



Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies  
Réseau Inter-Agences pour l'Éducation D'Urgence  
La Red Interagencial para Educación en Situaciones de Emergencia

## Template for a Case Study on Teacher Compensation

**Name:** Mary Ombaka

**Position:** Education Project Manager, South Sudan

**Name of your organisation:** Norwegian Refugee Council

**Date of program or policy implementation described in the case study:**

The programme referred to in this case study is currently under implementation by Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) in South Sudan. It has been on going since 2005.

**Location of program or policy implementation described in the case study:**

Lakes and Northern Bahr el Ghazal states, South Sudan.

**Background**

Please include:

- Brief overview of the context in which you are/were working (*emergency, post-crisis, recovery, development*)

South Sudan has been affected by conflict for over two decades, leading to deaths and displacement of over 2 million people. Most schooling activities in South Sudan have since 1990s been managed by the community and were conducted in the open air with no facilities befitting an environment conducive to learning/teaching. Majority of girls and young women were unable to attend school. South Sudan currently has one of the highest illiteracy rates in the world averaging 85%, 92% among women and 80% among men.<sup>1</sup> 500 girls and 2000 boys complete primary school every year, as opposed to an estimated 1.4 million school age children in the region. Construction and rehabilitation of permanent structures have been held back by the war, and due to lack of road infrastructure and skilled labour. In the SPLM areas of South Sudan only 6% primary school teachers have been formally trained.

- Background information about the population for which the teacher compensation policy applied (refugees, IDP, returnees)

This comprised host local community as well as IDPs and returnees (who are the primary target groups for NRC) affected by conflict.

- What kind of teachers were you working with:
  - Teachers in government primary and secondary schools (including pre-school/ ECD)
  - Teachers in government supported non-formal education programs/ learning centres etc
  - Teachers in NGO supported schools aligned with the government system
  - Teachers in NGO/ community supported non-formal education programs/ learning centres
  - Teachers with or without formal teaching qualifications
  - Head teachers and classroom assistants

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<sup>1</sup> Government of south Sudan Ministry of Education Science and Technology, Concept Paper for Alternative Education Systems, July 2006.

- Volunteer teachers and paraprofessionals

Other: Teachers initially working as volunteers in community supported schools but taken over by the government in 2005 after signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Majority of the teachers were under qualified and had little or no training.

### Teacher Compensation

Please describe your teacher compensation experience, including:

- Who are/were the key actors and what is/was their sphere of responsibilities with regard to the compensation of teachers?

The key actors were:

1. The Government of South Sudan (GoSS) and the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST) at headquarters (Juba) and state level.<sup>2</sup>
  2. NGOs were involved in paying teachers' incentives before the government took over the responsibility of paying teachers' salaries in 2006. For instance, NRC had an arrangement to remit incentives to all teachers (US\$30 per month) in NRC supported schools up to October 2006. The state MoEST however requested NRC to extend incentives to December 2006, pledging to pay proper salaries from January 2007. The amount of incentives that NGOs paid teachers varied from NGO to NGO. Some teachers continued to work as without any incentives until June 2006 when they learnt that the government would start paying teachers' salaries.
  3. The Church: e.g. Diocese of Rumbek managed church supported schools that were categorized as private.
  4. The Community: Most schools currently owned by the government were set up by community initiative during the conflict period. As a result, the community still wields a lot of influence in the schools, even after take over by GoSS.
- How did the money get dispersed? How was accountability assured? How were issues of corruption addressed?

When NRC remitted teachers' incentives, a pay roll for Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) teachers was compiled and updated each month. Every teacher signed after receiving the money. Because this was an incentive, a blanket figure that disregarded teachers' qualifications and experience was applied across the board for all teachers.

- Were there specific donor strategies and funding mechanisms put in place? If so, what approaches were taken and how were these implemented?

This has already been addressed above.

- Were there specific government structures and/or policies around teacher compensation? If so, how were these communicated and implemented?

In 2006 when the government took over the responsibility for teachers' salaries, there were no structures for an efficient implementation of a salary scheme. Most teachers had been serving as volunteers. Majority were ill qualified with no training. Some were not fit to be deployed as teachers, as they were primary school drop outs. The government was torn between enhancing quality with qualified teachers and keeping ill qualified teachers who had stood with it during the conflict period, when there was no money to pay salaries.

In any case, the government did not have enough qualified teachers to discard all those that did not qualify. Further, it became difficult to determine salary scales for various teachers under these circumstances. Some had long teaching experience but had no proper qualifications. Others were

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<sup>2</sup> South Sudan has ten states, each headed by a governor. The states have some degree of autonomy at decision making and prioritization of needs, but they depend on the central government for funding.

qualified and trained with no experience. Yet others were in between these two categories. Some teachers have voiced complaints to the effect that nepotism has been applied to determine theirs and other teachers' grades and salary scales, rather than their qualifications.

When the government eventually released funds to state authorities for teachers' salaries, it was without clear statistics and salary scales for respective teachers. Some state authorities had the funds diverted to other projects or misappropriated altogether, leaving teachers unpaid for several months. In some states, school children went on strike, destroying MoEST property and demanding that their teachers be paid. These irregularities have continued to plague teachers' compensation process in South Sudan, leaving most teachers crying foul for not being paid regularly or for being underpaid or both. Due to lack of proper teachers' statistics, it has been difficult to determine how much funds should be set aside for teachers in any given state. Despite allegations of existence of ghost teachers on pay rolls of certain states, some have opted to remitting a blanket salary to ensure that all teachers receive some salary at the end of the month. This is partly owing to a budget deficit at the central government.

- Was the community engaged in and encouraged to support the teacher compensation effort? If so, what approaches were taken to engage the community and what role(s) did they take to support the teacher compensation effort?

The community was only directly involved in supporting teachers in kind, before the government took over.

- What were some of the challenges you faced in compensating teachers, and how did you overcome those challenges?

Challenges:

1. Teachers were not happy with the amount of money that we remitted as an incentive. As a result, there was lack of motivation leading to chronic absenteeism; lateness and lack of discipline among teachers and learners alike. During the rainy season, most schools would start at 11am because teachers cultivated their farms in the morning. It was hoped that the situation would improve with introduction of a government salary.
2. We had to make do with ill qualified teachers because people with better qualifications joined NGOs and other government sectors that paid better salaries. Although we constantly conducted teachers' training to improve those who remained, we had to put up with a very high turn over, due to demand of trained teachers elsewhere.
3. Constant monitoring of teachers to support and strengthen them at school level helped. We recognized excelling teachers by asking them to facilitate in the refresher training workshops that we organized for all trained teachers. Although this was not tangible incentive, most were motivated for the esteem and recognition this approach gave them.
4. The teachers' kits that NRC distributed made life in the classroom much easier for NRC supported teachers compared to their counterparts who had no textbooks, chalk and other teaching and learning materials that enhanced the teaching atmosphere.

Were there any tools that you used in this work? If so, please describe them and attach a copy if possible. INEE MSEE were used for reference.

- Please share any lessons learnt / outcomes / good practices resulting from this experience.

The experience had the following positive outcomes/good practices:

- The Minister of Education in Western Equatoria state (the only female minister in MoEST) devised a system to pay all teachers in her state, with the meager funds she received. Although the salary was paid at a blanket rate, her state was the only one in South Sudan where teachers had received up to date salaries. Most other states were in arrears of 3-6 months or more.
- The community's involvement in encouraging and supporting the teachers' course proved to be a positive and active involvement, just as had been the case during the conflict period.

Lessons learnt:

- Like funding, capacity building for ministries of education in countries that are conflict affected or in the recovery and reconstruction phase is critical to an efficient and satisfactory teachers' compensation scheme.

### Policy and Coordination

Please describe the policy and coordination elements of your teacher compensation experience. For instance:

- Who are/were the key actors and what is/was their sphere of responsibilities with respect to policy and coordination?

Key actors:

- Ministry of Education Science & Technology (MoEST)- overall coordination & release of salaries to state ministries.
- NGOs (NRC in this case). - Involved in paying incentives earlier and later, in advocacy for an efficient salary scheme for enhanced quality of education.
- Donors & UN organizations- provided funding and coordination of education in collaboration with MoEST. Also involved in advocacy for efficient remittance of salaries
- Community – encouragement and support to teachers and the school administration.
- Local state administration- sometimes received all funds for the state and was expected to disburse portions to respective ministries. In some states, the authorities diverted funds to other projects or personal use, leaving teachers unpaid for months on end. In others, the local authorities were very supportive.
- Did you advocate for equitable teacher compensation? If so, describe the process and outcomes:

In a meeting NGOs and donors held with MoEST following a countrywide teachers' outcry due to inefficiency in teachers' salary remittance, NGOs put MoEST to task on the issue. As the problem persisted, NGOs and donors continued to express their displeasure with the government's inability to stop misappropriation of teachers' salaries and come up with an acceptable payroll.

Although NGO and donor pressure on the government paid, it became evident that that the government lacked capacity to implement an efficient work force payroll owing to its inability to establish clear database on the number of teachers and their grades.

- Did you engage/ work with the government from the start of the process?

Yes. Our involvement was both at state and central government levels. Although the central government enacts policies and remits funds to states, the latter's' autonomous position allows them to interpret policy as they deem fit and to use funds based on state priority needs. Some states invested in conducting surveys to establish the authenticity of existing teachers' payrolls. Advocating for an efficient teachers' compensation scheme was imperative at both levels.

- Did you engage/ work with local or international donors during the process?  
Yes. It was both local and international. These included UNICEF, USAID, UNESCO, NRC, NCA, SC-Alliance, Stromme Foundation, Diocese of Rumbek, etc.
- How did you engage/ work with these other actors and ensure coordination?

We had coordination fora at the central level, spearheaded by UNICEF, and at state level, spearheaded by respective lead NGOs. For instance, in Lakes state, NRC took the coordination lead whereas SC-UK led in Northern Bahr el Ghazal state.

- What were some of the challenges you faced in developing policy and ensuring coordination, and how did you overcome those challenges?

The major challenge I have faced in South Sudan in almost all sectors has been serious lack of capacity by MoEST and other government officials. Despite numerous capacity building activities on going, it will take some time before government personnel are fully in control.

- Were there any tools that you used in this work? If so, please describe them and attach a copy if possible.

Yes. INEE's MSEE were very appropriate.

- Please share any lessons learnt / outcomes / good practices resulting from this experience.

The reason why Western Equatoria Minister of Education was able to pay all her teachers on monthly basis was because she had an up dated payroll, which most states lacked. Although far from perfect, this is a good practice that ought to be emulated by other states within South Sudan and other counties with similar teacher compensation problems.

### Teacher Motivation, Support and Supervision

Please describe the teacher motivation, support and supervision elements of your teacher compensation experience. For instance, motivation and support may include in-service training; provision of housing, transportation, and food, etc.; defining what a teacher means in the community; building community respect for teachers; fostering student success to give teachers success, etc.

Unfortunately many teachers in South Sudan do not feel motivated. They regret that after volunteering their services during the conflict period, the government had neglected them when it had the capacity to pay their salaries. Despite numerous teachers' training activities going on, most well qualified and trained teachers are leaving the teaching force to join other government sectors that pay better. These include security forces such as police, army and prison forces that pay more than double what a teacher earns per month. The irony is that employees in the security forces do not have to be literate to be eligible for employment!

- Who are/were the key actors and what is/was their sphere of responsibilities with regard to teacher motivation, support and supervision? Please be sure to demarcate the roles of the government, community and international actors.

NGOs and donors have provide some motivation to teachers through training, providing school furniture, school construction and teaching and learning materials; all of which help to improve the teachers' working conditions. For instance, both NRC and UNICEF collaborate on school construction/rehabilitation, and provision of school kits and textbooks.

- How was accountability realized? Was there a code of conduct? If so, please describe and attach a copy if possible. How were issues of corruption and/or exploitation addressed?

Issues of corruption in South Sudan are still not adequately addressed. However, the MoEST after realizing that some state authorities misappropriated funds remitted for teachers' salaries decided to send funds directly to the state MoEST. This paid some dividends as some state MoESTs used the funds efficiently. Other states however continued with the history of misappropriation.

- What were some of the challenges you faced in motivating, supporting and supervising teachers, and how did you overcome those challenges?

Challenges faced in motivating and supervising teachers included:

- Most learning in South Sudan is conducted in the open air for lack of proper school infrastructure. It is very difficult to motivate and instill proper teaching methods in teachers working under these circumstances.
- Due to erratic remittance of teachers' salaries, teachers need a lot of convincing to report to school regularly and on time.
- The rainy season starts in April (coincidentally, the school year also starts in April) and ends in October (one month before end of the school year). Teachers are least encouraged to wade through mud to report to school, or to be rained on either in school or on their way to/from school.
- Were there any tools that you used in this work? If so, please describe them and attach a copy if possible. INEE's MSEE
- Please share any lessons learnt / outcomes / good practices resulting from this experience. N/A