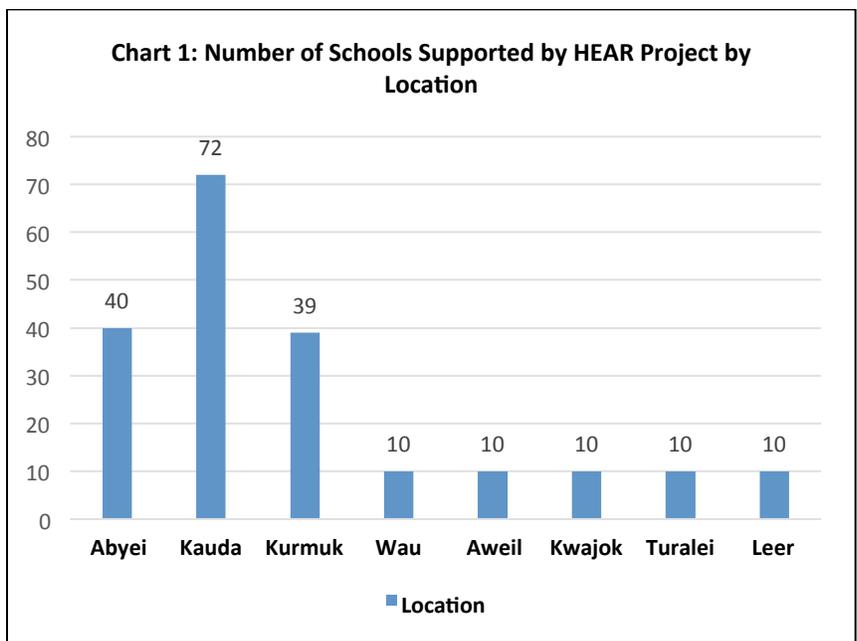
The model viewed schools as centers of learning, care, and support, and as focal points that bring parents, teachers, and community members together. For instance, schools not only served as venues for teachers to pass on education messages to children but would become safer learning environments as a result of project interventions. Communities were encouraged to apply for small grants to improve school compounds using a participatory approach that facilitated their working together peacefully towards a common goal. In this holistic model, the teacher was not only an instrument for imparting information to pupils but a counselor, an advisor, a social mobilizer, and role model within the community. The project provided HEAR teachers with training to strengthen their academic skills and give them the tools to exert their influence as respected members of the community to raise awareness about education, health, and reconciliation issues. The project promoted the development of the child by not only addressing education-related factors, but by implementing relevant activities targeted at improving the child's health and hygiene as well as his/her psychological well-being. This included creating a more sanitary and safe learning environment where children felt physically and emotionally secure. And, during the extension phase, teachers were trained to address issues such as

psychosocial distress and gender-based violence. HEAR also worked closely with government officials at the local and regional levels to plan, implement, and monitor activities.

***School Selection and Cluster Formation:***

During the initial phase of the project in the Three Areas, schools were grouped in clusters in order to facilitate the organization of school-based activities. A cluster typically consisted of a group of schools with approximately 25 primary school teachers, P1-8. The criteria for inclusion of schools in a cluster was that the schools should be close enough so that all teachers could reach a central training location, the ERC or one of the schools, by foot. A cluster usually consisted of 3-4 schools, depending on the size and proximity of the schools involved. Clusters of schools were determined in consultation with head teachers and local education officials.

During the extension period of the project in the Republic of South Sudan in 2012-2013, 10 schools were selected from each target site (Wau, Aweil, Turalei, Kwajok and Leer). In these more populous areas, schools at each location were close enough that each group of 10 schools could be considered one cluster. In Agok, HEAR continued supporting the schools that it had already been working with. Chart 1 below shows a breakdown of the schools supported by the project by location.



***The HEAR Cycle of Activities:***

HEAR interventions were designed around two organizing concepts: an initial seven-month training cycle and longer-term activities. The capacity-building activities followed a seven-month cycle. It initially included a five-day training, followed by school visits, two days of refresher courses, additional school visits, and another two days of refresher courses. During the extension period from July 2012- September 2013, four days of psychosocial support training for teachers was added to the HEAR training package and some material on health and hygiene was removed in order to fit the trainings within the timeframe available. The English language course was also included during the extension period. Regular school visits were conducted to provide

follow up and support to teachers on implementing the strategies learned through the trainings. Promotion of school governance was primarily conducted through PTA trainings and a small grants program that engaged communities in identifying and addressing specific education and health needs in their schools. Once a cluster of schools completed the seven-month cycle, another cluster would begin the cycle.

Over a seven-month period, one group of schools will take part in the following activities:

- Cluster formation
- HEAR teacher trainings
- School visits
- Refresher courses
- Community health worker training
- PTA training
- Head teacher training
- Small grants program
- School Open Days

Longer term activities included raising community awareness on health issues through Community Health Workers (CHWs), distribution of vitamin A tablets and deworming drugs to primary school students and long-lasting insecticide-treated bed nets (LLITNs) to families with small children, enhancing education technology in the ERCs, and monitoring and evaluation activities. These ongoing activities were conducted repeatedly throughout the cycle, and followed the relevant training activities to maximize their effectiveness. For example, the procurement and distribution of drugs would be conducted by the CHWs after they and teachers had received training on health and hygiene issues. Similarly, the small grants program began directly after PTAs were trained on school governance and how to develop small grants.

### ***Conflict-Sensitive Programming:***

From the start, HEAR took a conflict-sensitive approach to its implementation. The project tried to hire Sudanese and South Sudanese to the extent possible and was mindful to retain a balance between tribes and religions depending on the target location. Recognizing the need to be adaptable in an environment constantly in flux, the HEAR team members maintained a very flexible approach to their work, and were willing to adjust activities and schedules as needed. The concepts of conflict resolution and peace and reconciliation were incorporated into activities and the project tried to make sure that its interventions were relevant to the needs of a population coming out of conflict.

## ***H. Interagency Collaboration***

The HEAR project embraced interagency collaboration from the outset. HEAR used an integrated approach of multi-stakeholder collaboration with host country counterparts, implementing partners, other USG- and non-USG-funded projects, local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), Save the Children, GOAL, Mercy Corps and Population Services International (PSI), and communities to leverage external resources and information.

Coordination and collaboration between organizations was particularly important within the context of the Three Areas of Sudan and South Sudan. These were extremely challenging places to work in (from a technical, security and logistics perspective) and it was essential for organizations to support one another. Resources were scarce and budgets were often restricted, and the various NGOs working in the region were generally very willing to work together whenever possible. HEAR collaborated with USAID-partners working in the area, as well as other NGOs (both international and local) in the achievement of its goals.

Regarding its health activities, HEAR was contractually bound to distribute a certain number of vitamin A supplements and LLITNs. Additionally, based on its assessment of the needs in the target communities, HEAR also decided to distribute deworming tablets. Since the project was not allocated a budget to procure these items, it was necessary to work through health agencies who were already present in the area to source donations of these items. This was challenging at times; the HEAR target areas or beneficiaries did not always match the health agency's priorities, and occasionally the potential donor lacked sufficient supplies to be able to share them with HEAR as needed. However, the HEAR health coordinators worked tirelessly to negotiate arrangements with health partners and the project was successful in receiving donations of vitamin A supplements and deworming drugs from WHO, UNICEF and GOAL, and was able to source LLITNs from UNICEF and PSI. Since both GOAL and HEAR distributed the drugs themselves, they worked closely to coordinate their distribution plans to ensure that there was not overlap of schools. Additionally, in Kauda, HEAR staff teamed up with UNICEF on several health-related activities, and UNICEF donated hand-washing kits for distribution to HEAR schools with permanent latrines.

For education, the HEAR project initially included an IRI component through EDC, which was later removed due to overlap with the work of the SSIRI project in the same areas. However, HEAR continued to coordinate extensively with SSIRI to ensure that SSIRI was reaching HEAR beneficiaries in target areas. HEAR collaborated with Save the Children to conduct joint trainings on topics of mutual interest in Abyei and also collaborated with Internews in Kauda and Kurmuk. The Internews community radio stations broadcasted announcements in local languages about HEAR project meetings and trainings, and reported on special project events in schools. In Kurmuk, the radio station broadcasted information about HEAR school open days and health trainings, and in Kauda, they broadcasted a radio play supported by HEAR, which included pupils from primary schools talking about the importance of health and hygiene. Reports indicated that the broadcasts reached a wide audience, and a number of listeners called the radio stations to comment on the issues discussed. HEAR, from its side, supported the internet connection for the radio stations and assisted with transportation as required.

The HEAR teams also coordinated with other partners on many logistical issues. For instance, in Abyei, HEAR regional and expat staff were allowed to rent lodgings with the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) or the UN Development Program (UNDP). After the May 2008 conflict in Abyei, Mercy Corps allowed HEAR, as well as other NGOs, to rent tents in their compound in Agok in order to continue supporting the Abyei IDPs who had fled there. Similarly, HEAR rented rooms from NGOs who had existing compounds in other target areas (such as GOAL and Relief Organization of Fazugli (ROOF) in Kurmuk, and Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) in Kauda). Such measures allowed the other NGOs to maximize on their infrastructure investments and allowed HEAR to operate efficiently without needing to establish new compounds in each location.

HEAR management staff were also linked into the overall coordination mechanisms through their participation in the South Sudan NGO forum and the South Sudan Education Cluster. The MSI midterm evaluation also noted that HEAR had excellent working relationships with the Regional Education Offices and Secretariats of Health in target areas.

## II. COMPONENTS, ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND RESULTS

### ***Component 1: Improved capacity of county, and school-level service providers to improve the quality of basic education service delivery***

In the target areas (both during the original scope of work and the extension), there was a serious lack of capacity of teachers, head teachers, and education officers to provide adequate support to schools and pupils. Most education managers did not possess the skills and knowledge to plan, implement, and oversee programs. At the school level, most head teachers were not formally trained in school management and coordination, and many teachers themselves had not received formal teacher training. These issues were further exacerbated by an acute lack of textbooks, instructional materials, and school supplies. Psychosocial support was also a priority need in the target areas, which included many IDPs and returnees who were still suffering from war-related distress.

In response to these challenges, the HEAR project took a holistic approach to working with pupils, schools and communities. HEAR tried to include all those who impacted the school environment and the quality of the teaching and learning process, such as education officers, administrators, teachers, and pupils. The HEAR project's approach included the following activities:

- Establishment of Education Resource Centers;
- Training of Teachers (HEAR training package, Psychosocial support course, English language course, and Refresher courses);
- Training of Head Teachers and School Administrators;
- Conducting School Visits;
- Provision of instructional materials and school supplies;
- Development of a Model School Approach

#### **1.1 Education Resource Centers**

The HEAR project's activities emanated from the Education Resource Centers (ERCs) that were established in each of the Three Areas. These ERCs replicated aspects of the GOSS/USAID-supported Sudan Basic Education Program (SBEP) Education Support Networks (ESN). ERCs were established to provide services to clusters of schools within targeted villages and communities. Each ERC was staffed with an ERC Manager, a Community Mobilization/PTA Grants Coordinator, and a Health Coordinator. Under the supervision of the local Education Office and with links to Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), the ERCs served the following functions:

- Office space for HEAR staff;
- Central location for the oversight and management of all project activities;
- Venue to provide training to teachers, health workers, parents, and local authorities; and
- Secure location to house print learning resource materials, digital libraries, and basic low cost education technology materials.

The idea was that ERCs would serve as a central and neutral venue where government officials, teachers, pupils, and community members could convene peacefully to participate in activities and access resources.

### **Description of Activities/Interventions**

*Establishment of ERCs:* One ERC was constructed in each of the target locations in the Three Areas: Abyei, South Kordofan (Kauda) and Blue Nile (Kurmuk). The Abyei ERC was the first to be established, in 2008. The Abyei Education Office authorized the HEAR project to utilize two rooms within its compound as office space and HEAR constructed an additional room to serve as a resource library. Unfortunately, the ERC was destroyed and all its contents burned or looted in the May 2008 conflict in Abyei. After the HEAR team shifted its operations to Agok, the project established another ERC in Agok to serve the needs of the Abyei IDPs who had fled to Agok.

In 2009, HEAR reached an agreement with the Regional Education Office (REO) on space for the ERC and offices in Kauda. The project was given the use of an office space, a suitable location for the ERC, a training hall and two tukuls (huts) for staff accommodation. HEAR rehabilitated the ERC, fenced the area, and installed a VSAT and generator to provide electricity and connectivity to the site.

In Kurmuk, unlike in Abyei and Kauda, there was no pre-existing structure that could be rehabilitated for the ERC and a new building had to be constructed, with approval from USAID. In 2009, the original site chosen in conjunction with the local authorities was determined to be unacceptable, as it was being subjected to a considerable degree of property damage and vandalism. The ERC was constructed on another site allocated by the Commissioner, and included an office, a store, and a training room. Latrines were also constructed in the compound and area was fenced and protected by a security guard. The quick allocation of new land and construction of the ERC in a relatively short period of time was a very impressive achievement, especially since it was done after the onset of the rainy season.

*Provision of Resources for ERCs:* All three ERCs were stocked with books that were either purchased by the project or donated through the project's partnerships with the Brother's Brother Foundation and the International Book Bank. The purchased materials included children's reading books, atlases, dictionaries, maps and South Sudan curriculum materials. The donated books included English books for different grade levels on topics such as literature, science, mathematics and the environment. The ERCs in Kauda and Kurmuk offered digital as well as print resources. Working with partner EDC, an Education Technology Specialist (based in Kauda) led the work on compiling e-learning opportunities and digital resources for the Kauda and Kurmuk ERCs. These two ERCs were connected to the internet through a VSAT and fitted with solar panels to provide backup power. The project procured seven desktop computers, a printer, a paper binder and a scanner to be used by visitors in both these locations.

*Implementation of Activities at ERCs:* The ERCs were used not just as offices for the HEAR staff and libraries for the materials but as training venues. With the computers and internet connection, the ERC could provide access to available electronic print materials as well as online resources. Led by two staff in Kauda and Kurmuk, the project introduced computer training for students, teachers and government officials at the ERCs. The computer training was a basic introduction to computer use and MS Windows software packages. A special timetable was developed to adequately address the needs of the primary school students, teachers and officials.

In Kauda, primary school students attended computer trainings for five afternoons a week. Teachers and Kauda Teacher Training College teachers and trainees were allocated an afternoon each. In Kurmuk, teachers were trained on two mornings per week, while education and health officials received training on two afternoons and primary school students on four afternoons. Participants were trained on various modules, which varied depending on the needs of the group. For example, the module for teachers included a basic introduction to computer hardware and software, the Internet, Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint. The objective of the computer training was to ensure that teachers could obtain online teacher education resources from the open source website to increase their teaching knowledge and proper management of school data.

The ERCs aimed to serve a wide range of community members besides project beneficiaries and stakeholders. Efforts were made in both Kauda and Kurmuk to really make the ERCs a community resource. In Kauda, project staff organized showings of movies for community members on HIV/AIDS causes and prevention, education promotion and peace building. In Kurmuk, an ERC exhibition was held during a literacy week in May 2011 to raise awareness among the community about the availability of ERC materials and equipment. The Kurmuk ERC also provided internet access to the nearby hospital so that its doctors could send and receive medical data from the state capital of Damazine. In exchange for providing internet access, the ERC received 12 free hours per day of electricity from the hospital. All these efforts helped to increase the use of the ERCs.

## Results

Overall, the ERCs in all three locations were actively and extensively used by teachers, pupils, and community members, and in Kauda and Kurmuk, a significant number of people were provided with computer training. Table 1 below shows the number of people trained on computer skills in Kauda and Kurmuk:

**Table 1: Numbers trained in computer skills in Kauda and Kurmuk**

	Pupils	Primary School Teachers	MOE staff	TTC tutors and student teachers	Nurses	Grand Totals
<b>Kauda</b>	286	102	24	69	32	<b>513</b>
<b>Kurmuk</b>	50	26	6			<b>82</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>595</b>

Table 2 below provides a summary of one typical quarter's usage of the ERCs in Kauda and Kurmuk to read the books and use the computers. From October-December 2009, 1,416 people accessed the Kauda center and 268 people accessed the Kurmuk center, a clear indication of the interest in the ERCs.

**Table 2: ERC Usage in Kauda and Kurmuk**

	Kauda ERC		Kurmuk ERC	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Teachers	73	16	31	4
Primary school Pupils	525	302	94	62
Students from Sec. school, TTCs and Colleges	211	148	18	3
Parents	106	11	36	5
Nurses, doctors	22	2	14	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>937</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>75</b>

During visits conducted by HEAR staff, teachers reported that the books at the ERCs were very useful. The computers, in particular, greatly increased the functionality of the ERCs and enhanced the computer skills of teachers and local authorities. In fact, in Kauda, one desktop computer in each ERC was allocated for the use of the local Education Office authorities, as they lacked the hardware and Internet connections in their offices. This fostered trust and created a good working relationship between HEAR and its local government counterparts. It also facilitated their ability to actively support HEAR teachers in their area and be engaged with program activities.

#### **Exhibition during literacy week boosted use of resource materials at ERCs in Kurmuk**

The HEAR Project played a key role in organizing the literacy week in Kurmuk in May 2011. During the literacy week, HEAR organized an ERC exhibition to inform local authorities, education officers, health officers, teachers, students and the larger community about the availability of resource materials in the ERCs and how to make use of them. From this point, the number of users of the ERC began to increase significantly.

The HEAR project tried to create an environment that would sustain the ERCs beyond the life of the project. The idea was that the operation of the ERCs would be transferred to the State or local government counterparts before the end of the project. Accordingly, the HEAR teams in each area made every effort to involve local authorities in the management of the ERCs. State government officials agreed to second one person who would work closely with the HEAR staff and learn how to handle the day-to-day operations. In 2010, the Kauda and Kurmuk ERCs were installed with solar backup systems. The backup system made it easier to maintain the ERCs after the end of the project, as it reduced the financial burden on the regional office of running a generator. In 2011, the HEAR teams in all project locations held sustainability workshops with the local Regional Education Office to introduce the officers to the ERCs. Workshop participants discussed the project's exit strategy and agreed to prepare the local Ministry to take over ERC management. The Kauda and Kurmuk ERCs were handed over to local education authorities before the project terminated its involvement there in 2011. The Agok ERC was officially handed over to the Abyei Area Administration Ministry of Social Services and Welfare in 2013 at the end of the project.

### **Challenges**

In all three locations, HEAR worked to build the capacity of the government staff members and hand over the management of the ERCs to the local authorities at project close out. This process

worked smoothly in Agok when the project closed in September 2013. However, in Kauda and Kurmuk, efforts to ensure the sustainability of the ERCs when the project terminated operations in those locations in September 2011 were impacted by the political and security situation at the time. Project staff held a series of workshops in both locations to discuss HEAR's exit strategy and came to an understanding about staff members from the local MOE offices who would manage the ERC's services after the project's close out. However, once Sudan and South Sudan officially became two different nations and the project ceased operations in Kauda and Kurmuk, it was no longer possible for project staff to access those sites and ascertain whether the ERCs were being sustained. Since then, the security situation has continued to deteriorate in both these areas. While the HEAR project truly did make a difference in the lives of its target communities through the ERCs and made every effort to ensure their sustainability, it is important to recognize the limitations of project-level interventions in such a fluctuating political context.

## **Lessons Learned**

*Establishing a communal center such as an ERC can have many more benefits than originally anticipated.* HEAR's ERCs were planned as sites for storing resources and conducting computer trainings. However, once the centers became known among the communities, they were used for a variety of purposes and by more members of the community than had been expected. Just by creating a tangible place for community members to gather, HEAR provided communities with something that brought them together and that they could build upon further.

### **1.2 Training of Teachers**

The HEAR project improved the capacity of school-level service providers through a package of trainings for teachers. The HEAR teacher trainings gave teachers a variety of skills and the confidence to create healthy, safe, and productive learning environments for their students.

The HEAR package changed over the course of the project in response to changing needs. For the first phase of the project (2006-2011), the HEAR package included a 9-day comprehensive pedagogical training (a 5-day training followed by two two-day refreshers). When HEAR's geographic coverage was limited to Agok after South Sudan's independence in July 2011, HEAR continued to operate using this package. However, from July 2012 through the end of the project in September 2013, HEAR modified its teacher training package at the client's request. HEAR staff reduced the number of days allocated to health and hygiene, and redesigned the training manuals to focus on pedagogy, English language skills, and psychosocial support.

The HEAR package was designed to create confidence in the teachers and give them an overview on pedagogy best-practices while enhancing their psychosocial awareness skills and English language skills. The last iteration of the HEAR training package was divided into three parts. The first component was a 7-day training on pedagogy, mainly focusing on Pupil Centered Instruction. The second component was a 4-day psychosocial training to support learners' well-being. Teachers would utilize activities and methods of psychosocial support in the classroom to support trauma-affected individuals and promote the understanding of life skills in emergency and post-conflict situations. The third component was a series of trainings and support sessions to address the English language needs of teachers. Each component of the package is described in detail below. Once all the trainings were completed, HEAR held a two-day refresher training.

Refresher trainings were designed to review and address content areas from the initial trainings that the teachers found difficult to understand and implement.

### **1.2.1 HEAR Pedagogical Training**

The HEAR project developed a training package for teachers to build their capacity to deliver quality education. Target groups of teachers were comprised of both qualified and unqualified teachers, many of whom were volunteers. The training worked to bridge the gap between the two groups. The trainings ran for a period of seven days and were facilitated by the HEAR team. Following the trainings, teachers were asked to utilize the skills they learned in the classroom. The teachers and facilitators would then meet again for a two-day refresher training on key topics.

#### **Description of Activities/Interventions**

The training pedagogical training package focused on learning and practicing the concept of Pupil Centered Instruction (PCI), a teaching methodology that puts the emphasis on the students' interests, abilities, and learning styles. The methodology places the teacher's role as the facilitator of learning and encourages a "learning by doing" approach. Many teachers in South Sudan struggle with the concept of student-centered instruction. South Sudan classrooms are overcrowded with a lack of instructional materials. As a result, many teachers simply lectured to their students. The HEAR program recognized the importance of continuing to monitor the teachers' progress in their application of PCI. HEAR staff conducted school visits to evaluate the teachers' performance and then based the refresher trainings off topics with which the teachers most struggled. This training module was seen as a great step in developing the teachers into professional teachers.

During the first five years of the project, health was a major topic in the training package and topics focused on mitigating some of the health factors that constrained children's participation in education. The HEAR manuals encouraged the concept of a health-promoting school and the integration of healthy behaviors and practices in school. HEAR also taught teachers how they could talk to their students about hygiene, sanitation, nutrition, and safety. The health training was based on the FRESH Model (Focusing Resources for Effective School Health) and addressed what a "health promoting school" should look like. Topics included vitamin A deficiency, intestinal worms, malaria, trachoma, and HIV/AIDS. HEAR also provided teachers with a Teacher's Health Manual and 2-sided posters (developed by Africa Education Trust) that displayed images on topics such as "health education-a clean body," "uses of water," "nutrition," and "a clean home." The health messages taught in the classroom were supported by awareness-raising activities by Community Health Workers and the provision of drugs, described in Component 2.

Supporting the base of PCI, the HEAR pedagogical training also covered topics like utilizing PCI through the Language Experience Approach (LEA). LEA is a pedagogical concept that encourages teachers to use the students' existing language level and prior experiences to develop lessons and learn collectively. In the Three Areas and in some regions of South Sudan, many classrooms comprise students of varying ages and multiple grade levels. LEA taught teachers how to work with pupils to collectively create stories that they use as a basic text to learn about reading and writing. Over time, students begin to learn to write and edit their own stories.

Teachers were also trained on the importance of student assessment. Student assessment is necessary to ensure learning outcomes and is helpful to both the teacher and the student. Before the training, teachers often resorted to fast and easy assessment methods like asking true-false questions or multiple-choice. In the context where classrooms can be larger than 100 students, teachers were struggling with even considering any alternative. The training presented methods that teachers could use to elicit a deeper understanding of whether or not students were truly understanding their lessons. They were also trained to understand the difference between objective and subjective assessment methods and were encouraged to use both methods to allow students to fully demonstrate what they have learned.

Classroom management was a very essential component to the training. HEAR trainers acknowledged the difficulties that teachers were facing to maintain a positive classroom environment. As a result, teachers sometimes did not have positive relations with their students. The training encouraged teachers to teach empathy, adopt a problem-solving, not a fault-seeking attitude, and to model desired behavior. Teachers were exposed to a toolbox of options for how they could establish and maintain a supportive classroom atmosphere.

In South Sudan, resources in schools are lacking. Therefore, the HEAR pedagogical package also included sessions on making teaching and learning aids using local materials. In many schools, students did not even have textbooks. However, teachers came to realize that they had all the necessary materials available to them to make teaching and learning aids for their classrooms. Using local materials like sticks and domestic items, drawings on papers and demonstrations in the school compound, teachers become active in teaching and helping students to understand their lessons. Teachers were given handouts on instructional aid options for different subjects as a reference for what type of material is best used in certain activities. The training empowered them to use what they had to help the student engage with their learning.

Another topic from the training focused on making schemes of work and lesson plans. It was discovered that there was a great variance in different parts of the Three Areas and South Sudan in terms of the extent to which teachers prepared for their classes. The HEAR pedagogical training allowed teachers to learn or review the steps essential for quality teaching. Teachers learned about a Progression Table (also referred to as a “scope and sequence”), which charted students’ content and skills ordered in a sequence. This is the first step to building a scheme of work. Once intended content and skills are charted, teachers can organize the content they must teach each term throughout the year and develop their scheme(s) of work. The training helped to professionalize teaching through the use of a logical progression. Teachers also felt empowered and relieved when they were able to identify the resources and activities they would use to teach specific content objectives. By the time the participating teachers were tasked with making a sample lesson plan, their understanding of the importance of each step was made clear. The HEAR pedagogical training concluded with a practical exercise to give teachers the opportunity to practice the skills introduced by the training and share ideas with their peers.

## **Results**

The project trained 1,500 teachers on the HEAR pedagogical package. The breakdown of the numbers by location and gender is shown in the table below.

**Table 3: Number of teachers who participated in the HEAR pedagogical training**

Location	Male	Female	Total
Kurmuk	231	148	379
Kauda	300	61	361
Abyei/Agok	305	86	391
Wau	36	42	78
Aweil	61	7	68
Kwajok	65	13	78
Turalei	67	6	73
Leer	69	3	72
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,134</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>1,500</b>

The HEAR project rolled out this training to teachers in target schools in the Three Areas for five years. Using the cluster model, the project completed a cycle of trainings in each cluster and when complete, moved on to the next targeted cluster. Schools in each cluster continued to receive support throughout the five-year duration.

During the extension period from 2012-2013, the HEAR project rolled out the training to teachers in targeted schools in four states of South Sudan. In the time available, the project was able to train one cluster of schools in each area: Kwajok, Turalei, Leer, Wau, and Aweil. Targeted schools in Agok had received the pedagogical portion of this training in the preceding years but were invited to participate in the English language and psychosocial support trainings as described below.

The project aimed to reach 1,481 teachers (LOP target) with this in-service training. The fact that HEAR was able to reach 1,500 teachers shows that the HEAR staff managed their plans systematically despite the constraints of working in a conflict-affected environment.

In the focus group discussions conducted at the end of the project, most teachers noted that PCI and the other skills they learned in the HEAR pedagogical training increased student classroom participation, improved their ability to manage their classrooms, and allowed them to use a variety of activities and assessments for improving student outcomes. They agreed that teaching became more enjoyable due to a more positive interaction with their students and the practice of scope and sequence gave teachers more confidence and made it easier to teach with intention. In Leer, for example, head teachers reported that certain female teachers in HEAR schools had previously not been very active. After the HEAR trainings, they became more motivated and embraced teaching as a profession. They even began to encourage other female colleagues to become teachers, and advocate for young girls to come to school.

#### Quotes from Teachers on PCI

*“Classroom management, group work and class control is more easy to do. I no longer beat children, am now more friendly with them and we discuss as I am more flexible and do listen to students” said a teacher in Wau.*

*A teacher in Aweil stated, “I used to teach students without knowing their names but I discovered it was important to call them by their names and when I called students by their names I could see some happiness on their faces.”*

## Challenges

One of the main challenges related to the IRI component being dropped early on in the project due to the overlap with the SSIRI project. While HEAR advocated for SSIRI to target HEAR schools, the project did not add any education material to its own training to compensate. Therefore, the initial HEAR trainings were seen as lacking in education content by both beneficiaries and the midterm evaluators. As a result, HEAR revised its content to add more education-focused material. Another challenge noted by beneficiaries was that the initial HEAR education content did not really address their specific needs. Most teachers had limited, if any, formal training, and wanted more information on the basics of how to teach in a classroom. Therefore, the new education content focused on teaching methodology topics such as classroom management, developing schemes of work, and lesson planning.

The project also noted that there was a big variation in the number of female teachers versus male teachers who participated in the trainings. HEAR staff worked diligently to invite as many female teachers as they could find. However, the existing gender breakdown in teachers in the target locations prevented the project having a closer gender parity.

## Lessons Learned

***Understanding the skill levels and specific of teachers and then developing training materials to address their specific needs is critical.*** HEAR discovered that the initial pedagogical training package that was designed assumed that teachers had certain basic skills and abilities in teaching. In the post-conflict context of Sudan and South Sudan, most teachers had very limited, if any, training. Therefore, it was important for the HEAR team to secure the feedback from teachers themselves about their needs and skill levels and develop materials to address those specific needs.

### 1.2.2 HEAR Psychosocial Training Package

The majority of the population in HEAR's target areas in South Sudan were seriously impacted by the long civil war. As a result, even after the war, much of the population was still struggling with post-war related psychosocial issues. Children had been exposed to the war at a young age and had often never been given the opportunity to overcome their traumas with outside support. Teachers play a central role in a child's life and can provide social and cognitive support by allowing a child to express their concerns freely, make choices, and develop life skills. However, most teachers in the target areas were themselves suffering from psychosocial stress. As a result, many teachers were ill-equipped mentally to face the day-to-day workload of managing hundreds of children at a time. Teachers in South Sudan had a history of beating their students when they misbehaved. They were unaware of alternative methods that would allow them to safely help their students mature cognitively and psychologically in the classroom.

From the beginning of the project, HEAR teacher pedagogical trainings included methods that teachers could utilize to create a safer learning environment. The original pedagogical training and refreshers were designed specifically to address the difficulties that teachers and students were facing in their conflict-affected society. However, in 2012, USAID asked the project to make training on psychosocial support more rigorous. The training was designed to empower

many teachers to understand children's well-being and learn strategies they could use in their classroom to facilitate the healthy growth of the child.

### **Description of Activities/Interventions**

HEAR built upon existing resources to develop its psychosocial support training manual. It was based on the Life Skills and Psychosocial Support Guidance Manual developed by the South Sudan Education Cluster, which included modules on topics relevant for HEAR teachers, such as psychosocial wellbeing and support, gender inclusion and access, peace building and child protection. HEAR also reviewed additional resources on these topics that had already developed by organizations such as UNICEF, Save the Children and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in South Sudan to meet the needs of the target population. Using these resources, HEAR adapted the manual to be more relevant to the target audience, and to focus on the needs of teachers as well as pupils.

HEAR's psychosocial training focused on a variety of key concepts and activities to purposefully acknowledge and remediate effects of social, economic, political, and other forms of distress found in the classroom. The coursework for teachers participating in this training began by developing an understanding of some key concepts, including the words psychosocial, well-being, resilience, and education in emergencies. Throughout the four-day training, HEAR facilitators made reference to the *Teachers' Code of Conduct for Emergency Situations*, which was signed by the MoEST in 2011. Each school received a *Teachers' Code of Conduct for Emergency Situations* that they signed and were asked to display in their schools. The training was designed to help the teachers adhere to this code by giving them the knowledge and the skills to keep to it.

The course helped teachers identify children with psychosocial needs and empowered teachers with teaching methods to help children cope with issues such as depression, shortness of breath, or inability to concentrate. As teachers were exposed to key concepts and vocabulary, many were able to accept for themselves the same understanding that they would give to their students. To do so, participants learned about strategies that can be applied to students' and their own well-being and learned how to better manage a classroom in this context. Teachers were shown alternatives to the damaging practice of corporal punishment, a practice that seemed ubiquitous in the northern states. Teachers practiced their listening skills, which they recognized as being important in gaining the confidence of children affected by trauma.

HEAR staff extended the invitation for State MoE officials to participate in the training. Fortunately, their response was positive and many state officials were present to learn about these new skills.

### **Results**

The psychosocial trainings were conducted in Kwajok, Wau, Turalei, Aweil, and Agok. HEAR's LOP target was to train 350 teachers on psychosocial support and wellbeing. The project was able to reach 345 teachers, 99% of the target. The breakdown of participants by gender and by location is shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: Psychosocial Support Training**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Wau</b>	<b>Aweil</b>	<b>Kwajok</b>	<b>Turalei</b>	<b>Agok</b>	<b>Grand Totals</b>
<b>Male</b>	34	66	67	60	49	<b>276</b>
<b>Female</b>	39	3	11	3	13	<b>69</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>345</b>

As a result of the trainings, teachers participating in the focus groups said they had become more aware of the specific needs of all their students, with an emphasis on those who showed signs of distress. Schools are displaying the teachers' Code of Conduct in their staffrooms and have

**Quote from George Ali,  
Director of Partners' Coordination, MoEST**

*"Psychosocial issues are so important. Peace education should be integrated into the government. Issues should be settled by teachers and addressed by teachers because the war damaged most of us."*

discussed the need to abide by the code with all teachers practicing in their school. Teachers indicated that they have desisted from corporal punishment, thus improving the relationship between teachers and students and parents. One teacher in Wau reported that, following the trainings, she formed a community

counseling group that she advises on psychosocial issues. She also said that other teachers in her area began to support community members on issues such as gender-based violence and advised them on coping mechanisms for trauma.

### **Challenges**

The psychosocial support training rejected the notion of corporal punishment as an option, despite the fact that corporal punishment was widely used and almost as widely accepted by teachers and communities as a form of discipline. The project found that rejecting that practice was difficult for teachers and they required time to adapt to using different approaches. Although many teachers reported at the end of the project that they no longer beat their pupils, this change in behavior was not universally witnessed.

While the psychosocial support training did address the needs of teachers, there was an expectation that the teachers would gain sufficient knowledge and skills through the process to create a caring environment for pupils. This was not always the case. The project discovered that many adults who were in need of psychosocial support themselves could not always handle and utilize the practices that the training maintained. For some distressed teachers, the training had a deep impact on them as it helped open their eyes as to why they reacted the way that they did to daily challenges. The training helped these teachers overcome their own fears and suffering and they were able to make remarkable changes in their teaching practices. For others, however, the burden of change was overwhelming and they could only make limited progress.

The project required that schools post the teachers' code of conduct in their school after the training. When HEAR project staff monitored this directive, they found that only about 50% of

the schools were displaying the code. Some schools admitted that they had yet to pin the code to their staffroom's walls. Other schools, however lacked a good staffroom and claimed that they had no place where they could safely display the code.

## **Lessons Learned**

*When dealing with communities suffering from psychosocial distress, it is essential to address the needs of all members of the community, rather than just a select group.* By addressing the needs of teachers as well as pupils, HEAR's training was more successful than it would have been had the project only targeted pupils' needs.

Also, changing attitudes and behaviors, especially of a population coming out of a crisis, is a lengthy process. While the training and support provided by HEAR made some headway, overcoming serious psychosocial trauma can take years and often requires more professional and targeted support than the HEAR project was able to provide. Similarly, changing behaviors around an issue like corporal punishment also requires a gradual shift in attitudes within the overall community.

### **1.2.3 HEAR Teacher Refresher Training**

#### **Description of Activities/Interventions**

The HEAR project emphasized the importance of following up with teachers after a training. The project wanted teachers to attempt to apply their learnings to the classroom and report back to project staff concerning any concepts with which they may have had problems. Refresher trainings were designed to be flexible training days to address gaps in content or practice. For the first five years of the project, the project held two, two-day refresher courses following each training. During the extension period, the project provided more days of initial training and one two-day refresher training course. Concepts from the psychosocial support training were also included in the refreshers.

Each refresher training began with teachers' feedback. The HEAR facilitators listened to the feedback and promptly guided the lesson of the refresher training to focus on areas the teachers wanted to cover. Teachers had the opportunity to share their experiences implementing the new techniques in their classrooms with their peers. This created a sense of community and allowed teachers to help one another by advising on what worked and what did not work in their experiences. HEAR facilitators also took this opportunity to revisit difficult topics. Most often, teachers asked to review concepts like the creation of schemes of work and lesson plans, effective classroom management techniques, and how to teach using locally developed teaching aids.

Frequently, teachers chose to review concepts such as communication strategies to use with children who have experienced distress, how to identify children in the classroom who have undergone trauma, and how to erase the stigma of special needs students within the class.



HEAR team leading a refresher course in Kurmuk

## Results

As a result of the refresher training courses, teachers were able to more fully grasp pedagogical concepts. They could revisit concepts that were not clear to them and they could hear from their peers about their experiences. They showed a real desire and commitment to improving the likelihood of student achievement in their classrooms.

## Challenges

Pedagogical and psychosocial trainings were so filled with content that it was not always possible to address all the topics with the depth that was needed. Therefore, refresher trainings sometimes ended up acting as extensions of the original trainings with new content being taught, rather than serving as true refreshers.

## Lessons Learned

*There is a need for flexibility when conducting refresher courses.* Refresher trainings were designed to address the specific needs of teachers who may not have been able to master and apply all concepts from the original training. By nature, this meant that HEAR staff could not plan the content too strictly ahead of time. Rather, they needed to allot sufficient time to address the content areas that teachers felt they were weak in and needed additional support in.

### 1.2.4 HEAR English Language Training Program for Teachers

After the signing of the CPA in 2005, it was determined that English would be South Sudan's official language of instruction in all schools. In a country with over 60 indigenous languages, many teachers lacked English language skills. In the Three Areas and in most of the states in the north where the HEAR program operated, Arabic was the common language. To help existing teachers move from an Arabic medium of instruction to English, the HEAR project initiated a foundational, learner-centered training course that focused on supporting teachers to develop their English language and communications skills to deliver lessons in English with greater effectiveness.

## Description of Activities/Interventions

*Training and Tutoring:* Beginning in September 2012, the HEAR project designed an English language training program that intended to build a foundation to improve the English language skills of teachers. The project recognized the language improvement is a long-term process and takes many hours. According to the Common European Framework for Languages, in a supportive environment, learners can be expected to raise their language competence by one level as a result of 100 hours of learning. Therefore, this course was not expected to show significant results within the one-year of its implementation. Rather, it was a pilot to see if the approach and content of the course were relevant to the target teachers and if it was a model that could be extended or replicated in the future.

In keeping with the HEAR project goals of emphasizing education, psychosocial support, and peace and reconciliation, these elements were integrated into the HEAR English language learning program. The program was led by selected tutors from each HEAR-supported school, who were trained by the HEAR project. The tutors were identified by state MoEs to lead and sustain English language support to teachers in their schools. Each tutor worked with teachers from 2-3 target schools. Twenty-five tutors, five from each target area, were given an orientation to the HEAR project and to the English course materials in September 2012.

The English language program comprised of two main support mechanisms for teachers. Tutors supported teachers for a period of 12 weeks with twice weekly support meetings at the teachers' schools. During these meetings, tutors were encouraged to use New English File lesson plans from Oxford University Press. The project supplied New English File books to teachers and tutors. The books are described in more detail below. Tutors could also use the support sessions with the teachers to address specific concerns that the small group of teachers were facing at that particular time. In some cases, tutors could give individual instruction while other teachers used New English File workbooks.

The second mechanism aimed at improving the English skills of teachers was a 10-day rigorous language course provided by the tutors. In the September 2012 orientations, tutors were introduced to the HEAR project and to the ECRIF concept. ECRIF is a framework for understanding how students learn. It stands for Encounter, Clarify, Remember, Internalize, and Fluent Use. In order to help the tutors reach a large number of teachers, all with different exposure to English and different levels of English skills and comfort, the HEAR project introduced this framework to allow teachers to adapt their approach as needed and to assess where their students were on the ECRIF spectrum. The orientation enabled tutors to improve their effectiveness as tutors, particularly for the twice weekly support sessions with the teachers in their schools.

In January 2013, tutors were reconvened in Wau, South Sudan, for a five-day training of tutors specifically to prepare for the 10-day rigorous language training course for teachers. The HEAR project developed a "*Using English to Teach*" manual specifically for the 10-day language course. Tutors reviewed the ECRIF concept and were introduced to a variety of activities specifically purposed to support the teachers' skill levels across the ECRIF spectrum. For example, when teachers were *encountering* a group of new words for the first time, tutors were encouraged to use pictures, hand gestures, or act out the meaning of a new word. Later in the

day, teachers would test the students' abilities to *remember* the meaning of new words by playing games such as "slap", "dice game" or "human computer."

Throughout the five-day training, tutors were exposed to these simulation exercises. The HEAR facilitators reinforced ECRIF concepts over and over again to ensure that tutors were prepared to be flexible in their approach based on how well the students were understanding each lesson. Flexibility for learners helps learners feel assured that they learn content that is relevant to them at a pace that is appropriate.

The HEAR team used two more interesting tactics with the tutors. One of these tactics was to start off each day with a "Community Builder". In keeping with the spirit of the HEAR goals, community builders helped to create a fun and engaging learning environment. Learning languages requires participation, and the community builders fostered the notion that everyone was equal in importance and could safely learn at their own pace. The HEAR team used a second tactic with the tutors to help them understand the importance of review, reflection, and patience. In a simulation exercise, the HEAR facilitator taught the entire lesson in Spanish. Because no South Sudanese tutor spoke Spanish, everyone began the lesson on the same level as new language learners. The facilitator did not use any words in English and all tutors were exposed and vulnerable just as the learners in their future trainings would be. The strategy initially frustrated the tutors. However, over the course of a few activities, tutors' confidence grew as they *encountered* new Spanish words, *clarified* them with the facilitators, played games to *remember* the new vocabulary, and *internalized* them. By the end of the session, tutors were using Spanish words *fluently*. Tutors believed in the approaches used by the facilitators and were reminded on the importance of review and reflection as well as patience.

Following the training of tutors, the tutors, with support from the entire HEAR staff, conducted the 10-day English training for teachers. All teams conducted their trainings in February 2013. In an effort to supply learners with additional resources and give them the opportunity to practice their English vocabulary pronunciation, the project supplied participants in the English language program with MP3 players. Content from the New English File CDs were downloaded onto the players, allowing teachers to hone their listening skills. Teachers were also taught how to use the recording function so that they could practice their speaking and pronunciation skills. One MP3 player was distributed to each of the 50 schools the project was supporting in the four states of South Sudan during the extension period: Warrap, Unity, Western and Northern Bahr el Ghazal, as well as Agok.

*Selection Criteria for Measuring Improvement:* The HEAR team consulted with Oxford University Press (OUP) to determine the criteria for measuring improvement in English language skills. An initial diagnostic test conducted at the start of the course assessed basic grammar and vocabulary. The test was multiple choice and tested subject verb agreement, pronouns, plurals, spelling, and basic vocabulary. The baseline information showed a wide range of English language proficiency of teachers, with some scoring as high as 100% on the grammar test and the vocabulary test and others scoring as low as 0% on the vocabulary test.

The end of the course post-test exam tested basic grammar and vocabulary as well as pronunciation, reading comprehension, and writing skills. This test used a variety of testing methods including multiple choice, fill in the blank (with no word box), true/false, and a writing section. Because the end of course exam was significantly more difficult than the diagnostic test,

the project and OUP attributed an appropriate weight to the baseline to account for the difference. It was determined that the diagnostic test justified approximately 10% of the degree of difficulty of the end of course exam. The results of the diagnostic test, therefore, were divided by 10 so that the two tests could be compared.

While 333 teachers were trained on the English training package, not all were considered when looking at the indicator measuring improvement in English language skills. Firstly, not all teachers were present during the baseline or post-tests, and therefore only teachers who had both a baseline and post-test score could be considered. Given the participants' wide range of skills demonstrated on the diagnostic test, it was decided by HEAR and OUP that any participant who scored above 90% on the baseline could not be counted towards the indicator measuring improvement. Although it was likely that these participants did improve their English language skills and their use of English in the classroom, the team would not be able to demonstrate improvement of these individuals due to their very high baseline results.

The indicator measuring the percentage of teachers showing improved English language skills is dependent on the definition of improvement. It is generally agreed that language improvement is a long term process. The HEAR project used the Common European Framework as a guideline to measure improvement. The Common European Framework divides general competencies in knowledge and skills with communicative competencies. In a supportive environment, it is hypothesized that learners would raise their language competence by one level as a result of the 100 hours of learning. See Annex 1 for the "Common European Framework for Languages."

After further consultations with OUP regarding the application of the Common European Framework to the participants' baseline and end of the course exam results, the project determined that teachers would need to show a 70% improvement from their weighted diagnostic test score to their end of the course exam to be considered as having improved from one level to the next. Therefore, "improvement" was determined by looking at the number of teachers who scored less than 90% on the baseline test but at least 70% or more on the post-test. A detailed description of the number of teachers included in the measurement of this indicator is shown in Table 6 below. The table is disaggregated by gender and by region.

**Table 6: English Language Course participant testing figures by region**

HEAR English Language Course participants												
	Wau		Aweil		Kwajok		Turalei		Agok		TOTAL	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
# of teachers with scores on baseline test	34	32	53	3	40	10	52	5	39	9	218	59
	66		56		50		57		48		277	
# of teachers with scores on both baseline and post-test	21	21	45	1	21	6	32	1	16	4	135	33
	42		46		27		33		20		168	
# of teachers discounted due to high baseline score (more than 90%)	1	2	6	1	7	3	0	0	0	0	14	6
	3		7		10		0		0		20	
# of teachers counted towards indicator on improvement in English language skills (less than 90% on baseline and 70% or higher on post-test)	20	19	39	0	14	3	32	1	16	4	121	27
	39		39		17		33		20		148	

## Results

Over the course of 12 months, 333 teachers were reached with the English language training package (including the 10-day rigorous workshop and 12 weeks of twice weekly tutoring sessions). A breakdown of the totals by location and gender are presented in Table 5 below.

**Table 5: English Language Teachers Trained**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Wau</b>	<b>Kwajok</b>	<b>Agok</b>	<b>Aweil</b>	<b>Turalei</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
<b>Male</b>	34	57	59	64	52	<b>266</b>
<b>Female</b>	32	12	16	3	4	<b>67</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>333</b>

With the LOP target for the project set at 350 teachers trained in English language skills, the project achieved 95% of its goal.

Although the project had limited time to reach teachers looking to improve their English language confidence and skills, the English language program had a significant impact on the teachers. During school visits, project staff observed that teachers could express themselves better in the classroom. In an evaluation assessment conducted by the team at the end of the project, teachers noted that the course had greatly improved confidence in English speaking skills among teachers within the schools and the communities. They also noted that Arabic medium teachers were showing an improved ability to use English in the classroom.

Teachers and tutors alike also appreciated the materials provided to supplement the trainings and support their learning. The New English File books allowed teachers to get the most out of the weekly sessions with tutors. Tutors cited the books as the main reason for the improved grammar and vocabulary use they observed in teachers. Teachers also noted improvement in their pronunciation of English words due to the use of MP3 players. Teachers were excited to practice on their own using the technology. When asked, most teachers rated themselves above 7 in a scale of 1-10 measuring their improvement from the time they started the English Language program. Anecdotal data supports the growth shown by the difference in baseline and post-test knowledge.

**Quote from Dominic Deng Longo, Director  
General for Education, Abyei Area  
Administration**

*“All teachers came from the North... Arabic pattern and they were very unlucky to find that everything was going to be in English. They were trained by HEAR and now they are able to stand in the class and teach English. This is one of the best works of the project.”*

The statistics for the number of teachers showing improvement through the English language course (based on the criteria noted in the section above) is broken down by region and gender as shown in Table 7 below.

**Table 7: English Language Course total statistical improvement and by region**

HEAR English Language Course statistical improvements												
	Wau		Aweil		Kwajok		Turalei		Agok		TOTAL	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
# of teachers able to be counted towards the indicator	20	19	39	0	14	3	32	1	16	4	<b>121</b>	<b>27</b>
	39		39		17		33		20		<b>148</b>	
# of those teachers showing improvement at the 70% threshold	14	14	30	0	3	1	7	0	13	2	<b>67</b>	<b>17</b>
	28		30		4		7		15		<b>84</b>	
% of teachers showing improved English language skills	71.79%		76.92%		23.53%		21.21%		75%		<b>56.8%</b>	

As a result of the English language course, approximately 57% of teachers were able to be counted towards the indicator showed improved English language skills. It should be noted that while the project can claim only 57% of teachers as having moved from one level to the next based on the Common European Framework, many more teachers benefited from the course and would have experienced some level of improvement in their English skills.

### Challenges

The project encountered certain constraints in implementing the English language course, including a wide range of language abilities among target teachers and tutors. While most tutors had a solid command of the English language, some did not. The project worked in conjunction with the State Ministries of Education to identify the English tutors for the program. HEAR staff did not enforce with the Ministries the idea of using rigorous selection criteria to select tutors as this would not have been acceptable culturally. Furthermore, target teachers who participated in the trainings varied greatly in their language levels. This made the job of the tutors much more difficult and the concepts espoused by the ECRIF model that much more important. Most teachers reported that the impact of the training would also have been greater had the training been longer and stretched over a longer period of time.

There was also a delay in the shipment and distribution of the New English File guides and workbooks. Some schools began their twice weekly tutoring sessions before the books were able to be distributed. Also, the project could only budget for one student book for every two teachers. Although each participating teacher received a workbook to practice their lessons, teachers had some difficulty coordinating the use of the student books. Teachers also found it

difficult to share MP3 players. The project procured one MP3 player for each target school for the purpose of enhancing their listening skills and allowing them to practice their pronunciation. Because the MP3 was seen as one of the most valuable assets in the school, some teachers found it difficult to access.

## **Lessons Learned**

*Allocate sufficient time for language training to have a significant impact.* Learning any language requires ample time and dedicated practice, and this training was added to HEAR's scope of work in the final year of the project. Therefore, although the initial results of the English language course were encouraging, the project was not able to measure the impact of the training over a longer period of time. While this training was meant to serve as a pilot to see if the overall concept of the course was sound, going forward, such trainings should be allocated a longer duration in order to truly impact their beneficiaries and show sustainable results.

*Design English language training that addresses the wide range of English skills among teachers.* The HEAR project did not have the time or resources to provide a course that could cater to the different abilities of the participants. This resulted in some teachers benefitting greatly but others being bored as they had started out with a better command of English. In the future, incorporating different levels into the English language course would better cater to the varying skill levels of teachers and provide support that targeted their specific needs.

## **1.3 Training of Head Teachers and School Administrators**

HEAR provided head teachers and school administrators with training on school management and support from the start of the project. This was essential in terms of understanding what the teachers are being trained on, both to ensure their buy-in to the process and so that they can support the teachers effectively. In 2012, after the project shifted operations from the Three Areas to the four states in South Sudan, the HEAR project added an Education Managers Training course to its training portfolio. Focused on county and payam education officers, this course was designed to enhance local capacity for planning and management of schools, particularly in regards to instructional supervision.

### **Description of Activities/Interventions**

To provide head teachers and school administrators the needed support to effectively carry out their functions, the HEAR project crafted a three-day course in management skills, leadership skills, instructional supervision and school development. The school administrator groups included education supervisors at the payam level, county education officials and state ministry education officials. This training was aimed at building an understanding of the roles of the different stakeholders in the management of schools and how they can develop the schools together. It provided a platform to sustain school development through leadership and management of school resources.

The HEAR team created an Education Managers Training Manual. The Manual guided users through the planning process for a range of interventions aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning in their respective schools. Such interventions included the development and use of classroom observation and assessment tools and a strategic planning process for

school supervision. Innovative, friendly, instructional supervisory methods such as clinical supervision were introduced as well.

## Results

In total, 611 head teachers, school administrators, and ministry education officials were trained on instructional strategies, planning, and school management. This total includes participants from all areas impacted by the HEAR project over its seven-year lifespan. Of this total, 151 county level education managers participated in the program in Year 7, using the revised module for instructional supervision. Feedback from the training revealed that the education managers appreciated the interactive approaches used by the trainers to encourage dialogue with the team and with one another. Below is the breakdown of number of administrators, head teachers and education managers trained by location and gender. With an LOP target of 622, the project achieved 98% of its goal.

**Table 8: Number of Head teachers and School Administrators Trained**

Location	Male	Female	Total
Kurmuk	113	18	<b>131</b>
Kauda	197	20	<b>217</b>
Abyei	99	13	<b>112</b>
Wau	22	12	<b>34</b>
Aweil	27	2	<b>29</b>
Kwajok	26	1	<b>27</b>
Turalei	26	1	<b>27</b>
Leer	29	5	<b>34</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>611</b>

## Challenges

One of the principal challenges in delivering the Education Managers' training was finding a gender balance. In South Sudan, there are few full-time female teachers. Furthermore, the higher positions in the educational system tend to be male-dominated. Another issue was the fact that during the CPA period, schools in the Three Areas were part of a fractured system with little support from the federal government. For these schools, educational management and supervision was a notion unsupported by assemblies outside of their immediate surroundings. The responsibility was great for these school leaders, who simply could not provide all the support needed by the schools.

## Lessons Learned

*Securing the buy-in and engagement of head teachers and education managers is critical to success and sustainability of school improvement interventions, especially in a context where there is still limited support available from the larger educational system.* Indeed, HEAR staff noticed that given the same training, some head teachers had a very positive attitude and exerted significant effort in following up on trainings and supporting teachers. Other head teachers were not so diligent, and this lack of motivation came across in the implementation of activities at the school.

## 1.4 School Visits

School visits helped HEAR staff monitor the progress of project interventions. They also provided an opportunity for HEAR staff to support teachers in their efforts to apply the HEAR approaches to their daily instruction.

### Description of Activities/Interventions

The HEAR project included the practice of visiting schools throughout all cycles of interventions. During HEAR's first five years, while operating in the Three Areas, HEAR staff continued to visit schools even after the cycle of training for a cluster of schools had finished. To the extent possible, HEAR staff included education managers in their school visits. They used the checklists and tools developed by the M&E Advisor to determine schools' progress in implementing HEAR interventions and also the main needs and challenges at the schools. During school visits, the HEAR team met with teachers, head teachers, PTA members and pupils. School visits held teachers and administrators accountable and helped to inform future refresher trainings. School visits allowed staff to monitor the impact of other project activities as well. The staff monitored whether or not the schools displayed the Teacher's Code of Conduct. Staff also monitored progress and completion of any small grants activities.

School visits were conducted as often as possible. HEAR's workplan mandated that school visits were conducted following each pedagogical training in order to inform refresher courses. Staff traveled to as many schools as possible. School visits also took place during any major health activity, whereby the project distributed vitamin A supplements, deworming drugs, or any other treatment relevant to the students' health needs. Following each school visit, the monitoring team would write up a report and discuss the main findings from the visit with the rest of the HEAR team, in order to inform future activities as well as refresher trainings.

### Results

School visits were conducted on a monthly basis to the extent possible. However, since the teams visited different schools during each visit based on the schools' accessibility and the needs at the schools, there is no specific figure for the number of visits paid to each school.

### Challenges

The principal challenge HEAR faced on school visits was that targeted schools were often in far-reaching places, and South Sudan's road infrastructure made travel to these schools long and arduous. This made it challenging for the HEAR team to always reach all schools with the frequency desired.

### Lessons Learned

*School visits are invaluable even if project staff are not able to conduct visits as regularly as they would like.* These visits provided very important information from teachers, head teachers and others about what they were able to implement from the HEAR trainings, what they were still struggling with, and what their main needs were in the schools. This allowed the HEAR team to adjust future activities to accommodate these needs. Indeed, it is essential to incorporate regular and frequent school support visits between trainings in order to secure this feedback and

provide on-site assistance to teachers to implement the interventions. Otherwise information gained during trainings is rarely used or used incorrectly, and teachers lose interest and motivation to practice what they have learned.

## **1.5 Provision of instructional materials and school supplies**

Most schools and communities in South Sudan are severely under-resourced. Many schools targeted by the project did not have textbooks for children, let alone other reading materials. Similarly, teachers lacked teaching aids, making it difficult for them to variegated their instruction. As a result, the project worked to increase the availability of instructional materials and supplies to teachers and students.

### **Description of Activities/Interventions**

The HEAR project interventions in the Three Areas were focused around Education Resource Centers (ERCs), described above in Component 1.1. These ERCs initially housed all the materials provided by the project. The ERCs were secure and permanent structures, and the community saw them as a centralized space for learning. The project did not construct ERCs when the project expanded to the South Sudan states in 2012. However, the project continued to supply schools directly with books and other materials.

*Reading Materials:* In collaboration with international book distribution companies, the project management received book donations from the Brother's Brother Foundation in 2008 and from the International Book Bank (IBB) in 2013. Brother's Brother contributed 11,500 books as a donation for schools in the Three Areas of Sudan. The project also received 5,000 books from Mercy Corps that were distributed to schools in Agok. The International Book Bank contributed 34,508 books and other reading and learning materials, including learning kits with flashcards and games. These books and other learning materials were distributed to the 50 target schools in South Sudan.

For many schools, this was their first time receiving such a donation. Teachers expressed sincere thanks for providing the children with supplemental reading materials that would help improve the culture of reading in the schools. Leer's County Education Director in Unity state thanked the project for the support and asked to be considered again for such a donation in the future. Since some schools were lacking in classrooms and stores, the head teachers of such schools were entrusted with the books for safe custody. However, the head teachers were encouraged to make the resources readily available to teachers and students.



**HEAR Finance Officer presenting reading books to teachers in Kurmuk**

*New English File Books:* To support the English language program, the project supported teachers and tutors with New English File resources from Oxford University Press. Twenty-five teacher's books were distributed to the tutors. The teacher's books were used by English language tutors to help them deliver twice weekly support sessions. The project also procured 200 Elementary Student books and 350 Elementary Student workbooks. Each of the student's books was shared by two teachers, but all teachers who were enrolled in the program received their own workbook.

*MP3 Players:* To support the English language program, the project also provided MP3 players to schools. The players were fitted with audio material complementing lessons found in the New English File books. They contained SD cards that were locked with information for the training as well as a slot left for the teachers to use other SD cards for recording other training materials if they so wished. One MP3 player was distributed to each of the 50 schools in the target states of South Sudan.

*School Attendance Registers:* In 2009, in an effort to increase accuracy of school data in the Three Areas, the HEAR project printed School Attendance Registries and distributed them to schools. With each school estimated as having classes from P1 – P8, eight attendance registers were distributed to each school. In total, 3,000 class attendance registers were procured by the project for distribution. This exercise covered the areas of Abyei, Kauda, and Kurmuk, with each location receiving 1,000 registers. In so doing, the project was able to report more reliable enrollment data gathered from school records.

*First Aid Kit Distribution:* In March 2010, the HEAR project procured First Aid Kits for the Community Health Workers (CHWs). Sixty-four First Aid Kits were procured from Khartoum and distributed to each of the schools supported by the HEAR project in Abyei and Kauda. Another procurement was made to supply 30 First Aid Kits from Khartoum to HEAR-supported schools in Kurmuk. This intervention helped schools supported by the CHWs to address minor cases of injury. It was the first time schools had resources necessary to deal with such matters.

## **1.6 Model School Approach**

During the first two years of implementation of the project, the team had given considerable thought to the concept of establishing “model schools”. This idea was proposed for implementation in Year 3 of the project. Among the HEAR-supported schools, six schools (two in each of the Three Areas) were to be identified as model schools and receive a more comprehensive array of services, including increased resources, in-house training and monitoring, and more grants funding, to allow for a holistic school improvement plan. The approach would show how limited resources could be put to greater use and have a deeper impact if used to demonstrate good practices for school management, teacher ability parental involvement, and pupil participation. Model schools would be exemplars of some of the theories and practices as promoted through the HEAR project training programs, including such aspects as water storage points, hand-washing stands, latrines for girls and boys, displaying of information and administration notices, school clubs and School Open Days. Other nearby schools would visit the model school and learn from the head teachers, PTA members and teachers on how to organize their school like a “model school.”

### **Description of Activities/Interventions**

In the third quarter of Year 3 (April-June 2009), the HEAR team began piloting a model school approach, with the active participation of regional education officers to ensure buy-in and ownership of the strategy. Workshops were held in each of the Three Areas with Payam supervisors and other education authorities to agree on the selection criteria, and one school was selected in each location to be a model school. The teams then visited the selected schools and discussed the model school concept and the way forward for implementation with the school’s PTAs and teachers. By the end of March 2010, the teams were ready to begin implementation with the model schools.

The implementation of the model school approach was put on hold during the midterm evaluation conducted in May 2010. After reviewing activities in Kauda and Kurmuk and speaking with HEAR staff, the team noted that in an already conflict-sensitive environment, the model schools may create the perception of inequality in the areas served by the HEAR project, if certain schools were seen as being favored over others. Given the existing tensions, it was deemed inadvisable to continue with the implementation of the model school concept. Upon recommendation from the midterm evaluation team, HEAR decided to discontinue the implementation of the model schools. Instead, the funding allocated to this activity was reassigned to the small grants program.

### **Results**

There are no specific results associated with this activity, since it was cancelled before interventions could begin in the model schools.

### **Challenges**

The main challenges with implementing the model schools approach were detailed under the description of the activity above.

## Lessons Learned

*It is essential to constantly be aware of conflict dynamics and maintain a conflict-sensitive lens when operating in such a volatile environment.* From the start of the project, the HEAR team worked hard to bring communities together and promote peace and reconciliation. Stopping the implementation of the model school approach was a good example of the project's understanding of the conflict dynamics in the region and the decision prevented any exacerbation of tension in target communities.

## ***Component 2: Increased sensitization around health issues and provision of basic health services to primary school children***

Good health and nutrition are key factors in ensuring that children both attend and perform in school. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), malaria, nutritional deficiencies, and infections from parasitic worms can impact children's ability to participate in school and learn. This results in poor classroom participation, high absenteeism and early drop out. In the Three Areas of Sudan, primary-school aged children suffer from malnutrition or nutrition deficiencies, malaria, and intestinal worms. Recognizing the importance of child health and nutrition in promoting cognitive development and educational attainment, a robust health component was integrated into the HEAR project.

The HEAR project's health component was based on the Focusing Resources on Effective School Health (FRESH) model, developed by WHO, UNICEF, UNESCO and the World Bank. The four main components of the FRESH model are as follows:

- **Health-related school policies:** School-based policies should ensure a safe and secure physical and psychosocial environment.
- **Safe water and sanitation facilities:** Clean water and sanitation should be addressed in order to create a healthy school environment.
- **Skills-based health education:** It is essential to develop knowledge, attitudes, values and life skills around health, hygiene and nutrition in order to make appropriate decisions around health issues.
- **School-based health and nutrition services:** Schools can effectively deliver certain simple and safe health and nutritional services in a non-discriminatory and secure environment.

The effective implementation of this model involved partnerships between education and health workers, teachers, pupils, schools and community groups, as well organizations responsible for health programs in the area. The HEAR project's approach included the following activities:

- *Training of teachers on health-related interventions (addressed under Component 1.2.1)*
- Training of Community Health Workers (CHWs)
- Awareness raising within communities on health topics
- Distribution of vitamin A and deworming drugs to primary school children
- Distribution of long-lasting insecticide-treated bed nets (LLITNs) to primary school children
- *Use of PTA grants to address health needs in schools (addressed under Component 3.2).*

Based on the FRESH model, the HEAR project developed an integrated health package that would complement its education interventions. The targeted health-related activities were conducted during the original scope of work of the project in the Three Areas, in Abyei, Kauda and Kurmuk. During the extension period, there was no health funding available and the project could not continue health-related interventions such as the use of CHWs and the distribution of drugs and bed nets. However, to the extent possible, health education topics were covered in the HEAR teacher training package and the project shared information with teachers and pupils on how to access health services.

## 2.1 Training of Community Health Workers

HEAR worked closely with Community Health Workers (CHWs) to implement its health activities. The CHWs were selected from within their own communities, and were involved in all aspects of HEAR's health interventions. Their role was not only to raise awareness around health issues in the communities, but to actively monitor HEAR schools and support teachers and pupils in their efforts to create safer and healthier school environments. They also assisted in the procurement and distribution of vitamin A supplements, deworming drugs, and long-lasting insecticide-treated bed nets. Since the CHWs were part of the communities they worked in, HEAR relied on their inputs to get up to date information on the specific challenges and needs in schools and communities and respond to them.

### Description of Activities/Interventions

*Materials development:* Led by partner JSI, the HEAR project developed the curriculum for the initial Community Health Worker (CHW) training. The training materials were designed to address the needs of the target communities. The five-day training manual covered basic primary health care issues (diarrhea prevention, malaria, intestinal worms, immunization, nutrition, STIs and HIV/AIDS, trachoma, and the use of bed nets), and adult learning activities (role plays, songs, story telling). In 2009, after conducting several CHW trainings, HEAR staff reported that there was insufficient time to go into detail on all the topics in the training manual. Based on their feedback, the training manual was revised to be more focused and to strengthen the capacity and skill level of the CHWs to enable them to deliver effective health messages to parents.

*CHW Recruitment:* HEAR recruited Community Health Workers (CHWs) in each of the target locations in the Three Areas as part of its goal to link education activities to health interventions at the school and community level. CHWs were selected from within their own communities and consisted of members of the community, members of the Ministry of Health and volunteers from other NGOs. Having volunteers working within their own communities increased the CHW's motivation and engagement in their work. Also, as members of the community, they had more credibility when raising awareness and disseminating health messages than someone who would be perceived as an outsider. HEAR aimed to recruit 40 CHWs to support each cluster of 10 schools.

*CHW Training:* The CHWs in each target location attended a 5-day training led by the Health Coordinator and facilitated by the HEAR team. The training focused on hygiene and sanitation promotion, effective communication about the cause, prevention and treatment of common diseases, and how to report on common illnesses observed in communities and schools. Training topics included diarrhea, diarrhea prevention, oral rehydration treatment, intestinal worms/schistosomiasis, trachoma, hygiene and sanitation, nutrition, vitamin A, malaria, use of bed nets, immunization, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and first aid. As all the project's CHWs were volunteers, the training also addressed what it truly meant to be a volunteer in this context, and the roles and responsibilities of the CHWs.

CHWs were also included in the health sessions which were part of the HEAR teacher training program. After the initial training, the CHWs in each location met with the HEAR Health Coordinator on a monthly basis. These regular meetings served as a good opportunity to discuss

ongoing activities, share challenges identified by the communities and receive updates on different health topics from the Health Coordinator.

## Results

From 2006-2011, a total of 618 CHWs were trained across project sites.

**Table 9: Number of Community Health Workers Trained**

Community Health Workers Trained in the Three Areas			
Location	Male	Female	Total
Abyei	87	77	164
Kauda	167	120	287
Kurmuk	93	74	167
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>618</b>

Overall, HEAR's health component was extremely well received by its beneficiaries, based on feedback received over the course of the project and during the focus group discussions at the end. The external midterm evaluation conducted in 2010 also concluded that the health component of the project was very successful based on their interviews with teachers, CHWs and health officials, and they noted clear evidence of good health messages. The evaluation also confirmed that CHWs on the whole demonstrated a good understanding of the topics covered in their training.

## Challenges

The HEAR team found that the trained community health workers needed close supervision and guidance to motivate them. They sometimes lagged in their responsibilities due to other priorities and a lack of incentives. The midterm evaluation noted that some CHWs expressed frustration about being volunteers. The CHWs' need to prioritize their family's economic needs resulted in a reduction in some CHW's involvement over time.

## Lessons Learned

*It is difficult to ensure the continued motivation and engagement of volunteers over time without ongoing training or incentives to increase retention.* During the life of the project, incentives can be provided. For instance, HEAR provided CHWs with t-shirts as a small incentive to increase motivation. While this was successful during the course of the project, it is difficult to comment on whether the CHWs will sustain their work after the project's closure.

## 2.2 Community Engagement

In order to ensure that any program interventions are truly embraced by its beneficiaries, it is essential to also secure the buy-in of the overall community. While training teachers on health and hygiene was very important, HEAR recognized the need to conduct significant community engagement on these issues. HEAR health coordinators and CHWs worked closely together to raise awareness around health, hygiene and sanitation in the target communities, and also supported the development of local groups, such as village health groups and school-based health

clubs, so that community members could begin to identify some of the health challenges in their areas and work together to find solutions.

### **Description of Activities/Interventions**

The HEAR Health Coordinators and CHWs engaged with teachers, pupils, parents and community members in a variety of ways.

*Information dissemination:* CHWs were tasked with disseminating health, hygiene and disease prevention messages to school children, their families and community members, and raising awareness among community members about good health practices. They also provided teachers in target schools with guidance on teaching children and adults in their communities about issues related to basic health, cleanliness and nutrition. Through the CHWs, community members were provided with clear and simple information on preventing and treating common health problems in their own homes.

*Village health groups:* HEAR Health Coordinators established village-based community health groups in each target area. Often these consisted of women's groups within the community. The HEAR Health Coordinator held meetings with these groups to discuss specific health-related issues and ways to address them. While the groups did ask request HEAR's support (both technical and financial) for certain projects, they also focused on how the community itself could contribute time and resources to solve the problem. The picture below shows a women's health group in Kurmuk meeting with the HEAR Health Coordinator to discuss the possibility of constructing latrines to improve hygiene and sanitation in the area.



**HEAR Coordinator in Kurmuk holding a consultative meeting with a women's health group**

*School-based health clubs:* The HEAR team worked with schools to form school health clubs to promote hygiene through different activities. Some clubs conducted monthly performances on hygiene and sanitation. Others focused on messaging through games and sports, and promoting the importance of exercise and good health, which successfully encouraged other children to participate in the clubs and the sports activities. These clubs also fostered a sense of

responsibility in the students, who worked together to ensure that they had clean latrines and an uncluttered compound without first being instructed to do so by their teachers. As a result, the children, side by side with their teachers, ran sessions to clean up their school compound and create a safer and healthier learning environment. Many students even began to impart these basic health messages to their parents at home.



**School health club in Kurmuk holding a sporting event to draw attention to the importance of regular exercise**

*Provision of resources to schools:* HEAR Health Coordinators' and CHWs' engagement with schools and communities highlighted many specific needs in the target areas, some of which the project was actively able to address. One of the main needs that emerged was for First Aid Kits. HEAR responded to this need by procuring First Aid Kits from Khartoum. The HEAR team and CHWs distributed kits to each of the schools supported by the project in the Three Areas and conducted trainings for teachers on how to use them. In most cases, this was the only health resource available at these schools, and it allowed teachers and CHWs to deal with minor injuries at schools rather than allowing wounds to fester or having to rush patients to a health clinic. Another need that emerged was for hand washing kits and water reservoirs. The project was able to provide schools with these kits and reservoirs through the small grants component (see Component 3.2, School Improvement Small Grants Program) to help protect school children from infection within the school. UNICEF also donated hand-washing kits to the HEAR project for distribution to schools with permanent latrines. The hand washing kits were placed near the school latrines to promote better hygiene.

## **Results**

From the HEAR team's midterm evaluators' discussions with CHWs, CHWs expressed pride in their knowledge about health and hygiene and their ability to engage communities in supporting health-related projects. The midterm evaluation found that the dissemination of health, hygiene, and disease prevention messages by teachers, health coordinators and CHWs was successful and suggested that the integrated health and education inter-sectoral design should be considered a model for future projects working on access to primary education. CHWs' presence was prominent in the communities and they were overall diligent about visiting target schools

regularly. CHWs reported that they promoted personal hygiene, including hand washing, bathing, preparation and storage of food and the clean maintenance of households.

Given the limited health facilities and resources available in the Three Areas, the engagement of CHWs and HEAR Health Coordinators was extremely successful. In particular, the health and hygiene facilities constructed through the small grants program and the resources donated through partners such as UNICEF were much appreciated by the schools and communities. Stakeholders interviewed during the midterm evaluation reported that the health of their children and their attendance in school had improved.

## **Challenges**

There were certain challenges to the implementation of health practices such as the use of latrines and hand washing. Indeed, the severe lack of access to clean water was an enormous challenge in the target locations. While it was important to disseminate health messages, it was difficult for teachers and pupils in schools to effect behavior change without the necessary resources. CHWs also noted their frustration with teaching about proper hygiene and sanitation when there was often no clean water source near the community. Some CHWs said that sometimes community members would avoid them out of shame because they could not practice or follow through on what they had been taught.

## **Lessons Learned**

*There are always limitations to what one project can achieve within its scope of work, which underscores the importance of interagency coordination and collaboration.* HEAR staff did their best to provide needed health and hygiene facilities such as latrines and hand-washing facilities through the small grants projects so that teachers and pupils could practice what they had learned in their health trainings. However, it did not have the resources or mandate to construct water points to address larger issues around hygiene and sanitation. The project advocated for organizations constructing boreholes and water access points to do so near the HEAR schools but could not ensure that this took place. Such issues require coordination at a higher level between organizations working on different sectors in the same target areas.

## **2.3 Distribution of Vitamin A and Deworming Tablets to School Children**

Healthy food and nutrition is vital during early childhood. Vitamin A deficiency in particular compromises the immune systems of almost 40% of children under the age of five in developing countries and can increase children's susceptibility to malaria and diarrheal diseases. However one dose of a vitamin A supplement every six months can reduce child mortality by 12-23% and it is recognized as a very effective way to improve child survival. Food and nutrition is an acute health concern in most of the conflict-affected areas in Sudan and certainly in the Three Areas. Therefore, the HEAR project design included the distribution of vitamin A supplements to children from target schools. Although the general WHO practice is to focus on children under five, HEAR targeted children under the age of 10 due to the serious malnutrition problems and the dire need for this supplement among children in the Three Areas.

Apart from vitamin A deficiency, intestinal worms were cited as some of the main health concerns for young children. Indeed, while conducting the initial vitamin A supplement

distributions to school children in Abyei in 2007, the HEAR project health coordinators realized that intestinal worms originating from the small river banks surrounding Abyei were a serious problem and there was a real need to fight these water-borne diseases in the area. This was particularly an issue in Kauda in the Nuba mountains as well, where deworming tablets such as Mebendazole and Albendazole were often given more importance than vitamin A by communities. This was because there were many areas without boreholes or clean sources of water. The main sources of water in these areas were seasonal rivers, and during the rainy season, the waste from the hillsides washed into the rivers. Due to the lack of a proper human waste disposal system, the rivers became highly contaminated and the water unsafe to drink. However, community members continued to search for water in these rivers and in the sand beds that remained during the dry season. According to the local referral hospital run by GED (German Emergency Doctors), 30% of deaths in the area were due to intestinal infections attributed to improper hygiene and sanitation. Local clinics only gave out deworming drugs for curative, not preventive, purposes, and teachers in HEAR-supported schools strongly voiced their opinion about the need for deworming drugs. Therefore, HEAR included distribution of deworming drugs as a part of its health interventions, even though it was not a contractual deliverable.

### **Description of Activities/Interventions**

*Distribution of Vitamin A Supplements:* The HEAR project was contractually obligated to distribute vitamin A supplements to its target beneficiaries. However, the project was not allocated a budget to procure these tablets directly and was expected to cost-share them from other agencies working in the target areas. Therefore, it sourced the drugs from health providers already working in the area. These included WHO, GOAL, UNICEF and PSI. Drug distribution was conducted by the HEAR team and CHWs at the schools on a semi-annual basis. This was in keeping with the integrated HEAR approach of using school as a central venue for different activities in order to bring parents, teachers, and community members together.

Before each vitamin A distribution, the team visited the school at least 1-2 weeks prior to discuss the distribution with teachers and PTA members so they could explain the activity to the students and their parents. Prior to administering the supplements, HEAR project staff also disseminated health education information to students, teachers, and parents on the following: what vitamin A is and the foods that contain vitamin A; why people need vitamin A; and how to protect children and mothers from vitamin A deficiency. HEAR encouraged parents to come to the school during vitamin A distributions and to bring their young children who were not yet enrolled in school so that they could also receive the vitamin A doses.

*Distribution of deworming drugs:* Even though it was not a contractual deliverable, HEAR took into account the impact of intestinal worms on pupils' physical and cognitive development and the vocal requests from the target communities, and agreed to start providing deworming drugs to the extent possible. As with the vitamin A supplements, HEAR health coordinators requested deworming drugs from agencies such as WHO and GOAL, and targeted children up to the age of 15. The deworming drugs were administered at the same time as the vitamin A supplements. In addition to administering the drugs, health coordinators also disseminated health education information to students, teachers and parents, focusing on: the purpose, importance, and advantages of deworming; how people become infected with intestinal worms; possible side-

effects associated with deworming medication; and where to seek health services for other related illnesses.

As a result of the keen interest in and impact of the deworming tablets, in 2010 the project health team carried out a survey to test the prevalence of Bilharzia in Kauda. Working in collaboration with the local health clinic and hospital in Kauda, it was found that there was a high prevalence of Bilharzia among the people in that area. The project was successful in acquiring Bilharzia medication from WHO and administered it to affected people with assistance from the local clinics.

## Results

**Table 10: Number of Children who Received Vitamin A and Deworming Tablets in the Three Areas**

<b>Vitamin A and Deworming Tablets Distributed by Location</b>	
Location	Total
Abyei	8,513
Kauda	7,366
Kurmuk	11,933
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,812</b>

As shown in the table above, 8,513 children received vitamin A supplements and deworming tablets in the Abyei region, 7,366 in Kauda, and 11,933 in Kurmuk. With a total of 27,812 children reached over the course of the project, HEAR achieved 103% of its set LOP target of 27,087.

These distributions were regarded by beneficiaries as one of the greatest contributions of the project to the target areas. Head teachers attested to the effectiveness of the drugs provided by HEAR and noted that the number of pupils going to the local health clinics had drastically reduced since they began receiving medications regularly through the HEAR project. In many cases (such as Yabus Payam in Kurmuk), formal medications were not reaching many of the schools in the target areas, and the HEAR project was able to reach these underserved populations for the first time through its delivery mechanism. Below is a picture of the HEAR Health Coordinator in Abyei providing deworming tablets to pupils.



**HEAR Health Coordinator in Abyei provides deworming tablets to children**

## **Challenges**

The main challenge for the HEAR team was that the project had no budget to procure vitamin A supplements and deworming tablets. This posed a conundrum at first, as HEAR was contractually obligated to distribute a certain number of vitamin A supplements but the project was not allocated the resources to ensure that this happened. HEAR health coordinators had to constantly request the needed drugs from health agencies working in the area, such as WHO, GOAL and UNICEF. While the program always eventually succeeded in obtaining what was needed, it was often difficult to conduct these negotiations on a regular basis. Firstly, donors such as WHO or UNICEF did not always have an active presence in target areas. The HEAR team also approached GOAL, another health NGO to obtain drugs. Since GOAL also conducted drug distributions, they did not always have sufficient inventory to spare for the needs of the HEAR team. Eventually, HEAR's senior management was able to come to a more formal arrangement with GOAL and the Ministry of Health in Juba, so that HEAR's needs could be incorporated into procurement planning for target sites and the project could have more regular access to the needed drugs. HEAR and GOAL also coordinated their distribution efforts so that there was no overlap in distribution sites.

Another challenge was that some of the target communities were not initially aware of the utility of or need for these drugs. Therefore, at first, it was necessary to provide a very thorough explanation of the activities that would be conducted and the use of the drugs in order to convince them of the benefit to children. This process of securing their buy-in was done in close collaboration with officials from the secretariat of health. It was successful and all the target communities were soon very grateful for these drugs and desirous of more.

## **Lessons Learned**

***When a project is contractually obligated to distribute items by leveraging contributions from other agencies, this process is most effective if such partnerships are negotiated and***

*formalized at the very start of the project.* This allows the project to feel confident that it has the resources and mechanisms to deliver on its contractual obligations.

## 2.4 Distribution of Long Lasting Insecticide Treated Bed Nets

Malaria remains one of the most deadly diseases in Sub-Saharan Africa. With its tropical climate and large amount of rainfall, the region provides an ideal breeding ground for mosquito larvae. Indeed, almost 90% of malaria-related deaths worldwide occur in Sub-Saharan Africa. And, with a vigorous rainy season that lasts 5-6 months of the year and its numerous small rivers and swamps, malaria is particularly prevalent in South Sudan and the Three Areas.

One of the main goals of the HEAR project was to increase access and retention of children in primary school. Young children's susceptibility to malaria was cited as one of the main reasons for absenteeism from schools in the target areas. Therefore, the HEAR project determined to provide information on malaria prevention and to distribute long-lasting insecticide-treated bed nets (LLITNs) to the families of pupils from target schools.

### Description of Activities/Interventions

Similar to the vitamin A supplements, the HEAR project was contractually required to distribute LLITNs to families with young children in target areas but was not allocated a budget to do so. Therefore HEAR health coordinators had to negotiate the donations of bed nets from health organizations working in the area. This process initially got off to a slow start in Abyei. HEAR engaged in numerous discussions with UNICEF in 2008 and eventually received approval to distribute 3,000 bed nets in the Abyei area in May 2008. 1,000 of the LLITNs were received from UNICEF but an armed conflict flared up on the very day of the planned distribution. This conflict destroyed most of Abyei town and unfortunately the bed nets were also lost during this time. HEAR was able to secure a second consignment of 2,004 bed nets from UNICEF. Additionally, PSI donated 20,000 LLITNs to HEAR in 2010, and the project team and CHWs were able to conduct distributions to all the target schools in Abyei, Kauda and Kurmuk. Distributions were conducted at central locations and families were provided with training on the proper use and maintenance of the LLITNs. Additionally, the HEAR team disseminated information on malaria prevention and how to stay safe from infection.

### Results

**Table 11: Distribution of Long-lasting Insecticide-Treated Bed Nets by Location**

Long-lasting Insecticide-Treated Bed Nets Distributed by Location	
Location	Total
Abyei	5,470
Kauda	8,464
Kurmuk	8,070
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,004</b>

As seen in Table 11, 5,470 bed nets were distributed in Abyei, 8,464 in Kauda, and 8,070 in Kurmuk over the course of the project. With an LOP target of 22,174, HEAR achieved 99% of its target.

From the internal impact assessment conducted at the end of the project, teachers reported that the distribution of the LLITNs had reduced children's absenteeism due to illness, and greatly improved student attendance in classes. School monitoring visits by HEAR staff revealed that children were excited about the bed nets and were actively using them. Indeed, it was also reported that in many communities the mosquito nets also served as a safe-guard against other insects as well as snakes, which are particularly prevalent in Kauda and the Nuba mountains. Even though the project has been unable to supply additional bed nets during the project's extension period, LLITNs are still much sought after and requested by beneficiaries. This need should be taken into consideration during future USAID programming.

## **Challenges**

One of the main challenges regarding the distribution of LLITNs was that (similar to vitamin A supplements and deworming drugs), HEAR did not have any budget to procure these. Therefore, the project had to repeatedly negotiate with health agencies to secure donations of bed nets for distribution. Initially, the project worked with UNICEF to secure bed nets for Abyei. This was a difficult process as UNICEF had very specific requirements regarding who was eligible to receive LLITNs. For instances, the donated bed nets could not go to returnees as UNICEF was already planning on covering these households through their own distribution. This posed quite a challenge as almost everyone in Abyei could be classified as a returnee. Eventually the HEAR team held a community building exercise whereby the community members themselves decided on the criteria by which a child/family would receive a bed net. This also allowed HEAR to use the activity as an exercise in community mobilization and conflict resolution. Finally, HEAR did secure approval to distribute 3,000 bed nets from UNICEF, although this distribution did not take place due to the conflict in Abyei in May 2008. Eventually HEAR did secure an additional 2,004 bed nets from UNICEF and was able to conduct that distribution. Sourcing bed nets continued to be a problem until HEAR was able to come to an agreement with PSI for the distribution of 20,000 bed nets in 2010. However, HEAR did not have any real control over the timing or quantities of donations, which made it difficult to plan ahead.

Another challenge faced by the HEAR team was that bed nets were targeted at specific populations. Since the focus was on protecting small children, the distributions were done for families of children in HEAR schools. However, the project was not able to also supply nets to HEAR teachers. This became problematic because the teachers had equally been made aware of the dangers surrounding malaria and wanted to be included in the distributions, as many could not afford to buy one. The project was able to direct the teachers to organizations such as UNICEF which were conducting wider distributions.

## **Lessons Learned**

***When a project is expected to leverage contributions from other agencies to meet a contractual deliverable, it is best if such arrangements are formalized at the start of the project so that the project team is not continuously struggling to meet the needs of its beneficiaries as well as its contractual deliverables.***

### ***Component 3: Increased community engagement in school improvement and the promotion of peace and reconciliation***

The civil war in Sudan devastated communities and displaced thousands of people. The impact of the war was particularly felt in the Three Areas and the states in South Sudan bordering the north. These areas were left with very limited infrastructure and a lack of basic social services. During the CPA period and in the post-independence period, there was a huge influx of IDPs and returnees to these areas, which placed an additional burden on the host states, especially in terms of adequate school infrastructure. Many communities felt that schools should be the government's responsibility. In many of the target areas, which contained a significant number of IDPs, there was often not a strong sense of community or communal ownership and accountability. Hence, in addition to resource constraints, the lack of a sense of ownership also constrained the full participation of communities and parents in their children's education. Recognizing that it is essential for individuals to be actively involved in the rebuilding of their communities, HEAR worked hard to engage community members, such as PTAs and SMCs in the provision of social services such as education and health. The HEAR project's approach included the following activities:

- PTA/SMC capacity building training
- School Improvement Grants Program
- School Open Days

#### **3.1 PTA/SMC Capacity Building Training**

Communities are often the main source of support for schools. Parent Teacher Association (PTA) trainings build the capacity of parents and community members as key stakeholders in education so that they can participate in the decisions that are made about school resource allocation. It allows them to build relationships with teachers and be involved in shaping the educational experience of their children. Community engagement in project implementation has become a prominent mechanism by which to foster sustainability of project goals. When communities become involved in school governance and school improvement plans, teachers and administrators are held accountable. Similarly, when communities are involved and trained on their roles and responsibilities, they can collaborate with schools to play a part in identified improvements to ease the burden of teachers alone. For the HEAR project, the process of parental and community engagement is as important as the end goal itself. Building these lasting relationships is a tactic for fostering a cohesive community that prides itself on cooperation, peace, and reconciliation.

#### **Description of Activities/Interventions**

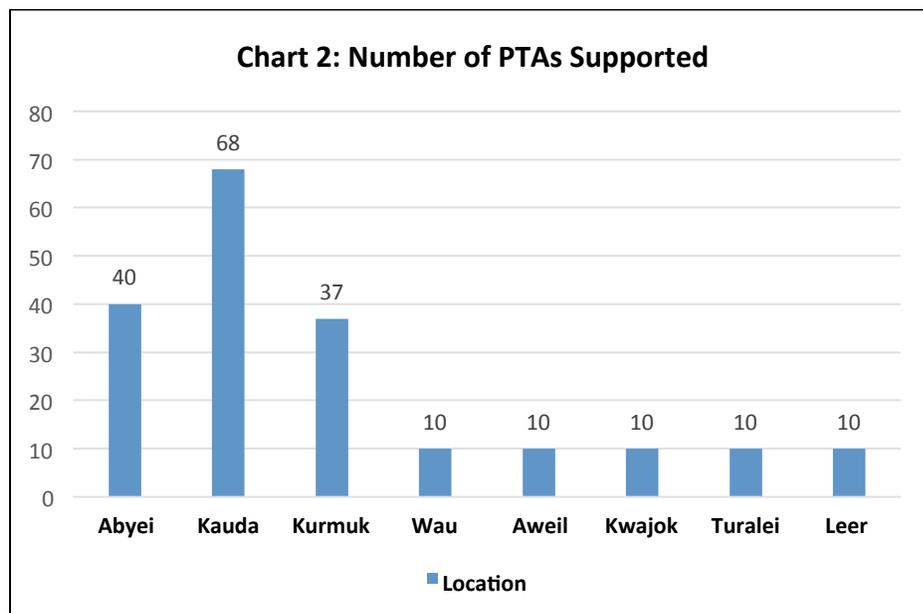
From its inception, the HEAR project engaged PTAs that existed in the school community. In communities that did not have a PTA, the HEAR project collaborated with community members to form one. In the Three Areas, the HEAR team used good practices in PTA engagement to be able to raise their level of understanding regarding the major constraints facing their schools and help them to identify local solutions. When the HEAR project expanded into South Sudan's northern states after independence, the HEAR staff revised the PTA manual to include all the priorities stated in a policy paper on PTAs and SMCs drafted by the MoEST in Juba.

The HEAR team created a three-day training for PTA members that was divided into two parts. Part I of the manual focused on community mobilization and involvement. HEAR trainers reviewed South Sudan’s education goals and based on that, facilitated discussions with each training group on the creation of a PTA mission statement. During this exercise, HEAR trainers introduced the roles and responsibilities of PTAs to the members, emphasizing how they can apply their roles in managing their organization’s activities effectively. Many community members believed that schooling and school improvement was the sole responsibility of teachers. The training taught parents about the importance of their involvement. PTAs learned about the importance of mobilization and sensitization to channel human and other resources into development efforts. Supporting these efforts, PTAs studied the international instruments safeguarding children’s rights.

Part II of the training focused on the development or improvement of the association itself. South Sudanese culture can be quite hierarchical. While respecting that, the HEAR trainers did emphasize the importance of a successful group dynamic in order for an organization to be well coordinated and effective. HEAR trainers delivered lessons to improve leadership skills, noting that there are many different types of leaders and that PTAs need to harness the potential of all its members. The final lesson in part two of the training was focused on developing plans that helped them run their activities. This involved lessons in budgeting, delegation, problem solving, resource mobilization, and monitoring and evaluation. At the end of part two, PTAs created their constitution, assigned roles and discussed membership. Finally, the PTAs were taught how to apply for and implement small school improvement grants. This process is described in Component 3.2 below.

## Results

The HEAR project trained and supported 195 Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) in the Three Areas and the northern states of South Sudan over the life of the project. Chart 2 shows the breakdown of the figures by location.



The major impact of the PTA trainings was seen in their successful efforts in applying for and implementing small grants. It was also seen in their increased involvement and ownership of school activities. During the project's internal evaluation at the end of the program, beneficiaries commented that prior to the trainings, PTAs existed, but members would attend school functions sparingly. They were not aware of their roles and responsibilities to the schools. After the project training and support, they noticed that PTA members became more active, increased the frequency of visits to schools, and better understood their roles in managing school affairs. PTA members reported that after the PTA trainings, they began to respect teachers more, and started assisting head teachers to solve problems in the school. They now recognized that they were part of the school administration and saw themselves as a bridge between the school and community.

PTAs began contributing more meaningfully to school improvement projects. Most commonly, PTAs contributed to the construction of temporary classrooms using local resources. These efforts increased the frequency of interaction between parents and school authorities, fostering a greater level of respect for teachers from parents and community members.

## **Challenges**

Many people in the Three Areas and in the border states of South Sudan were in temporary dwellings or were in the process of resettling to their former homes. In some cases, this allowed the substances of the PTA teachings to spread far and wide. Communities could take the learnings with them and apply it to their new school communities. However, in other cases, the project discovered that decreased membership in PTAs, due to the resettlement process, caused the number and intensity of PTA activities to decrease. The 2010 midterm evaluation team found that the PTAs who received training in 2008 now had fewer members trained as compared to PTAs who had received training in later stages of the project.

The make-up of the PTAs also proved challenging in some communities. Many parents in the communities that HEAR reached were illiterate. This made training more difficult for HEAR staff who had to use different approaches to ensure that the substance of the training was understood by as many PTA members as possible. PTAs were also male dominated, both in their composition and in their decision-making process. Despite HEAR staff encouragement of women to join PTAs, membership was often decided by village elders. However, in the cases where woman had greater decision making power, PTAs were often more successful in sustaining their efforts even in the midst of ongoing conflict.

As described above, the third day of the PTA training focused on PTAs creating a school development plan, with a linked budget and monitoring activities. After some evaluation, school development plans proved to be overly ambitious and required more training. Instead, the PTAs were more successful in implementing small grants.

## **Lessons Learned**

***Engaging community members around education through mechanisms such as PTAs can not only help improve the learning environment and strengthen school governance but can also lay a foundation for stability in a fragile post-conflict environment.*** According to the feedback from the focus group discussions at the end of the project, the PTA trainings reduced tensions within the communities because parents and teachers gained a better understanding of their roles

and responsibilities and discovered how they could better support one another. The process encouraged all stakeholders to have a voice, to express their vision, and to work together to realize their goals.

### **3.2 School Improvement Small Grants Program**

The school improvement small grants program was intended to accomplish many things. The target regions of HEAR are some of the most disadvantaged in the world. The Government of Sudan neglected to support communities in the Three Areas with basic social services, including health and education. After independence, communities in South Sudan expected tangible support from their nascent government. The small grants program provided some support for communities to develop their schools into safer and healthier environments. With increased community participation through the PTA training and other health outreach activities, the project used small grants to raise interest among community members to support the provision of these basic social services in the absence of government ability to do so.

The small grants programs aimed to improve and promote hygiene and sanitation and to improve school appearance and infrastructure, and to foster the spirit of togetherness and conflict avoidance by bringing communities together. Indeed, one of the main components of the HEAR project was the promotion of peaceful conflict resolution and reconciliation strategies through its activities. During the implementation of the small grants program, community members came together around a topic of mutual interest such as a school improvement project, and were encouraged to work together peacefully to achieve a common goal. The expectation was that hands-on involvement in a tangible project would create a gradual shift in attitude and foster an increased sense of mutual ownership and responsibility.

#### **Description of Activities/Interventions**

*School Improvement Plans:* The small grants component of the HEAR project was an opportunity for PTAs to put into action a school improvement plan. By the end of the PTA training, members learned how to write proposals to apply for a grant. The criteria for the written proposal was simple, to encourage members to apply their learnings. HEAR trainers guided PTA members to identify the intervention that was most needed in their school to address limited resource constraints. After the planning and proposal writing was complete, the PTA could submit the proposal to the grant selection committee, described below.

*Grant Management Committees:* After PTA trainings, the HEAR project formed a small grants committee to oversee the operation and management of the small grants. In the Three Areas, the committee comprised of one HEAR team member and at least two members of the community. When the project moved into South Sudan, the committee comprised of one HEAR team member, one staff member from the State Ministry of Education, a member of the PTA, and a member of the payam education office. The committee visited the sites and scored the proposals based on predetermined criteria. Most proposals were awarded to PTAs on their concepts to improve school safety and infrastructure or awareness activities to promote peace and reconciliation. Several grants were also used to create a healthier environment in the schools. As noted in Component 2.2, Community Engagement, HEAR disseminated messages on hygiene and sanitation at schools and in communities. However, most schools did not have any facilities to put these learnings into practice. Therefore, several PTAs chose to use their grant money to construct gender-segregated latrines and water and hygiene facilities.

During the first stage of the project, grants were awarded in the amount of \$2,000 per award. Funds were eventually increased to \$2,500 per award due to requests from the community. When HEAR received its extension into South Sudan in 2012, it was initially agreed with USAID that the project should provide one large grant project (in the amount of \$18,000) in each of the five target locations. The rationale was that investing more funds would allow for the creation of a larger and more durable product. However, over the course of implementation, the HEAR team determined that, given the large distances between schools, it would be more beneficial to the communities to have more (albeit smaller) grant projects in each target area. After discussions with USAID, it was agreed that the project would approve three grants in each location (for about \$6,000 each). This decision also fit in well with the overall process-based rationale of the small grants activity, as it allowed more PTAs and community members to be actively engaged in the grants and take on the responsibility of creating something tangible for their schools.

## Results

With PTA and community participation and contribution, the HEAR team oversaw the completion of 74 small grants over the life of the project. Grants provided tangible benefits to schools, such as kitchens, water tanks, latrines, classrooms, and fences. For a relatively small amount of money, PTAs were able to make significant contributions to their schools. The small grants program became one of the most valued components of the project by community members and government institutions alike. It should be noted that the School Open Days were initially considered part of the small grants indicator: “Community development projects completed.” During the extension period from 2012-2013, they were counted as a separate indicator. Table 12 below includes the total number of small grants and School Open Days completed over the life of the project.

**Table 12: Number of Facilities Awarded for Small Grants Funding**

SN	Facilities Awarded	Number Completed
1	Latrines	6
2	School Kitchen	11
3	Classrooms	19
4	Staffrooms	5
5	School Fence	6
6	Water and Hygiene Facilities	9
7	Sports and Scholastic Materials	4
8	School Open days	14
	<b>Total Awards</b>	<b>74</b>

Each small grant awarded to a community contributed to the goals of the project, particularly as it related to increasing community engagement in school improvement and the promotion of peace and reconciliation. The product of the grants created safer and healthier environments for students and others in the school community. For example, the table above indicates that nine grants were awarded to support the creation of water and hygiene facilities. In the HEAR teacher training, teachers were exposed to different methods of promoting health and sanitation in their classroom and amongst student habits. However, in the absence of proper facilities, teachers were not as easily able to create behavior change. The nine grants for water and hygiene facilities

supported the HEAR teacher trainings by providing safe water storage tanks, hand washing kits, boxes of soap, and health messaging instructions. Students and teachers were then better able to change their behavior to improve the overall health and hygiene of the school community. The project was able to see the greatest impact of each of its interventions in schools where all components were integrated together.

Another example of a small grants program that had a noticeable impact was the construction of temporary classrooms. Most classrooms in the target regions of South Sudan are considered temporary classrooms, meaning their engineering support is made of local materials and not steel skeletons with concrete siding. Over the years, schools were typically unable to uphold the necessary maintenance for their schools. In the instance that schools had an unmaintained permanent structure, the HEAR project was able to support the recreation of the structure with local materials, like bamboo sidings and corrugated iron sheet roofing. In instances where schools did not have a permanent structure, the project provided the support for PTAs to create enough of a structure to protect children from rain or the harsh rays of the sun. Indeed, the use of local materials such as bamboo was extremely practical in these areas as it allowed for privacy in the classrooms and at the same time allowed fresh air to come through. Given that the target areas are extremely hot for most of the year, this created a more bearable temperature in the classrooms than plastic tents or even cement structures. An example of a before and after picture of a temporary classroom in Juljok primary school is shown below.



**Classroom block at Juljok primary school in Agok constructed under the small grants funding**

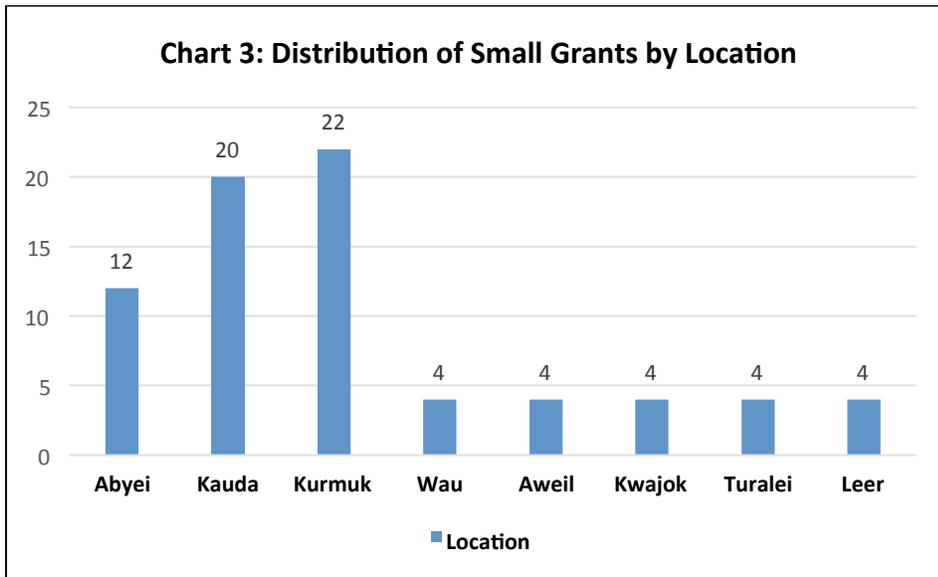


**Girls' latrine constructed through small grants program in Upper Kumo Primary School, Kauda**



**PTA members of Upper Kumo Primary school in Kauda join efforts to construct a house for a teacher through the small grants program**

Over the life of the project, HEAR was able to complete 74 small grants in eight different locations in the Three Areas and northern states of South Sudan. This includes 68 small grants projects (including eight School Open Days) completed by June 2012, and the six School Open Days completed during the extension period. For a breakdown of the number of grants by location, see Chart 3 below.



The grant projects themselves created safer and healthier school environments. However, the grant process, from the proposal stage, to evaluation, and through implementation, was equally important to achieving project goals. In focus group discussions, PTAs and government officials reported that the small grants program greatly improved community involvement and fostered a sense of community ownership over the school. In most cases, community members contributed local materials to supplement resources provided by a small grant. Often PTA members completed the labor themselves. For example, during the focus group discussions at the end of the project, participants reported that in Lokoloko Primary school in Aweil, five teachers had been recruited to allow for both morning and evening sessions to ease the congestion in the school, and that their salaries were being paid through PTA contributions.

**Box 1: Kurmuk Model School Gate Project**



*“We have fought for 31 years, why do we have to fight now?” said Hellen Samia Rajad, Deputy Headmistress, Kurmuk Model School. “We have to be one, so we can achieve our goal. We have to continue working very closely with each other, for the sake of the future of our children.”*

Through the HEAR small grants program, the Kurmuk Model School PTA constructed a new school gate and fence. When the fence was destroyed by militia, the community rallied together and mobilized members to contribute materials and labor to rebuild the fence, all without even requesting project support. In a community that has relied on donor aid for decades, this mobilization is a testament more empowered and motivated community members who are taking ownership and responsibility for their school and for the education of their children.

## Challenges

In environments that were historically neglected, communities had high expectations for what a small grants program might bring. All schools wanted to win a grant proposal and many schools wanted far more resources than could be provided with the monetary ceiling available. The project responded to the communities' requests by increasing the ceiling of each grant somewhat, but the HEAR team found it difficult to manage expectations among communities. The need for improved infrastructure and healthier environments is so great in South Sudan that PTAs submitting their proposals found it difficult to prioritize. Although the project scored each proposal on predetermined criteria, HEAR staff had difficulty helping PTA members focus on which activity should be prioritized to have the most benefit.

Small grant ideas typically required some materials not found in local markets in the village. The roads in South Sudan made travel extremely difficult, particularly during the rainy season. Therefore, it became difficult to implement and complete grant projects during the country's two rainy seasons. The project quickly learned that it only had a window of a few months twice a year to start and complete construction or rehabilitation projects. Additionally, materials that were not found locally were typically very expensive. At times, the PTA proposed budget was not always sufficient to complete the grant idea.

## Lessons Learned

*It is important to be constantly sensitive to how interventions can unintentionally create tensions within a community.* The rationale of having fewer but larger-scale grants during the extension period was sound in terms of what could be accomplished with more funding. However, the HEAR team recognized early on that this could be perceived by the target communities as being biased towards certain schools or certain groups. Since schools were often far away from one another, not all the pupils in one target location would have been able to benefit from the results of one project. Even though having three grants per location did not fully satisfy the communities, it allowed the projects to be spread more evenly throughout the target areas and dissipated some of the additional tensions that could have arisen from having only one grant per location.

### 3.3 School Open Days

HEAR's objective of promoting peace and reconciliation was best exemplified in School Open Days. Initially part of the small grants program, School Open Days are opportunities for school communities, students, parents, teachers, and education officials to gather together around an important theme. Historically, many parents in South Sudan were limitedly involved in their children's schooling. Parents also rarely convened with other parents to discuss their children's progress or needs in school. School Open Days addressed this need.

#### Description of Activities/Interventions

All School Open Days encourage a culture of learning. PTAs, in cooperation with local education officials, school administrators, and other community members were supported by the HEAR project to host an event to share encouraging messages about education and health. One school would host an event that was centered around a certain theme and invite several

neighboring schools to join. Students, teachers, and parents would travel to the hosting school to participate. Examples of themes included “Education is the Responsibility for All,” “Education for Reconciliation and Development,” and “Girls’ Education is Key.”

A typical event began with an opening speech by a chief guest, usually a high ranking education official. Then, students were given opportunities to display their work and perform in dramas and singing performances. HEAR staff members would use the opportunity to either distribute health supplements or share some important health and education messages. Occasionally, parents and school officials would participate in sports activities such as tug-of-war or soccer matches. The project would support the event with t-shirts, sports equipment, uniforms, and other mementoes. The best performing students and students who participated in School Open Day events were often given awards at the close of the ceremonies.

## **Results**

In total, the project supported 14 School Open Days. Of these, eight were completed during the original scope of work for the project (and included in the “community development projects completed” indicator, while six were completed during the extension period from 2012-2013 and were counted under a separate indicator. Building reconciliation among communities requires both cooperation and forgiveness. Through School Open Days, communities in the region were able to come together to share in the happiness of the children in schools. In a focus group discussion at the end of the project, communities reported that School Open Days raised awareness about the importance of education, good health, and reconciling any differences. See Annex 5, Success Stories, for a description of a School Open Day.

## **Challenges**

The main challenge the project faced in regards to School Open Days was that there were insufficient resources to hold an event at each school. Feedback from communities indicated that events were so successful in terms of the broader dissemination of health, hygiene, and disease prevention messages as well as understanding the importance of education. However, the project was only able to hold 14 School Open Days over the life of the project, as planning for such events took time and resources. The project did not have the opportunity or the manpower to hold events any more frequently than was planned. Participants recommended holding a School Open Day at least once a year among a cluster of schools to sustain the positive outcomes of the event.

## **Lessons Learned**

***Holding events such as School Open Days can be a very effective way of reducing tensions within the community.*** Beneficiaries cited them as a great way of bringing schools and communities together. Because different groups of schools were brought together for these events, teachers from different schools sat and talked with one another and shared stories, which fostered a healthier relationship between them. The topics of the Open Days often addressed peace and reconciliation and the events provided an opportunity for education officials to address the audience about the importance of community engagement in education.

## ***Project Close-Out and Handover of Assets***

### **Handover of Assets**

From its inception, the HEAR project worked closely with local stakeholders (education and health officials, teachers, parents, and community members) to strengthen local capacity for social service delivery and create an environment that fostered sustainability. In order to facilitate the ability of the state ministries and local education offices to continue to support communities, and in keeping with USAID regulations on inventory distribution, the project handed over all its assets to the MoEST and the State MoEs when it terminated operations in the target areas.

The HEAR project experienced several transitions over its lifetime. The project began by operating in the Three Areas of Abyei, Southern Kordofan state (Kauda) and Blue Nile state (Kurmuk). In 2011, prior to South Sudan's independence, the project terminated its work in Kauda and Kurmuk, as it would no longer be possible to access those areas from the south. After USAID approved HEAR's close out plan and inventory disposition request for these two areas, HEAR handled the distribution of assets. Specific inventory items were retained for project use in Abyei/Agok (such as staff members' laptops, phones, and office equipment). All other items (including vehicles, computers and furniture) were handed over to the MoEs in Kauda and Kurmuk. The ERCs along with all their contents were also officially handed over to the local education authorities for their maintenance and management. In June 2012 (before the extension period), the ERC in Agok was officially handed over to the local education authorities.

In July 2013, HEAR submitted a close out plan and inventory disposition request to dispose of all its remaining assets in Juba, Agok, and the extension target areas in the states of Northern Bahr el Ghazal (Aweil), Western Bahr el Ghazal (Wau), Warrap (Turalei and Kwajok), and Unity (Leer). The disposition of these assets took place in August 2013. The HEAR field teams held a "handover" ceremony at each project location, so that the allocated assets could be duly received by the Director Generals of Education from the state MoEs as well as the Directors of Education from the County education offices. At the end of the project in September 2013, the project closed its doors and all assets in Juba were transferred to the central MoEST offices. The assets were received by the Director for Partners' Coordination on behalf of the Undersecretary, MoEST Republic of South Sudan.

### **National Close Out Workshop**

The entire HEAR team held a Close Out Workshop at the end of August 2013. It was attended by representatives from the state or county MoEs from each target area as well as from the central MoEST in Juba (including the Undersecretary of the MoEST). Several representatives from USAID were present including the Deputy Mission Director.

The main purpose of this workshop was present the results of the lessons learned to the Ministry representatives and USAID and to discuss the main successes and challenges of the project. It also allowed an opportunity to hear from the Ministry representatives about their perceptions of the project's benefits and what they felt could be continued. USAID engaged with the Ministry about the government's strategy to sustain interventions from the HEAR project. The Ministry representatives were very engaged in the discussion on successes and challenges and asked

specific questions that would help them continue the interventions. Comments were made by all participants, followed by a ceremonial handover of inventory. Certificates of appreciation were presented to the state Ministry representatives. The event ended with closing remarks from the HEAR COP, the Undersecretary of the MoEST and the USAID Deputy Mission Director. Below is a quote from the Alicia Dinerstein, Deputy Mission Director, USAID South Sudan:

*“We have come together to recall the many achievements of our close cooperation over the past seven years – work that has laid the foundation for basic education, health and peaceful coexistence in the northern border areas. It is thanks to the constant support of the national Ministry of Education and the State Ministries, to the stewardship of Creative Associates International and the technical expertise of the John Snow Institute and the Education Development Center – and to the generosity of the American people – that together we have succeeded so well. I am proud of the accomplishments we take note of here today – despite the daunting security, infrastructure and logistical challenges all of you faced. I am thrilled that so many children have received the chance of learning and growth through our partnership.”*

### **III. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

#### ***A. Introduction to HEAR Project M&E Approach***

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plans are essential for obtaining accurate, valid, and timely information about key results and outputs of the project and ensuring that ongoing project management and decision-making reflect lessons learned. Verifying the achievement of results is important both for effective implementation of a project as well as for demonstrating its success. Information about key results and outputs is necessary in order to track progress and make mid-course corrections (monitoring and performance management) and assess and report the results of the major components and the impact of the project as a whole (evaluation). The M&E strategy carried out by the HEAR project facilitated the collection of qualitative and quantitative data on key indicators to:

1. Allow for regular process monitoring by enabling the project to report on pre-determined indicators and milestones on an ongoing basis and help ensure that all project objectives were met and activities were performed in a timely manner;
2. Demonstrate impact through performance monitoring to report on the project's outcomes and success stories during implementation;
3. Serve as an early-warning system for any issues and concerns before they became major problems;
4. Encourage stakeholder participation through inclusion in M&E activities such as analysis of data and regular reviews; and
5. Aid effective management decisions by timely, regular reporting of accurate data on meaningful indicators, encouraging open and regular communication with USAID and other stakeholders, and providing a common platform for meaningful discussion.

The HEAR project's M&E strategy stipulated information to be shared on a regular basis with USAID, partners, and other stakeholders.

#### ***B. Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP)***

The HEAR Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) is a comprehensive detailed guideline that contains all the plans for the project output indicators and their target deliverables. It presents a working mechanism for the project indicators to be monitored, reported and achieved. The HEAR project had standard indicators that were related to the USAID functional indicators as well as custom indicators that were created by the implementers to report on activity indicators that were in line with the USAID standard indicators.

The USAID framework organizes indicators in three layers: USAID functional objectives, program areas, program elements and program sub-elements. The HEAR project was originally funded under the functional objective of 'investing in people' in the Education program area (with elements that deal with Basic Education) and Health program area (with elements that deal with Malaria, Maternal and Child Health, and Water Supply and Sanitation).

The HEAR project PMP followed USAID policy guidelines, which suggest that a PMP should include performance indicators and their definitions; data sources; method of data collection; frequency and schedule of data collection; and responsibilities for acquiring data.

As a requirement from USAID, the HEAR project was expected to update the PMP on an annual basis to represent the changes that occurred during its annual implementation cycle in the achievement of its targets. As such, the Performance Indicator Reference Sheets (PIRS) were updated annually in October to include latest achievement of targets and accomplishments and were shared with USAID.

During the several phases of the project, HEAR also updated targets or indicators in the PMP depending on changes in or additions to its scope of work. The HEAR PMP was updated as a whole in 2008 after a cost extension, in 2011 after a no-cost extension and in 2012 after a cost extension and geographical shift of operations from the Three Areas to include the new target areas of Northern Bahr El Ghazal (Aweil), Western Bahr el Ghazal (Wau), Warrap (Turalei, Kwajok), and Unity (Leer). This process ensured that the HEAR project PMP, indicators, and data collection tools were always in line with the project's current scope of work and expected deliverables.

### ***C. M&E Indicators***

With the overarching goal of “increasing access to quality education for healthy boys and girls through community support and action,” the HEAR project originally had three broad components (from 2006-2012): capacity building to improve basic education service delivery, sensitization around and provision of basic health services, and community engagement in school improvement and the promotion of peace and reconciliation. During the extension period from 2012-2013, the project's health component was removed and the program focused on the other two components.

The HEAR M&E plan addressed the overall goals and all sub-objectives of the project. The HEAR project identified a number of indicators typically used in the education and health sectors to focus efforts and resources on achieving the desired program objectives. The crucial factors in selecting indicators were their utility and efficiency and their provision of information that was useful in measuring progress effectiveness. Within this context, four broad sets of indicators were used for monitoring the progress of the project, and all these indicators were directly related to the standard United States Government (USG) indicators.

- a. The first set of indicators assessed the overall project goal of increasing access and participation of students in education;
- b. The second set of indicators assessed the project objective of “improved capacity of county, payam, and school-level service providers to improve the quality of basic education service delivery;”
- c. The third set of indicators assessed the project objective of “increased sensitization around health issues and provision of basic health services to primary school children;” and
- d. The fourth set of indicators assessed the project objective of “increased community engagement in school improvement and promotion of peace and reconciliation.”

Over the course of the project, HEAR reported on a total of seventeen (17) indicators, as shown in the Performance Monitoring Plan (Annex 2). All indicators were grouped into the four categories noted in the section above, i.e., indicators of access and participation; indicators of

increased capacity for education service delivery; indicators of awareness and provision of health services; and indicators of increased community support and peace and reconciliation.

Of the seventeen indicators reported on by the HEAR project, ten were standard USG indicators, (seven in education and three in health) and seven were custom indicators. The seven USG standard indicators under the education program area were:

- (1) Number of learners enrolled in primary schools and/or equivalent non-school based settings with USG Support;
- (2) Number of USG supported schools or learning spaces meeting criteria for Safe Schools Program;
- (3) Number of teachers/educators/teaching assistants who successfully completed in-service training with USG support;
- (4) Number of teachers in USG supported programs trained on how to support learners' psychosocial well-being;
- (5) Number of administrators and officials successfully trained with USG support;
- (6) Number of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials (TLMS) provided with USG assistance; and
- (7) Number of Parent-Teacher Associations or similar school governance structures supported).

The three standard USG indicators under the health program area were:

- (1) Number of people trained in child health and nutrition through USG-supported health area programs (number of community health workers trained);
- (2) Number of children under five years of age who received Vitamin A from USG supported programs, and
- (3) Number of Insecticide Treated Nets (ITN's) distributed that were purchased or subsidized with USG support).

The seven custom indicators included:

- (1) Number of teachers reached with English language professional development courses;
- (2) Percentage of teachers showing improvement in English language skills;
- (3) Percentage of target schools displaying the teacher's code of conduct;
- (4) Number of schools and primary health care facilities with latrines and boreholes;
- (5) Number of communities/locations involved in strengthening school and health services;
- (6) Number of community development projects completed; and
- (7) Number of School Open Days held.

As mentioned above, the project's indicators were revised and adjusted based on changes to the scope of work. Of the project's seventeen indicators, six were introduced during the extension period in 2012. These were:

- (1) Number of teachers in USG supported programs trained on how to support learners' psychosocial well-being;
- (2) Number of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials (TLMS) provided with USG assistance;
- (3) Number of teachers reached with English language professional development courses;
- (4) Percentage of teachers showing improvement in English language skills;
- (5) Percentage of target schools displaying the teacher's code of conduct; and
- (6) Number of School Open Days held.

These indicators were only monitored in the extension period target areas of Agok, Northern Bahr El Ghazal (Aweil), Western Bahr el Ghazal (Wau), Warrap (Turalei, Kwajok), and Unity (Leer) from July 2012-September 2013.

In addition to the indicators mentioned here, several other indicators were used by the project team to monitor project progress. For example, data on education technology programs (number of individuals attending computer training, number of ERCs built and number of people accessing ERCs on a quarterly basis) were collected from the ongoing project locations. However, such data, which were useful for the purposes of understanding the context of the project, did not form a part of the project monitoring plan indicators.

#### ***D. Data Collection Tools***

Data collection tools and instruments were developed under the coordination of the M&E Specialist. First, a review of existing instruments developed for other programs was conducted and adapted to the extent possible to suit the needs of the project. Additional instruments were developed as needed. Examples of some of the tools are noted below.

Certain tools were used to gather information during specific activities, such as trainings and drug distributions. For instance, attendance sheets were used to collect information on participations during trainings and workshops. All participants were asked to fill these out at the beginning of every training so the project could disaggregate information on all attendees by location, type of training, school, and gender. Pre and post evaluation forms were also used to help facilitators and trainers measure the participants' level of knowledge before and after the trainings. This process also allowed participants' to provide feedback that was useful for the project team to improve the training materials and content as needed. Other tools were used to track the number of children receiving vitamin A supplements, deworming drugs and long-lasting insecticide-treated bed nets.

Other tools monitored the progress of certain longer-term activities, and were used when field staff conducted their regular school visits. For instance, specific tools were designed to monitor the small grants process. The grant award contracts were used as data sources for grants awarded to schools and communities, and grant tracking forms were used to maintain information on the implementation process of small grants. These tools were used to ensure that projects were progressing on schedule and that they were completed within the allocated timeframe and budget. During school visits, the HEAR team also tried to ascertain whether teachers were incorporating the information learned from their trainings in their classrooms, whether materials provided to schools were being put to use, and whether the structures built through the small grants mechanism were being utilized.

The same instruments were used for all project locations. Over the course of the project, new instruments were introduced based on changes in the scope of work. All instruments were pre-tested in each of project locations and modified as necessary to incorporate feedback. The M&E Advisor trained all field staff members in the use of the instruments and the M&E functions. Training of field M&E data collectors and officials involved in M&E was conducted on a regular basis. Staff were provided with additional training as needed on new procedures or with the addition of new interventions that required additional M&E activities or data collection.

## ***E. M&E Activities***

The HEAR project M&E activities were divided into field-based monitoring (carried out at each project site) and hub-based monitoring activities (carried out from the hub office in Rumbek/Juba).

### **Field-based Monitoring**

The primary monitoring of activities was field-based process monitoring and was carried out at the different field locations where the project activities were taking place. The project M&E field team worked closely with HEAR project partners in the field to carry out the monitoring activities. The gathering of data during activity implementation was entrusted to a field M&E Assistant who was supervised by the field team leader. M&E Assistants gathered data that informed inputs and outputs of the project using instruments and checklists designed or adapted for that specific purpose. During school visits, the HEAR team always invited an official from the government offices to accompany them so as to practice participatory M&E. The project encouraged the use of participatory M&E to empower relevant stakeholders to carry the interventions forward in the absence of continued project funding, thus encouraging sustainability.

Monthly meetings took place in the field in order to encourage regular data collection and reporting, and so that team leaders could take stock of activity progress and share information with the team on the achievement of targets. The HEAR field team regularly reported on activities to the M&E Advisor at the hub office, who compiled the reports to be shared with USAID, partners and stakeholders. The field team submitted reports on a bi-weekly basis to the hub office. This allowed the M&E Advisor to easily address implementation issues that arose on a day-to-day basis and inform senior management of concerns so they could be addressed in a timely manner.

### **Project Hub Office Monitoring and Supervision**

The M&E Advisor was based in the project hub-office, first in Rumbek and later in Juba (during the project extension). Working closely with the project Chief of Party, the M&E Advisor designed or adapted all the project's M&E tools used for data collection in collaboration with inputs from the field team. The hub office also supervised the overall M&E system processes and procedures.

The M&E Advisor conducted visits to different field locations on a quarterly basis in order to carry out various supervisory M&E activities such as verifying data sources for activities, participating in school visits with stakeholder partners and HEAR staff to qualify information already gathered, verifying and checking field reports on trainings, and training field staff as needed. Such visits also provided the field team with an opportunity to clarify any procedures that may have been confusing to them. This process allowed for a continuing dialogue to maintain the quality of the M&E system and data collection.

Semi-annual project planning meetings were organized by the project hub office and usually held in March and September of every year. These meetings provided a good opportunity to take stock of the achievements of the project and make any necessary changes in the workplan to

ensure that the project annual targets were achieved. State MoE representatives from the project sites often attended these meetings in an effort to learn more about and be engaged in the project implementation process.

### **Data Quality Assurance**

In line with USAID regulations for data quality assurance and assessment, the HEAR project measured data quality at every stage of its implementation. The project ensured that data quality was maintained at all times and that the information reported was accurate. Reliability was maintained by verifying all the data sources before reporting. The data reported from the field were always checked to maintain consistency with the data sources. Any irregularities noted during these exercises were rechecked and corrected before information was included in reports. Reliability of data collection tools was maintained by pretesting the tools before actual data collection took place. Both content validity and face validity of the training manuals and data collection tools were carried out to ascertain that the intended data and information were collected.

Apart from the internal data quality assessment measures taken by the project, USAID reviewed HEAR data sources and verified information in project reports annually, for data quality and consistency. USAID also hired external consultants through MSI to carry out data quality assessments before the USAID annual portfolio review.

### **Reporting**

The HEAR project was contractually obligated to submit reports to USAID on a specific timeline. The project submitted bi-weekly reports to USAID so that the Contracting Officer’s Representative (COR) could be informed on the day-to-day operations of the program. Additionally, HEAR submitted quarterly progress reports and annual performance reports to USAID. These were meant to inform USAID about the accomplishments of HEAR’s activities as well as show progress towards achieving its deliverables and indicator targets. The 4<sup>th</sup> quarter report was submitted along with the annual report, which indicated which activities were achieved during the fourth quarter of implementation. Apart from submitting periodic progress reports, the HEAR COP and senior management team met on a regular basis with the USAID COR to discuss program implementation and progress, and discuss how to address any challenges. Below is the breakdown of the reporting schedule and dates.

**Table 13: Reporting Schedules**

<b>SN</b>	<b>Report Type and Specification</b>	<b>Duration of Activity Implementation</b>	<b>Expected Report Date</b>
1	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter Report	1 <sup>st</sup> October – 31 <sup>st</sup> December	31 <sup>st</sup> January
2	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter Report	1 <sup>st</sup> January – 31 <sup>st</sup> March	30 <sup>th</sup> April
3	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter Report	1 <sup>st</sup> April - 30 <sup>th</sup> June	31 <sup>st</sup> July
4	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter Report	1 <sup>st</sup> July – 30 <sup>th</sup> September	31 <sup>st</sup> October
5	Annual Report	1 <sup>st</sup> October – 30 <sup>th</sup> September	31 <sup>st</sup> October

## **F. M&E Results**

Over the course of its seven years of implementation, the HEAR project reported on 17 different indicators. The targets to be achieved were added or revised based on changes to the scope of work. The details of HEAR's achievements for each indicator against its targets are detailed in the Progress on Indicators Table in Annex 3. Almost all the targets were fully achieved, or were within a range of 10% above or below the target. Five of the indicators were either under or over their life of project target by more than 10%, and the explanations are provided in Annex 3.

Performance Indicator Reference Sheets (PIRS) were also developed for annual data quality assessments on specific indicators, which disaggregate the information by location and year. These PIRS are shown in Annex 4.

## **G. External Midterm Evaluation, 2010<sup>1</sup>**

### **Objectives of Evaluation**

A mid-term evaluation of the HEAR project was conducted in 2010 by an external organization (Management Systems International – MSI) funded by USAID to review HEAR's performance against expected outcomes, assess its efforts to coordinate with other USAID/Sudan projects and stakeholders and make recommendations for adjustments.

The purpose of this mid-term evaluation was:

1. To assess the mid-term performance of Creative Associates International and the HEAR project regarding the expected outcomes and contractual deliverables.
2. To assess the HEAR Project in the context of coordinating with the BRIDGE Project and other USAID/Sudan projects.
3. To assess the HEAR Project in the context of coordination with non-USG implementing partners and other stakeholders.
4. To assess the effectiveness of HEAR's integrated model of health, education, and reconciliation/governance.
5. To make recommendations towards potential scale-up, short-term adjustments to the contract, and potential follow-on programs.

The evaluation team met with relevant HEAR project staff, HEAR beneficiaries, local/regional education and health ministry officials, SRRC directors, and health workers, representatives from partner organizations, and USAID. As the project was just restarting activities in the Abyei/Agok area, the evaluation team could not travel to this project site but focused on Kauda and Kurmuk.

### **Results and Recommendations**

Overall, the evaluation team found that the HEAR project was functioning effectively. All components of the project were fully operational and the team was on target to meet its deliverables. The evaluation team stated that the project activities were effective in enhancing the demand for and overall supply of social services. The trainings for teachers, CHWs and PTA members strengthened capacity at the school and community level. One of the key rationales for the HEAR project was that it would bring tangible peace benefits to target communities through

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<sup>1</sup> The information on the 2010 Midterm Evaluation was taken from the HEAR Midterm Evaluation Report by Management Sciences International, May 2010.

the provisions of social services such as education and health. And, the evaluation team saw clear evidence that HEAR was providing an important benefits through its activities, and particularly through the presence and function of its ERCs.

HEAR's collaboration with Regional Education Offices and Secretariats of Health and its support to schools and communities showed evidence of improved delivery of services, increased accountability, and good governance. The evaluation team felt the project's distinguishing feature was its inter-sectoral approach. The team found strong evidence of integration of health and education messages in the project and felt that the focus on school governance through PTAs showed promise. The USAID COR reported having excellent communication with Creative Associates and felt the project had strong management. The evaluation team also stated that the project had excellent working relationships with the education and health offices in Kauda and Kurmuk, as well as strong collaboration with USG partners as well as non-USG implementing partners. These partnerships are detailed in Section I, H: Interagency collaboration. A summary of the main findings is provided below.

*ERCs:* The evaluation team reported that in general, the ERC activities were progressing well. The centers were well stocked with computers, books and CDs. The team did note that the strategy for the role of the ERC, especially in terms of the use of computer training for strengthening education, was not yet fully developed. They also recommended that HEAR provide more English reading and picture books for lower primary.

*Education:* The evaluation team reported that the project had not been as successful in improving teachers' skills in education and in teaching. A part of this was due to changes in the original design of the project. Initially, the Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) activities targeted basic teaching skills and methodology. When this component was removed from the HEAR project and transferred solely to the Southern Sudan Interactive Radio Instruction (SSIRI) Project in 2008, it was not replaced by additional education activities. Secondly, the time spent on pedagogy in training was minimal compared to health topics. Finally, the team noted that the project did not reflect the actual conditions that most of the teachers were working in, which made it difficult for teachers to implement some of the strategies learned. They recommended that training materials better reflect the realities of schools and the actual needs of the teachers based on their skill levels.

*Health:* The evaluation team felt that the project was successful in health/hygiene and disease prevention education at the school and community level through its integrated approach of training teachers and CHWs, as well as the provision of vitamin A, deworming pills and bed nets. There was clear evidence of awareness activities and dissemination of good health messages, although there seemed to be mixed progress in the implementation of better health practices, such as the use of latrines and hand washing. Indeed, a major challenge (which the HEAR project had limited ability to address) was the serious lack of access to clean water in the target areas and the evaluation team recommended that HEAR access groups with the capacity to drill boreholes. Despite these limitations, all constituencies reported that children's health and subsequently their attendance in school, had improved over the two years leading to the evaluation. The team noted that HEAR had been successful in securing and distributing donations of vitamin A tablets but that the distribution of bed nets had been slow. This was due to the slow procurement process and the fact that the procurement of 1,000 bednets from UNICEF had been destroyed in the May 2009 conflict in Abyei.

*Reconciliation and School Governance:* The evaluation team reported that HEAR's focus on training PTAs on the development of small grants proposals had been very beneficial. This was similar in process to creating a school development plan (which was seen as overly ambitious for the schools at the time) but resulted in more tangible benefits for the schools. One concern raised was the limited funding available for grants, which prevented each school from obtaining a grant. Also, PTAs were primarily composed of men who dominated the process. They recommended that HEAR should provide additional resources to grants, revise the grant agreement and assign a small grants manager at each site to provide more oversight to the process. The team also suggested that head teacher training should be separated from PTA training and should focus on school leadership and management, and that it should include Regional Education staff as possible.

*Project impact and sustainability:* The evaluation team did note that the HEAR design did not aim to directly measure the impact of the project on health or pupil learning. Given the limited training on teaching skills and the challenging working environment, the team did not think it worthwhile for the project to attempt to assess potential gains in student learning or direct improvements in student health. The team noted that HEAR was aware of the importance of addressing sustainability and had included relevant activities in the 2010 work plan. However, they recognized that due to the fragility of the political situation and limited government support to schools, sustainability of project interventions was largely out of the project's control.

### **Actions Taken by HEAR in Response to Midterm Evaluation**

The HEAR team took the results and recommendations of the Midterm evaluation seriously, and made a number of changes to the project's activities. The main changes were as follows:

*ERCs:* In response to the need for more English reading books as well as curriculum books, HEAR purchased copies of the South Sudan curriculum and distributed them to all target schools in the Three Areas. Additionally, in 2013, the project received a contribution of 34,508 books from the International Book Bank in 2013, which were distributed to schools in Agok and in the target areas during the extension period. Additionally, HEAR revised its ERC-based computer training program to emphasize training education officials and providing hands-on experience for teachers and pupils.

*Education:* Recognizing the gaps in relevant education training for teachers, HEAR revised the contents of its teacher training package to lay more emphasis on pedagogy and methodology and the skills that the teachers really needed, such as classroom management, developing schemes of work, and lesson planning.

*Health:* In order to address (to the extent possible), the lack of access to water supplies for schools, HEAR advocated vigorously to organizations such as UNICEF and GOAL as well as new projects like Building Responsibility for the Delivery of Government Services (BRIDGE) to drill boreholes near HEAR schools. HEAR PTA grants were also geared towards creating healthier and more sanitary learning environments for pupils.

*Reconciliation and School Governance:* In regards to the implementation of the small grants projects, HEAR increased the ceiling on its small grants and created a grants committee at each

project site to manage the process more effectively. Also, recognizing that head teachers require very different types of training and information than PTA members, the team developed a separate training for head teachers and school administrators, and in 2013 developed an Education Managers training manual.

*Project impact and sustainability:* Following the midterm evaluation, the HEAR team revised its M&E instruments and tried to collect more systematic information on health behavior change through school visits and through the activities of the Community Health Workers (CHWs).

## IV. CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS STABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

The HEAR project was originally designed to contribute towards USAID’s objective of averting and resolving conflict in Sudan and promoting stability, recovery, and democratic reform in support of the implementation of the CPA. Within this framework, HEAR aimed to provide tangible benefits to the target communities through the delivery of critical social services such as health and education. Therefore, the project was not designed as a typical development-focused education initiative with sustainability of interventions as a main goal. Rather, HEAR conducted education and health interventions not only for their sake alone, but as a way to mitigate potential sources of conflict and develop ownership and resilience at the community level during a period when government capacity for service delivery was still limited. By demonstrating observable changes on the ground and visible symbols of progress and strengthening local capacity, the project aimed to rebuild communities and reduce tensions, thereby contributing towards greater stability in the area. To the extent that it was within the control of the project, HEAR was successful in accomplishing these objectives. Below are some of the ways in which HEAR contributed towards its overall objective based on the results of activities.

### Contributions towards Rebuilding Communities and Reducing Tensions

*Education and health served as a platform for developing local capacity and resilience:* The project recognized that it would take time for the government to really be able to provide the necessary services to the constantly growing population in the target areas (especially given the influx of IDPs and returnees). Therefore, it was essential to build capacity at the local level and to encourage communities to take more responsibility for social service delivery in their areas. With this in mind, the project trained teachers, head teachers, Community Health Workers (CHWs), local education officials, and members of PTAs, and conducted significant community awareness activities around topics related to education and health. Also, the PTA grants projects were implemented by community members who had to donate time, labor and materials to the effort. HEAR found that by getting community members actively involved in such projects created a sense of mutual ownership and civic responsibility. Because they were involved from the start, they were more motivated to see the project through and protect the fruit of their labor. See the Success Story about the Kurmuk model school<sup>2</sup> gate, Annex 5, as an example of increased civic responsibility as a result of the PTA grants program.

**Quote from Anyieth Ayuen, Alternate USAID  
COR for HEAR**

*“The communities have appreciated the interventions and I have seen it with my own eyes. They have pulled their resources for the benefit of the project and for the benefit of themselves.”*

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<sup>2</sup> Kurmuk Model School was the name of this school. It was not one of the schools identified by HEAR as a “model school.”

*Interventions addressed the needs of a population emerging from conflict:* HEAR ensured that activities and trainings were directly relevant to the specific needs of the beneficiaries, most of whom were emerging from decades of civil war. Given that most teachers had received minimal (if any) formal training, the HEAR training package focused on imparting basic information on

**Quote from Head Teacher, Agok, following first training after Abyei conflict**

*“We the people of Abyei were blind, most of us are unable to read or write, we are left in the middle of nowhere because of the politics of this area. We are so thankful for the HEAR project, we would like to urge the HEAR Sudan project to increase the days of the training for us because we lack all the skills to teach our children. We are hungry for knowledge.”*

pedagogy and methodology. The training included how to develop teaching aids out of local materials, since the target areas were very poor in resources. Basic health and nutrition information was also incorporated into the trainings, as was conflict resolution, peace and reconciliation. During the extension, a course on psychosocial support was added

to address the psychological and emotional needs of both teachers and pupils coming out of conflict. Also during the extension, an English language course was developed to improve the English language skills of teachers in the border states (many of whom had been trained in Arabic), since English was to be main language of instruction in South Sudan. Focus group discussions held at the end of the project, revealed that these trainings were much appreciated and focused on the actual needs of the teachers. Additionally, following the conflicts in Abyei, HEAR refocused its programming in the Agok area. The project provided educational materials suited to their new temporary learning spaces, and HEAR staff re-engaged teachers, head teachers and PTA members in regular project trainings in an effort to provide a sense of normalcy and continuity to their lives. Following the first HEAR training of head teachers in Agok after the Abyei conflict, the trainees voiced their appreciation for the project and requested additional training, especially for PTAs and teachers.

*Tangible benefits provided:* Apart from its capacity building activities, HEAR ensured that it provided some very tangible and visible benefits to the target areas. Examples of these included the ERCs established in the Three Areas (stocked with books, computers and other resources), the small grants projects constructed by the PTAs, and the provision of vitamin A supplements, deworming drugs and bed nets. Per the results from the focus groups, the target communities benefitted greatly from these interventions and were happy that some of their children’s basic educational and health needs were being addressed.

*Conflict resolution integrated into project activities:* HEAR incorporated the concept of peaceful conflict resolution into all aspects of the program. This was particularly the case with the small grants program. While the final product was important, the *process* was equally so. By getting community members involved in a project of mutual interest (such as the improvement of the learning environment for their children), the project tried to create an environment in which people would work together amicably. Indeed, the PTA grants projects did succeed in bringing community members from different tribes or backgrounds together and focus group participants noted that the PTA grants projects and the School Open Days had greatly reduced tensions within communities, and especially between parents and teachers.

## **Contributions towards Sustainability**

Although the main objective of HEAR was not to ensure the sustainability of its interventions, HEAR worked with sustainability in mind from the outset. Given the volatile and constantly fluctuating political situation, it was also difficult to expect a high degree of sustainability. That said, below are some of the key measures taken by the HEAR project to work towards sustaining project interventions.

*Engagement of all stakeholders:* From the outset, the project worked closely with stakeholders (local education and health authorities, teachers, parents, students, and community members) at all levels to secure their buy in. Getting communities actively involved in the small grants projects also increased the likelihood that they would take ownership of and continue to maintain those facilities.

*Provision of needed materials:* In a resource-poor environment, HEAR tried to provide as many materials to schools and communities as possible that could be used after the end of the project. For instance, the ERCs were stocked with many resource materials, including books, computers and e-resources. The project ensured that the Education offices seconded a staff member to each ERC so that they could learn how to manage the center after the end of the project. When the project closed out, the ERCs were handed over to the Education offices with confidence that they could continue to operate and maintain the center. HEAR also provided teachers and CHWs with copies of all the training materials and manuals so they could refer to them as needed. With the English course, HEAR provided copies of the New English File to teachers at each target school, as well as an MP3 player to each school so that teachers could continue to practice their skills. The thousands of supplementary reading materials provided to schools would also be lasting resources for teachers in the classrooms.

*Strengthening of Systems:* Finally, HEAR worked closely with local authorities and head teachers to ensure systems strengthening to the extent possible. During the extension from 2012-2013 in particular, HEAR staff were housed and worked within state MoE offices. This allowed HEAR to participate in meetings called by the government ministries and also facilitated the active involvement of ministry officials in HEAR activities. The team included head teachers and local education and health officials in trainings whenever possible. Gaining the knowledge from the trainings increased their motivation and interest to support teachers, as well as their ability to do so. This also increased the likelihood that they would be able to continue to offer this support after the end of the project. Additionally, during the extension period, HEAR developed and conducted a training program tailored to the needs of Education Managers, such as County and State level education officers.

The results of the focus group discussions at the end of the project revealed that HEAR beneficiaries truly appreciated the activities, skills and resources brought to them by the HEAR project. There are still many factors that make true sustainability of these interventions challenging, but HEAR interventions provided beneficiaries with some basic and essential skills that they could build upon. The following Section V on Lessons Learned and Recommendations for Future Programming provides more detail on the main successes and challenges of the HEAR project and recommendations for what elements of the HEAR project could be continued in the context of the target areas.

## V. LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PROGRAMMING

### A. Lessons Learned from HEAR Team and Focus Group Discussions

Over the course of the project, the HEAR team gained a great deal of knowledge from its experiences about what types of interventions work well and what does not work in this very challenging context. Firstly, the HEAR management sought feedback from its staff members on the challenges to be aware of when working in the target areas and the lessons learned from operating in these environments. Secondly, at the end of the project, the team held a series of focus group discussions with beneficiaries. These discussions provided a wealth of information about what technical interventions worked especially well as well as the challenges faced on the ground. The results from these two initiatives are described below.

#### Lessons Learned from HEAR Team

Over the seven years of the HEAR project, the team worked in extremely challenging environments and dealt with insecurity, resource limitations, and various technical and logistical challenges. The team learned how to overcome some of these challenges, apply a conflict sensitive approach to solutions and how to work with a broad range of organizations and individuals over whom they had no control. Below are some of the main lessons learned by the HEAR team:

- **Logistics and Transportation:** *Work plans need to take realistic account of the vagaries of weather and limited transportation infrastructure when planning activities and setting deadlines.* The Three Areas and South Sudan's border states posed huge logistical challenges to the team. The weather, with a six-month long rainy season, made mobility via both road and air difficult. This was compounded by the fact that most roads and air strips were not tarmacked. After initial delays in implementation, the team adjusted the project's workplan to work around the seasons, understanding which activities could be conducted in which months. For instance, trainings could only take place in the rainy season if participants were close enough to be able to access the training venues. Most small grants projects had to be completed during the dry season as construction was very difficult during the rainy season.
- **Communication:** *Project staff should always have back up plans for communication when working in inaccessible areas.* Over the seven years of the project, the cell phone coverage in the target areas has improved dramatically. However, even at the end of the project, there were still many areas that lacked cell phone coverage. The project's management ensured that any staff traveling to the field was equipped with a satellite phone for emergencies.
- **Security:** *Security plans are essential when working in post-conflict areas. However, they should be relevant to the context and accommodate for the realities on the ground.* Security was a constant challenge in the target areas, and particularly when working in Abyei. The UMMIS Security personnel in Abyei repeatedly stated in meetings, "*the situation is calm but unpredictable.*" Indeed, as the HEAR team discovered early on the importance of having a security plan in place. This plan was tested during the Abyei conflict in May 2008. Many aspects of the plan were followed to the letter. For instance, HEAR had an arrangement with

UNMIS to relocate all non-local staff in case of an emergency. All such staff members were on the UNMIS list and were relocated safely to Khartoum. However, there was one important deviation from the security plan which the team learned from. For example, in the case of an emergency, the security plan stipulated that all staff should congregate at the UNMIS base. When the conflict erupted, Creative discovered that while non-local staff did collect at UNMIS, all the staff from the Abyei area dispersed to find their families and relocated to Agok and other areas that they knew were safe. Their priority was clearly to keep their own families safe rather than comply with the guidance in the security plan, and their response was quite understandable under the circumstances. Creative recognized that it was important to respect such decisions and that the project management had to allow for such decisions while at the same time doing their utmost to ensure everyone's collective safety. Overall, the entire HEAR field and HQ teams were very successful in locating all the staff and staying in touch with them to address their immediate needs. Creative was also very successful in quickly relocating the project's base to Rumbek and continuing to support activities in Kauda and Kurmuk until operations could resume in Abyei and Agok. Nevertheless, the Abyei conflict really highlighted the fact that security plans needed to be very realistic to the context. Additionally, it underscored the importance of collaborating with other agencies such as the UN who have the mandate and the ability to provide the type of protection that is beyond the capacity of the project.

- ***Procurement:*** *Procurements in South Sudan should be planned well in advance and back up plans should be put in place in case of unforeseen logistical hurdles.* The process of procurement for the HEAR project was very long and often arduous. Prior to South Sudan's independence, most essential equipment and vehicles had to be procured from the US or regionally. Transportation to the target areas was very challenging, especially given the rough roads and the long rainy season. Indeed, in order to safely transport a project vehicle to Kurmuk, the team ultimately needed to charter a plane and fly the vehicle to its destination. During the expansion period, more items were available in Juba but many still had to be procured from outside, including vehicles, the donated books and the MP3 players. Securing the necessary approvals from relevant government entities took an extremely long time. This was due, in large part, to the fact that South Sudan had just become a new country and many systems and procedures were still being finalized. Nevertheless, the challenges of terrain and the uncertainty of transportation options still remains. HEAR staff discovered the importance of planning well in advance and learned to organize back up options in case the expected vehicles or materials did not arrive in time.
- ***Multiple systems of instruction:*** *When attempting to consolidate multiple systems of education, it is essential to ensure that government policies are understood and enforced at the local levels and that all schools are provided with the same materials.* One major technical challenge in the Three Areas was the multiple systems of instruction that existed in different areas. Depending on whether the schools were supported by the governments of the North, the South or external NGOs, lessons were taught in Arabic or English. In Kauda, the HEAR team discovered that many children were being taught the Kenyan curriculum as teachers did not have access to the South Sudan curriculum. Additionally, depending on the system of instruction, the school year differed, with some schools holding classes in three trimesters and others following a semester system. Although it was challenging to work around these different systems and schedules, HEAR was able to be flexible and conduct all its trainings and other activities successfully. However, as the issue of school schedules continued to be in flux even in the border states of South Sudan during the extension, it

underscores the importance of establishing and enforcing consistency in government policies down to the community and school level, and ensuring that South Sudan textbooks and curriculum materials are distributed to all the states.

- ***Language of instruction:*** *Additional English language instruction is essential in South Sudan's border states and should continue to be a priority for future projects.* As noted above, in the Three Areas, teachers taught in Arabic or English depending on the medium of instruction at the school. However, even during the expansion period when the official language of instruction was English, many teachers in the border states continued to teach in Arabic. This is because many of the qualified teachers in these areas had come from the North and been trained in Arabic. HEAR addressed this by initiating the English language course, which was greatly appreciated by the target teachers, especially the Arabic-speaking ones. This is a vital activity that can be continued in the coming years.
- ***Catering to specific needs of beneficiaries:*** *Activities should not be "cookie-cutter" but should be molded to the specific needs of beneficiaries. Their needs should be identified before materials are even developed.* Early on in the project, the HEAR team truly understood the importance of truly understanding the current skill level of teachers and their specific needs, and developing programs to address them. For instance, the original teacher training manuals focused heavily on the health content. They included education information but did not take into consideration the fact that most teachers had barely been trained in the basics of how to teach. Following feedback from the teachers and also from 2010 midterm evaluation, the team added a lot more content on methodology to the trainings, and included topics such as how to develop lesson plans and schemes of work, and pupil-centered instruction. Teachers found these topics to be extremely helpful. This approach served HEAR well when developing the English language course. Initial consultations in target areas revealed that previous English language courses conducted by NGOs had emphasized teaching grammar and reading comprehension rather than focusing on learner-centred activities. Teachers in the target areas needed to be able to use language that was simple, but accurate and easily understood by the learner. In addition, classroom teachers needed to have strong oral skills and the ability to explain, simplify and rephrase. Consequently, HEAR's English language training course was developed with the goal of helping teachers to develop their English language and communication skills to deliver lessons in English with greater effectiveness. Teachers much appreciated this approach and felt that the course was much more practical, simple and relevant to their needs than previous programs.

### **Findings from Focus Group Discussions with Beneficiaries**

In the last quarter of the project (July – September 2013), HEAR carried out a series of focus group discussions. The purpose of the focus groups was to learn from beneficiaries and stakeholders on the ground about what aspects of the project they felt were successful, the challenges they faced, and what elements of the project could be sustained. The focus group discussions were carried out at all project sites (with the exception of Kauda and Kurmuk which were not reachable).

Participants included teachers, English course tutors, school administrators, county education officers, PTA members and Community Health Workers. Ten participants were included in each focus group, which were conducted by asking a specified list of questions about the activities they had been involved in. Topics included the HEAR training package, the psychosocial support

training, the English language course, school administrator and Education Managers training, community engagement through the PTA training and small grants process, and the health interventions. For each topic, participants were asked a series of questions to learn about their overall impression of the intervention, usefulness and relevance of the activity and materials, what they had learned from the interventions, what knowledge they were putting into practice from their trainings, and what aspects of the HEAR project they felt could be sustained in their communities. Finally, participants were asked about HEAR's sensitivity to the local context and whether HEAR contributed in any way to a reduction of tensions in the community.

Overall, the findings of the focus group discussions were very positive in terms of the project's contributions and success. Below is a summary of the main responses and suggestions of participants by topic:

### ***HEAR Training Package:***

- Teachers who responded on the HEAR training package were very appreciative of the training content. In particular, Pupil Centered Instruction (PCI) was seen as the most important method of teaching that teachers learnt. They stated that it gives children a chance to participate in the teaching and learning in the classroom. Teachers noted that PCI helped them to use group work and discussions in classes rather than simply lecturing.
- The sequence of the lesson plans the teachers made after the training gave them more confidence and made it easier to teach using their schemes of work. Most teachers stated that teaching became more enjoyable and less boring as they had more solutions to problems and correcting students become easier.
- County Education Officers stated that when they used to conduct school inspections, teachers had no real control of the classes and there was little involvement of the pupils. After the trainings, they observed improvements in pupil involvement and engagement.
- Respondants in Leer stated that some of the female teachers in HEAR schools had previously not been active teachers. After the trainings, they were motivated to embrace teaching as a profession, and encouraged their other female colleagues to become teachers. They even tried to support young girls to return to school.
- Teachers recommended that all schools in the target areas be included in the HEAR trainings, rather than just certain selected schools.

### ***Psychosocial Support Training:***

- For most teachers, this was the first psychosocial support training they had attended. Some had previously attended trainings on education psychology. However, they stated that the HEAR training was very practical and relevant for dealing with issues related to education in general and in particular with school children.
- Teachers felt the most important thing they learned from the training was how to identify children with trauma. They also appreciated the information they gained on resilience and mechanisms for coping with trauma, as well as child support strategies. Most teachers stated that the training had helped them learn how to identify children showing signs of distress and that they had a solid understanding of how to help them cope with their trauma.
- Most teachers reported improved classroom practices following the training. Many teachers admitted that they had initially treated children badly and had beaten them when they

misbehaved. Following the training, they said that they no longer used corporal punishment but tried to support the children instead.

- The focus on teachers' own post-war trauma and stress was equally appreciated. Teachers stated that after the trainings, they began to address their own needs and take more pride in their appearances. Relationships between teachers also improved as they learned to support one another.
- Teachers did not provide any specific recommendations for improvement to this training.

### ***English Language Course:***

- Both tutors and teachers lauded the English language course as a big success. Despite the relatively short duration, they said that it had helped teachers gain confidence in speaking and using English in schools. Most teachers said that they felt they had improved in their English language skills as compared to before the training. English tutors indicated that many more teachers were now using English to teach in the classrooms than prior to the training. In particular, the teachers who had been trained in Arabic, were no longer as shy to express themselves in English.
- The tutoring sessions were seen as beneficial and teachers felt they improved their grammar and vocabulary skills. The fact that HEAR used tutors from the target locations was seen as a basis for sustainability. Building the capacity from within the local population would allow these individuals to continue to supervise and assist the teachers in their areas after the end of the project.
- The materials provided with the English course were seen as very helpful. The New English File materials provided for the English course were lauded as being useful and practical. Teachers stated that following the New English File books step-by-step during the tutoring sessions made it easy for them to understand the sessions. Teachers also said that the MP3 players helped them with their self-practice and learning and improved their pronunciation of words.
- Teachers in Turalei and Kwajok reported that they were sharing what they learned with their colleagues who had not been able to attend the HEAR training. This was a very positive sign of the participants' engagement with the course as well as the interest of others at their schools.
- Participants felt that the trainings should include all the teachers in their state, rather than the selected few that the project was able to include. They also suggested that the training continue for a longer period of time to allow for greater improvement. The HEAR English course was a pilot to gauge if the overall approach was sound. Time permitting, this course could be extended for a longer period of time.
- Teachers stated that it was difficult to share one MP3 player between all the teachers in a school and that it would have been beneficial to have more than one player per school. Similarly, they found it difficult to share the New English File books between two people. This was due to HEAR's budgetary constraints and in ideal conditions, it would certainly be preferable to have one book per person and more MP3 players in each school.

### ***School Administrator and Education Manager Trainings:***

- Head teachers reported that their trainings had been very helpful to them in their work, especially in terms of supporting teachers. They said that the training had enabled them to

better understand the strengths and weaknesses of teachers so that they could target their support. The training also allowed them to assist the teachers with their lesson planning.

- School administrators stated that training on instructional supervision helped them to conduct more effective monitoring of school teachers and plan better for supervision and inspection. They felt they now had a better understanding of how to assess teachers and provide suggestions for their improvement.
- County Education Officers appreciated that the code of conduct was distributed to schools, as it promoted the Central and State MoE's guidelines.

### ***Community and PTA Engagement in Education:***

- Participants reported that the HEAR trainings and PTA grants process had greatly increased PTA involvement in schools. They said that PTAs had existed before the HEAR project but were not active in the schools. Members would attend school functions sparingly and did not play a major role. After the HEAR trainings, PTA members visit schools more often and are more engaged in school activities. They better understand their roles and responsibilities, and contribute to school development plans.
- Parents' overall involvement in schools also improved as a result of the community engagement and small grants activities. At first, parents took no interest in their children's education. They would send the children to school but were not engaged in managing the schools. After the trainings and their involvement in the small grants activities, they began to become more engaged. Participants reported that many teachers started following their children's performance in class and would visit schools more often. Some parents even began volunteering to protect school property.
- Participants reported that the HEAR trainings resulted in improved relationships between the school teachers and the PTA and other community members. PTA members said that they now respected teachers more. They recognized that they were a part of the school administration and would act as a bridge between the community and school to help solve problems. They also reported a greater attendance of community members at school meetings.
- The small grants process resulted in an increased involvement of PTA members and communities in schools. Many head teachers noted that the community members had been more interested in the small grants program because HEAR had involved them from the very beginning. PTA members said that they had been very engaged in the small grants process, especially as they had contributed local materials for the facilities and had been very involved in the construction. This created a sense of ownership of the schools by the communities and a feeling that schools belonged to them as well and not just to the teachers.
- Participants affirmed the effectiveness of the grants process and noted they would have benefitted from additional funding for the actual projects and the ability to have more small grants at each location.

### ***Health:***

- Only the participants from Agok were able to respond to the health questions, as they had received these interventions prior to the expansion period. The health interventions were

greatly appreciated by all those interviewed. Teachers stated that the information they received on hygiene and sanitation as a part of the HEAR training package was extremely helpful to them.

- Participants particularly appreciated the distribution of the drugs and bed nets. They reported that the deworming tablets had prevented children from falling sick with intestinal diseases and that they had seen improvements in their children's health as a result of the vitamin A supplements. They also reported a reduction in malaria as a result of using the bed nets. Overall, they stated that HEAR's health interventions had resulted in a reduction in children's illnesses and consequently a drop in children's missing class due to illness.
- Participants sincerely regretted that there was no focus on health activities during the extension. They would have liked to see a continuation of the health interventions, and in particular the distribution of vitamin A supplements, deworming drugs and bed nets.

### ***Reduction of Tensions within the Communities:***

- Overall, participants unanimously reported that the HEAR project had been very sensitive to the local context and did not create any additional tensions. In fact, respondents felt that HEAR had helped to reduce tensions and created a more reconciliatory environment between schools and communities.
- The School Open Days were cited as a great way of bringing schools and communities together. Because different groups of schools were brought together for these events, teachers from different schools sat and talked with one another and shared stories, which fostered a healthier relationship between them. The topics of the Open Days often addressed peace and reconciliation and the events provided an opportunity for education officials to address the audience about the importance of community engagement in education.
- For schools that received small grants and had constructed classrooms, parents stated that they no longer worried about their children studying under trees during the rain, as they felt confident that they were now in a safer and more secure learning environment.
- Many PTA members stated that the PTA training had significantly reduced tensions between teachers and parents. After the trainings, everyone was clearer on their roles and responsibilities and there was a greater desire to work together to support the school.
- Many teachers noted that the psychosocial support training reduced tensions between teachers and their students. Understanding the various problems that children were facing allowed the teachers to better support and counsel them, which greatly improved the teacher-student relationships.

The results of these focus group discussions were invaluable for the HEAR team to understand the actual benefit of the project activities to their beneficiaries. Their responses and suggestions were incorporated into the recommendations provided to USAID during the HEAR National Close Out Workshop, described under "Project Closeout and Handover of Assets."

### ***B. Recommendations for Future Programming***

Based on the feedback from the HEAR team, the focus group discussions and the national close out workshop, HEAR was able to provide put together some overall recommendations to USAID for future programming, which are summarized below.

**Be flexible:** Working in an environment of political instability and logistical uncertainties calls for flexibility in planning and the day-to-day implementation of projects. Creative’s project leadership consistently took into consideration many factors outside of its control, leading sometimes to a complete change of plans and choices of activities. For example, staff annual leave time and R&R were determined by changes in the security, political and social dynamics on the ground. Given that challenges with weather, bad roads and unpredictable transportation schedules are likely to continue for the near future, it is recommended that all projects factor in as much flexibility as possible into their planning schedules, and develop an ability to adapt quickly as needed.

**Take an integrated approach to the delivery of basic social services:** It is important to develop an integrated model of operation and provide a platform for various sectors to work together. HEAR allowed the local health and education authorities to work well together by encouraging consideration of all children’s needs and making the school the center for

action. Implementing activities that cut across different sectors means that communities can see the added values of schools as centers of holistic development for their children, not only the development of literacy and numeracy skills, but also the importance of their physical, social, and psychological growth and development. When working in post-conflict environments such as South Sudan, it is essential to address as many factors that inhibit children’s development as possible.

**Integrated Approach**

The benefits of an integrated approach where the needs of the whole child are considered and schools are seen as the center of action are:

- Getting people to work together
- Getting community members to recognize the importance of the school
- Preventing competition between various actors
- Promoting peace and reconciliation

**Provide for continuous community engagement and empowerment:** Top-down approaches are most effective when combined with bottom-up approaches where communities take part in identifying problems, setting priorities, and planning and implementing interventions. Building systems that can effectively flow down to support people at the community level is a long-term endeavor. In the meantime, it is essential to focus efforts on building capacity and resilience at the local level. The family, school, and community are the three major contexts in which students live and grow; these overlapping spheres of influence all directly affect children’s learning and development. Local administration officials, teachers, PTAs, parents and communities are instrumental to this process. HEAR’s experiences show that the will, ability, and resources for improving education conditions exist within communities; the challenge is to properly identify and leverage them.

**Promote inter-agency collaboration and leveraging of external resources:** Inter-agency collaboration is important in any context. When working in environments like South Sudan that are challenging from a technical, security, and logistics perspective, it becomes even more important for organizations to coordinate and support one another. HEAR was extremely successful in collaborating with other NGOs, projects, and donors in the successful implementation of its activities. However, the project did find it challenging at times to meet its contractual deliverables for the distribution of vitamin A supplements and bed nets, given that it relied entirely on requesting donations from other organizations. While the team was successful in meeting its deliverables, it is recommended that going forward, USAID consider establishing

Memoranda of Understanding with other donors at the start of the project in order to facilitate the ability of project teams to leverage such resources.

***Focus trainings on needs of beneficiaries:*** HEAR learned that focused training events and activities designed to develop specific sets of skills are more effective than those organized around generic topics. HEAR's success after adapting the HEAR teacher training course to the needs of the teachers and developing an English course that focused on practical skills underscores the importance of this approach. It is recommended that projects should conduct sufficient research on the actual skills levels and needs of their target audience before developing courses or activities, and not rely on a cookie-cutter approach.

***Specific elements of HEAR activities for replication:*** Based on the focus group discussions and feedback from the Ministry representatives at the national close out conference, the main HEAR activities that could be replicated or expanded included the following:

- Integrated model of the HEAR approach, and in particular the combination of education and health interventions. This HEAR training package for teachers can be expanded to include more schools in the target areas.
- Provision of basic health resources, such as vitamin A supplements, deworming drugs and bed nets.
- English language course and ensuring that the content is simple and useful for the day-to-day needs of teachers. It would be beneficial if additional materials can be provided to schools and teachers and if more days of training and tutoring can be incorporated.
- Psychosocial support training. This training and support was stressed as being both much needed and extremely beneficial in the target areas.
- Small grants program as a way to build cohesion with the community. The process of using a small grants project to encourage communities to identify and solve problems in their area is worth replicating in future programs.

## VI. ANNEXES

### **Annex 1: Common European Framework for Languages**

Proficient	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

## Annex 2: Performance Monitoring Plan Matrix

	Proposed Indicators	Custom/ USAID Std F Indicator	Level of Disaggrega-tion	Data Source	Data Collection Methodology	Frequency of data collection	Responsibility for data collection	Frequency of Reporting
<b>Project Goal: Improved quality of basic education service delivery</b>								
	# of learners enrolled in primary schools and/or equivalent non-school-based settings with USG support	S	Project site; School; Sex; Grade	Admin records	Review of records	Quarterly	Field staff	Quarterly and annual reports
<b>Improved capacity of county, payam, and school-level service providers to improve the quality of basic education service delivery</b>								
	# of USG supported schools or learning spaces meeting criteria for Safe Schools Program	S	Project site	Admin records	Review of records	Quarterly	Field staff	Quarterly and annual reports
	# of Teachers/Educators/Teaching Assistants who successfully completed in-service training or received intensive coaching or mentoring with USG support	S	Sex; Project site; School	Admin records	Review of records	Quarterly	Field staff	Quarterly and annual reports
	# of teachers in USG supported programs trained on how to support learners' psychosocial well-being	S	Sex; Project site; Beneficiary; School	Admin records; School visits	Review of records; School visits	Quarterly	Field staff	Quarterly and annual reports
	# of teachers reached with English language professional development courses	C	Sex; Project site; Beneficiary; School	Admin records; School visits	Review of records; School visits	Quarterly	Field staff	Quarterly and annual reports
	% of teachers showing improvement in English language skills	C	Sex; Project site	Evaluations; Interviews; School visits	Review of records; Interviews School visits	Quarterly	Field staff	Quarterly and annual reports
	# of administrators and officials successfully trained with USG support	S	Sex; Project site; School	Admin records	Review of records; School visits	Quarterly	Field staff	Quarterly and annual reports
	% of target schools displaying the teacher's code of conduct	C	Project site	School visits	School visits	Quarterly	Field staff	Annual reports

	# of Textbooks and other Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMS) Provided with USG Assistance	S	Project site; School	Admin records	Review of records	Quarterly	Field staff	Quarterly and annual reports
<b>Increased sensitization around health issues and provision of basic health services to primary school children</b>								
	# Number of people trained in child health and nutrition through USG-supported health area programs (# of community health workers recruited and trained)	S	Sex; Project site	Admin records	Review of records	Quarterly	Field staff	Quarterly and annual reports
	# of children under five years of age who received Vitamin A from USG supported programs,	S	Project site; School; Sex	Admin records	Review of records	Quarterly	Field staff	Quarterly and annual reports
	# of Insecticide Treated Nets (ITN's) distributed that were purchased or subsidized with USG support	S	Project site	Admin records	Review of records	Quarterly	Field staff	Quarterly and annual reports
	# of schools and primary health care facilities with latrines and boreholes	C	Project site	Admin records; School visits	Review of records; School visits	Quarterly	Field staff	Quarterly and annual reports
	# of communities/locations involved in strengthening school and health services	C	Project site	Admin records; School visits	Review of records; School visits	Quarterly	Field staff	Quarterly and annual reports
<b>Increased community engagement in school improvement and promotion of peace and reconciliation</b>								
	# of Parent-Teacher Associations or similar "school" governance structures supported	S	Project site	Admin records; School visits	Review of records; School visits	Quarterly	Field staff	Quarterly and annual reports
	# of community development projects completed	C	Project site	Admin records	Review of records	Quarterly	Field staff	Quarterly and annual reports
	# of School Open Days held	C	Project site	Admin records;	Review of records;	Quarterly	Field staff	Quarterly and annual reports

### Annex 3: Progress on Indicator Targets (Quantitative Impact)

Deliverable Indicators	Progress through to Sept 30, 2012	Year 7 Targets	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year 7 Achieved	LOP Targets (through September 2013)	LOP Achieved
Number of Learners Enrolled In Primary Schools and/or Equivalent Non-School-Based Settings With USG Support	56,962	25,500	33,052	2,890	0	0	35,942	82,462	92,904
Male	32,508	14,025	20,089	1,699	0	0	21,788	46,533	54,296
Female	24,454	11,475	12,963	1,191	0	0	14,154	35,929	38,608
Number Of USG Supported Schools or Learning Spaces Meeting Criteria for Safe Schools Program	151	50	40	10	0	0	50	201	201
Number of Teachers/Educators/Teaching Assistants who Successfully Completed In-Service Training or Received Intensive Coaching or Mentoring with USG Support	1,131	350	297	72	0	0	369	1,481	1,500
Male	836	245	229	69	0	0	298	1,081	1,134
Female	295	105	68	3	0	0	71	400	366
Number of teachers in USG supported programs trained on how to support learners' psychosocial well-being	N/A	350	214	131	0	0	345	350	345
Male		245	161	115	0	0	276	245	276
Female		105	53	16	0	0	69	105	69
Number of teachers reached with English language professional development courses	75	275	258	0	0	0	258	350	333
Male	59	186	207	0	0	0	207	245	266
Female	16	89	51	0	0	0	51	105	67

Deliverable Indicators	Progress through to Sept 30, 2012	Year 7 Targets	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year 7 Achieved	LOP Targets (through September 2013)	LOP Achieved
Percentage of teachers showing improvement in English language skills	N/A	50%	0	0	0	57%	57%	50%	57%
Number of Administrators and Officials Successfully Trained With USG Support	460	162	0	151	0	0	151	622	611
Male	409	130	0	130	0	0	130	539	539
Female	51	32	0	21	0	0	21	83	72
Percentage of target schools displaying the teacher's code of conduct	N/A	90%	0	0	50%	0	50%	90%	50%
Number of Textbooks and other Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMS) Provided with USG Assistance	2,027	5,000	0	572	34,508	0	35,080	7,027	37,107
Number of Parent-Teacher Associations or Similar 'School' Governance Structures Supported	145	50	40	10	0	0	50	195	195
Number of community development projects completed	53	5	0	0	12	3	15	58	68
Number of School Open Days held	N/A	6	0	0	4	2	6	6	6
Number of students covered by Vitamin A program	27,812	0	0	0	0	0	0	27,087	27,812
Number of long-lasting insecticide treated bed nets per student in each household	22,004	0	0	0	0	0	0	22,174	22,004
Number of schools and Primary Health care facilities with Latrines and Boreholes	48	0	0	0	0	0	0	48	48
Number of communities/ locations involved in strengthening school and health services	550	0	0	0	0	0	0	550	550

Deliverable Indicators	Progress through to Sept 30, 2012	Year 7 Targets	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year 7 Achieved	LOP Targets (through September 2013)	LOP Achieved
Number of Community Health Workers recruited/trained for school linkages	618	0	0	0	0	0	0	618	618
Male	347	0	0	0	0	0	0	347	347
Female	271	0	0	0	0	0	0	271	271

**Explanation of indicators that are more than 10% above or below life-of-project target.**

1. *Number of Learners Enrolled In Primary Schools and/or Equivalent Non-School-Based Settings With USG Support.* The life of project target was 88,462 and the total reported was 92,904, 13% over the LOP target. While the HEAR project tracked this indicator, the project did not have any control over enrollment figures. HEAR’s activities were not expected to directly impact enrollment figures, and the project only estimated anticipated enrollments each year.
2. *Percentage of teachers showing improvement in English language skills.* The life of project target was 50% and the total reported was 57%, 14% over the LOP target. HEAR set a target of 50% of teachers showing improvement in English language skills after a year of training. The training course was very well received, and based on the criteria for “improvement,” a greater number of teachers showed improvement than the project had initially expected.
3. *Percentage of target schools displaying the teacher’s code of conduct.* The life of project target was 90% and the total reported was 50%, 56% of the LOP target. HEAR staff repeatedly encouraged head teachers to display the code of conduct in their schools, but by the end of the extension period, only 50% of the schools had fully complied. All schools had the code of conduct but some admitted they had yet to pin it to their staff room’s walls. Several other schools lacked a good staffroom and claimed they had no place to safely display the code.
4. *Number of Textbooks and other Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMS) Provided with USG Assistance.* The life of project target was 7,027 and the total reported was 37,107, 521% over the LOP target.

The Year 7 target for materials was 5,000, which was based on an expectation of the project's purchasing materials regionally as supplementary reading materials for HEAR classrooms. However, the project was successful in leveraging a donation from the International Book Bank for 34,508 books. With the addition of the other 572 books procured by the project, the total number of materials distributed just in Year 7 was 35,080, which was considerably higher than the originally anticipated number.

5. *Number of community development projects completed.* The life of project target was 58 and the total reported was 68, 17% over the LOP target.

The original target set for the Year 7 extension period was five, which was based on the notion of having one larger scale project in each target location. However, over the course of the year, the HEAR COR advised that the HEAR project should aim to complete a larger number of smaller-scale projects instead of 5 larger-scale ones. Therefore, although the official target was not revised, the number of grants completed is much higher than the original target.

## Annex 4: Performance Indicator Reference Sheets

INDICATOR TITLE: Number of learners enrolled in USG-supported primary schools or equivalent non-school-based settings																	
UNIT: Number of school-aged students entering primary education system	DISAGGREGATE BY: Location, event, date and gender																
	Geographic Location		Event				Date		M		F		Sub-total				
	WBG, Wau		Collection of Enrolment data in Schools														
	NBG, Aweil		Collection of Enrolment data in Schools														
	Warrap, Kwajok		Collection of Enrolment data in Schools														
	Unity, Leer		Collection of Enrolment data in Schools				Feb 2013		1,699		1,191		2,890				
	Totals								1,699		1,191		2,890				
Results:																	
Additional Criteria If other criteria are important, add lines for setting targets and tracking	Baseline		Results Achieved Prior Periods		Reporting Period 31/Dec/12		Reporting Period 31/Mar/13		Reporting Period 30/Jun/13		Reporting Period 30/Sep/13		FY 2013 Target		End of Project Target		
			Achieved		Achieved		Achieved		Achieved		Achieved		Target		Target		
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
Gender: Female (F), Male (M)		0	0	32,508	24,454	20,089	12,963	1,699	1,191					14,025	11,475	46,533	35,929
Kurmuk				9,736	7,200												
Kauda				11,706	8,354												
Abyei				11,066	8,900												
Wau						6,018	4,295										
Aweil						5,622	2,954										

Kwajok					5,009	3,202												
Turalei					3,440	2,512												
Leer							1,699	1,191										

**INDICATOR TITLE: Number of teachers/educators trained**

<b>UNIT:</b>	<b>DISAGGREGATE BY: Location, event, date and gender</b>							
Number of teachers trained (Improving Teacher Quality)	Geographic Location		Event		Date	M	F	Sub-total
	Unity, Leer		Teacher Training		4 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2013	69	3	72
	NBG, Aweil		Teacher Training					
	Warrap, Kwajok		Teacher Training					
	Warrap, Turalei		Teacher Training					
	Totals					69	3	72

**Results:**

Additional Criteria If other criteria are important, add lines for setting targets and tracking	Baseline		Results Achieved Prior Periods		Reporting Period 31/Dec/12		Reporting Period 31/Mar/13		Reporting Period 30/Jun/13		Reporting Period 30/Sep/13		FY 2013 Target		End of Project Target		
	Achieved		Achieved		Achieved		Achieved		Achieved		Achieved		Target		Target		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Gender: Female (F), Male (M)	0	0	836	295	229	68	69	3						245	105	1,081	400
Kurmuk			231	148													
Kauda			300	61													
Abyei			305	86													
Wau					36	42											
Aweil					61	7											

Kwajok					65	13												
Turalei					67	6												
Leer							69	3										

INDICATOR TITLE: Number of Administrators and Officials Trained

UNIT:	DISAGGREGATE BY: Location, event, date and gender																		
Number of School Administrators and Head Teachers trained	Geographic Location				Event				Date				M		F		Sub-total		
	WBG, Wau				Head Teacher and Admin Training				27 <sup>th</sup> Feb-March 1, 2013				22		12		34		
	NBG, Aweil				Head Teacher and Admin Training				12-14 Mar, 2013				27		2		29		
	Unity, Leer				Head Teacher and Admin Training				12-14 Mar, 2013				29		5		34		
	Warrap, Turalei				Head Teacher and Admin Training				12-14 Mar, 2013				26		1		27		
	Warrap, Kwajok				Head Teacher and Admin Training				27-1 <sup>st</sup> Mar 2013				26		1		27		
	Totals												130		21		151		

Results:

Additional Criteria If other criteria are important, add lines for setting targets and tracking	Baseline		Results Achieved Prior Periods		Reporting Period 31/Dec/12		Reporting Period 31/Mar/13		Reporting Period 30/Jun/13		Reporting Period 30/Sep/13		FY 2013 Target		End of Project Target	
			Achieved		Achieved		Achieved		Achieved		Achieved		Target		Target	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Gender: Female (F), Male (M)	0	0	409	51			130	21					130	32	539	83
Kurmuk			113	18												
Kauda			197	20												
Abyei			99	13												

Wau							22	12											
Aweil							27	2											
Kwajok							26	1											
Turalei							26	1											
Leer							29	5											

INDICATOR TITLE: Number of PTAs Supported										
UNIT:  Number of Parent Teachers Associations Strengthened and training provided	DISAGGREGATE BY: Location, event, date and gender									
	Geographic Location			Event		Date		Sub-total		
	WBG, Wau			PTA Training						
	UNITY, Leer			PTA Training		22-24 <sup>th</sup> Jan, 2013		10		
	Warrap, Kwajok			PTA Training						
	Warrap, Turalei			PTA Training						
	Totals							10		
Results:										
Additional Criteria  If other criteria are important, add lines for setting targets and tracking	Baseline		Results Achieved Prior Periods	Reporting Period 31/Dec/12	Reporting Period 31/Mar/13	Reporting Period 30/Jun/13	Reporting Period 30/Sep/13		FY 2013 Target	End of Project Target
			Achieved	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved		Target	Target
			Total	Total	Total	Total	Total		Total	Total
Total	0	0	145	40	10				50	195
Kurmuk			37							
Kauda			68							
Abyei			40							
Wau				10						
Aweil				10						
Kwajok				10						
Turalei				10						
Leer					10					

**INDICATOR TITLE: Number of Community Development Projects Completed**

UNIT:  Number of Small Grants Completed	DISAGGREGATE BY: Location, event, date and gender			
	Geographic Location	Event	Date	Sub-total
	WBG, Wau	Monitoring visit to confirm completion of small grants project to PTA organization	July 2013	1
	NBG, Aweil	Monitoring visit to confirm completion of small grants project to PTA organization	July 2013	2
	Warrap, Kwajok			
	Totals			3

**Results:**

Additional Criteria  If other criteria are important, add lines for setting targets and tracking	Baseline		Results Achieved Prior Periods	Reporting Period 31/Dec/12	Reporting Period 31/Mar/13	Reporting Period 30/Jun/13	Reporting Period 30/Sep/13		FY 2013 Target	End of Project Target
			Achieved	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved		Target	Target
			Total	Total	Total	Total	Total		Total	Total
Total	0	0	53			12	3		5	58
Kurmuk			22							
Kauda			20							
Abyei			11							
Wau						2	1			
Aweil						1	2			
Kwajok						3				
Turalei						3				
Leer						3				



INDICATOR TITLE: Number of Schools Supported by the Project										
UNIT:  Number of Schools Supported by the Project	DISAGGREGATE BY: Location, event, date and gender									
	Geographic Location		Event		Date		Sub-total			
	Unity, Leer		School Assessment Survey		Jan 2013		10			
	NBG, Aweil		School Assessment survey							
	Warrap, Kwajok		School Assessment Survey							
	Warrap, Turalei									
	Totals						10			
Results:										
Additional Criteria  If other criteria are important, add lines for setting targets and tracking	Baseline		Results Achieved Prior Periods	Reporting Period 31/Dec/12	Reporting Period 31/Mar/13	Reporting Period 30/Jun/13	Reporting Period 30/Sep/13		FY 2013 Target	End of Project Target
			Achieved	Achieved	Target Achieved	Achieved	Achieved		Target	Target
			Total	Total	Total	Total	Total		Total	Total
Total	0	0	151	40	10				50	201
Kurmuk			39							
Kauda			72							
Abyei			40							
Wau				10						
Aweil				10						
Kwajok				10						
Turalei				10						
Leer					10					

INDICATOR TITLE: Number of students covered by Vitamin A program										
UNIT:  Number of Students covered by Vitamin A program	DISAGGREGATE BY: Location, event, date and gender									
	Geographic Location		Event		Date	M	F	Sub-total		
	South Kordofan State, Kauda County		Distribution of Vitamin A drugs to school aged children							
	Blue Nile State, Kurmuk County		Distribution of Vitamin A drugs to school aged children							
	Abyei									
	Totals									
Results:										
Additional Criteria  If other criteria are important, add lines for setting targets and tracking	Baseline		Results Achieved Prior Periods	Reporting Period 31/Dec/12	Reporting Period 31/Mar/13	Reporting Period 30/Jun/13	Reporting Period 30/Sep/13		FY 2013 Target	End of Project Target
			Achieved	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved		Target	Target
			Total	Total	Total	Total	Total		Total	Total
Total	0	0	27,812							27,087
Kurmuk			11,933							
Kauda			7,366							
Abyei			8,513							

**INDICATOR TITLE: Number of Long Lasting Insecticide Treated Bed Nets per Student in each household**

UNIT:  Number of Students covered by Vitamin A program	DISAGGREGATE BY: Location, event, date and gender			
	Geographic Location	Event	Date	Sub-total
	South Kordofan State, Kauda County	Distribution of Bed Nets per household		
	Blue Nile State, Kurmuk County	Distribution of Bed nets per household		
	Abyei	Distribution of Bed nets per household		
	Totals			

**Results:**

Additional Criteria  If other criteria are important, add lines for setting targets and tracking	Baseline		Results Achieved Prior Periods	Reporting Period 31/Dec/12	Reporting Period 31/Mar/13	Reporting Period 30/Jun/13	Reporting Period 30/Sep/13		FY 2013 Target	End of Project Target
			Achieved	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved		Target	Target
			Total	Total	Total	Total	Total		Total	Total
Total	0	0	22,004							22,174
Kurmuk			8,070							
Kauda			8,464							
Abyei			5,470							

INDICATOR TITLE: Number of Community Health Workers recruited/Trained for School Linkages																		
UNIT:  Number of Community Health Workers Trained	DISAGGREGATE BY: Location, event, date and gender																	
	Geographic Location				Event				Date		M		F		Sub-total			
	South Kordofan State, Kauda County				Community and school Health Promoters Training													
	Blue Nile State, Kurmuk County				Community and school Health Promoters Training													
	Abyei				Community and school Health Promoters Training													
Totals																		
Results:																		
Additional Criteria  If other criteria are important, add lines for setting targets and tracking	Baseline		Results Achieved Prior Periods		Reporting Period 31/Dec/12		Reporting Period 31/Mar/13		Reporting Period 30/Jun/13		Reporting Period 30/Sep/13				FY 2013 Target		End of Project Target	
			Achieved		Achieved		Achieved		Achieved		Achieved				Target		Target	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F			M	F	M	F
Gender: Female (F), Male (M)		0	0	347	271												347	271
Kurmuk				93	74													
Kauda				167	120													
Abyei				87	77													

**INDICATOR TITLE: Number schools and Primary Health Care facilities with Boreholes and Latrines**

<b>UNIT:</b>  Number of Schools and Health facilities with Boreholes and Latrines	DISAGGREGATE BY: Location, event, date and gender			
	Geographic Location	Event	Date	Sub-total
	South Kordofan State, Kauda County	Data collection on the availability of Boreholes and latrines in schools		
	Blue Nile State, Kurmuk County			
	Abyei			
	Totals			

**Results:**

Additional Criteria  If other criteria are important, add lines for setting targets and tracking	Baseline		Results Achieved Prior Periods	Reporting Period 31/Dec/12	Reporting Period 31/Mar/13	Reporting Period 30/Jun/13	Reporting Period 30/Sep/13		FY 2013 Target	End of Project Target
			Achieved	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved		Target	Target
			Total	Total	Total	Total	Total		Total	Total
Total	0	0	48						-	48
Kurmuk			23							
Kauda			20							
Abyei			5							

**INDICATOR TITLE: Number of Communities involved in Strengthening Schools and Health Services**

UNIT:  Number of communities around Schools and Health facilities	DISAGGREGATE BY: Location, event, date and gender			
	Geographic Location	Event	Date	Sub-total
	South Kordofan State, Kauda County	Data collection of the number of communities around schools and Health services		
	Blue Nile State, Kurmuk County			
	Abyei			
	Totals			

**Results:**

Additional Criteria  If other criteria are important, add lines for setting targets and tracking	Baseline		Results Achieved Prior Periods	Reporting Period 31/Dec/12	Reporting Period 31/Mar/13	Reporting Period 30/Jun/13	Reporting Period 30/Sep/13		FY 2013 Target	End of Project Target
			Achieved	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved		Target	Target
			Total	Total	Total	Total	Total		Total	Total
Total	0	0	550						-	550
Kurmuk			190							
Kauda			275							
Abyei			85							

## ***Annex 5: Success Stories***



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**SUDAN**

## SUCCESS STORY

### Education Resource Centers Connect Communities to Learning

After years of isolation, Education Resource Centers will connect communities with knowledge in Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile State



The Education Resource Center in Kauda provides books and internet connectivity to help children and community members learn and improve.

“The books and internet facilities the (HEAR) project has brought here are for our good life; let’s all make good use of them to develop ourselves. We have lagged behind for so long and it is time for us to catch up.”

- Abdulahamid, Director for Education in Kauda

The Director of Education in Kurmuk County, Blue Nile State, waited a long time to connect to the rest of the world. For years, he anticipated the arrival of an internet facility in his area. Now, a connected Education Resource Center (ERC) is open to the public, giving students and community members the chance to learn, and engage with others near and far.

“We have been given hooks to fish; now it is our turn to get the knowledge out of these books,” says Mr. Karamah, the Education Director. With this kind help we shall stand tall amongst the best in the region in education.”

The library opened under the auspices of the USAID-funded Health Education and Reconciliation (HEAR) Sudan Project, implemented by Creative Associates International in partnership with the Education Development Center and John Snow, Inc.

Regional Education and Health Ministry officials opened the new ERC in Kurmuk, and one in Kauda, Nuba mountains. The centers provide in-service teacher training and other capacity building programs, and serve area schools as hubs for print and electronic educational materials. With their state-of-the-art Information Communications Technology facilities, the ERCs provide the most recent web reading materials to local students, and help teachers and education officers enhance their knowledge on day-to-day developments in the field of education.

The ERC in Kurmuk now facilitates computer trainings for students, teachers and County education officials. Students are particularly excited about the opportunity, and how it could develop their community. “I want to learn computer so that I can teach others how to use a computer,” says Maritina Paul, one of the girls who attends computer classes.

At the opening ceremonies for the ERC in Kauda, regional government officers were delighted at the range of services that the center could provide. Political leaders and government officers from the regional education and health offices attended the launch, where students and teachers from local schools celebrated the event with songs, dances, poetry recitations and a drama sketch.

“The books and internet facilities the (HEAR) project has brought here are for our good life; let’s all make good use of them to develop ourselves,” says Abdulahamid, the Director for Education in Kauda. “We have lagged behind for so long and it is time for us to catch up.”

With the creation of the ERCs, the HEAR Sudan project has brought connectivity, and educational potential to the much marginalized areas of the Nuba mountains and Blue Nile State.



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**SUDAN**

## SUCCESS STORY

### Teacher Training in South Sudan Brings Creative Methods and Fresh Air

Teachers in Wau practice the pupil-centered instruction methods taught by the HEAR project.



*Children from Wau's Grinti primary school get away from their cramped classrooms and sit outside in clusters to learn.*

"Sitting outside class helps up us to interact better with friends during group work and exercises given to us by our teachers."

- Dut Garang, pupil at Grinti primary school

It would be a stretch to call the place where Juliana Sabina holds classes at Grinti Primary School in Wau, South Sudan a classroom. There are no lights or desks for the 180 first-graders who crowd inside to learn. Some students bring plastic chairs from home, but most sit randomly on the floor or squeeze onto windowsills.

With conditions like these, concentration was tough, and supervision even harder. Sabina was unable to move around the classroom to monitor work or help students who did not understand. She knew it was a problem, but was not sure what she could do to fix it.

When Creative Associates trained Grinti Primary schoolteachers through the USAID-funded Health, Education and Reconciliation (HEAR) project, Sabina got some ideas. "We were advised on how to deal with large classrooms and making pupils actively learn," she says.

The seven days of training showed her how to create effective lesson plans and schemes of work. She learned how to manage large classrooms, and identify children with psychosocial issues. Sabina also learned an approach to teaching called Pupil Centered Learning and Instruction (PCI.)

Sabina—who has volunteered as a teacher for the past decade and during the civil war—had never had any kind of formal teacher training before the HEAR project. Now, she knows approaches to teaching that allow her to be more effective, and more creative.

Sabina had the idea to incorporate group work as a learning technique. Impossible inside the cramped classroom, she moved all of her students outside where they could sit in clusters and she could monitor their progress. The students felt more comfortable in the open space and fresh air, and Sabina did not have any major discipline issues as she conducted her lessons using the newly-acquired PCI techniques.

"Sitting outside class helps up us to interact better with friends during group work and exercises given to us by our teachers," says student Dut Garang, though he admitted the lack of a blackboard outdoors posed its own challenge.

His classmate Deng Majok agrees that outdoor learning has created better conditions for him to learn: "The teacher pays better attention to us while outside the class than while inside," he says.

Sabina says the teachers who received HEAR training are now better able to control their huge classes and help children who need extra attention. She plans on conducting all of her lessons outdoors until the rainy season drives them inside.

"I encouraged my colleagues at Grinti to do the same as it will help us improve the quality of our teaching and the learning of our students."



**USAID**  
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**SUDAN**

## SUCCESS STORY

### From One Classroom to a Whole Community, a Teacher Learns to Heal

A teacher in Wau uses the skills she learned from HEAR to teach children at her own home.



Children sit in Dorina Joseph's makeshift classroom, eager to learn.

"Most of the time, students are just at home, sad and isolated from their fellow students who are able to attend the formal school. If we do not help now, these kids will end up being street children."

- Dorina Joseph, Wau primary school teacher

In the blazing days of South Sudan's hot season, families retreat for naps in their rakubas, outdoor structures used for relaxing in the shade. But Dorina Joseph, the only teacher in the village of Aweil Jedid, has put hers to another use: providing free education to children who cannot afford the costs associated with attending school.

"Most of the time, students are just at home, sad and isolated from their fellow students who are able to attend the formal school," says Dorina. "If we do not help now, these kids will end up being street children."

After a long day teaching at Lokoloko Primary School in Aweil, Northern Bahr el Ghazal State, Dorina now returns to eager pupils who have camped out at her home waiting for her to teach them, too. She did not always have such a positive relationship with young students. In the schoolroom, she used to beat them with a cane when they misbehaved. She found them rude when they were easily distracted, fell asleep, or just sat there crying.

It wasn't until Dorina received training from USAID's Health, Education and Reconciliation (HEAR) Project that she recognized these students were not being rude, but were traumatized by violence and war. The training taught her to identify children with psychosocial issues and find ways to deal with them other than corporal punishment. As her teaching style changed, she noticed students becoming friendlier and seeking her out to discuss the issues affecting them. She began to listen more, and judge less. "I felt like a whole new teacher," Dorina says.

The training also opened her eyes to the scope of the problem in Aweil Jedid—a village largely populated by returnees from Sudan. Plenty of parents also needed psychosocial support, and were especially stressed over their inability to pay for their children's education.

Dorina and her husband, Evaristo Khamis, set out to address both problems at once. They transformed their rakuba into a makeshift classroom, with a few salvaged benches and a blackboard hung on a pole. Then, using the lessons from the HEAR training, the couple started a community psychosocial group to help its members cope with their issues, and improve their economic standing.

With 45 members, the group is now learning to sew, bake and grow vegetables in the hopes of starting small businesses that will generate income. "We are looking towards the bright future of our children," says group member Christina Joseph.



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## SUCCESS STORY

# Healthy Behaviors Flow from Training

Community Health Workers identified water supply as a key barrier to good health in Khorbody Primary School, and devised their own plan to get it.



*Community Health Workers realized access to water is critical for ensuring the health of students, teachers and community members.*

“Training that the HEAR Sudan project has been giving the community members in the three transitional areas has provided everlasting behavior changes in the health patterns of the people in the schools and community.”

- Head Teacher, Khorbody Primary School

Community Health Workers (CHWs) at Khorbody primary school in Kurmuk, Blue Nile State, had pressing things to teach the rest of the school community about health and hygiene. First priority: explaining the importance of using clean water for drinking and hand-washing to students and their families.

But there was a major obstacle in delivering this message and getting people to change their behavior when it came to how to use water: As it stood, the school did not have any clean water available.

These CHWs had been trained under the auspices of the Health, Education and Reconciliation (HEAR) project, funded by USAID.

The seven-year initiative aimed to promote quality education and health services and improve school governance through enhanced local capacity and community engagement.

To increase the sustainability of HEAR, the project provided monthly refresher training to the CHWs it taught about health and hygiene. It was at this training where they realized that the lack of water for the school and community presented a challenge in transferring the knowledge they had acquired during the workshops.

“We had to do something to solve this,” said Ahmed Muhammed, one of the CHWs.

The group decided to make contributions through Khorbody primary school’s parent-teacher association in order to purchase a donkey and cart. That way, someone would be able to collect enough water for the children and teachers at the school and bring it back more easily.

After hearing that the CHWs were making their own donations to keep the children healthy, a community member sold the school one of his donkeys at a low price to benefit the effort.

When HEAR staff visited Khorbody a month later, the school was still trying to hire someone who could regularly do the work of traveling the six kilometers roundtrip to collect water. But, with community members serving as volunteers to do the job, the school already had a much steadier supply of water.

With the increased availability of water, the team also noticed improvements in healthy behaviors in the community and school, visible from the way the students kept themselves clean.

“We are grateful for the work that the (CHWs) have done in this school,” said the Head Teacher of Khorbody Primary school.

“Indeed the (CHW) training that the HEAR Sudan project has been giving the community members in the three transitional areas has provided everlasting behavior changes in the health patterns of the people in the schools and community.”



## SUCCESS STORY

### PTA takes matters—and materials—into its own hands

The Chairwoman of Rumbek Primary School's Parent-Teacher Association used skills she learned from HEAR to mobilize her community and reconstruct classrooms.



The school community of Rumbek Primary came together to construct four new classrooms out of local materials.

Rumbek Primary School was not much to look at. Located southeast of Agok town in the Abyei region, it was barely a building at all, just a makeshift structure held up with old poles that had been donated years ago by UNICEF.

The Chairwoman of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) believed that students at Rumbek Primary School deserved better.

After receiving training on education, health and hygiene, peace education and conflict resolution from the USAID-funded Health, Education and Reconciliation (HEAR) Project, she led a team of teachers, administrators and community members in discussions about what could be done to provide a safe learning space for children in Agok.

The group held a series of meetings between the PTA, the school administration and the community, which was represented in large part by women. Together, they decided to construct four classrooms out of local materials.

The PTA agreed to contribute by participating in the construction of the rooms. With skills in community mobilization and small grant application and implementation gained during HEAR training, they organized contributions of grass, poles and rope to make the new school. The HEAR project gave them an additional leg up by paying for labor and doors.

This construction effort was a great achievement in the area, and not just because Rumbek Primary School is now a safe and comfortable place for students to learn. Indeed, the collaborative effort has created a greater sense of community engagement in the operations of the school.

The project has helped to motivate PTA members from the school and the surrounding communities to unite and initiate similar projects to improve the school environment and make it a safer and healthier place for children to learn.

This also encouraged the Abyei Education Inspectorate to visit the school, and it led other NGOs, such as Catholic Relief Services, Save the Children and UNICEF to take note as well.

These organizations were motivated to plan for more developmental activities in the school, including improving sanitation and hygiene, and providing teaching and learning materials to the school.

The project received enormous attention in the area and will serve as a model for future development.



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## SUCCESS STORY

# Community Mobilizes to Fence School

The community of Kurmuk used tools learned from Creative's HEAR program to join together and advocate for a safer school environment.



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*Destroyed twice, Kurmuk Model School's new gate and fence are a testament to an empowered PTA and community.*

"We have fought for 31 years, why do we have to fight now? We have to be one, so we can achieve our goal. We have to continue working very closely with each other, for the sake of the future of our children."

- Hellen Samia Rajad, Deputy Headmistress, Kurmuk Model School

A hotbed of conflict during more than two decades of war, the Kurmuk community in Sudan's Blue Nile State was counting on education to provide their children with the foundation for prolonged peace. But their unfenced school building in the heart of the marketplace was routinely subject to vandalism, stray animals and disruption that undermined learning.

To ensure quality education for the 600 students, the Kurmuk community used a grant from the USAID-funded Health, Education and Reconciliation (HEAR) Project to solve the problem by building a fence around the school.

HEAR worked for seven years in Sudan and South Sudan to strengthen community support for school governance and outreach through conflict avoidance and resolution strategies.

The construction project it galvanized seemed an easy fix. But soon after the fence was completed, military forces destroyed it when they held an event at the school.

"It takes minutes or seconds to destroy, but the rebuilding is a big problem," says Hellen Samia Rajad, the Deputy Headmistress of Kurmuk Model School. "As a mother, it pains me to see the property for our children being destroyed."

Undeterred, Kurmuk's parent-teacher association (PTA) decided to step in. Recently trained in civic action by HEAR, it organized a community meeting about the fence and led the group to lodge an appeal with local police. When that was unsuccessful, the association escalated the issue at the governor's office, where it condemned the destruction of property and demanded repayment and reconstruction.

"We have fought for 31 years, why do we have to fight now?" says Rajad. "We have to be one, so we can achieve our goal. We have to continue working very closely with each other, for the sake of the future of our children."

In a society accustomed to violence, these tactics were a respectful way to address community problems. They were also successful: The responsible parties acknowledged they were at fault and agreed to repair the damaged fence and gate.

Only a few months later, a fire broke out at a kiosk selling fuel near the school. Within minutes, the spreading fire engulfed the Kurmuk Model School's new fence, leaving it a pile of ashes.

Discouraged but undefeated, the school's head teacher and PTA sprang into action. They mobilized the community to bring materials and contribute their labor, and a new fence was put in place within just two days. The organizational skills that HEAR helped deliver were put in action as the school community rallied together to gather support and rebuild the fence a second time.

The attitude shift and community engagement for social services in Kurmuk is fostering an increased sense of mutual responsibility and ownership. Today, the community is building latrines for its school, remaining active and engaged on its own.



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## SUCCESS STORY

### Huge Turnout at School Event Reveals Community Aspirations

Kurmuk County's Open School Day brought 1,000 community members together to celebrate what they can do for education, health and reconciliation.



Parents play a game of tug-of-war at Jorot East Primary School

“We can pull together—teachers parents and pupils—to promote education and reconciliation.”

- Commissioner Representative Habil Zaki

More than 1,000 parents, teachers, students, education officers, community leaders and NGO workers attended a fun-filled Open School Day held at a remote primary school in Kurmuk County, Blue Nile State.

Guests at “Let’s educate our children to secure our future” enjoyed a volleyball match between teachers, and an inter-school football match that had fans cheering at both teams’ frantic efforts to outdo each other on the field.

The huge turnout at Jorot East Primary School revealed more than the high-spirited nature of Kurmuk residents. It bared the entire community’s deep desire to secure quality formal education for its children.

Organized by the USAID-funded Health, Education and Reconciliation (HEAR) Project, the event included songs, dances and skits that trumpeted the students’ fervent aspirations for peace.

Event speakers delivered a common message: The future of communities and the nation hinges on the quality of education children receive. They urged all stakeholders to actively participate in developing, promoting and implementing health and education programs.

A moving skit that featured mock fighting spoke to the children’s hopes for nonviolence. Another skit by the children addressed how the absence of health education in the community exposes everyone to harmful practices.

“My participation here today was motivated by the HEAR training I got as a community health worker,” said health promoter and event organizer John Stephen. “I feel obliged to work and serve my community with all my strength. Our community has lagged behind long enough.”

The roar of laughter was irresistible as parents of Jorot East Primary School played a rowdy game of tug-of-war with a clear message: it is easier to pull together than to pull apart.

This used to happen before the war, where the warring villages used this tug of war game to bring about reconciliation,” said Commissioner Representative Habil Zaki. “HEAR has brought an element on the ground that had been missing: We can pull together—teachers parents and pupils—to promote education and reconciliation.”

HEAR-Kurmuk’s Education Resource Manager Mary Migiro challenged leaders to promote girls’ enrollment and retention in schools instead of letting them fall prey to early marriages and low self-esteem. “Empowerment to the women is empowerment to the whole community,” Migiro said, urging women to accept leadership positions and act as role models.

The event concluded amid song, ululation and cultural dance. Those present described it as one of a kind.