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Executive Summary

Speak Up was a three-year non-formal education project in South Sudan (1st October 2010 – 31st September 2013 + 3 months extension), funded by Comic Relief and delivered by three partners (Africa Educational Trust, Resource and Open Learning Centers, and Free Voice South Sudan). Speak Up was a radio-based English language learning program targeting South Sudanese youths who have missed out on education as a result of decades of conflict.

Speak Up delivered social issue-based radio broadcasts in combination with taught classes and accompanying teaching and learning materials. The project had two main objectives: to increase English language and life skills for disadvantaged young people; and to strengthen the national media sector through training and employment to new South Sudanese journalists. The project was implemented in four states: Jonglei, Lakes, Central (CES) and Western Equatoria (WES).

On project completion, Africa Educational Trust (AET) contracted two independent educational consultants to conduct a final evaluation of Speak Up to garner the overall impact of the project measured against its objectives, and to gather recommendations for future related projects. The evaluators undertook a three-pronged methodology for this evaluation, conducting: 1) a comprehensive desk review of Speak Up documents; 2) interviews with implementing staff; and 3) participatory focus group discussions and interviews with beneficiaries.

The findings are presented in this document, organized by addressing the specific objective outcomes, AET learning questions and evaluation objectives spelled out in the Terms of Reference. Throughout the research, consultants evaluated the relevancy of each of the specific project objectives, the achievements realised, and specific feedback that can contribute to future relevant programming.

Key overall findings from this evaluation include:

- Exceptional organizational delivery of Speak Up through AET’s local ROLE centers, building capacity at multiple levels through staff training and use of resources, as well as through positive mid-project programming shifts;
- Achievement of breadth as well as depth in the implementation areas, some of which are in hard-to-reach and marginalized locations;
- Significant learning and retention outcomes among teachers and students;
- On-going difficulty in recruiting and retaining female teachers and students;
- Extremely relevant and high quality content and delivery mode through locally produced broadcasts; and
• Enthusiasm among project beneficiaries for future similar and expanded programming.

Key recommendations for future related programming include
• Targeting returnee, refugee and internally displaced persons (IDP) populations, as well as under-served groups such as those who are physically disabled and those who live in extremely rural areas;
• Reviewing material content in light of recent ethnic violence before seeking adaptation and expansion methods for reusing Speak Up materials in other states in South Sudan;
• Expanding programming to include three levels of progression and additional relevant content;
• Involving local county education officials through sensitization and trainings; and
• Categorizing the program as English language learning training rather than a literacy program.

The following evaluation presents an objective and nuanced assessment of Speak Up’s overall impact, based on primary research in two of the four states of intervention.

Project Background and Objectives

Speak Up worked to combat the effects of two decades of devastating conflict—poverty, very little education attainment, an immature media sector, and lack of access to important language skills. The project worked with more than 100 communities in Central and Western Equatoria, Jonglei and Lakes states to promote English language learning for young people.

The program was targeted at disadvantaged out-of-school youths and young adults to enable increased English language skills that are applicable in their everyday lives. It was delivered through an integrated approach, combining radio programs, written learning materials and face-to-face classes. The project aimed to reach more than 15,000 young people (60% female) and enable them to use English in their everyday lives to contribute to the development of their community and country.

By using the medium of radio, young people were trained in financially-sustainable, independent journalism, thus improving South Sudan’s media sector, which is presently low-quality, financially weak and lacking independence. In addition, the project aimed to address a lack of understanding and basic human rights at the community level and
also to help improve tense cross-community relations through increased understanding of different tribal groups.

Speak Up worked through the Alternative Education Systems (AES) directorate of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST or MoE) and was fully endorsed by the Ministry at the national, state and local levels. Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) is not new to South Sudan, and Speak Up also coordinated with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

The three-year project saw the delivery of two Speak Up courses in Years 2 and 3. Some significant changes were made for the second course, based on findings from the first cycle and recommendations of a mid-term review. This included condensing a 50-week course into 6 months, the provision of individual learner’s workbooks rather than shared worksheets and moving from radio transmission to the use of MP3s transmitted using SD cards in radios.

The project had two key aims: 1) to increase English language and life skills for disadvantaged young people (AET and ROLE centers), and 2) to strengthen the national media sector through providing training and employment to new South Sudanese journalists (Free Voice). Five outcomes contributed to these over-arching goals:

**Outcome 1:**
Alleviate poverty by providing access to English literacy-skills and life skills for disadvantaged young people supporting livelihoods rebuilding and increased access to rights.

**Outcome 2:**
Communities are more able to advocate for their rights, to understand each other and ways of life, customs and issues that affect each other.

**Outcome 3:**
Local partners and community organisations receive training in the course of the project that increases their capacity to plan, deliver and monitor appropriate educational interventions to their communities.

**Outcome 4:**
Young journalists equipped with skills to produce good quality relevant radio programs suited to needs of local communities.
Outcome 5:
South Sudan's media strengthened and better able to take advantage of more liberal legal environment to deliver independent, well-informed radio journalism.

Evaluation Objective

The purpose of this final evaluation is to assess the overall impact of Speak Up. This includes the extent to which the project has achieved its planned objectives, and identifying lessons for future projects. The objectives listed from the ToR are below.

At the project level

- Assess relevance of the original objectives in terms of whether they were achievable and whether they met the needs and priorities of the specific target groups and more widely, whether and how they responded to education gaps and needs in South Sudan.

- Assess the extent to which the 5 project outcomes have been achieved and the overall impact on the lives of beneficiaries and on local communities.

- Assess what progress has been made and findings achieved towards answering the 8 learning questions defined by AET (see Appendix C).

- Assess whether the project activities generated the planned outputs and were delivered on time. How were work plans adapted during the life of the project? Did the project activities represent good value for money?

- Review significant achievements the project has brought about. Which approaches worked particularly well and why, and which less well and why? Any unexpected or unintended outcomes – both positive and negative?

- Gather feedback about the project from people affected by the activities and provide an opportunity for them to participate in analyzing project achievements and informing future project design.

- How does the program and its impact fit into and contribute to the wider picture of Alternative Education System (AES) delivery and policy in South Sudan? How does it compare with other initiatives, particularly other Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI)?

- What are the longer-term and broader impacts of Speak Up? What was the impact beyond direct learners in classes and on the host communities? Are the positive outcomes of the project likely to continue beyond the project cycle? What are the
chances (and challenges) of communities continuing lessons beyond project funding?

At AET level

- How effective was AET at leading and coordinating the implementation and monitoring of Speak Up?

At ROLE Center Level

- Assess whether and to what extent the ROLE Centers’ capacity has been developed through the project. What level of capacity building support did AET provide to the ROLE centers and how relevant and effective was this?

- Assess the extent to which the project’s structure has enabled it to meet its objectives and the needs of the target groups.

- Assess the effectiveness of the monitoring, evaluation and learning system of the project (AET offices along with ROLE Centers) including how monitoring data is captured, analyzed and applied to program practice.

- Assess the effectiveness of the monitoring, training and on-going support to teachers provided by ROLE Center staff, including quality assurance of project activities such as quality of teaching and teachers’ examination grading.

At Free Voice Level

- Assess the quality and relevance of the content and language levels of the radio programs and their effectiveness.

- Assess how the program has contributed to the development of South Sudan’s media sector in relation to 1) the development of independent journalists 2) the delivery of independent and relevant news and information; and 3) strengthening of local radio stations.

On partnerships

- Assess the level of effectiveness of partnerships at all levels of the project (e.g. local communities, ROLE Centers, AET, South Sudan Government).

In addition, the evaluation aims to answer or address the following:
1) Which target group has benefited most from the program and what recommendations can be made for targeting future projects? What is the most appropriate target group (in terms of age, situation, education level, etc.)?

2) The impact (an evaluation of the pros and cons) of moving from radio to MP3 in Year 3 and recommendations for future projects.

3) The impact of condensing the 50-week course into six months (learning twice a week rather than once a week) for the second course.

4) The relevance of Speak Up materials beyond the four target states.

5) Recommendations for the use/revision/adaptation/development of Speak Up materials beyond the project.

6) The initial proposal to Comic Relief intended Speak Up to be a literacy-training program. Is that a realistic description of the program that has been delivered or is it really an English language-learning program?

**Evaluation Methodology**

In order to meet the objectives and answer the questions for the final evaluation, the evaluators used a three-pronged approach to conduct research on the Speak Up program. The first approach was conducted in Juba, while the second and third approaches were conducted in both Western Equatoria and Lakes States during December 2013 and February 2014.

1. Desk review of project information, including:
   - Recordings of interactive lessons, teaching and learning materials
   - Project proposal and start-up forms
   - Annual narrative and financial reports to Comic Relief
   - Comic Relief’s project-monitoring visit report
   - Project monitoring and evaluation framework
   - Mid-term review by Emmanuel K. Kamuli and Hannah Rounding
   - Research Report by Robert Simpson
   - Baseline, participatory impact assessment and other project data

2. Interviews with implementing staff, including those from:
• Africa Educational Trust/ROLE Centers in CES, WES and Lakes State
• Free Voice

3. Participatory evaluations with key project stakeholders and beneficiaries, including:
   • Trained journalists
   • Speak Up teachers/tutors
   • Direct learners
   • Indirect beneficiaries
   • Radio station staff
   • Ministry of Education and related Ministry officials

*Interview and focus group discussion methodologies*

Participatory evaluation methods included the use of focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews. Focus group discussions are used as a good practice for evaluating development programs such as Speak Up, because they give participants the opportunity to voice their feedback and thoughts in an intimate environment alongside their peers.

FGDs were conducted with a minimum of five individuals and a maximum of ten, in single-sex or mixed groups. Often the tutor or outreach officer was invited to sit in the discussion to act as a translator for the participants who had limited English comprehension or speaking skills. FGDs were facilitated by the evaluator with a loosely scripted discussion guide and encouraged free discussion and participation.

One-on-one interviews were conducted using similar question guides (see Annex B) and were another venue in which participants could voice their opinions and feedback. Interviews help verify the information collected in the group setting of the FGDs and can offer more nuance to the research.
Focus group discussion with learners and teachers in Yambio County, WES, February 2014.

**Selection Bias**

Interview and FGD participants were selected from a limited pool of available individuals who were informed by word of mouth from the outreach officer in their area. Many were incentivized to attend the meetings to collect their certificates for passing the final examination. Individuals who were more comfortable with their English skills were more likely to want to participate in discussions or interviews.

Therefore, it is likely that the individuals consulted were those who had been relatively successful in the program or who already had a certain level of English communication skills. In one instance, a group of ladies gathered for a FGD under the impression that they were beginning the second level of the Speak Up program and were there for registration. Some misinformation may have caused some bias in the individuals who were consulted during the evaluation.

**Respondent Bias**

It is important to acknowledge that there may have been bias in the participants’ responses to some of the questions. Some participants were under the false impression
that the evaluator worked for AET or for the donor and could decide on the future funding of the program. Because there was a strong desire for future programming to take place and for further supplies to be given, there may have been a natural bias for participants to hold back on any negative feedback of the program. Evaluators tried to mitigate this by explaining our third party relationship and to emphasize the importance of constructive feedback.

Translation Challenges

Speak Up targeted a diverse group of learners, some of whom had previous school and English language learning experience, and some who previously had virtually no introduction to the language. FGDs were facilitated by the evaluator in simple English, but it was quickly clear that translation assistance was needed. Mother tongue or Arabic was used as a second language during most FGDs. This may have affected the accuracy and the level of nuance of the information gathered. Additionally, because translation help was given by Speak Up tutors or outreach officers, there may have been a bias in the delivery of the questions or back translation of the answers. Researchers tried to mitigate this by verifying patterned responses through one-on-one interviews.

Geographic Bias

The Speak Up program was implemented in four states: Central Equatoria, Western Equatoria, Jonglei and Lakes. However, the scope of this evaluation was limited to WES and Lakes State due to numerous factors. (One exception is that the final examination session of Speak Up was observed and the ROLE Manager consulted in Central Equatoria.)

An outbreak of insecurity, violence, and displacement in mid-December 2013 meant that it became impossible to contact individuals in Jonglei and other states to verify research. Therefore, the primary research conducted through this evaluation mainly reflects the Speak Up experience in WES and Lakes State where in-person visits were possible. Secondary information can confirm that many of the findings were similar in CES and Jonglei, but this is inconclusive.

Research Delays

The original evaluation plan was for the research to be conducted in the immediate period after the final Speak Up examination session took place. However, delays in contracting, availability and travel pushed the dates to the end of the year. The first
week-long research trip to Rumbek, Lakes state took place in early December and the trip to Yambio, WES was arranged for the following week. On 15 December 2013, heavy fighting broke out in Juba and all domestic and international flights were cancelled. The evaluator was eventually evacuated from South Sudan and the trip to WES was postponed.

When the situation in South Sudan calmed and internationals were able to return, a substitute evaluator already in-country was contracted to conduct the research in WES in mid-February. Given these unfortunate delays, the evaluation was conducted later and over a longer period than intended. Additionally, because of the insecurity in South Sudan, many participants and informants may have been outside of their home areas or unavailable for consultations.

Field Visits

- Rumbek, Lakes State: 9 – 15 December 2013
- Yambio and Nzara, WES: 19 – 24 February 2014

In total 39 learners, 14 teachers, 6 education officials, 15 project staff, 1 indirect beneficiary, 1 journalist and 1 radio station were consulted face to face during this final evaluation.

The evaluation findings are divided into three thematic areas: relevance and achievement of the five outcomes, service delivery, and significant project achievements. These findings are followed up with recommendations to inform future uses for Speak Up or similar projects. AET’s learning questions have also been addressed throughout the findings section.

Findings: Relevance and Achievement of five outcomes

Outcome 1:
Alleviate poverty by providing access to English literacy-skills and life skills for disadvantaged young people supporting livelihoods rebuilding and increased access to rights.

South Sudan is one of the poorest countries in Africa. The formal job market is extremely weak and plagued by tribal favouritism. Markets are fragile because of a lack of road access and an immature manufacturing sector. Poverty is a widespread issue in South Sudan that is dependent on many more factors than just education. This outcome is too broad and not attainable. At this point in the country’s economic
development, poverty reduction projects are not feasible through education alone and require a targeted income generation approach, rather than purely educational activities.

A tracer study conducted by AET found that of the eleven people interviewed, two reported that they were making an income, when the previous year they had not been. Consultants perceived during interviews that while former students had not yet found paid employment after attending Speak Up, students were enthusiastic that their new skills would help them find jobs in the future. Many reported that they could now use computers, read job announcements, volunteer as teachers, get jobs as security guards and provide receipts at market stalls. However, because of the weak job market and lack of capital to start businesses, most had not yet gained an increased income.

In terms of providing access to English literacy skills, Speak Up was successful in training 11,226 people in two years. Year 1 peak enrolment data reported that that 7,467 people attended the course, and Year 2 saw 6,960. Between Year 1 and Year 2, graduation rates increased from 86% to 91%. Additionally, attendance rates rose from 57% to 73%. This could mean that changes in project implementation led to increased retention and learning outcomes.

Findings such as these contribute to Learning Question 1: *What is the impact of basic literacy skills on young people in South Sudan in relation to livelihoods – especially access to finances and employment?*

With the creation of the new country and the switch in national language from Arabic to English, English literacy is now a crucial part of gaining employment in South Sudan. In order to access jobs in the government, private sector or NGO field, prospective candidates must be fluent in English. With the increase of trade and investment from outside countries as well as the increasing mobility of the South Sudanese population, it is also necessary for small business owners and traders to speak and write English in order to procure goods, advertise and interact with clients. People who have basic literacy skills can also access information on the radio, TV and newspapers.

**Outcome 2:**
*Communities are more able to advocate for their rights, to understand each other and ways of life, customs and issues that affect each other.*

This outcome is extremely relevant in South Sudan, but the political situation in the country does not make it particularly feasible to attain. In many states, the local governments are very low functioning because of a lack of human and financial
resources. At the county level, information does not filter up to state or national governments, so populations have no venue to advocate for their rights. However, the ability for communities to understand one another and their neighbours is extremely necessary to build a common national identity, which has never existed in South Sudan. The first step is the building of social cohesion outside of tribal identity which could lead to populations advocating for their rights as South Sudanese citizens.

The Star Journey monitoring data showed that 70% of respondents have an improved understanding of human rights issues within their community and 44% feel more able to speak about human rights with their families. During individual interviews and focus group discussions with consultants, beneficiaries did not report any evidence that they were able to advocate for their rights, but they did respond positively to an increased understanding of their neighbours and different cultures in South Sudan. The Star Journey monitoring data revealed similar findings, as 55% of respondents reported an improved understanding and respect of other communities in South Sudan. One woman in Rumbek said that neighbours now approached her to help settle disputes when they involved people who spoke languages other than Dinka. A young man in Rumbek said that now he speaks with foreigners in the market rather than get angry with them for not understanding Dinka. Respondents in Yambio remarked that they now understand a bit more of the diversity of the country and why peacebuilding is so important in South Sudan.

**Outcome 3:**

*Local partners and community organisations receive training in the course of the project that increases their capacity to plan, deliver and monitor appropriate educational interventions to their communities.*

Given a general lack of financial and human resources in South Sudan and reliance on NGOs and outside actors to provide services to populations, the need for communities to take ownership of service provision in their communities is crucial. The high incidence of insecurity, as well as natural disasters such as flooding, mean that local communities will become isolated and not receive any outside assistance at times of crises. Communities need tools to ensure resilience and to continue to function by themselves. This is especially relevant in the field of education, because state education provision is very centralized and generally weak at the local level.

The Speak Up program worked well to build capacity from the ground up by providing trainings and work experience to a variety of local stakeholders such as ROLE Center staff, government teachers, local ministries of education and local community organizations. Findings related to this capacity building are explained below.
• **Capacity building for ROLE centers**

Local staff capacity was built through training, inclusive decision making and direct implementation of activities. ROLE Center staff in Lakes State reported that they gained skills because the project was so challenging to implement. They were able to confront problems, develop solutions specific to the context and work to correct problems. They also reported being happy to have a voice in program development of activities. All respondents reported that they felt part of the decision-making processes. David Arima, the Project Officer in Rumbek, felt that he grew professionally from leading trainings of other ROLE Centre staff who were sometimes his peers. They prepared the training themselves and delivery methods and this pushed them to learn, study and improve. ROLE staff in Yambio reported an overwhelmingly positive experience with the program. They enjoyed working under the leadership of their Director, Toroyo Baptist, and feel that they are now more capable of running other AET education programs.

Additionally, AET placed a UK-based Programme Coordinator in South Sudan for 6 months to enhance the provision of service delivery, training and overall quality control. The practice of combining provision of training with monitoring visits is a good practice that should be continued in future programming.

> “I gained a lot from this experience personally… working with the community… going into the field… talking with my people… being friends with the people in the field.”
> Project Officer, Yambio, WES

• **Capacity building and support for teachers**

Teachers received pre-training and in-service training as well as being monitored throughout the project by outreach workers who would coach them and help them prepare for lessons. Although teachers received short training courses, all respondents said they would like even more training in teaching methods and that they wished the sessions had been longer. A large percentage of teachers in South Sudan are untrained and learn by doing and practicing. So even with training on the Speak Up curriculum, many teachers are not familiar with basic pedagogical practices such as lesson planning.

One of the most common experiences mentioned by teachers was that they improved their English skills during the course, which helps them in their roles as government teachers. During a focus group discussion in Lakes State, teachers said that they had
previously been shy about their English and nervous when supervised. However, through practicing for and facilitating Speak Up lessons, they became more comfortable speaking English, especially because their pronunciation improved. Teachers stated that they enjoyed hearing the simple and fluid pronunciation of the recordings, which helped them to model for their students. They were provided with dictionaries so they could look up unknown words before lessons and be confident in their knowledge beforehand. Additionally, teachers in Yambio stated that they learned a lot from the content of the radio programs, such as relevant information on how to protect their families from diseases and advise their neighbors on starting small businesses. In this way, the teachers benefited in a similar fashion to the direct learners.

- **Capacity building of local Ministries of Education (MOE)**

In Rumbek, ministry school inspectors were hired as outreach workers and trained in data collection. One Inspector reported that he learned how to do proper data collection through employment and training for Speak Up. He says that now he is appreciated in the ministry because he now knows how to collect data and advocates for the importance of data collection. Before working for Speak Up, he was a county inspector. Now he is a Deputy Director of the local Ministry of Education because of his skills gained from AET.

In Yambio, one of the outreach workers was also a school inspector, but this was not the norm. Outreach officers in WES were very pleased with the program and hope to engage further with AET. One raved about the trainings he undertook and appreciated the opportunities to debrief with and learn from other outreach officers throughout the project life cycle.

Beyond hiring ministry staff, AET/ROLE offered training to local and state MOE officials on school management, inspection and classroom observation to give technical support to teachers. Two MOE staff interviewed in Lakes State admitted that their positions were political appointments and that they had no background in education. They reported that before working with Speak Up they did not understand why or how to monitor teachers, but now they can apply their new knowledge.

- **Partnership building of local organizations**

This activity began at the beginning of the Speak Up implementation when AET forged partnerships between the organizations or groups hosting the lessons. The hosting of lessons by the New Sudan Federation in Lakes and Jonglei and the YWCA and Lutheran Center for the Disabled in WES are good examples of this collaboration with
local organizations. AET also reports that additional funding will be utilized in April 2014 to host sessions to share lessons learned with other partners in order to plan for future programs and identify ways to involve even more local organizations. This collaboration and the collection of feedback from partners will help inform follow up projects.

The implementation of capacity building of local organizations was difficult to assess for consultants. The Speak Up Year 2 narrative reports that 22 local organizations received training to deliver Speak Up, increasing their capacity to deliver better quality education programs. However, ROLE staff were not able to give exact information on trainings or their content and how they engaged with local organizations. It was reported that PTAs were trained in Yambio and Rumbek but that this was part another AET project. (However, this is a positive way to leverage multiple projects and is encouraged for future iterations of Speak Up.) It is noted that PTA members in each community were invited to take part in Speak Up and there were a few School Mothers that were highly involved.

**Outcome 4:**
Young journalists equipped with skills to produce good quality relevant radio programs suited to needs of local communities.

**Outcome 5:**
South Sudan’s media strengthened and better able to take advantage of more liberal legal environment to deliver independent, well-informed radio journalism.

The media sector in South Sudan is extremely immature, lacking the proper capacity and laws to support an independent crucial information-sharing sector. Although radio is the most subscribed to form of media in the country, most journalists and radio stations lack even the basic skills of journalism and broadcasting. Because of the availability of radio frequencies for broadcasting in South Sudan, this medium is extremely important to develop and disseminate critical and relevant information to a wide audience.

Many programs that are broadcast are produced outside of South Sudan and are often irrelevant to the average South Sudanese, especially those living in rural areas. Therefore, there is a strong need for locally-produced programs that can be used as national identity-building and English language learning tools that can inform listeners and assist in developing crucial language skills to connect people and improve livelihoods.

Although the training of journalists is definitely a positive step in the right direction, at this point a more liberal and legal media environment is not yet a reality. (The Media Bill that was to liberalize journalists and reduce censorship was supposed to have been passed in 2013 but with a resurgence of violence and political upheaval, it is unlikely
that this will come to fruition anytime soon.) With the current weak job market and widespread poverty and insecurity, it is not guaranteed that a trained person will stay in the media sector because of the lack of paid job opportunities (especially outside of the capital) and the threats that are often made against these individuals because of censorship.

Free Voice implemented the activities related to the training of journalists to produce radio-based English lessons. They recruited at least one young person in each state to train as a local journalist to investigate, report and assist in broadcasting English interviews related to chosen relevant topics. The trainings were high quality, well-structured and collaborative. One question that arose during the evaluation was why there were not two or more journalists trained from each state, to expand the impact and provide a platform for peer collaboration during the journalistic work.

Trained journalists developed 50 programs that covered a wide range of topics that were both educational and entertaining. Topics were chosen by the journalists in the field based on what communities wanted to learn about and what information was relevant to the population. Programs were mixed to cater to local communities, as well as introduce topics from all over South Sudan.

Beneficiaries were extremely enthusiastic about what they learned and noted their favorite programs to be those about the history of South Sudan or about topics that would help them in everyday life. Several women interviewed spoke positively about programs on cooking, farming and malaria because they could use this knowledge to improve their family life. Young men were excited about a program on small business. One soldier interviewed mentioned that he learned about the importance of drinking clean water, which he shared with his colleagues during patrols. No respondents reported anything negative about the content of the information, except that they wanted more of it.

According to a consultation with the manager of Yambio FM in WES, Speak Up did not have much to do with building the capacity of local radio stations. The station was simply contracted by AET through a Memorandum of Understanding to play the lessons at a certain time (in Year 2 only, before the switch was made to Freeplay radios with MP3 audio files on SD cards). However, the radio stations appreciated their involvement with a radio-based learning project, and would be happy to participate again in the future. The station benefited by having the WES trained journalist return as a freelance volunteer journalist who now produces a weekly economic and business program.

Due to the delays and timing, the evaluators were only able to capture the feedback of one of the trained journalists, Angelo, from WES during the evaluation. Angelo has an extremely positive experience being trained by Free Voice and working with the project.
to produce the lessons. He was not a journalist previously. But, as a smart and driven young man, Angelo was accepted on the program and trained to identify issues in his community, select topics, conduct interviews, investigate, write reports and practice technical skills such as recording and broadcasting.

As the only journalist covering WES, twenty-six year old Angelo was often challenged by the heavy workload and meeting deadlines but reported that the opportunity was life-changing for him and his community. The exposure to different sorts of people in his community, government officials, NGOs, and other journalists was influential. Angelo has now taken a full-time and well-paid job at Red Cross South Sudan in Yambio, but still does work as a journalist. He records an economic and business program on Yambio FM twice weekly for no pay.

Angelo reports that this benefits the radio station, journalists, and listeners. He does it because he enjoys staying engaged as a journalist, practicing his skills and would like to give back to his community. When there is a future opportunity to take a paid job as a journalist, he would like to continue pursuing this passion. Based on the above, at least one important agent of change was trained in a community and continues to have a voice as a journalist because of Speak Up’s programming.

In addressing the AET Learning Question 7, *Is a radio literacy project an effective way to strengthen South Sudan’s media?* evaluators consulted officials in the WES local MOE and state Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. These officials are very enthusiastic in receiving radio-based educational programs in their communities. They recognize that radio is often much more accessible than other learning opportunities and can reach a wider audience.

The Director General of Information and Broadcasting in Yambio remarked that people appreciated the Speak Up broadcasts and came to him asking why they were discontinued after a year. He also said that journalists need training on how to write news and broadcast reports, so the Speak Up method integrates this with education. Although Speak Up’s effect on the media sector in South Sudan was extremely limited, the creative integrated approach of strengthening relevant information sharing in communities through training and English language learning is unique and highly appropriate for South Sudan.

“One person as a teacher cannot be everywhere to educate, so more people can be reached by radio. The media [in South Sudan] have problems saying the real truth about what is going on but local journalists can ask communities what is relevant to them and then speak on these topics.”  Director General, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, WES
Findings: Service Delivery

- Co-ordination and implementation of project by AET

The structure of the project capitalized on the key strengths of each involved organization: AET in curriculum development and education knowledge, Free Voice on media and ROLE on community engagement. In Lakes state, many NGOs have a difficult time operating because of government regulations. However, the relationship of the ROLE center with the community contributed to project support and ownership from the community and local government. In Yambio, AET was seen as synonymous with the ROLE center and is well respected in the community because of the influential director and their ability to provide quality education trainings.

The changes made to program implementation also greatly enhanced the learning experience between Year 1 and Year 2. In both Lakes State and WES, the switch from one year to six months had mixed reviews. ROLE center staff unanimously preferred that the courses were condensed to six months because they felt that it reduced drop-out rates because of boredom, a need to find work or seasonal migration to cattle camps. Additionally having the classes twice per week helped learning retention as well.

However, students and tutors in Rumbek preferred the year-long course. Students said that it was easier to find time to go only once a week so that they could look for work and do chores at home. Teachers said that the syllabus was too big to cover only in six months and they could not cover all lessons if any were cancelled. Tutors and students complained that the six-month period did not allow time to revise. That said, tutors also said they preferred the year-long course because they were paid for longer, which is a personal bias unrelated to the quality of education given in the period of time.

In Yambio, teachers and learners preferred the twice-weekly class because they enjoyed going more often, forgot less of the material between classes, and worked towards their certificate on a more condensed timetable. Furthermore, learners requested that any future program should have classes even more often, such as three days in one week. Even considering the opinions of teachers and students in Rumbek, it seems that in terms of learning outcomes and service delivery, the six-month program was more efficient and productive.

All respondents in Rumbek and Yambio reported that the switch from radio to MP3 greatly improved the learning experience. It was often said that in Year 1, classes experienced many delays because the radio stations were not playing the lesson on time or that rain and bad weather interrupted broadcasts. Often the wrong lesson was played or forgotten altogether.
With MP3 lessons, teachers could play the lessons on Freeplay radios at their discretion, so that classes could be made up if they were cancelled due to insecurity or rain. They also enjoyed the ability to rewind during lessons or replay them again for further practice. The ability to take radios home and replay lessons also let teachers practice on their own or play lessons for friends and families living nearby.

The only negative aspect of the switch from radio to MP3 seemed to be that the lessons were not reaching as many people, which reduced the number of indirect learners. There was still evidence of indirect learners, but this was only in the hands of the teachers and relied on their motivation to help their community.

- Monitoring of activities (data collection, tools, analysis)

Outreach officers in charge of certain centers in their area primarily did the monitoring of activities through the gathering of data. Teachers were asked to collect basic information on learners, in addition to attendance, and outreach officers were responsible for this collection and supervisory visits. Outreach workers expressed that teacher absenteeism was an issue so they conducted surprise visits to ensure the attendance of teachers. Outreach workers monitored teachers teaching performance as well to ensure quality in the classroom. When weaknesses were identified, ROLE staff would work individually with teachers to build their skills.

These methods seemed to well and efficiently to connect the field to the state headquarters. In each ROLE center, someone was assigned to data entry and the project officer conducted quality assurance and basic analysis. Overall, the monitoring of education activities at the local and state levels seemed logical and accurate.

Certain indicators were difficult to monitor and were evaluated based on conversations and interviews with staff. For example, All partners and partner organisations show increased capacity or Local radio stations strengthened by broadcasting independent radio programmes on English language. These indicators were reportedly measured through qualitative interviews with staff, PTAs, journalists and community groups. There was not baseline data collected to understand the capacity of these populations to compare to at the end of the project. Increased capacity is difficult to measure without clear ideas of the capacity of beneficiaries before the project and after the project ends. For future projects, it would be beneficial to AET to develop baseline and endline tools to monitor each individual activity or to design indicators that are more tangible to measure.
Learners with their certificates of completion in Yambio County, WES, February 2014.

**Findings: Significant Achievements**

According to monitoring data, 13,231 students enrolled in Speak Up during the two years, with 60% completing the course.

There were several target groups that benefitted the most from the Speak Up program. One of the groups that seemed to have benefitted the most were those who had dropped out of primary school. As the level of English in the lessons was sometimes quite high, students needed some understanding of English to follow the broadcasts and excel in the course.

In Focus Group Discussions many learners answered that they had attended school until at least Primary 5 in their mother tongue and English. There was a great difference between the levels of English of drop-outs (who could freely express themselves, understand questions without translation and answer correctly) and those who had never attended school and needed translation during FGDs or refused to answer. Those who learned the most from the course seemed to be those who had some basic level of English prior to enrolling.
Those who had dropped out also reported more use of English since they had finished the program. They reported that they would now read the newspaper, listen to the radio, and have discussions with friends or neighbors. Those interviewed who had never attended school reported that they hadn’t used their new knowledge yet.

Another target group that benefitted was women who had never attended school. Overall, 5,249 women were enrolled in the two intakes, with 84% of those taking the final exams passing.

Although in FGDs and interviews they sometimes needed translation or had trouble expressing themselves, all the women who attended the courses in Lakes and WES were enthusiastic about the opportunity and expressed a desire to continue to learn English or enroll in formal education. They highlighted that, while they had not yet achieved fluency in English, they were able to interact with more people at the market, help their children with homework, listen to the radio or watch TV, and speak with neighbors who they had not been able to communicate with before. Interviewees enjoyed the chance to practice their English with a foreigner during consultations, and cited this as another way their new skills have helped them advance in communication.

Women enjoyed the flexibility of the course. They had time to fulfill their duties at home and watch their children, and still learn once a week without having any homework. Additionally, because it was only two or four hours a week it did not make their husbands concerned that they were staying away from the house too long. Some women who had been pregnant or lactating at the time expressed that they were happy to be accepted at Speak Up because they had not been allowed into formal schools. Another woman was attending with her 26-year-old son. She said she felt comfortable to go with him because he would walk her there and she was not worried about getting harassed along the way.

As all over South Sudan, the Speak Up program struggled to employ female teachers. In Lakes state, no female teachers were hired. Project staff in Rumbek said that although they pushed to find female teachers, it was not possible because of cultural factors in the primarily Dinka state.

In terms of indirect beneficiaries, AET counted 22,848 people who listened to broadcasts during the first year the course was played on the radio. However, once the switch to Mp3s was made and radio stations stopped playing the program, indirect beneficiaries were drastically reduced. Teachers talked about taking their radios home
to play lessons for their friends and families, but consultants found it difficult to find indirect beneficiaries to speak with.

In Lakes state, one woman was found and interviewed as an indirect learner. She said that she benefitted from the project because her neighbor was a tutor. He would take his radio home at night and she would go and listen to the broadcasts. She had her husband’s permission, but she said this caused the neighbors to talk about why she was spending so much time at his house.

**Contribution to the AES system in South Sudan**

According to AES (Alternative Education System) government officials in Lakes state, AES aims to bring education to those in South Sudan who do not fit into the formal education system. The model of Speak Up strives to engage people of all ages who are not enrolled in primary education. Ministry of Education (MOE) officials said that Speak Up takes education deep into the villages and finds those who missed their chance for education.

MOE officials reported that they appreciated the program because it achieved the aims that they were striving for, but they did not have the capacity to design this curriculum on their own. Officials were also familiar with other Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) programs in South Sudan and said they appreciated that Speak Up was more interactive than other programs such as the SIRI (Southern Sudan Interactive Radio Instruction) projected implemented by EDC (Education Development Center). They also appreciated the fact that Speak Up targeted out-of-school learners, not only primary school students, as other programs do.

Although all people interviewed were very enthusiastic about the continuation of Speak Up in their community, it does not seem possible that the project will continue without funding. Most teachers interviewed stated that they would not teach for free because they are already rarely paid by the government for their jobs in government schools. Without the AET salary, they would have to seek another form of employment in order to take care of their families. MoE officials in Lakes state really wanted the project to continue, but said that the MoE would not be able to take over the project because they do not have funding to pay the teachers.

AET Learning Question 2 was *How effective is a combined radio literacy and direct learning approach for literacy learning?* Speak Up was understood to be primarily an English language learning course rather than an all-round literacy course, which was the general feedback from the research. Considering the combined radio and direct
learning mode of the program, Speak Up was very effective in teaching English language listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

The radio aspect allowed for accurate pronunciation and fluency to be modelled, and the direct learning approach provided students with a deconstruction of the language and explanation of the content for comprehension. Language skills are cultivated through both fluency and comprehension, so the combined effect worked well to develop these skills. Because the language modelling was done through engaging and relevant interviews, the approach accomplished an added bonus of providing important information sharing. In other words, the approach made English a means as well as an end for the learner.

**Recommendations**

- **Adaptation of content beyond the four states**

Students appreciated hearing about their cultures, but took great interest in learning about the other places in South Sudan. Because an array of cultures was covered (pastoralist, agricultural, urban, rural, Nilotic, Equatorian), the material was relevant to all other states of South Sudan. However, in light of the recent ethnic violence that began on 15 December 2013, the recordings should be reviewed, primarily for CES, Unity, Upper Nile and Jonglei states.

Many respondents cited the importance of reaching populations returning from Sudan who had previously been learning in Arabic and now needed to adapt to speaking English in South Sudan. This is especially important for these people to access income-generating activities and formal employment. Currently, most young people who speak English in South Sudan were educated in refugee camps in Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda. Those who did not leave Sudan during the Second Civil War (1983-2005) rely only on Arabic and local languages. These people have a difficult time finding jobs because of their lack of English and often resent those who left as refugees because they take all the jobs. Speak Up materials could be edited to become Arabic to English learning materials for new residents of Northern states in South Sudan or returnees who have much lower English literacy.

- **Additional recommendations for content**

Overall the feedback on the content was very positive, and listeners found the topics engaging and relevant to their lives. To make the lessons more cohesive, however, teachers and learners recommended that lesson topics related to one another. For
example, instead of having one lesson contain a topic on HIV, small business, and Nelson Mandela, that lesson could focus on just health topics or just current events. Because many of the listeners are new to the language, this would help them to develop related vocabulary and streamline comprehension development.

Learners gave specific feedback on lessons and topics that they would like to see included in future iterations of the program. Among those that were particularly relevant were lessons on how to write a job application, letter writing, and information on how to conduct a job search.

- *Future target groups*

Future projects could continue to target the abovementioned groups, such as drop-outs and women, while also including new groups such as returnees and disabled students. Returnees, who were in secondary school in Sudan and then returned to South Sudan after independence are often forced to go back to primary school because of language problems. This is hard for their confidence and identity. The Speak Up program, paired with formal education, can accelerate their learning. In WES, many mentioned that the program could reach out to refugees and IDPs who are often marginalized from the community. People who are now internally displaced due to the most recent violence in South Sudan would be another group to target, because they are far from their homes or have no access to formal education due to security concerns. The majority of the school aged population of the 80,000 plus people displaced during the fighting in December, 2013 have had their educations interrupted during this emergency period. However, in the near future, educational programs targeting these children and youth will need to begin. As a large number of these IDPs are currently living in UN bases around the country and cannot leave go outside for fear of ethnic violence, creative solutions like radio programming will need to be used to reach these learners.

Physically disabled students or those who have problems with mobility could benefit from the fact that this course only took place one or twice a week, not on an everyday basis, which may be a factor that would cause them to stay out of school. Teachers were trained to encourage all learners and not marginalize disabled students. One Speak Up learning center in Yambio was at a school for the disabled, and the achievements were remarkable as well as the improvement in the level of confidence among the learners.
• **Service delivery**

As explained in the findings sections, many students and teachers expressed the positive desire for more content, more often. This is great feedback to hear and reflects the positive effects of the Speak Up program. In Yambio, a majority of respondents asked for the program to be separated into levels such as beginner, intermediate and advanced so that students could progress through these as if they were in school. Many hoped for a second or follow-on course. Any future iterations of Speak Up can consider the benefits of having multiple levels that would cater for the varying levels of targeted students and offer a trajectory for them to move through and improve their learning.

• **Continuation of broadcastings**

Even without teacher facilitation, workbooks and the classroom setting, the content of the broadcasts is extremely relevant to a wide audience. One option for recycling the broadcasts and expanding the secondary benefits of Speak Up is to continue to air the program over the local radio stations in South Sudan, even without the accompanying lessons. This may require additional advocacy and certain incentives, but could be accomplished through interested State Ministries of Information and Broadcasting and private-public partnerships with local radio stations. As a regular 30-minute informational and educational program, Speak Up could reach a wide audience similar to those secondary listeners in Year 1.

• **Teacher Training**

Based on the feedback of teachers in Lakes State and WES, there was a desire for longer training sessions and more training on teaching methods. Repetition and practice is key to delivering capacity-building trainings in South Sudan. Regular check-ins and debriefs between outreach officers and tutors is a positive mentoring model and should be used in tandem with regular trainings.

• **Involvement of local education officials**

In certain states, Speak Up did an excellent job of involving education officials in capacity building and implementation. This involvement could be strengthened and deepened in other areas, especially at the county level. For example, in Yambio, one AES inspector knew that Speak Up was happening in his areas, but knew no further details of the program. The county AES director in Yambio also did not understand the objectives of the program and requested seeing the materials that were being used.
This points to a need for greater sensitization of state and county education officials. One way to entrench a feeling of local ownership in the project is to involve them from the beginning by sharing materials, introducing the methodology and gaining their support and feedback. This will help educate local officials (beyond state ministry officials) in non-formal education methodologies as well as increase their likelihood of adopting aspects of the program in the future.

- **Labelling the program**

The majority of those consulted during the evaluation talked about Speak Up as an English language learning program, rather than a literacy training program. Considering the broad benefits of Speak Up and where teachers and students felt that they improved the most, this project seems to be a language learning program that cultivates skills in listening to, speaking, reading and writing English. Based on these findings, it is recommended that Speak Up categorize itself as such, and that future iterations of the project be more overt in English learning objectives.

- **Infusing local ownership**

One common criticism of many development projects in South Sudan is the failure to impart local ownership, which can help communities take initiative in their future improvement. Speak Up did a good job of involving local leaders, many of whom seemed to be champions of education. There is always room for improvement, however, in involving local community groups or individuals who may or may not be direct learners.

Given that AET has simultaneous projects promoting education, there may be overlaps and entry points for leveraging common resources. For example, School Mothers can be dually involved in projects and help recruit female learners. Parent-teacher associations (PTAs) or School Management Committees (SMCs) that are involved in the schools that often host the Speak Up centers could be given information on the project. While PTAs are the most commonly engaged groups, often secondary schools will have formed SMCs whose members can be invited for involvement. These groups could be tasked with identifying ways to adapt, recycle and use resources and learning for the period after funding has ended. For example, PTAs could host a refresher group that meets twice a month with learners who have passed the Speak Up course to practice English conversation by listening to a broadcast or reading an English newspaper.
• Sharing lessons learned

Education stakeholders in South Sudan can benefit from hearing about the methodology and lessons learned during the Speak Up program. The project’s approach, incorporating the media and education sectors to produce relevant radio-based English language learning materials, is unique and creative. Disseminating and sharing materials, especially the workbooks and recordings, with other educational stakeholders such as implementers and donors, will increase the likelihood of related programming continuation. Collaborating with others who are funding or implementing alternative education projects is one way to use the existing materials. One actionable way to share the Speak Up experience is to hold a roundtable discussion or workshop in Juba and invite NGOs and donors working with formal and non-formal education to attend.
## Appendix A

### List of Informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lakes</td>
<td>ROLE Manager</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lakes</td>
<td>Lake State Ministry of Education, Alternative Education Services</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>MOE AES Director MOE AES school inspector</td>
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<td>Lakes</td>
<td>Indirect beneficiary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 female</td>
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<td>ROLE Project Officer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Lakes</td>
<td>ROLE Outreach worker</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakes</td>
<td>Learner FGD</td>
<td>1 FGD / 6 participants</td>
<td>3 male, 3 female</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lakes</td>
<td>Learner</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Individual interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakes</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Individual interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakes</td>
<td>Teacher FGD</td>
<td>1 FGD / 4 participants</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>CES</td>
<td>ROLE Manager</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WES</td>
<td>DG Ministry of Information</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>WES</td>
<td>DG Ministry of Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<td>WES</td>
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<td>County Education Director &amp; Inspector</td>
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<td>WES</td>
<td>ROLE Outreach Officer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yambio (3); Nzara (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WES</td>
<td>ROLE Speak Up Project Officer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>WES</td>
<td>ROLE Director</td>
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<td>WES</td>
<td>Yambio Radio Station</td>
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<td>Yambio FM Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>WES</td>
<td>Speak Up journalist</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WES</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Individual interviews – Yambio (3); Nzara (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WES</td>
<td>Learner</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Individual interviews – Yambio (1) disabled; Nzara (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WES</td>
<td>Learner FGDs</td>
<td>4 FGDs / 29 participants</td>
<td>Yambio – 1 all-female; 1 all-male; 2 mixed gender</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Sample interview facilitation tool:  *Individual interview with Learner*

First name: 
Age: 
Gender: 
Occupation: 
Education 
Experience:

1. What was your level of English before the training?
2. Why did you enroll in this training?
3. Why were you not enrolled in school previous to this?
4. What had you hoped to learn? Were your expectations met?
5. What did you think of the level of the training? Was it ever too easy/difficult?
6. Did you find the lesson subjects interesting? Why? What were the best ones?
7. What have you done since the training?
8. How are you using your new skills in literacy and English?
9. Has this training helped you earn money or find a job?
10. Why will speaking English and being able to read and write help you find a job or earn money?
11. Do you feel like you are more aware of political issues in South Sudan?
12. Did you learn about different cultures in your country? What did you learn?
13. Do you think this will help you understand people that are different to you?
14. Do you feel comfortable to speak up about different things? (i.e. politics, women’s rights, etc.)
15. Did you talk to anyone about what you learned? (family, friends, etc.)
16. Why were you able to complete the program rather than dropping out?
17. Where the workbooks easy to understand? Did you find the subjects suited to your life?
18. What were some of the challenges in the course?
19. What did you like most about the course?
20. What was more important? Learning to read or learning to speak English?
21. Do you have any additional feedback on your experience with Speak Up?
Appendix C

AET Learning Questions

1. What is the impact of basic literacy skills on young people in South Sudan in relation to livelihoods – especially access to finances and employment?

2. How effective is a combined radio literacy and direct learning approach for literacy learning?

3. Are inter-community radio discussions a useful tool to promote peace between communities in areas affected by conflict?

4. Is radio literacy learning through cross-cutting issues an effective approach? Does it lead to greater understanding of issues and rights?

5. Is radio literacy learning through cross-cutting issues and intra community interviews an effective way to deal with post conflict trauma and other issues?

6. How appropriate is a radio literacy approach effective in engaging women and girls in literacy learning?

7. Is a radio literacy project an effective way to strengthen South Sudan’s media?

8. Are the information needs of the community served by this literacy program?