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South Sudan Teacher Education Program

**FINAL
REPORT**



SSTEP FINAL REPORT

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Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) In partnership with
Winrock International and Episcopal Church of Sudan and Windle Trust/British Council

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Acronyms

BSF	Basic Services Fund
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
CBS	Community based study
CEC	County Education Centre
CES	Central Equatoria State
ECS	Episcopal Church of Sudan
EES	Eastern Equatoria State
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
ERP	Educational Rehabilitation Program
IDP	Internally displaced person
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
LPPC	Lower Primary Provisional Certificate
MDTF-SS	Multi-Donor Trust Fund South Sudan
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MoGEI	Ministry of General Education and Instruction
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NBeG	Northern Bahr El-Ghazal
NTTC	National Teacher Training Curriculum
SBEP	Sudan Basic Education Program
SCOPE	Standard Classroom Observation Protocol for Educators
SSTEP	South Sudan Teacher Education Program
TAP	Technical Assistance Program
TTI	Teacher Training Institutes
TPDP	Teacher Professional Development Program
UTTC	Unified Teacher Training Curriculum
WBeG	Western Bahr El-Ghazal
WES	Western Equatoria State

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The USAID-funded South Sudan Teacher Education Program (SSTEP) initiated activities at the end of 2011, following the Independence of the world's newest nation on July 9, 2011 and a renewed sense of optimism regarding the future of the region after decades of war. The SSTEP project (implemented by EDC with partners Winrock International, Windle Trust, and the Episcopal Church of Sudan) accomplished substantial results during its 3 years of operation, notwithstanding the extremely challenging conditions.

SSTEP supported important policy reforms, like the National Professional Standards for Teachers, which helped establish the foundation for the education sector. In addition, SSTEP led the design of an updated Unified Teacher Training Curriculum, including the revision of 135 in-service training booklets. Training of about 3,000 teachers throughout the ten States in South Sudan, many of which had never received any formal teacher training, as well as 255 tutors supporting these teachers, SSTEP provided critical professional skills for a sizable number of teachers. Close to 1,000 teachers in the northern part of the country significantly upgraded their English language skills to improve delivery of the primary school curriculum. Hundreds of thousands of readers and books were provided to students in classrooms with teachers who had undergone extensive literacy training through SSTEP.

Key achievements of the project are listed below:

- Professional Standards for teachers, published in 2012, gained Ministry of Education (MoE) praise in parliament and demonstrated South Sudan's commitment to providing quality education.
- Three teacher training literacy modules were created with 150 lesson plans and corresponding readers for literacy improvement in primary school.
- Produced technical papers to lay the foundation for establishing a comprehensive teacher certification system.
- Strong consultative bodies were formed within the Ministry of Education, including the SSTEP Steering Committee and SSTEP Advisory Committee which helped expose a wide range of officials to new ideas regarding teacher training as well as discuss the development of a coherent national strategy.
- A Gender Affirmative Action Policy was developed in consultation with stakeholders from all States and across the central government and parliament. This lays the foundation for increasing female participation in teacher education as teachers and leaders.

- 3500 Lifeplayers radios, loaded with self-learning materials, distributed across the country to enable teachers to support their own professional pedagogical improvement. They also have materials loaded to support language learning in the classroom.
- More than 1700 teachers received extensive in-service teacher training, many for the first time.
- Over 250 tutors from across the country were trained and provided with materials to train teachers in their States.
- Close to 1000 teachers (who previously taught in Arabic pattern) have improved their ability to teach the English medium curriculum.
- The national teacher education curriculum has been updated and 135 modules revised which is 75% of the materials for the 4-year in-service program.
- Locally based organisations trained and have stronger capacity to continue training teachers.
- Multiple sets of both teaching and learning curriculum materials, including literacy teaching materials and policy/analytical papers were produced and distributed in hard copy and electronic format to all levels of the Ministry of Education, donors and international agencies and local organizations working in the education sector and to local organisations with training capacity. State Ministries of Education who have trained trainers are able to use these materials to continue training teachers.

The above accomplishments were achieved in collaboration with the Ministry notwithstanding the post-conflict recovery challenges faced by South Sudan coupled with unanticipated changes in the operating context (e.g. the austerity measures in 2012 that restricted government funding for education institutions and staff and ongoing security challenges).

SSTEP has carefully documented and disseminated its experiences as well as its technical recommendations with the hope that once South Sudan recovers from the current crisis, it can again begin the important work of training its teachers to be able to, in turn, educate future generations. These products include the Teacher Certification policy paper, Final Draft Gender Affirmative Action Policy, Unified Curriculum for Teacher Education, Advancing Literacy in South Sudan policy paper, SSTEP Literacy Training Modules 1-3 (including EDC developed readers for modules 2 and 3), and the In-Service Training Materials. All products, in hard and soft copy, have been disseminated widely to the government of South Sudan, donors, implementing partners, educational institutions, and NGOs working in the teacher-training sector.

2. INTRODUCTION

The South Sudan Teacher Education Program (SSTEP)¹ initiated activities at the end of 2011, following the Independence of the world's newest nation on July 9, 2011 and a renewed sense of optimism regarding the future of the region after decades of war. The original program design recognized the critical need to upgrade teacher skills given the significant increases in enrolment rates, low levels of teacher skills development, and the dearth of training programs and institutions to enhance teaching skill levels.

SSTEP grew directly out of work supported previously by USAID (the Sudan Basic Education Program (SBEP) and Technical Assistance Project or TAP) and multi-donor funds such as the South Sudan Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF-SS), the Education Rehabilitation Project (ERP), and the Basic Services Fund (BSF). The original concept was that SSTEP would pick up where the other projects had left off in terms of teacher training, particularly with the MDTF-SS and BSF teachers that had only partially completed in-service training programs, and in further materials development. The original objectives were to work closely with the National² and 10 State Ministries of Education, and through Teacher Training Institutes (TTIs) and County Education Centres (CECs) to:

- Improve policy frameworks and management systems to professionalize teaching and to ensure effectiveness and quality in the delivery of education services;
- Improve teacher performance; and
- Increase access to curriculum-based teaching and learning materials.³

3. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

From the onset of SSTEP, a foundation for success was built by developing meaningful and collaborative relationships with the Ministry of Education as well as the State Ministries of Education. Steering and Advisory Committees were established early on and proved valuable in aligning the project with the realities on the ground. In the first quarters of the project, SSTEP engaged

¹ The original title of the project as per the USAID Cooperative Agreement No. AID-668-G-11-00001 of September 15, 2011 was the Teacher Professional Development Program (TPDP) in South Sudan.

² Originally titled the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MOGEI), the name was later changed to the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST). For ease, in this report, the term Ministry of Education will be used.

³ The TPDP design anticipated a fourth objective; To enhance access to teacher training through infrastructure provision, to be implemented through a separate agreement, but this never materialized before SSTEP was terminated.

in a consultative process with the Ministry of Education to develop a work plan that addressed the needs of the country. Although, as noted below, the work plan changed and shifted throughout the life of the project, the relationships that were established enabled constant engagement and dialogue with decision makers to make the most of the project in challenging times. The changes to the program, and the reasons that brought them about are documented in SSTEP quarterly and annual reports, and formalized through approvals and modifications from USAID.

Original Project Design and Approach

Originally designed in 2010 to address a comprehensive range of teacher training, teacher performance and teacher certification concerns, SSTEP had three objectives, as defined in the original program description:

1. Improved policy frameworks and management systems;
2. Improved access to and quality of teacher training, and;
3. Increased access to teaching and learning materials.

The original results framework (included as Appendix 1) as well as the Performance Monitoring Plan, provide specific details regarding the original SSTEP planned activities and targets to achieve these three objectives. In summary form, SSTEP planned to work on nine educational policies, support both in-service and pre-service training through existing structures with an emphasis on continuing teachers, help revise the teacher training curriculum, and provide teaching and learning materials to training institutions and organizations, particularly CECs, TTIs, State Ministries, schools, and other education stakeholders.

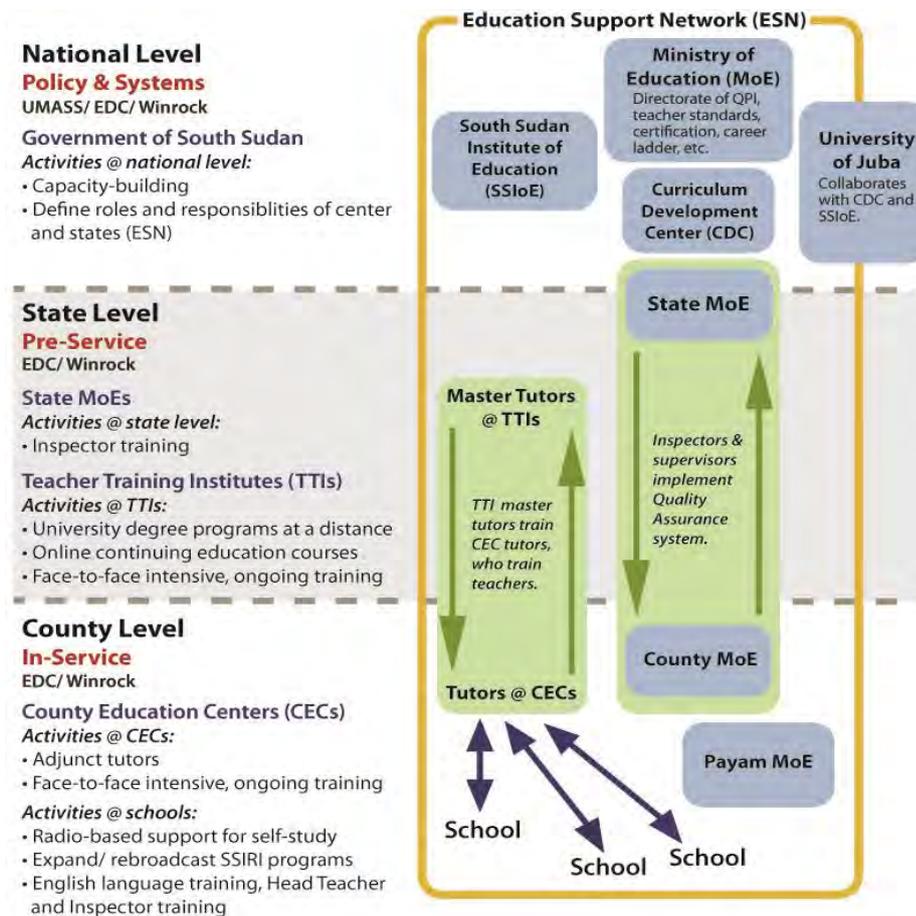
One of the policy objectives that underpinned the original design was to work within the existing structures to create and build the capacity of an Education Support Network (ESN) in the country. SSTEP was to work with the ESN to address policy gaps, provide in-service and pre-service training for teachers and to finalize the unified teacher training curriculum and training materials.

This was set out in the original proposal⁴ as follows:

“Technical Approach: *Our project’s three key objectives are collectively designed to support effective implementation of an Education Support Network to deliver pre- and in-service training to Sudan’s untrained teachers. Each objective deals with a different*

⁴ EDC South Sudan TPD1 Proposal Final; 11-14-11

supporting pillar to the network's overall functioning. Figure 1 is a graphic depiction of our strategy.



Ensuring the viability of the Education Support Network called for working at three distinct but interconnected levels of operation within the Ministry of Education: the level of policies and systems coming from the MoE and SSIoE; the level of the TTIs and State Ministries of Education; and the level of the CECs and county education offices, which directly support the payams (sub-districts) and schools. The SSTEP team will concentrate resources on the lower two levels, as they constitute the heart of a functioning ESN, while assisting the central MoE and SSIoE to further develop the policies and systems necessary to strengthen both the TTIs and the CECs. “

Using the ESN as an underpinning approach, SSTEP set out to achieve the following output targets:

OBJECTIVE 1: Policy frameworks and management systems

Outputs (7 policies and 2 standards):

1. Teacher Professional Development Policy
2. Standards for (Qualified) Teachers
3. Teacher training curriculum framework

4. Human Resource Policy
5. Gender Affirmative Action Policy
6. Teacher Certification
7. Institutional Accreditation
8. ESN policy and framework
9. Standards for Tutors

OBJECTIVE 2: Improved access to and quality of teacher training

Outputs:

1. Provide support to 15 ESN institutions (TTIs and CECs)
2. Develop institutional assessment package
3. Train 4000 teachers (reduced to 1827) via in-service
4. Train 1941 teachers via pre-service
5. Train 1000 teachers in Intensive English
6. Train 15 TTIs
7. Train 100 CEC tutors
8. Train 5300 school administrators and officials (4498 school heads and 752 inspectors/supervisors and 50 Ministry officials)

OBJECTIVE 3: Improved access to and quality of TLM and resources

Outputs:

1. Revise the Unified Teacher Training Curriculum
2. Revise/develop teacher training teaching and learning materials (TLMs)
3. Develop materials distribution system for print and digital
Procurement of school library resource books/decodable texts and distributed

Conditions On The Ground in 2012

There was a significant gap in time between the end of the previous USAID supported teacher training program (SBEP and TAP) and the start-up of SSTEP in 2012. This extended design and procurement phase was characterized as a period of great optimism after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accords. However, within months of inception, SSTEP staff began to identify elements of the original project design that were unfeasible given the actual context. One of the reasons was that the Ministry was in the process of developing its Education Strategic Plan and had its own changing views on how and where the project needed to support its priorities. As such, the SSTEP project team began working with the Ministry and USAID to adjust the program's focus and activities accordingly. Specifically, the conditions affecting implementation within SSTEP's first year were:

1. The absence of operational budgets for the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), the TTIs, the CECs, and the South Sudan Institute of Education:

Under the austerity measures resulting from oil disputes with Sudan, the government was not able to provide adequate funding to any of the teacher preparation institutions with which SSTEP had planned to work as a

counterpart.⁵ As a result, these institutions were almost entirely non-functional. There was only one functioning government TTI and a limited number of CECs operational during the life of the project. Therefore the anticipated partnering with the Ministry training structures to support in-service training was severely limited and there was less support for pre-service training activities.

2. The lack of tutors for the in-service training model: With the closure of the TTIs and consequent lack of teacher trainers, SSTEP turned to government-paid tutors, linked to the CECs or the State Ministries of Education, to deliver in-service training and support. Typically State tutors were retired teachers linked to a CEC (if operational) and tasked with conducting training, coaching, mentoring, and supervision of teachers. Unfortunately, in many states the government tutors were unavailable, unqualified or simply not working, as they were not being paid, or dually assigned to a school as well and so unable to carry out follow-up support activities in other schools.

3. Low re-enrolment of teachers who had been trained through the MDTF and BSF: There were approximately 1,650 teachers enrolled in the MDTF, of which SSTEP was able to locate and re-enrol approximately 900 teachers. The reasons for the dropouts ranged from teachers finding other (paid) jobs, including jobs in the police force or the army, to loss of interest in the teaching profession also related to delays in salary payments. With only 900 potential teachers re-enrolling in SSTEP training, significantly less than originally targeted, SSTEP initiated training in year 2 for a new cohort of teachers. It was hoped at this point in time that the Ministry would approve the Lower Primary Provisional Certificate (LPPC, detailed in following sections) that would enable these new teachers to achieve a certification during the life of the SSTEP project. The challenges in identifying teacher that met the agreed-upon criteria and standards are detailed in further sections of the report.

4. Lack of unified vision on establishing systems to regulate the teaching profession: SSTEP was committed to improve policy frameworks and management systems to professionalize teaching, but, progress had been slower than anticipated. Reasons for this included; delays in passing the Education Bill in Parliament, lack of agreement amongst government stakeholders in key aspects of policy (for example the certification structure), and an emphasis on the need to increase numbers of trained teachers.

⁵ While specific data is hard to obtain on actual budget figures, SSTEP estimates that only 30% of the Ministry budget was allocated in FY2012/2013. Roughly 10% of the overall FY2012/2013 austerity budget of 6.7 billion South Sudanese pounds (US\$1.3 billion) is allocated to education. Following this logic, an estimate of total funding for education in South Sudan for 2012/2013 is in the range of US\$40 million.

These factors led the Ministry to prioritize putting resources into CECs and training programs rather than policies and procedures that would sustain the overall system of training. When the project was terminated early, significant advancement in Teacher professional development, including certification, remained a pending issue.

5. Lack of curriculum counterpart expertise and workforce to revise and complete the previously developed teacher-training curriculum: While SSTEP had anticipated leading a curriculum review process and supporting the development of materials, it was envisioned that the Ministry itself would conduct the mainstay of the work. Unfortunately, due to a variety of factors including budget, the Curriculum Development Centre at Maridi was dysfunctional, and intended capacity building in curriculum and materials development was not built at the national Curriculum development Centre.

This range of issues pointed to the difficulties of pursuing a comprehensive plan for the Education Support Network (ESN), so in discussion with the Ministry of Education and USAID postponed this until conditions changed. Furthermore, the focus on delivering and supporting pre-service teacher training was also no longer feasible due to the lack of operational institutions.

All these factors demanded a re-examination of SSTEP's activities, with a view towards prioritizing those that were: a) feasible in the current context and b) Still in line with the program's (and Ministry of Education's) objectives.

To respond to the above conditions and others, in December 2012 SSTEP submitted to USAID a change in approach that was outlined in the SSTEP "Master Plan", which benefited from wide consultation with the Ministry and USAID. The main elements of the Master Plan, that detailed the first major shift in approach, were:

Reduction in the overall numbers of teachers to be trained under SSTEP and increase in number of tutors: Under the initial design with optimal conditions the Ministry and State Ministries of Education were to support both pre-service and in-service teacher training. Due to the Ministry's insufficient funds to maintain the minimum infrastructure for pre-service training, this component was dropped from the project with a greater emphasis on in-service training as the only feasible option. However, as outlined above, the conditions for in-service training were also challenging at the State level and SSTEP realized it would have to assume responsibility for direct implementation of certain aspects of the in-service training and shift resources to hiring additional staff at the State levels to train and compliment tutors. As a result, the overall targets for teachers undergoing training were reduced. Realizing the

emphasis on in-service training moving forward, and the critical role and low capacity of government tutors, tutor support and training was expanded to reach more tutors with a more in-depth training program.

Emphasis on early primary grade teachers and proposal of Lower Primary Provisional Certificate (LPPC): Given the high numbers of lower primary teachers with little to no training, SSTEP proposed to focus on providing two-years of in-service training whereby teachers would receive a lower primary provisional certificate and would be able to complete the final 2 years of training within a 5 year period grace period (they would have a total of 5 years after receipt of the LPPC to obtain the additional two-years of training) in order to receive a full primary teaching certificate. SSTEP, USAID and some in the Ministry viewed this as a cost-effective and efficient way to upgrade the skills of thousands of teachers in a relatively short time frame. The delivery model would continue as: 1. Face-to-face training (3 weeks held 3 times per year), 2. Cluster meetings and 3. Community based self-study. Following this pattern, all of the teachers enrolled in SSTEP could conceivably be certified by the end of the project. Those teachers that had had previous training could reach the four-year full certification stage, while the new cohort could reach the two-year LPPC stage.

Focus on reading: Recognizing the importance of literacy in South Sudan, and the lack of materials and methods to teach reading and writing, SSTEP proposed to integrate the teaching of reading and writing into the English syllabus of the Unified Teacher Training Curriculum, to design new literacy training materials, and train a core group of tutors as trainers. This was also in line with USAID's new Agency Education Strategy 2011 to 2015, which emphasized the acquisition of early grade reading skills.

Expanded SSTEP offices based in States: Initially, STEP staff worked from one office in Juba. In response to the challenges faced by the Ministry in terms of numbers and qualifications of tutors, SSTEP expanded its field presence in order to provide more direct support to tutors and teachers alike. State Offices were eventually opened in each of the 10 States, each with a total of 5 staff positions (3 technical, 2 operational).

This led to a new set of activities for SSTEP as set out below:

OBJECTIVE 1: Policy Frameworks and Policy Support

1.1 Primary Teachers' Certification Policy:

- Technical support to the Ministry to establish a National Certification Board for examination of primary teachers or similar body.
- Development of a National Policy on teachers professional development
- Development of National Professional Standards for Teachers Standards in South Sudan
- Development of competencies for pupils and teachers vis a vis literacy

1.2 Gender Affirmative Action Policy, including a Gender Incentive Program

OBJECTIVE 2: In-service Teacher Training

- 2.1 Development of training program and materials for master trainers
- 2.2 Development of training program and materials for tutors
- 2.3 Orientation of education officials to in-service teacher training model and plans
- 2.4 Delivery of a 2-year Lower Primary Provisional Certificate (LPPC) in-service training program for continuing and new teachers that includes early grade literacy
- 2.5 Delivery of another year of in-service training for continuing S4 graduates to complete the Primary Teaching Certificate
- 2.6 Integrate literacy into English language training as a teacher professional development program
- 2.7 Delivery of English language proficiency training to teachers (Windle Trust and British Council)
- 2.8 Delivery of School-based Interactive Audio Instruction (IAI) English Language Training Program

OBJECTIVE 3: Curriculum and Learning Materials

- 3.1 Production of English language materials for classrooms to support reading instruction and learning
- 3.2 Unified curriculum revision/refinement; Pedagogical materials (supplementary student teacher materials, teacher guides and tutor guides)
- 3.3 Revision of tutor and student books
- 3.4 Formative evaluation of revised text materials

A Cooperative Agreement Modification signed on July 16, 2013 reflected these changes in the Program Description.

Budget and Project Realignment (December 2013)

While SSTEP continued to forge ahead throughout 2013, training teachers and tutors alike, developing policy guidance, and expanding efforts in literacy, by the end of the calendar year in discussions with new USAID management and the newly appointed representatives of the Ministry of Education, it was agreed that SSTEP would focus its remaining resources to prioritize policy and curriculum development. This was partly based upon a review of the high cost of the in-service training model and the decreasing numbers of teachers who could achieve certification under the current model within the time frame of the project, particularly given the lack of Ministry consensus over the Lower Primary Provisional Certificate. A review of the expenditure rates in September 2013 also indicated that the project would run out of funds before the projected end date, largely because of the level of costs required for the in-service teacher-training program. After this review, USAID asked EDC to propose a plan for the remaining time and budget levels that would allow for as many teachers as possible to complete training, core policy work to be finalized before the end date of the project and to ensure the production of good quality materials for use for both pre-service and in-service training.

This also linked with the new Minister's plan to move forward with resourcing the TTIs and to get a qualification structure in place and received his full support. This new focus was agreed to by all parties and was reflected in a revised work plan that was submitted to USAID in mid-December, 2013.

The key elements of the plan for the remaining period focused upon:

OBJECTIVE 1: Policy Frameworks and Policy Support

- 1.1 Primary Teachers' Certification Policy
- 1.2 Development of a National Policy on Teachers Professional Development
 - *Development of National Professional Standards for Teachers Standards in South Sudan (completed)*
- 1.3 Gender Affirmative Action Policy, including support for implementation
- 1.4 Development of competencies for pupils and teachers vis-à-vis literacy and other literacy policy support

OBJECTIVE 2: Teacher/Educator Training

- *Development of training program and materials for master trainers (completed)*
- 2.1 Development of training program and materials for CEC and TTI tutors and support for teacher visits
 - *Orientation of education officials to in-service teacher training model and plans (completed)*
- 2.2 Delivery of in-service training for teachers (residential instead of non-residential from Year 3 onwards)
 - *Integrate literacy into English language training (completed)*
 - *Delivery of English language proficiency training to teachers (completed)*
 - *Delivery of School-based Interactive Audio Instruction (IAI) English Language Training Program (proposal to suspend)*
- 2.3 Pilot "afternoon" in-service training model in one State (proposal to add)
- 2.4 Provide technical assistance to upgrade skills at TTIs (proposal to add)
- 2.5 Provision of supplementary reading materials to TTIs and CECs to deliver to schools (added)

OBJECTIVE 3: Curriculum and Learning Materials

- 3.1 Production of English language materials for classrooms (teacher guides, levelled readers, read-aloud books, etc.) to support reading instruction and learning
- 3.2 Unified curriculum revision/refinement (other subjects) pedagogical materials (supplementary student materials, teacher guides and tutor guides)
- 3.3 Complete revision of tutor and student books (Stages 1-4)
- 3.4 Update National Teacher Training Curriculum and compact for pre-service use

Security Crisis and Termination for Convenience (2014)

Concurrent to the agreement between USAID, the Ministry, and EDC to prioritize resources in mid-December, and days before the Christmas period, South Sudan entered a profound security crisis that would lead to intense ethnic fighting and as of the time of this report, resulting in the deaths of thousands of South Sudanese and the displacement of up to a million more South Sudanese. The US Government evacuated non-emergency personnel,

including staff from USAID's education office. USAID instructed its contractors to also evacuate their U.S. citizens on staff from the country. It is within this context, of no USAID education or international EDC staff presence, that USAID informed EDC in February 2014 of its decision to terminate the SSTEP Cooperative Agreement for convenience.

As part of its close-out process, SSTEP produced a series of policy papers and distributed packages of materials and the papers to National and State counterparts, as well as international and local partners, to help support future teacher training efforts in South Sudan. The full list of printed materials distributed over the life of the project is included as Appendix 2.

4. MAIN ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

Objective 1 - Policy

Soon after signing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005), the Ministry began a series of policy reforms in education. But the efforts were piecemeal until independence in July 2011, when the Ministry was fully constituted. To contribute to the policy process, SSTEP Objective One was designed to support the Ministry's efforts to revise, reshape and develop new policies and set up management systems that would be relevant and responsive to South Sudan's education needs.

As detailed in the program overview and below, the focus of this work on policy areas shifted over the time of the project.

Achievements

The initial plan was for SSTEP to address, with the Ministry of Education, nine policy initiatives related to teacher education and their professional development including the National Teacher Professional Development Policy, National Teacher Standards, Teacher Training Curriculum Framework for primary school teachers, Human Resource Policy, Affirmative Action Policy, Accreditation Policy for institutions and teacher education programs, Teacher Certification Policy, Standards for Tutors, and policies and procedures pertaining to the Education Support Network.

During the first year of SSTEP a number of actions were initiated, some with the involvement of international and regional consultants. SSTEP and the Ministry of Education established a Steering Committee and a Technical Committee as forum for consultation and discussion for the program in overall and for specific technical aspects. Special committees were formed as

needed for specific issues with invited stakeholders and experts, such as for the National Professional Standards for Primary teachers and for teacher Certification.

Work on policy aspects continued during year 2, however the work focused more narrowly than the original plan in line with the changes discussed with the Ministry and USAID as set out in the project refocus (March 2013) due to the realities that became apparent during the early period of the SSTEP program implementation. This included

This narrower focus was formalised in the program modification in 2013.

As agreed with USAID, plans for work on policy issues for the final two year period were agreed to focus on teacher certification, teacher professional development, gender affirmative action and promoting literacy as a core element of teacher training.

Key achievements under the policy component were:

National Professional Standards for Primary Teachers - Through a working group and a national validation conference, the Teacher Professional Standards were approved, printed, launched and distributed in May 2013. Through this document, the Ministry of Education laid out the Standards all teacher-training programs would follow. Prior to approval of the standards, teacher trainings were offered by a variety of NGOs using different curricula from neighbouring countries. This National Professional Standards is a critical document for the basic education sector in South Sudan, as it provides a basis for developing and standardising teacher training programs and is a competency-based guideline for the monitoring of education quality in schools. Further copies of these standards were distributed with the final package of SSTEP materials in 2014.

A **policy framework for teacher registration, certification and accreditation** was developed during the first year and this framework was used for further discussions during year 2 in the SSTEP Steering Committee. A Special Certification Committee was also formed in 2013 as an attempt to come to firm decisions and recommendations to move forward. At the time of the early termination of SSTEP, no definitive policy for teacher certification had been agreed upon, largely because of differences of opinion over whether to provide interim certification after two years of in-service training (the proposed Lower Primary provisional Certificate (LPPC)). However, a detailed policy paper; "**Primary Teacher Qualification, Registration, Certification and Accreditation of Teacher Training Institutes and Programs for the Republic of South Sudan**", including analysis of the primary teacher demand and supply was prepared and distributed in July 2014, as part of the project closeout,

that sets out the key issues and the decisions facing the Ministry and Government of South Sudan (and development partners).

In South Sudan women are under-represented in the education sector, both as teachers and in management positions. The SSTEP project took forward a participatory and consultative process, including stakeholders from each State Ministry of Education and other local representatives, the National Legislative Assembly, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Gender UN agencies and other non-governmental stakeholders and with their involvement an action plan to take forward the development of a **Gender Affirmative Action Policy** was prepared in collaboration with the Ministry and the parliament in year one. Two committees were formed and through consultations and work guided by the committees, a draft Affirmative Action Policy was prepared and presented at a validation seminar in November 2013. The Final draft policy was distributed as part of the final package of SSTEP materials in June 2014. The policy now needs to be implemented, again through a participatory and awareness raising process, with the aim to increase the number of women joining the teaching profession and the promotion of women in management roles in the education sector. This will enable more women to be in the position of role models and in turn would encourage more girls to complete secondary education and gain professional qualifications.

Working with the SSTEP committees from the Ministry and other stakeholders, SSTEP produced a broad **Curriculum Framework** aligned with the approved National Professional Teacher Standards as a basis for further work that would revise and update the Teacher Training Curriculum (see Objective 3).

During 2013, the SSTEP project strengthened literacy teaching by introducing into the in-service training program an enhanced literacy-training component, including detailed training materials and levelled readers for primary school classrooms. This was approved by the Ministry of Education. In June 2014, as part of the project closeout SSTEP published a policy brief “**Advancing Literacy in South Sudan**” that sets out the importance of maintaining and extending this type of training across primary schools in the country and distributed updated training materials and 15 levelled readers (developed for the African context by EDC) in hard and electronic format.

Challenges

In relation to teacher certification, a clear challenge was the issue that a high proportion of teachers currently teaching in schools across the country did not have a secondary leaving certificate. The 2012 Education Act requires a teacher to have a secondary leaving certificate. This issue was one of the

major stumbling blocks for the committees discussing the teacher certification, as some members focused upon an ideal vision where the country had a teachers qualification structure commensurate with other East African countries, whereas others, SSTEP included, advocated an approach that responded to the existing realities and argued for a phased approach that created some short term measures to move forward based upon existing capacities and resources. SSTEP had proposed a temporary process for such teachers to be awarded a Lower Primary Certificate following in-service training. A consensus, however, could not be reached; some officials recognised the need for this as an interim measure to provide a structured training context for the reality of the current situation, while others were trying to put in place a vision for the education system that mirrored neighbouring countries. Another factor for rejecting this interim qualification could have been an expectation of non-endorsement by the Ministry of Labour and Human Resource Development because the General Education Act stated that teachers should have completed secondary education.

An additional factor was the unclear role and mandate of the recently set up South Sudan National Examinations Council, which according to its mandate only had a role to set school examinations, but there were expectations that it would have a role in setting final examinations for teacher trainees. Additionally, the role of the Universities and the awarding body for certificates for newly qualified teachers remained uncertain.

To date, teacher certification still presents a major challenge for the country, as, if the 2012 Education Act is strictly applied, the already depleted teaching corps would suffer a large loss of existing teachers when class size in many schools limits effective teaching. Relatedly, the issue of certification and the lack of clear policy, with the prospect of many SSTEP trainees not gaining a qualification at the end of the program was raised consistently by trainees themselves, and contributed to loss of motivation, absenteeism and high dropout rates.

In regards to the Gender Affirmative Action Policy, a very good, consultative foundation has been made to date and there should be a broad process, engaging with a number of government bodies, to refine and institutionalize the policy that SSTEP helped design and that aims to encourage more women teachers to come into the profession as well as to gain senior positions in the education system, which challenges the current male-dominated environment in schools. A limiting factor is the low number of girls gaining secondary leaving certificates (which was not specifically a target of

this component) as well as both government commitment and resources for this area.

Objective 2 – Teacher Training

SSTEP had originally planned to address teacher training through both pre-service and in-service structures, and the TTIs were expected to re-open to coincide with SSTEP implementation. Unfortunately, this was not the case as the austerity measures that came into force in February 2012 made it clear that TTIs would not open and provide SSTEP with structures for the program to engage with and by default resulted in the project focus on the in-service training model. The austerity measures also cut the expectation of significant government resources being directed at increasing or strengthening functioning CECs. In addition to teacher training, SSTEP also was designed to train government (and partner NGO) tutors, as well as provide independent English Language Training (ELT) to teachers with limited English skills that had been trained previously in Arabic.

Achievements

By the end of 2013, when the SSTEP training was halted by the outbreak of fighting, **1,722 teachers, in all 10 states and through 30 different training sites supported by the project, had received training by SSTEP partners.** This consisted of 9 different cohorts of teachers, the majority in their first two years of the four-year in-service training curriculum. The teachers had varied educational backgrounds ranging from primary 8 to secondary completion, which proved quite challenging in pitching the level and pace of the training program and materials.

To support the teachers, **255 tutors (from CECs schools, and NGOs) had been trained to run the in-service trainings across the country and 188 of these tutors also received concentrated training on teaching literacy.** SSTEP provided significant material support to some CECs in order to create conditions for training. SSTEP also provided office space in 7 states (EES, CES, WES, Lakes, Western Bahr El Ghazal, Jonglei and Upper Nile) and provided furniture and basic office equipment and Internet services to enable usual office functionality for staff that were assigned there.

The General Education Bill (March, 2012) clearly indicates that in “In primary 4 through 8, the medium of instruction shall be English”. This is a major reform particularly in the education sector that is meant to reverse years of Government of Sudan policy of using Arabic as the language of instruction at all levels of education. As a result of the previous policy many teachers,

especially in the Northern States of South Sudan, acquired their education and training in Arabic. In order to tap into this cohort of professional teachers the Ministry of Education prioritized the raising of the language skills of teachers as the best way to provide quality education to the children of South Sudan. The provision of English language skills is essential to enable these teachers to integrate into the South Sudanese education system and make full use of their much-needed professional skills. Through SSTEP, **977 teachers had completed training under the English Language Training (ELT) component, implemented by Windle Trust.**

In order to support the English language skills of teachers, as well as reinforce teaching skills through interactive methodology, SSTEP procured and distributed 3,500 MP3 Lifeplayers. These came pre-loaded with beginner and intermediate English lessons as well as professional studies self-study materials that were developed under the South Sudan Interactive Radio Instruction (SSIRI), a previous USAID program implemented by EDC. These MP3 Lifeplayers were fitted with both a solar panel and a handle wind-up mechanism, with a 12V DC power cable for recharging. The Lifeplayers were distributed to 855 primary schools located in 35 counties in the 10 states of South Sudan, as well as to the Ministry of Education, State Ministries, TTIs, and CECs.

As part of the close out process following the termination for convenience, certificates verifying each teacher trainee's participation in the training program and the training they had covered were prepared and distributed to State Ministries for handover to the individual trainees. Lists of the trainees and their training progress were provided to the State Ministries and the Ministry of Education. Tutors also received certificates verifying their role in the program.

Challenges

The results outlined above were accomplished in the face of significant challenges – both operational and programmatic in nature. Many of these issues were documented in periodic reports submitted to USAID and include the lack of qualified teachers and tutors, the delays in salary payments for teachers and tutors due to the continued impact of austerity measures (caused low motivation and at times prevented participants traveling to training and for school follow-up where these expenses were to be reimbursed later), the closure of the Teacher Training Institutes, the lack of functional County Education Centres (CECs), the delayed re-staffing of the Maridi Curriculum Development Centre, and limited availability of Ministry technical staff with the necessary skills to support project activities.

Also important to note are the challenges faced by the project in terms of shifting Ministry priorities. For example, in 2012, EDC, the Ministry and USAID agreed that the program focus was on training teachers that had not finished secondary school (the majority of teachers nationwide). To respond to this, SSTEP proposed a Lower Primary Provisional Certificate (LPPC), which still has yet to be formally endorsed by the Ministry. This leaves many current teachers vulnerable to the possibility that they may not be able to receive any formal certification in the future. SSTEP certificates were endorsed by the Ministry at the end of the program, however, since the in-service training program is not recognised as leading to a formal qualification, this issue will continue to be a challenge in future teacher training programs.

Through the Education Act, the Ministry shifted support away from training teachers with less than a secondary and emphasized the priority to train secondary school graduates (not included in the selection criteria previously agreed upon), although this more highly educated group of teachers are a minority percentage of the current total teaching force. Finally, the diverse conditions in the States led to complications in the application of a standardized training program. Some States had been unable or unwilling to assign teachers according to agreed-upon criteria while others objected to the entire concept of in-service. Challenging climatic conditions also restricted project activities from moving forward in a timely manner.

More detailed information on challenges includes:

Limited tutor capacity and availability for in-service: The in-service model of face-to-face and school-based training was structured with 3 week sessions of face to face teacher training conducted by tutors with SSTEP support, and also relied upon follow-up support to ensure teachers were applying the concepts and methods they had covered in the face to face training in the classroom. This follow-up support was provided by tutors, both to keep costs manageable and as a capacity building measure. There was an overall shortage of qualified tutors and education officers in South Sudan and the number of tutors, as well as their skills, varied greatly from State to State. This was exacerbated by the austerity measures – which limited the ability of states to hire and pay qualified personnel. Teacher supervision and accountability is very weak as the education system in South Sudan is still fledgling, under staffed and underfunded. Even the permanent field presence of SSTEP staff and partners in each State was not able to improve this as part of the training set up to the requisite level. Mentoring and support to teachers while applying new approaches in the classroom is critical to the reinforcement of training and enables teachers to build the confidence to

implement more fully what has been learned. The lack of tutors also limited the impact of cluster meetings and community based study.

Salary delays and teacher/tutor turnover: Salary delays for teachers increased absenteeism from training (teachers were required to pay for travel to training from their own pocket and be reimbursed later), and led to high turnover in terms of teachers and tutors alike. Many simply did not work since they were not receiving salaries, and others found paid employment in other sectors.

Skill levels and assignment of new trainees: Due to the challenge in locating teachers enrolled in previous training programs (e.g. MDTF), as well as the attrition noted above, in 2013 SSTEP enrolled new trainees into the program. EDC and partners formally agreed selection criteria with the State Ministries outlining the trainee profile required and implementation strategies (i.e. level of training, location, English language, etc.). However, in the end, recruitment and assignment was handled differently across the different States, and led to SSTEP being assigned a diverse group of teachers that in some States, did not meet the requirements as laid out by the project. In many cases States did not select a group of teachers from a compact geographical area, creating challenges for the community-based study part of the in-service model. This provided challenges during training for the tutors, some of whom had limited experience in training trainees with varying experience and qualifications.

State autonomy: The decisions of the central Ministry of Education, and agreements as to SSTEP's approach on the ground were often challenged or ignored at the State level, which sometimes led to drawn out discussions at state level that were not always successful, leading to a lack of coherence of the program.

Limited number of functional CECs: Each state was supposed to have at least two functioning CECs to support teachers, but that was not the case. Apart from Western Equatoria, Upper Nile and Northern Bahr el Ghazal, the rest of the States had few functional CECs. In some locations SSTEP had to find alternative venues for holding in-service teachers training – as well as equip CEC buildings/venues where they existed with basic facilities to make them suitable for the purpose.

Variation in school calendars: Although the General Education Act (2012) required a uniform school calendar of 270 days, divided into three terms, many states found it difficult to comply due to varying climatic conditions. For example, states such as Western Bahr el-Ghazal, Unity State and some counties in Lakes State (Yirol East and West) either have very long rainy

seasons or very short dry seasons, and therefore, have maintained different calendars. This required SSTEP to negotiate with states individually to extend training periods for the face-to-face training for adequate coverage of the training curriculum content.

Climatic conditions: Since the in-service model relied on cluster meetings and tutor visits to conduct classroom observations, the implementation was limited by the inaccessibility of teachers. The onset of the rainy season restricted travel to some program states, especially to Unity, Jonglei, Upper Nile, Western and Northern Bahr el Ghazal. Severe flooding made it difficult for both the teachers and tutors to travel to workshops as well as conduct field visits. This reflects the challenges that resulted from States not following agreed criteria for trainee selection

Cost of the in-service training model: The cost of the in-service model was high, including the cost of printing training materials; face-to-face training costs; stationery materials; and transport costs for follow-up (exacerbated by participants being from a widespread area). While the only viable option given the closure of the TTIs, the project ended up taking on costs, such as contracting project tutors that were not originally anticipated.

Objective 3 – Curriculum and Materials

This component aimed to produce outputs to support the teacher training activities and provide the Ministry with a revised and up to date set of materials that could provide a basis for expanded teacher training in the country. This included a revised and updated National Teacher Training curriculum and materials that would support both pre-service and in-service training. Modifications to the program added literacy training materials and early grade readers to the outputs of this component.

Achievements

Within SSTEP's overall capacity building objectives, the Curriculum Development Centre at Maridi (Western Equatoria State) was a key focus of SSTEP's early efforts. The original concept was that were the CDC to be staffed and operational, the Ministry would assign qualified staff to work on the revision of the teacher-training curriculum, with technical support and capacity building coming from SSTEP's long term international TA assigned to the centre. SSTEP provided significant resources to renovate and equip the CDC, and even built housing to enable the staff person to be based in Maridi. SSTEP appointed a seasoned Curriculum Advisor, who was familiar with the South Sudanese education system, culture and processes, to provide technical assistance and capacity building for the staff at the CDC.

SSTEP facilitated a consultative process that led to the revision of the National Teacher Training Curriculum (NTTC), now referred to as the Unified Teacher Training Curriculum (UTTC). In January 2013, a national workshop was held bringing together teacher training education institutions and development partners. Participants included education leaders from the Central Ministry of General Education and Instruction, Universities in South Sudan, State Ministries of Education, Teacher Training Institutions, and Development Partners. Five regional consultants – drawn from Uganda and Kenya- plus two early grade experts from EDC's home office constituted five subjects panels for the core subjects of English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and Professional Studies. The UTTC was endorsed by the Ministry and is awaiting formal approval.

Following the endorsement of the UTTC, SSTEP began to revise the teacher training materials, working off of versions that were produced by the MDTF program. SSTEP revised years⁶ 1, 2, 3 of the in-service training materials during the life of the program. The year 4 materials were not reviewed by SSTEP, but printed and distributed as part of the final SSTEP materials package to enable recipients to have the full package of materials.

Methodology and subject specialists from Kenya, Uganda and South Sudan were contracted to undertake the revision of the curriculum support materials for years 1 & 2. The materials were organized by term (3 terms per year) and consisted of three parts:

1. Tutor's Guide – geared for the tutor to use in delivering training to teachers.
2. Workshop Book – the main orientation of materials for the student teacher, including significant subject curriculum content for teachers who may not have completed secondary education used in the face to face training; and
3. Community-based Study Book – to be used for reflection and support by the student teacher following the face-to-face training when back teaching in the classroom.

Materials for the five core subjects⁷ were revised for each of the 3 terms of Year 1 and Year 2. A total of 90 booklets (3 booklets x 5 subjects X 6 terms⁸)

⁶ Years are referred to as stages in South Sudan. Thus Years 1,2,3,and 4 are referred to as Stage 1,2,3,4.

⁷ Maths, English, General Science, Social Studies and Professional Studies

⁸ Note that at the end of the project the printed materials distributed were combined into year/stages, hence for each subject there were 3 books per year/stage comprising the Tutor's Guide, the Workshop Book and the Community Based Study Guide

were produced. The newly revised booklets were distributed and used during the in-service trainings held in 2013, with over 12,000 booklets printed and distributed. For the year 3 materials a different approach was used; due to the challenges of managing and overseeing so many subject specialists. Specifically, staff from the relevant faculties at the University of Juba was hired to work on the materials, this work being completed at the end of 2013 (at total of 45 booklets; 3 booklets x 5 subjects x 3 terms).

In addition to booklets produced for training on the five core subject areas under the UTTC, SSTEP also produced extensive and detailed training materials to supplement the English component that focused on literacy. In addition, SSTEP distributed levelled readers to be used in classrooms. The feedback from teachers and students was extremely positive.

The full list of SSTEP materials printed during the close out period and distributed is set out in Appendix 2. Hard copies and digital copies of all materials were provided to each of the 10 State Ministries at close out, with digital master files provided to the Ministry of Education and USAID. Development partners and education NGOs also received hard and/or digital copies.

Challenges

The austerity measures led to the situation where the Ministry was not able to recruit the staffing for the Maridi Curriculum Development Centre as per the original plan and agreement. The project however needed improved materials for the in-service training program. Discussion were held with the Ministry about moving the SSTEP Curriculum Advisor to Juba permanently but it was decided that the Advisor remain in Maridi where the Curriculum Development Centre was located. In the end, the SSTEP Curriculum Advisor worked almost exclusively on his own, based at the Maridi CDC, as during the life of the project few ministry curriculum developers were assigned to support this task. When it was clear that there were no secondments coming from the Ministry an assistant was hired for the Curriculum Advisor to support the task.

With plans underway to revise the primary curriculum, the UTTC and teaching materials will again need to be reviewed and revised, hopefully with adequate resources (human, technical, and financial) to ensure a lasting and sustainable process that included local stakeholders to enable capacity building.

Supplemental Technical Training Areas

English Language Training

During the inception phase of SSTEP, it became evident that in some states the level of English Language competency of a large proportion of the teachers was low. This was because most of the qualified teachers had been trained in Khartoum, in Arabic, yet the new nation of South Sudan had declared that English was national language and the language of instruction in schools when most schooling had been in Arabic before, particularly in the northern States. This impacted not only those teachers' ability to receive training in English, but also to deliver the curriculum to their pupils. To address this need a sub-award was given to the Windle Trust International (WTI)/British Council.

From September 2012 through November 2013, Windle Trust International (WTI) and British Council implemented the English Language Training (ELT) program component of SSTEP. The program aimed to equip Arabic-pattern primary school teachers and those with low proficiency in English with knowledge and skills in communicative and interactive methodology of teaching in English language. The ELT included the following key components:

- Training of 50 tutors to equip them with necessary interactive skills to train teachers
- Training of teachers in selected states (see Table 1 below for summary data)
- Providing teachers with supplementary teaching materials
- Assessment and tracking of teachers' progress
- Monitoring of the program implementation
- Follow up of the trained teachers in schools in order to support improved teaching in the classroom.

Table 1: Summary Information of ELT program Trainees

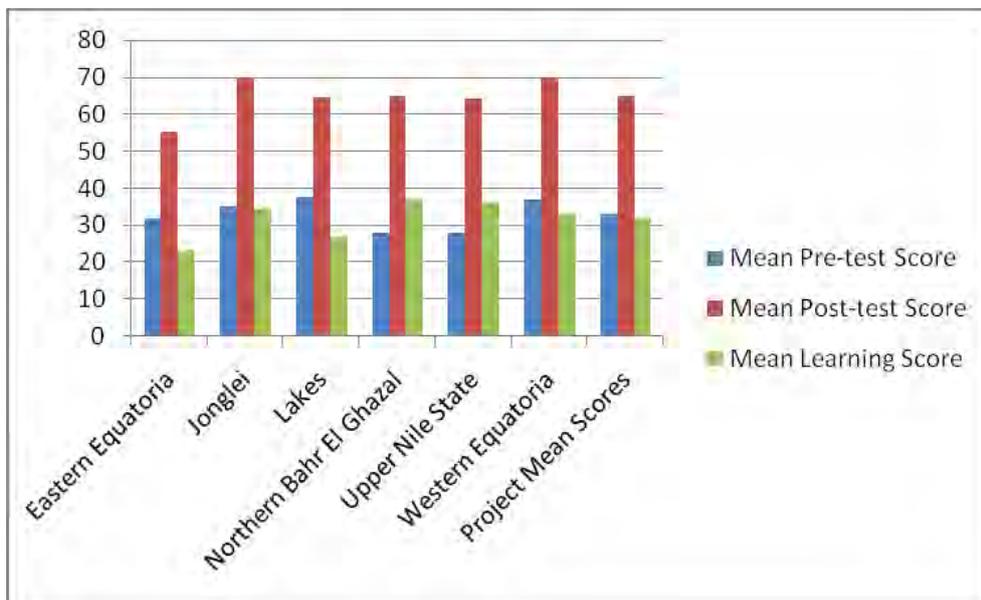
State	Male	Female	Total
Eastern Equatoria	108	42	150
Western Equatoria	98	38	136
Jonglei	138	29	167
Lakes	121	42	163
Western Bahr El Ghazal	144	47	191
Upper Nile	110	60	180
Total	719	258	977

Despite a difficult implementing environment that included high expectations from participants, insecurity, as well as remote locations, the ELT program achieved its performance targets. This is largely attributed to the direct

contracting of ELT tutors by WTI as well as the existence of sound training materials.

Results indicate that the training program has had a positive impact on the trainees by an average mean learning score of 31.2%. This value was calculated from the results of pre-tests and post-tests carried out with the trainees. These learning scores proved statistically significant. Audio-visual records of selected teachers have indicated a dramatic positive change in lesson delivery in the classroom. Graph 1 below shows learning gains on a state-by-state level.

Graph 1: English Language Learning Gains



Literacy Training

As noted previously, SSTEP also quickly identified the ability to teach literacy as a critical skill gap for primary school teachers in South Sudan and the reprogramming aimed to focus more resources on literacy training. SSTEP designed a modular training program that was delivered to SSTEP tutors and Master trainers, who then returned to their regions and trained in-service teachers. Given the importance of early grade literacy in school success, SSTEP started the early grade training at the beginning of 2013. Two EDC literacy experts, who also participated in the training, developed the literacy materials. The training covered the pedagogy of early grade literacy; teachers were acquainted with a variety of materials for supporting the delivery of early grade reading training to teachers. 4,000 copies of the literacy training manuals and resource materials were printed and distributed.

To supplement the literacy work, SSTEP procured and distributed 42,610 story books (levelled readers) during the year. Integrating the early grade literacy

into the UTTC required EDC-SSTEP to identify simple storybooks to be put in the hands of pupils as well as serve as reference books for the teachers delivering early grade instruction. These levelled readers, though not sufficient to quench the appetite of all curious learners, nonetheless encouraged the pupils, as well as their teachers, to start appreciating the text and start forming reading habits. The readers were screened for appropriateness by SSTEP staff and printed locally.

During the close out period (March – June 2014) EDC updated the literacy training materials and distributed copies of the materials to relevant counterparts. In addition, EDC provided 15 Africa-specific levelled readers (developed with EDC resources with EDC copyright), which were distributed along with the training materials. Finally, in an effort to ensure adequate and relevant written text in the classrooms, EDC procured over 240,000 reading books (3 containers) to be distributed throughout the country by SSTEP partners continuing work in the region.

5. STATE LEVEL ACTIVITIES

State Summary Overview

The SSTEP program was designed to operate in all 10 States, and given the realities on the ground during the start-up period, this meant establishing in-service training activities with face-to-face trainings conducted in over thirty distinct sites. Lead implementing partner EDC was responsible for the implementation in seven states (Eastern Equatoria, Central Equatoria, Western Equatoria, Jonglei, Lakes, Upper Nile, and Western Bahr El Ghazal), while Winrock International was responsible for Warrap, Unity and Northern Bahr El Ghazal. The third SSTEP partner, the Episcopal Church of Sudan (ECS) Education and Training, also implemented training in certain counties of Central Equatoria, Western Equatoria, Lakes, Unity, Western Bahr El Ghazal and Northern Bahr El Ghazal, mainly for teachers that had already begun training with ECS under the MDTF and were thus continuing trainees. A total of 1,722 teachers received training through SSTEP, spread throughout 30 different sites.⁹ The trainees were all at different points in the four-year in-service training program. In fact, at the time of the closure of SSTEP, there were nine different cohorts of teachers spread throughout the country. Please see Table 2 below for more details.

Table 2: State Breakdown of Trainees

⁹ In some instances, multiple partners trained in the same towns, although at different times due to the existence of distinct cohorts.

State	Location	SSTEP Partner Responsible	# Trainees	Stage Completed S=Stage; T=Term	Total/ Location
EES	Torit	EDC	58+18 + 51	S1/T2; S2/T2;S3/T1	127
	Kapoeta South	EDC	26 + 21	S1/T2; S3/T1	47
CES	Juba	EDC	32 + 33	S1/T2; S2/T2	65
	Yei	EDC	43	S1/T2	43
	Yei	ECS	44	S2/T2	44
	Lainya	ECS	42	S3/T2	42
WES	Maridi	EDC	51	S1/T2	51
	Yambio	ECS	20 + 31	S2/T2; S4/T1	51
	Tambura & Ibba	ECS	42 + 38	S2/T2; S2/T3	80
Jonglei	Bor	EDC	27+ 34	S1/T2; S2/T2	61
	Ayod	EDC	31	S1/T2	31
	Pamot	EDC	76	S1/T2	76
Lakes	Rumbek	EDC	40 + 42	S1/T2; S2/T2	82
	Yirol East	ECS	42	S3/T2	42
	Yirol West	ECS	51	S1/T3	51
Western Bahr El Ghazal	Wau	EDC	52 + 28	S1/T2; S2/T1	80
	Wau	ECS	32	S4/T2	32
Northern Bahr el Ghazal	Raga	ECS	36 + 42	S1/T3; S3/T1	78
Warrap	Aweil East	ECS	50	S4/T2	50
	Bouth Yar	WI	51 + 26	S2/T1; S2/T3	77
	War Allel	WI	80	S2/T1	80
	Gok Macher	WI	47	S2/T3	47
Unity	Majak Aher	Wi	33 + 19	S1/T2; S2/T3	52
	Panilet	WI	37 + 22	S1/T2; S2/T3	59
	Tonj North	WI	21 + 34	S1/T2; S2/T3	55
Upper Nile*	Rubkoana	WI	45	S1/T2	45
	Leer	ECS	40	S3/T1	40
	Leer	WI	56	S1/T2	56
	Mayom	ECS	43	S2/T3	43
	Mayom	WI	35	S1/T2	35
Upper Nile*	Malakel & Renk	EDC			
Total			1,722		1,722

*A training program with 33 trainees was initiated in Upper Nile in 2013, but discontinued due to security considerations in September 2013.

Table 3 below, gives a breakdown of the tutors that were trained by SSTEP to provide ongoing instruction to teachers enrolled in the programs in both the teacher training and English literacy programs. Tutors represented each of the ten States.

Table 3: Tutors Trained by SSTEP

Tutor Type	Males	Females	Total
Teacher Training	119	69	188
English Literacy	63	4	67
Total	182	73	255

Table 4 gives a breakdown of the 1,722 teachers that were trained by SSTEP in the teacher training program based on their terms of enrolment and training location. It also gives an indication of the geographic dispersal of teachers, as well as the 9 distinct cohorts and their locations. Table 5 below provides a breakdown of the 977 teachers trained in the English literacy program. The two added together represent a total of 2,699 directly benefited from SSTEP training.

Table 4: State Breakdown Of Trainees By Cohort (Teacher Training Component)

	STATE	Training Location	STAGE 1			STAGE 2			STAGE 3			STAGE 4			Total
			T1	T2	T3	T1	T2	T3	T1	T2	T3	T1	T2	T3	
EDC	CES	Juba		32			33								65
		Yei		43											43
	WES	Maridi		51											51
	EES	Torit		58			18		51						127
		Kapoeta Sth		26					21						47
	LAKES	Rumbek		40			42							82	
	JONGLEI	Bor		27			34								61
		Ayod		31											31
		Pamot		76											76
	WBeG	Wau		52		28								80	
	UPPER NILE	Malakal and Renk													0
Subtotal			0	436	0	28	127	0	72	0	0	0	0	0	663
ECS	CES	Yei					44								44
		Lainya								42					42
	WES	Yambio				20					31			51	
	WES	Tambura and Ibba				42	38							80	
	LAKES	Yirol East								42				42	
	LAKES	Yirol West			51									51	
	WBEG	Raga			36				42					78	
	WBeG	Wau										32		32	
	UNITY	Mayom						43						43	
	UNITY	Leer							40					40	
	NBeG	Aweil East											50	50	
Subtotal			0	0	87	0	106	81	82	84	0	31	82	0	553
WINROCK	WARRAP	Majak Aher		33					19						52
		Panliet		37					22						59
	WARRAP	Tonj North		21					34						55
		Rubkoana		45											45
	UNITY	Leer		56											56
		Mayom		35											35
		Bouth Yar				51		26							77
	MBeG	War Allel				80								80	
	NBeG	Gok Macher						47						47	
Subtotal			0	227	0	131	0	73	75	0	0	0	0	0	506
GRAND TOTAL			0	663	87	159	233	154	229	84	0	31	82	0	1722

Table 5: State breakdown of trainees by (English language component)

States	Training Centre (Counties)	Target Number	Statistics at the Start of ELT Program			Current Statistics		
			Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Lakes State	Yirol Girls Primary school (Yirol West)	60	5	36	41	5	36	41
	Ager Gum (Rumbek Town)	120	37	109	146	37	108	145
Northern Bahr El Ghazal	Maper TTI (Aweil Town)	40	11	23	34	11	23	34
	Aweil South CEC (Aweil South)	80	21	59	80	21	59	80
	Bouth Yar CEC (Aweil East)	80	15	61	76	15	61	76
Eastern Equatoria	Torit East Primary School (Torit)	60	20	39	59	19	33	52
	Kapoeta CEC (Kapoeta South)	60	22	33	55	19	28	47
Jonglei State	Bor Sec Sch & Bor A Pri School (Bor)	100	28	109	137	26	104	130
	Akobo A Primary School (Akobo)	40	1	29	30	0	28	28
Upper Nile State	Sobat Secondary School (Malakal)	60	18	35	53	18	35	53
	Jok Yusuf Ngor Basic School (Renk)	60	9	51	60	9	51	60
	Timothy Girls Basic School (Nasir)	40	6	27	33	6	27	33
	New Sudan Primary School (Melut)	60	27	21	48	27	21	48
Western Equatoria	Yabongo Girls Secondary Sch (Yambio)	40	29	16	45	26	16	42
	Maridi Girls Primary School (Maridi)	40	11	34	45	11	34	45
	Comboni Primary School (Tambura)	20	3	20	23	3	20	23
	Source-Yubu Primary School (Tambura)	20	2	19	21	2	19	21
	Nzara Secondary School (Nzara)	20	3	12	15	5	14	19
		1000	268	733	1001	260	717	977

State Roles and Responsibilities

The General Education Act of 2012 streamlined the roles and functions of the National and State Ministries of Education. The act assigned policy development and formulation of education service provision and the regulatory framework to the National Ministry of Education. The States were tasked with the management of teachers (recruiting, training, promoting and dismissing teachers), supervision and inspection of schools, and general supervision of construction of school buildings.

EDC agreed with each state that they would establish an In-service Teacher Training Committee to guide the planning and implementation of the in-service teacher-training program, and to provide tutors and other staff to the designated County Education Centres (CEC) to support the training. Both Winrock and EDC were fully reliant on the States upholding the agreement and providing qualified tutors to be trained and supported to conduct the in-service training. In contrast, local partner ECS relied on its extensive network of church-based teachers and tutors already affiliated with ECS to carry out this work.

For management purposes, the States were originally clustered into regions (e.g. Greater Equatoria), however, given the need to have SSTEP staff on the ground to help manage relationships in all States, this was later shifted, in 2013, to a State-based management structure.

Achievements at the State level

Performance and impact varied greatly from one State to the next, depending on a wide variety of factors including the commitment of State Ministry personnel, resources available, status of CECs, number and quality of tutors and whether they were trained, climatic conditions, ongoing conflicts in the region, and communication and transportation infrastructure.

Nonetheless, the ToT trainings for CEC tutors in all States led to improved skills of these tutors, a capacity building achievement. Most tutors reported being able to work effectively with the teacher trainees during both face-to-face training and community-based studies, though monitoring and reports from SSTEP state level offices showed less optimistic for the school follow-up work. SSTEP staff and partners reported that the ToTs also provided tutors with a sense of responsibility. It was noted that the tutors were much more committed about their work with the CECs after participating in the SSTEP program.

In addition to increasing the levels of skilled tutors, SSTEP also served over 1,700 teachers, helping them to improve both content knowledge pedagogical concepts and classroom teaching skills. SSTEP staff also reported a noticeable improvement in teachers' professional ethics, behavior and conduct.

The literacy training, implemented in 2013, clearly had a positive impact on teachers and students alike. One teacher noted: *"The need to invest in literacy and numeracy training should be a priority in other upcoming education projects in all locations or states. Experience had shown that, the two rounds of literacy trainings facilitated by the SSTEP through the USAID funding have significantly added value in teachers' performance as well as in delivery of lessons in classroom."* With improved skills supplemented by reading materials, anecdotal evidence indicates improved learning for students.

Coordination and regular sharing of information on project progress with State Ministries of Education promoted a generally favourable working relationship with partners at State level. This relationship at the State level was a critical factor in promoting collective responsibility in the planning and implementation of the teacher training activities, as well as problem solving.

The full set of in-service training materials, three literacy training modules and associated readers, as well as other materials (see Appendix 2 for the complete list) have been distributed to each State Ministry of Education. It is hoped that the experience gained through the SSTEP program in each state, including the capacity built at CEC level, as well as these multiple copies of the materials will encourage State Ministries of Education to continue some level of in-service training within their states.

Some CECs are better equipped with the basic resources to support effective teaching and learning and general welfare of the trainees and the tutors. It is hoped that with these resources, the CECs will continue to be venues of future teacher training initiatives or any other initiatives aimed at building the capacity of the education supervisors or managers.

All trainees have been provided with a certificate that defines their progress completed in the training program (stating specifically the subjects they have covered) and this certificate also sets out what remains to be covered for the trainee to complete the course. The Directorate of Quality Control and Innovation from the Ministry of Education Science and Technology have endorsed this certificate. It is hoped that this certificate can facilitate the further training of each individual trainee through other programs as they move forward. Lists detailing the names and progress of each trainee have been distributed to each State Ministry of Education.

English Language training, including training in pedagogical skills for 977 teachers, has improved their ability to understand the syllabus content better and to improve their teaching performance in the classroom.

Challenges at the State level

The challenges of implementing the in-service training program were significant, and varied from State to State. The below summarizes challenges which affected implementation in most States.

Poor infrastructure and facilities: The infrastructure for training in the States (such as CEC buildings) was poor in many locations, ranging from structures that were falling apart or leaked when it rained, to buildings that flooded (e.g. in Central Equatoria). There was a complete absence of CEC infrastructure in some States (e.g. Unity), where all training took place in schools, or halls provided by other organisations. While SSTEP did have a modest budget for minor repairs for CECs, there was no significant infrastructure budget.

Difficult travel to training sites and schools: In many States, conditions for teachers to travel to face-to-face training and more critically for tutors to travel to support trainees during the community-based study element of the training cycle were a huge challenge. This was largely related to poor road conditions, exacerbated in the rainy season, when travel by road was impossible in some locations. Security was also a factor in some areas that prevented tutors from travelling to support teachers in their schools. Finally, without travel stipends and significant expenses paid in advance, tutors simply were unable to travel to school sites.

Mixed skill levels and motivation of tutors: Where tutors were not highly educated and skilled, such as in Unity State, SSTEP staff provided extensive support to the tutors during the in-service training. However, since SSTEP was never designed to hire its own tutors, the support SSTEP could provide was limited.

Across all states, tutors were not motivated to put extra effort into the training process when the State Ministry of Education delayed their salaries. Supervisory pressure from the CEC administrators was not effective to motivate them in these instances. This affected face-to-face training and more seriously impacted the community-based study programs. In some states the tutors were caught in a crossfire between the State Ministry that wanted them to serve as full-time tutors and the head teachers to the schools to which they had been permanently deployed. For example, Central Equatoria State did not have permanently designated tutors. The tutors were always drawn from schools during school break, and expected to return to their respective schools during the term, which conflicts with the training

structure where tutors are required to undertake community-based study (CBS) follow up sessions. Many were not compensated for this dual-role.

Mixed skill levels and motivation of trainees: As SSTEP was required to pick up teacher trainees from previous programs, there was often a range of skills and experience in each cohort of teachers, which made training mixed level groups a challenge. For the new cohorts of teachers assigned to start training in late 2012/early 2013 (as noted previously, due to the low enrolment of continuing teachers, SSTEP needed to enrol new teachers in the program), the selection criteria provided to the State Ministries were not followed, resulting again in mixed level groups. As a result, some trainees struggled to comprehend the training materials and follow the pace of the training, whereas others found the pace of training too slow. In addition, while the criteria requested teachers clustered in geographical centers, this was more often than not ignored, creating travel issues for both teachers to come to face to face training and for tutors to travel to the schools to support the teachers. This issue, combined with the irregular and often late remuneration by the government of teachers, affected their ability to attend cluster meetings regularly (teachers attending training were reimbursed for travel, but had to pay for the initial travel from their own resources). This also posed a challenge to the objective of developing learning communities among the teachers in their respective communities during the CBS.

There was the additional complication that a significant number of trainees came from Arabic-pattern speaking backgrounds and/or their English Language skills were very weak. SSTEP responded to this through the English Language training program, implemented through a sub-award to the Windle Trust (see Section 2.4.i) and through the provision of MP3 Lifeplayers loaded with the Radio-Based Education for All (RABEA) English Language self-study training; however this did not solve the issues in all locations as this is a widespread issue and SSTEP was not able to provide English Language training to all teachers with weak English language skills given the high numbers and dispersity of such teachers.

Poor Teacher attendance and school environment: The in-service teacher-training program was designed with the assumption that teachers would apply what they learned during training during their daily classroom teachings in their respective schools. This was meant not only as fulfilment of their professional and contractual obligation, but also as a learning experience. However, school attendance by teachers was erratic and time on task poor. First, teachers' attendance was not regular in many schools, related to late salary payments and poor supervision. Secondly, student attendance in schools is influenced by actions such as poor teacher attendance and food distribution, leading to very poor attendance when there is no food. Finally, the school structures in many areas were very poor and de-motivating for teachers.

Limited National and State Ministry coordination and collaboration: SSTEP observed that some individuals in the National Ministry of Education viewed the project as the provision of resources, rather than a partnership that needed input and support from their side. This issue of teacher certification was discussed and debated for over 18 months, with SSTEP providing consultancy and written recommendations, but remained unresolved. This clearly affected the motivation of trainees as they could not see tangible incentives to complete the training in terms of certification and a salary structure that had incentives for professional advancement. This not only affected SSTEP, but also other training programs. Some officials acknowledged the reality of the current situation on the ground, but decisions were not made because of a lack of agreement with others who wanted a more ideal qualification structure that the institutions currently did not have the capacity to deliver. One issue that was not addressed by the concept of the 'ideal' structure (which requires all those entering the teacher training system to have completed secondary education) was that many teachers currently serving would be marginalised by the lack of a policy to take account of their incomplete schooling.

6. DATA AND MONITORING

Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP)

SSTEP submitted a draft PMP to USAID in December 2011 and a revised version in March 18, 2012. However, after implementing the program for one year, there was need to re-adjust the program design to adapt to the evolving contextual realities of South Sudan education sector and the newly agreed upon modification. These revisions were wide ranging and focused on:

- Revisions to the Results Framework to take into account changes in program components;
- Introduction of new performance indicators and retirement of old indicators;
- Changes to the Life of Program (LoP) targets; and
- Modifications to the Performance Indicator Reference Sheets – taking into account changes to intermediate results statement, indicator statements, the LoP and annual targets – as well as ensuring proper definitions to custom indicators – especially in the case of new ones – which were not previously defined.

The final revised re-focused PMP document was submitted to USAID Mission in October 2013, following the approval of the master plan in July 2013.

Tools for Operationalizing the PMP

The SSTEP M&E team developed a variety of monitoring & evaluation tools for operationalizing the PMP. These tools included the following:

- Teacher registration form.
- Continuous assessment record form.
- Pupil enrolment data collection form.
- Teacher training data summary reporting form.
- Tutors registration form.

It is important to highlight that these tools were uniformly applied by all the SSTEP implementing partners.

Impact Evaluation

Initially, SSTEP held discussions with USAID education team in South Sudan relating to impact evaluation of the program elements. Discussions focused on the feasibility of an impact evaluation and explored various options and associated constraints. The master plan included the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) as the most feasible area for impact assessment, given a significant investment in early grade reading in the literacy component of the program. A baseline for the EGRA was conducted in July/August 2013, however neither a data series, nor a more robust impact evaluation was completed due to the early termination of the program.

e-EGRA and SCOPE Baseline Studies

With a new emphasis on early grade reading and literacy, SSTEP developed an evaluation design to assess the impact of the literacy component of the program by using the tested two tools:

- Standard Classroom Observation Protocol for Educators (SCOPE) - to assess the teacher performance and;
- e-EGRA (EDC computer based version) of Early Grade Reading Assessment instrument for assessing lower grade learners.

EDC home office experts provided the necessary technical assistance (TA) to: (i) adapt the e-EGRA instrument to South Sudan context and (ii) train the EDC-SSTEP team on how to administer the e-EGRA instrument. In adapting the instrument to the South Sudan context, the TA worked with the South Sudan teachers from lower primary grades to ensure the instrument was relevant.

The EDC staff trained 12 SSTEP staff on how to administer the e-EGRA instrument. The training involved the theory of e-EGRA as well as hands on practice on the administration of the instrument. The Staff were also trained on how to observe the teacher instruction practice in class using video cameras. The e-EGRA/SCOPE baseline was implemented from July 1, 2013 and concluded in August 26, 2013. The e-EGRA/SCOPE assessment targeted only new intake teachers teaching grade two classes.

In selecting the schools for the assessment, the following criteria were considered:

- schools located within the state capital and its peri-urban centers;

- schools which were clustered together (nearer one another); and
- schools which are accessible throughout the seasons.

A total of 37 schools in 4 states of Eastern Equatoria, Central Equatoria, Jonglei and Lakes were selected for the assessment.

The purpose of the baseline was to determine if the training of teachers and provision of early grade literacy materials was making a difference in both the teachers' instructional practices and the pupils reading abilities. The details of the baseline are contained on the baseline report.

Teachers Qualification Profiles

SSTEP was dealing with teachers who had different qualifications and therefore it was important to understand the nature of teachers who were undertaking the certification program. EDC and implementing partners compiled up to date profiles of all teachers undergoing the SSTEP training. This information has been very useful in informing SSTEP management, USAID and MOEST of the qualification levels of the teachers SSTEP was training. See the summary table below for details.

Table 5: Teacher Summary by qualification level

State	Without Standard 4 (# female)	With Standard 4 (# female)	Unknown Qualifications (# female)	Total Teachers
Eastern Equatoria	46 (8F)	127 (37F)	1	174
Central Equatoria	45 (6F)	124 (33F)	25 (15F)	194
Western Equatoria	154 (26F)	55 (2F)	2	211
Jonglei	113 (18F)	55 (2F)	0	168
Lakes	106 (10F)	63 (3F)	6 (1F)	175
NBG	231 (18F)	34	3	268
Unity	116 (2F)	91	12	219
Warrap	133 (9F)	33(4F)	00	166
WBG	80 (8F)	59(10F)	8 (6F)	147
Total	1,024 (105F)	641 (91F)	57 (22F)	1,722 (218)

In sum, out of the 1,722 teachers still enrolled in SSTEP at the time of project completion, 218 were female (12.6%). In terms of qualifications, 59.4% did not complete secondary school, with a further 3% with uncertain qualifications.

All of the teachers, who were also spread out between multiple training sites, were subjected to the same teacher training curriculum. Given the reasons presented earlier in the report about how selection criteria was not followed by State Ministries, some teachers had difficulty understanding the training materials, others could not even read the materials as they were from Arabic-pattern background (not all these teachers were covered by the English

language training) and yet others found the content relatively easy and wanted the training to move at a quicker pace.

Pupils' reached by teachers trained by SSTEP.

EDC-SSTEP had a primary obligation to train in-service teachers. However, it was also a responsibility of EDC-SSTEP to report the number of pupils reached by the teachers who benefitted from the in-service teacher training activities. SSTEP trained in-service teachers in two separate programs namely the Intensive English language-training program for Arabic background teachers (ELT) and the Teacher Certification Program for untrained teachers. Overall, the teachers trained reached a total of 212,045 (83,724F) learners. This number includes 135,929 (56,131F) lower primary learners and 76,117 (27,611F) upper primary learners. See the summary table below for details.

Table 6: Summary Data of Learners reached by SSTEP Trained Teachers

State	Lower Primary			Upper Primary		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1 Eastern Equatoria	4,292	3,611	7,903	3,618	2,587	6,205
2 Central Equatoria	7,804	6,531	14,335	4,092	3,231	7,323
3 Western BG	12,926	8,764	21,690	9,056	4,938	13,994
4 Western Equatoria	6,955	5,606	12,561	5,479	2,905	8,384
5 Lakes	10,803	6,323	17,126	7,245	3,818	11,063
6 Jonglei	14,457	11,592	26,049	7,496	4,661	12,157
7 Unity	2,116	775	2,891	1,818	747	2,565
8 Warrap	9,261	4,846	14,107	4,438	1,528	5,966
9 NBG	2,585	1,284	3,869	2,292	679	2,971
10 Upper Nile	8,598	6,799	15,397	2,972	2,517	5,489
Total Pupils Reached	79,797	56,131	135,928	48,506	27,611	76,117

7. FINANCIAL REPORT AND COST SHARE

Final Financial Summary

Category	Approved Budget	Costs Incurred on or before 7/31/14 reported as of 8/31/14	Costs incurred on or before 7/31/14 reported after 8/31/14	Total Estimated Costs	Remaining Balance
Salaries	\$ 3,138,359	\$ 3,151,233		\$ 3,151,233	\$ (12,874)
Fringe Benefits	\$ 1,047,485	\$ 1,051,707	\$ 1,763	\$ 1,053,470	\$ (5,985)
Allowances	\$ 970,557	\$ 1,014,965		\$ 1,014,965	\$ (44,408)
Consultants	\$ 260,550	\$ 193,829		\$ 193,829	\$ 66,721
Travel	\$ 590,347	\$ 574,933		\$ 574,933	\$ 15,414
Other Direct Costs	\$ 3,216,110	\$ 3,251,386	\$ 6,785	\$ 3,258,171	\$ (42,061)
Sub awards	\$ 5,805,929	\$ 5,704,969		\$ 5,704,969	\$ 100,960
Indirect Costs	\$ 3,333,655	\$ 3,378,117	\$ 11,583	\$ 3,389,700	\$ (56,045)
Equipment > \$5,000	\$ 1,050,662	\$ 1,050,662		\$ 1,050,662	\$ -
Participant Costs	\$ 1,672,268	\$ 1,667,678		\$ 1,667,678	\$ 4,590
Total Requested Funding	\$ 21,085,922	\$ 21,039,478	\$ 20,131	\$ 21,059,610	\$ 26,312
Cost-Share	\$ 941,156	\$ 941,156		\$ 941,156	\$ 0
Total Program Costs	\$ 22,027,078	\$ 21,980,634	\$ 20,131	\$ 22,000,765	\$ 26,313

Estimated Costs by Objective

	Costs Incurred on or before 7/31/14 reported as of 8/31/14	Costs incurred on or before 7/31/14 reported after 8/31/14	Total Estimated Costs
Admin & Support Costs That Benefit All Objectives	\$ 14,531,987.49	\$ 20,131.41	\$ 14,552,118.90
Objective 1	\$ 168,767.13	-	\$ 168,767.13
Instruction			\$ -
Trainee	\$ 24,157.68		\$ 24,157.68
Travel	\$ 144,609.45		\$ 144,609.45
Objective 2	\$ 5,740,093.81	-	\$ 5,740,093.81
Instruction	\$ 10,584.13		\$ 10,584.13
Trainee	\$ 2,694,699.20		\$ 2,694,699.20
Travel	\$ 3,034,810.47		\$ 3,034,810.47
Objective 3	\$ 486,404.25	-	\$ 486,404.25
Instruction	\$ 37,039.05		\$ 37,039.05
Trainee	\$ 319,279.00		\$ 319,279.00
Travel	\$ 130,086.20		\$ 130,086.20
Objective 4	\$ 112,225.63	-	\$ 112,225.63
Instruction	\$ 2,002.50		\$ 2,002.50
Trainee			\$ -
Travel	\$ 110,223.13		\$ 110,223.13
TOTAL	\$ 21,039,478.31	\$ 20,131.41	\$ 20,947,384.09

Cost Share

In the original agreement EDC was responsible for \$1,746,972 in cost share. With the early termination of the project this amount was reduced to \$ 941,155.72. EDC met this requirement following the original plan of procuring and distributing supplemental reading materials. The SSTEP project procured 3 containers of donated books worth \$ 941,155.72. The 240,000 books consisted of primarily K-3rd grade readers and storybooks. Due to the rapid closeout of the project the books were distributed to SSTEP implementing partners for future use in education projects and activities.

8. LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

While the early termination of the program resulted in challenges to fully documenting some of the activities, processes, and outcomes, nonetheless through the implementation of the program, SSTEP learned some very important lessons to help inform future teacher training support in South Sudan and other countries. In addition, the SSTEP experience helps to inform a broader discussion on education in emergency or crisis contexts. Some of the key recommendations and lessons learned are outlined below.

Build strong government relationships and continually assess government capacity and commitment. The government's capacity and commitment need to be continually assessed. SSTEP, through technical leadership and collaboration developed strong relationships with the ministry of education, for these reasons SSTEP was well positioned and had firm understanding of the education environment. Because of these relationships SSTEP engaged ministry officials on challenging issues that needed further time to resolve while at the same time was able to adapt the program to address pressing needs that could be agreed on, the focus on literacy is an example.

Importance of quickly adapting programs to realities on the ground, particularly in constantly evolving conflict environments. As noted above, the situation on the ground in South Sudan was different than that envisioned by the design team. External factors such as the austerity measures, which went into effect during the start-up phase of the project, had a negative impact on the education system. These changing conditions forced the ministry, SSTEP and USAID to be flexible and adapt the program to be responsive to the new environment.

Need to evaluate conflict dynamics when designing technical programs. Strategies to integrate important issues like conflict mitigation, peace building, etc. into the planned training did not occur in the program. At the time of the project launch the optimism from the newly founded country created a forward-looking perspective where a functioning education system was envisioned and seemed obtainable. It was an oversight by all stakeholders not to pay more attention to the recent past and how years of

conflict would affect people and systems within the government. The use of conflict sensitive strategies like those advocated by the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) would have allowed program designers to:

- Identify the tension between the teacher training and the systems development goals, and either choose one or the other or design a way to address both that took the conflict setting into account;
- Analyze closely the capacity of government to provide education services and design a project that recognizes those assets and constraints.
- Clearly define the ethnic and/or other underlying conflicts that can lead to (or have already resulted in) violence; determine the relative priority or mix of conflict-related v. academic content; and identify ways to redefine the purpose of schools in these contexts—to help prevent, reduce, or mitigate violent conflict.
- Work with government to determine a small set of critical policy or systems design priorities.

Ideally, the conflict sensitive strategies and analyses would have happened prior to the issuance of a solicitation. Short of that, such a strategic analysis in the context of a fragile state such as South Sudan probably should have been conducted as a first major step at the beginning of the project, with the idea that early adjustments could and should be made according to findings.

Balance policy development and meeting critical needs on the ground

SSTEP invested heavily in the policy area, made some significant contributions and in cases where things were unresolved at least started and contributed to the discussion. The clear lesson learned is that it is important to take time to consult and implement a consultative policy development process. Many policy issues were left pending but it was important that the project not get bogged down by a lack of policy and continue to move forward in areas of agreement. In some cases this worked and in others SSTEP was limited by the unclear or undefined policy.

Stronger coordination between donors and shared strategy with the government. Improved coordination between donors could bring about more concerted pressure on the government to take important policy decisions in line with a clearly articulated (and resourced) education strategy. Donor pressure could also bring about more coherent, consistent teacher training programs with built in quality assurance. This also could help ensure the importance sequencing of activities. For example, while SSTEP was working on updating the teacher training curriculum, other donors were working on the primary curriculum, which would require yet another full revision of the teacher training curriculum. This example also underscored

the challenges of a project approach, whereby organizations like EDC through the SSTEP program are required to move towards targets and results, regardless of the changes in conditions on the ground.

Ensure alternative plans are immediately developed and supported when government commitments are not met. SSTEP relied on government tutors, which, as noted in multiple instances, were often unavailable, or in some instances, unwilling to participate. With no direct supervisory role or incentive system, SSTEP had little to no control over this key requisite for successful implementation. The challenge is the tension between quality inputs and capacity building objectives, as if external (i.e. not local) trainers are hired, capacity building is not achieved and so funds are continuously required for further training. Using local (government) trainers requires more resources allocated to training of trainers and ongoing technical support and supervision, but ultimately local capacity is built. SSTEPs local partners, ECS and Windle Trust tended to use their own trainers, which resulted in training of a higher quality because they were often trainers these organisations had used before.

Another key issue in this area is related to the curriculum work. While it was initially envisioned that the SSTEP role would be to support the curriculum team at Maridi, the Ministry of Education did not actually make available such a team. Therefore, by default, the initiative was left in the hands of a single Advisor. This clearly was an unsatisfactory solution.

Program adequate time and resources to build relationships with State Ministry personnel, given the devolution/decentralization of key activities.

Tasked with operating in all 10 States, and with very limited field staff, SSTEP faced the tremendous challenge of obtaining the buy-in and support of the State Ministries, critical for future program success. This was also related to the breakdown in communication and relationships between the National Ministry and the State Ministries. For example, the formation of the in-service teacher training committees at the State level was vital to the sensitization of other potential stakeholders about the program. Above all, the in-service teacher training committees were essential in allowing the States to take the lead in the implementation of the program. While this was effectively demonstrated in Eastern Equatoria State, but the committees having mixed success in other States. The challenges of States sometimes not agreeing with decisions that SSTEP and the central Ministry of Education had come to suggests that a national Steering Committee to oversee the project might have been an option worth considering. While the cost and organisational challenge of getting appropriate representatives from each State is a factor, meeting only once or twice a year (or annually with provision for extraordinary meetings being called) can minimise costs, but the benefit would be greater communication consensus between government

representatives at State and national level and reduced delays in implementation of decisions.

Project staff need to be directly involved in selecting and pre-screening participants. SSTEP was entirely dependent on the assignment of teachers by the State Ministries. While criteria were set and agreed, these agreements were often ignored as States made selections based on their own criteria and interests. This resulted in the tremendous diversity among sites where trainees were clustered, had uneven skills levels, and had language deficiencies. More homogeneous groups would have also facilitated the clustering of trainees for peer support after training and for more consistent follow up and monitoring by tutors.

For future national training programs that require trainee selection at State level it is advisable to have a formal selection committee with project representation working to written criteria in each State.

Design strong mechanisms to ensure ongoing support for teachers. While SSTEP could largely ensure the quality of the face-to-face training, a much bigger challenge was in providing support for cluster meetings, community-based training, and mentoring in the classroom. Extensive training would have needed to have been done with head teachers to enable them to support a learning environment in their schools in which their teachers could practice and apply in their classroom teaching what they had learned in training. The application of what is learned in the training room by teacher trainees is critical to the success of such programs and only well-trained and motivated local tutors are able to do this. The management and supervision of schools and teachers need to be reviewed in order to encourage good practice in the classroom. There should be a rigorous focus on building a school culture that enables the teacher to learn, e.g., through the creation and use of teacher support networks (TSN) and/or the training of the head teachers and local officials that supervise schools. This would also build local capacity and good practices within schools and positively affect teachers not directly involved in the formal in-service program.

Promote/advocate for gender balance. SSTEP emphasized gender balance from the beginning; however this was always a challenge as most tutors were male, as were most of the participating teachers. This was due to a dearth of qualified females in almost all States. With little control over the selection of tutors, and few female head teachers, there were few women to serve as role models to encourage girls to consider a career in the teaching profession. This is a long process and demands concerted action, as increasing the participation of women in the education system requires a greater number of qualified women, and this also needs a focus on programs that will increase the number of girls completing their schooling.

Support improved infrastructure and learning environments. SSTEP, like many of its predecessors provided some support to certain CECs and Ministry offices to improve their operating conditions; however conditions were still grossly inadequate in many areas. This recommendation includes infrastructure such as classrooms and latrines, and also teaching and learning materials such as books and pencils. While SSTEP worked with teachers to design low-cost materials using locally available resources (e.g. bottle caps to write letters), adequate facilities must also be established to ensure student safety, hygiene, and attendance.

Continue literacy promotion. The literacy component of SSTEP clearly had a positive impact in the schools where teachers were trained, on both teachers and students and their relationship in the classroom. The literacy component also appeared to encourage children who had dropped out to come back to school¹⁰. The SSTEP literacy materials (Training of Trainers, teacher training and early grade readers) are contextually developed and ready to continue to be used. Below are the recommendations from the paper SSTEP produced at project close.

Recommendations from 'Advancing Literacy in South Sudan' 2014

The government of South Sudan and donors should consider allocating appropriate resources to support literacy instruction. Universities and Teacher Training Institutes should consider including a specific course on the teaching of reading/literacy instruction into their teacher training curriculums.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) donor group should consider using these materials as a set of resource materials for training under the GPE program. Engaging reading and writing materials should be in each school, which are appropriate for both beginning readers as well as materials that more accomplished readers could use to develop both their skill and interest in reading and writing.

Other local stakeholders in the education process need to understand and be aware of the importance of good literacy instruction in their schools. This includes head teachers, Payam, County Education Centre and State officials, as well as parents and key figures from the local community. This will give teachers support and encouragement to achieve the goal of helping their pupils to become skilled and fluent readers and writers.

¹⁰ Please see the SSTEP [Advancing Literacy in South policy paper \(2014\)](#) for more details on the literacy program and results.

Design more effective tools for monitoring learning. SSTEP relied on traditional tutor reports to monitor progress of teachers enrolled. This approach has bias and does not enable any cross-site comparisons. With more time and resources and a stronger technically based M&E program, SSTEP could have done more pre-testing, post-testing, and general assessment to measure results, integrating technology (tablets and cellular phones) to ensure quick data collection and transfer.

Ensure a basic certification system is adopted before investing in a nation-wide pre-service and in-service training system. By December 2013, SSTEP had trained close to 3,000 teachers and tutors; however, none of these teachers had completed the full 4-year in-service training program, and few were likely to complete it during the project lifecycle. Even had the teachers completed the four-years of training, they were still unlikely to be able to sit an examination or pass it without significant review and also supplementary teaching. Without a proper certification system in place, teachers would likely not have any additional recognition (or incentives) for their additional skills and commitment to learning.

SSTEP had all along been advocating for the Lower Primary Provisional Certificate, which would have enabled SSTEP trainees to sit the Provisional Certificate exam during the life of the project. Notwithstanding significant efforts of SSTEP, the Ministry had not made any progress on approving the Lower Primary Provisional Certificate by the end of the project, largely due to disagreements over whether there was much value in training teachers with less than secondary degrees. This issue must be resolved via a formal Ministry policy to ensure that teachers that enroll in future training can indeed count on receiving formal recognition of their work.

While significant resources and efforts both from the Government, Ministry of Education and donors are being committed and put into the education sector it should be recognized that to attract school leavers into pedagogical training programs and young professionals into the teaching profession (and significantly, to stay in the teaching profession) a clear career path, with reasonable remuneration and incentives, needs to be established and legislated for as soon as possible in order to maximize the investment resources and build a strong and sustainable teaching profession to contribute to South Sudan's human resource development.

Recognize regional variations and program accordingly. The SSTEP program was designed with a one-size fits all approach. This proved difficult to implement as conditions on the ground varied greatly from State to State. At several points, State Ministers had their own proposals for how to accomplish effective teacher training (e.g. Western Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria, Upper Nile). While the Ministry of Education has a mandate to set policy the variations in political independence and context and conditions across the States means a one size fits all approach is hard to apply. Unfortunately, the program was not designed with the flexibility to take account of positive local

initiatives and to take a more opportunistic approach toward supporting legitimate alternative approaches that had the State's political and financial backing. Moving forward, any future teacher training program must recognize the distinct conditions in each area (e.g. geography, CEC availability, tutors, residential facilities, commitment of State and local officials, existence of TTIs, etc.) to ensure maximum benefit to build a strong teaching corps for the country.

Promote sustainability. Some of the teachers enrolled in SSTEP had been involved in in-service training for more than 5 years, under multiple programs. None, to our knowledge, had ever received any formal certification or recognition. This has led many to be skeptical about enrolling in skills upgrading programs and also to leave the profession. Future teacher training programs must be negotiated with the government of South Sudan to underscore sustainability and impact.

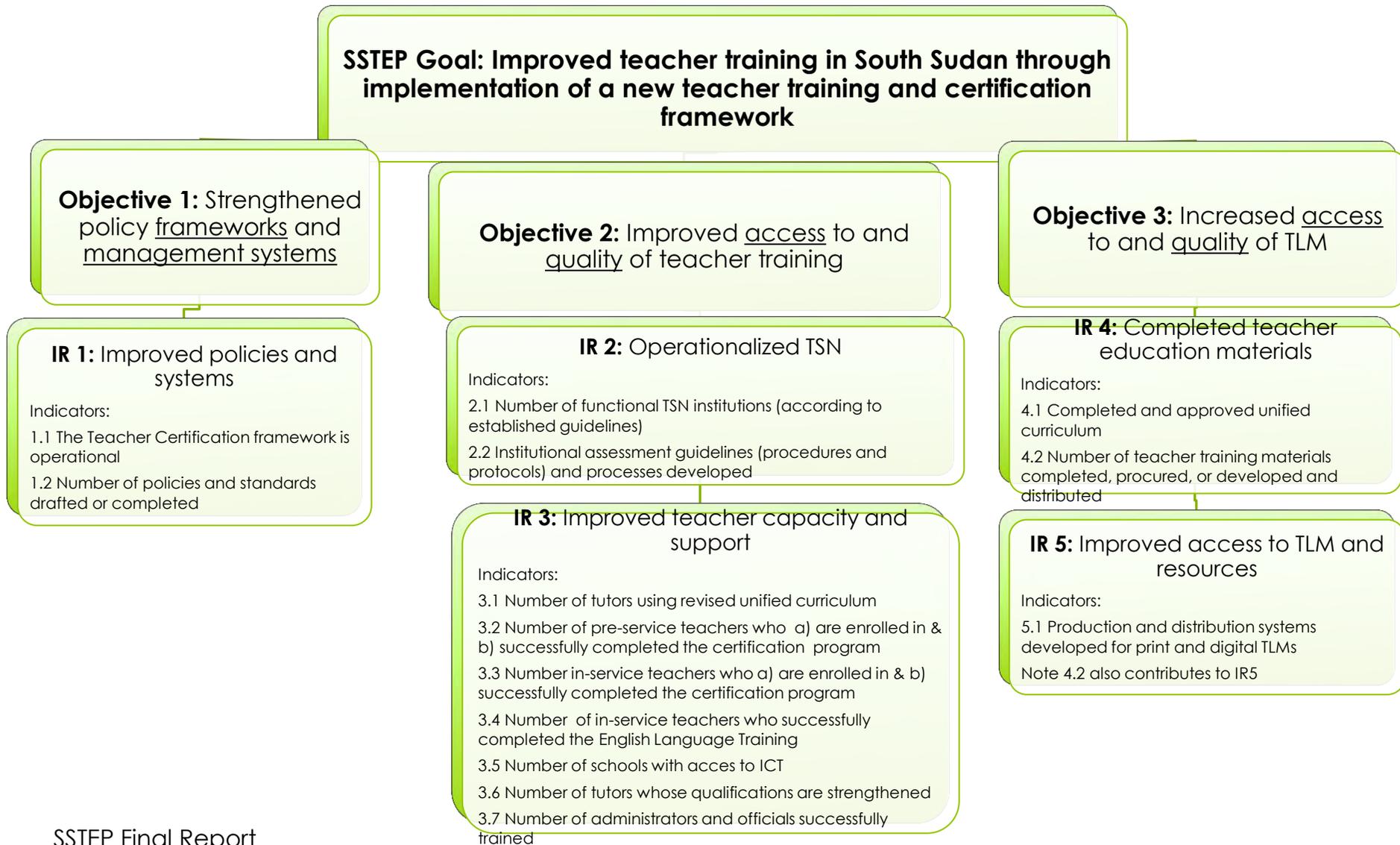
9. CONCLUSION

The current conflict in South Sudan is evidence of the fundamental and historical tensions which, if not addressed adequately, will continue to emerge in the future. The fact that South Sudan is a newly established nation, with the tremendous task ahead of developing structures, systems, and policies, is a tremendous challenge. It is also a potential opportunity to lay the groundwork for a modern and functional system. Teacher training, a critical component for South Sudan's growth and prosperity, must be prioritized by the government and donors alike. For a teacher training system to become effectively institutionalized, policy changes should be the immediate priority, to lay the groundwork to support future teacher training. This includes the critical work pending on teacher certification and management. Although SSTEP was unable to complete its work in all of these important areas, it is hoped that the SSTEP materials, reports, and other legacies will help inform a functional, sustainable teacher professional development system in the future.

APPENDICES

1. SSTEP Results Framework (2012)
2. List of all materials distributed and published (All components except ELT)

1. APPENDIX ONE – SSTEP RESULTS FRAMEWORK (2012)



2. APPENDIX TWO – LIST OF ALL MATERIALS PUBLISHED AND DISTRIBUTED UNDER SSTEP (ALL COMPONENTS EXCEPT ELT)

- Teacher Certification Paper
- National Professional Standards for Teachers in South Sudan
- Final Draft Gender Affirmative Action Policy
- Unified Curriculum for Teacher Education
- Advancing Literacy in South Sudan
- SSTEP Literacy Training Module 1
- SSTEP Literacy Training Module 2
- SSTEP Literacy Training Module 3
- Readers for use with SSTEP Literacy Training Modules 2 & 3
 - Do You See?
 - Where Are You Going?
 - Going to School
 - Playing Football
 - Musa and Finda Make a Football
 - Here Comes the Bus
 - A Lion and a Mouse
 - Little Lion Roars
 - The Lost Ball
 - Jobs We Have
 - Hyena and Hare
 - My Feelings
 - Village Counting
 - A New King
 - How the Gazelle Learned to Jump
- In-Service Training Materials
 - **Each of the 15 booklets noted below was produced for Years 1,2,3, and 4 for a total of 90 booklets

Maths:

Workshop Activity Book
Community Based Study
Tutor's Guide

English:

Workshop Activity Book
Community Based Study
Tutor's Guide

General Science:

Workshop Activity Book
Community Based Study
Tutor's Guide

Social Science:

Workshop Activity Book
Community Based Study
Tutor's Guide

Professional Studies:

Workshop Activity Book
Community Based Study
Tutor's Guide