TETRA TECH
International Development

Independent Evaluation of the Girls' Education Challenge Phase II –
Evaluation Study 5: Education for Marginalised Adolescent Girls Beyond Formal Schooling

Annexes

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Partners:

- Research and Equitable Access and Learning (REAL) Centre at the University of Cambridge
- Fab Inc.

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This document has been approved for submission by Tetra Tech International Development Project Director, based on a review of satisfactory adherence to our policies on:

- Quality management;
- HSSE and risk management;
- Financial management and Value for Money (VfM);
- Personnel recruitment and management;
- Performance Management and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

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List of Acronyms

ALP	Accelerated Learning Programme
ASER	Annual Status of Education Report
CLC	Community Learning Centre
DCP	Data collection partner
DHS	Demographic and Health Surveys
EE	External Evaluation
EfL	Education for Life
EGMA	Early Grade Mathematics Assessment
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FM	Fund Manager
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
IAG	Independent Advisory Group
IDI	In depth interview
IE	Independent Evaluation
IP	Implementing Partner
KII	Key Informant Interview
L&N	Literacy and Numeracy
LNGB	Leave No Girl Behind
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
QC	Quality Control
REAL	Research and Equitable Access and Learning Centre
RQ	Research Question
RRLF	Rapid Research and Learning Fund
SPA	Senior Portfolio Adviser
ToR	Terms of Reference

UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

List of Projects

Project Name	Acronym used in report	Country
Accelerating Life Skills Literacy and Numeracy of Out of School Adolescent Girls	Aarambha	Nepal
Adolescent Girls' Education in Somalia	AGES	Somalia
Biruh Tesfa for All	BtA	Ethiopia
Closing the Gap	Closing the Gap	Pakistan
Education for All	EfL	Kenya
Empowering a New Generation of Adolescent Girls with Education	ENGAGE	Nepal
Every Adolescent Girl Empowered and Resilient	EAGER	Sierra Leone
Improving Access to Education in Ethiopia for Most Marginalised Girls	CHANGE	Ethiopia
Marginalised no More	MnM	Nepal
Steps Towards Afghan Girls' Education Success	STAGES LNGB +	Afghanistan
Strategic Approaches to Girls' Education	STAGE	Ghana
Supporting Adolescent Girls' Education	SAGE	Zimbabwe
Teach and Educate Adolescent Girls with Community Help	TEACH	Pakistan
Transformative Empowerment of Adolescent Marginalised Girls	TEAM Girl	Malawi

Annex A: Terms of Reference (ToRs)

1. Background and Purpose

1. The Girls' Education Challenge Phase II (GEC II), launched in 2017, is operating through two windows – (1) Girls' Education Challenge-Transition (GEC-T) and; (2) Leave No Girl Behind (LNGB) – with a commitment to support marginalised girls' learning in 41 projects across 17 countries.

2. Within the GEC II, some Implementing Partners (IPs) deliver *education pathways for marginalised girls beyond formal schooling*, which is an umbrella term to encompass educational programmes intended to reach children and adolescents who have been unable to access formal schooling, or for whom formal education pathways no longer meet their specific needs. These programmes may include children and adolescents who have either never been enrolled in formal education or have discontinued formal education, due to various factors.

3. Education pathways for marginalised girls beyond formal schooling was identified in early conversations with a range of GEC II stakeholders as an important thematic focus for one of the evaluation studies being conducted by the Independent Evaluation Team.[5] This study is part of the ongoing Independent Evaluation (IE) of the GEC II, commissioned by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) in 2020.

4. For the purpose of this study, education pathways for marginalised girls beyond formal schooling are classified in alignment with the terminology used by the Fund Manager (FM) to include *accelerated education programmes*, *catch-up programmes*, *alternative education programmes* and *community-based education*.

Box 1: Classifications of education pathways beyond formal schooling

Pathway	Definition
Accelerated education programme (AEPs)	AEPs cater to girls who have either never been in the formal education system or have dropped out. Typically, the curriculum is aligned with the formal school curriculum or a government AEP, and they are usually intended to transition girls back into the formal education system.
Catch-up programmes	These are shorter than an accelerated education programme (e.g., less than 12 months) and intended to transition girls back into the formal education system.
Alternative education programmes	These usually target older girls (e.g., 15-19) who may not be able to or may not want to re-enrol in secondary school. These programmes provide basic literacy and numeracy skills along with life skills (e.g., financial literacy or sexual & reproductive health knowledge). The transition pathways from these programmes include Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), self-employment/ other employment, or continued daily life with improved skills.
Community-based education (CBE)	These programmes target learners who do not have/ cannot practically access government schools. The curriculum typically follows the government curriculum (though is autonomous from the formal education system).

Note: Please see this FM learning brief (2019) for more information.

5. Discussions with the FCDO and the FM Senior Portfolio Advisors (SPAs) have highlighted the importance of focusing on projects within the LNGB Window of the GEC II for this study. In total there are 14 LNGB projects. These span across 10 countries (Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nepal, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Zimbabwe). All 14 LNGB projects have at least one education pathway which looks beyond formal schooling. The benefits of focusing on LNGB include: (a) nearly all their beneficiaries are out-of-school; (b) these projects were designed to specifically reach 'the most' marginalised adolescent girls (aged 10-19)

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[5] There are a total of five studies as part of the Independent Evaluation that have been completed or currently underway. The two have that have been completed are Access and Learning and Teachers and Teaching. The three that are underway include GEC-T learning impact assessments, Disability, and this study.

through education pathways beyond formal schooling; and (c) there has been very limited analysis of LNGB projects to date.[6]

6. For the purpose of this study, the definitions of 'the most' marginalised will be based on the categories defined and adopted by individual LNGB projects, which we will map. Adolescence as defined by LNGB primarily includes girls aged between 10-19 years. To the extent possible, the study will explore differences for younger and older adolescent girls. This was highlighted as important in discussions with the FCDO.

7. The overall objective and research questions for the study have been framed in light of the high-level Evaluation Questions set out in the overarching Terms of Reference (ToR) of the IE. Specifically, this study seeks to explore the perspectives, agency and choices of younger and older adolescent girls, to understand how LNGB education pathways beyond formal schooling have met their needs.

8. This objective will be addressed through the following research questions (RQs), each of which will pay particular attention to perceptions of adolescent girls about their agency and choices in the design and implementation of the programme:

   a. How do different LNGB pathways mitigate barriers that the most marginalised adolescent girls face in education?

   b. In what ways have LNGB pathways enhanced the most marginalised adolescent girls' agency and choice in education and beyond?

   c. To what extent, and how, have LNGB pathways influenced the most marginalised adolescent girls' learning and/or transition to formal schooling and/or work opportunities?

9. Central to the study is engagement with the adolescent girls to gather their views about their agency and choices in what projects have offered them and how they have mitigated barriers they face, as well as their perceived changes in choices and agency in terms of transitions to formal schooling/work opportunities after being engaged with these projects. While the perspectives of adolescent girls will be at the forefront of the study, these will be complemented with educator, community and government perspectives to understand how these have affected girls' agency and choices.

10. As most of the LNGB projects offer two types of education pathways beyond formal schooling[7], this study may provide the opportunity to compare pathways within a particular context.[8] This will be detailed in the research design phase.

11. This study will also include two cross-cutting themes throughout the design, analysis, and reporting:

    a. **Political Economy Analysis (PEA)**: This analysis will explore the following question: how have the political, economic, and socio-cultural environment and other wider structural factors influenced how LNGB education pathways beyond formal schooling have been able to support marginalised girls' learning and future opportunities?

    b. **Gender & Social Inclusion (GESI)**: This study will integrate a GESI lens throughout, with girls as the primary focus of this study. Initial conversations with the FCDO and SPAs have highlighted the importance of centering girls' agency, choices, and voice, which will be incorporated in the design of the primary data collection tools and reporting of findings. This will include, for example, understanding the extent to which girls could make choices based on the pathway offered to them, as well as how their involvement in the programme affects the choices they see for their future.

12. As with other IE studies, the primary stakeholder audiences for this study are the FCDO, including the GEC II Programme Team, FCDO Education Advisors and Regional Education Advisors (REAs); the FM and SPAs,

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[6] Although some GEC-T projects also implement education pathways beyond formal schooling for out-of-school girls, unlike the LNGB portfolio, these programmes are not designed with this specific objective in mind. GEC-T projects, which continued from Phase 1 of the project, focused on girls who were in school. In addition, GEC-T projects have been studied previously (both in previous IE studies and through other analysis). This is because most of the projects continued over from GEC Phase 1 and were, therefore, subject to baseline, midline and endline evaluations. For these reasons, as well as because over the duration of the IE period the team endeavours to include different projects as case studies for in-depth qualitative research in efforts to engage as many IPs as possible, the decision is to focus on LNGB projects for this study.

[7] Within the 12 LNGB projects that offer two education pathways beyond formal schooling, they are typically providing an accelerated education programme in conjunction with another pathway, such as a catch-up programme, alternative education or community-based education.

[8] This will be contingent on whether the design prioritises a comparison of similar education pathways between projects or whether a comparison of different education pathways within the same project. The design note stage will explore which of these approaches best helps answer the research questions. The decision will also be driven by mapping what data is available within the project documentation to determine whether a comparison between different education pathways within the same project is feasible.

and project IPs. The secondary stakeholder audiences include other international donors, agencies, government representatives and other stakeholders investing and working in girls' education more widely.

2. Scope of Work

13. Overall, this study proposes to retain the *evaluation for learning* objective, which has been adopted for previous IE studies, to generate evidence for learning aligned to GEC II stakeholders' learning priorities and wider evidence gaps. This is particularly relevant to LNGB projects, which are highly context-specific and work with extremely vulnerable/ marginalised girls. In addition, they are designed to adopt innovative approaches from which valuable learning can be derived.

14. As agreed by the FCDO and the SPAs, this study will focus on LNGB projects. From the LNGB window, we have identified all 14 LNGB projects implement at least one education pathway beyond formal schooling (with 12 implementing two or more pathways). Thus, the study will focus on these 14 LNGB projects.

15. The evaluation will include both portfolio-wide documentary and quantitative data analysis, where feasible. It will also include qualitative case studies, as discussed further below.

16. While we will endeavour to make full use of the project quantitative data to respond to RQs where appropriate, we have identified (to date) 20 baseline datasets, four midline, and three endline[9] datasets available from the projects' external evaluators via the FM.[10] The team will use the study design phase (see *Work Plan and Expected Deliverables*) to fully scope the availability and usability of these datasets. We will also continue to identify data for the projects for which information is currently not available.[11]

17. We will also scope projects' monitoring data to assess the feasibility of using these, in efforts to complete 'missing' evaluation points from the external evaluators' datasets. This is in recognition that some of the projects' monitoring data might include a wider set of variables of relevance to this study, while acknowledging that the comparability of the data might be more challenging. An example of a variable from the monitoring data which are relevant to this study includes, for example, the monthly incomes of households at different stages of the project.[12] While we recognise that the collation and analysis of data from projects' monitoring data is likely to be time-intensive, it is likely to be beneficial for future analysis by the IE and other partners.

18. Documentary analysis will be undertaken across all 14 of the LNGB projects adopting education pathways beyond formal schooling in response to the RQs. This will include baseline reports, Covid-19 response plans, and monitoring reports. The team will also liaise with the FM and with IPs to access other relevant documentation, recognising that additional documentation may become available as the study progresses.

19. An in-depth qualitative exploration of selected projects will be undertaken. The number of projects included for this in-depth primary research is envisaged to be 3-5, as per the GEC II IE Inception Report, but will be finalised based on the agreed research questions and project selection criteria. This will take into consideration requirements related to adapting research tools to different contexts (language, customs, etc.) and girls' time and budgetary constraints, obtaining research permissions, and associated fieldwork management processes.

20. The IE will seek to ensure complementarity with ongoing and planned work related to LNGB projects by the FM/ FCDO, through ongoing consultations to discuss which lines of inquiry may be duplicating efforts. Further details regarding this will be provided in the Research Design Note. Consideration will also be paid to demands on IP time.

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[9] As the LNGB projects operate on a cohort-by-cohort basis, for the majority of the projects, the next evaluation point following baseline has been identified to be 'endline'. Endlines are for a particular cohort; that is, a particular group of girls receiving a particular set of interventions, and not for the entire beneficiary group within the LNGB project. Only two of the three endlines (PIN Nepal and World Education) have identified that they follow the same cohort of girls. Due to COVID-19 constraints, ACTED was only able to collect baseline of Cohort 1 and endline of Cohort 2. Six projects have also collected midline data, and four midline datasets have been identified to date. Continued engagement with the FM will clarify to what extent the data can be used and for what purpose.
[10] While most LNGB projects adopt a baseline-endling approach, some projects also have a midline. However, the team has received feedback that these are part of an internal process and should therefore not be used. The team is currently clarifying this with the FM.
[11] At least seven additional midline datasets (three cohorts of CARE Somalia, three cohorts of Street Child Nepal, one cohort of Plan Zimbabwe) and three endline datasets (Cohort 2 of PIN Nepal, Cohort 1 of LCD Malawi, and Cohort 1 of IRC Sierra Leone) are expected to become available for this study.
[12] This example is taken from the ACTED LNGB project in Pakistan, for which the team had access to monitoring information.

3. Study Design

3.1. Research Focus

21. Related to the overall objective and research questions noted above, an initial review of the available LNGB project documentation (such as baseline reports, Log frames and projects' Theories of Change (TOCs)), and consultation with the FM, FCDO and SPAs have determined the research questions below. The research questions will pay attention to capturing the perceptions of adolescent girls to understand how the project design and implementation helped (or hindered) them in exercising their voice and agency.

22. As mentioned above (Section 1), 12 of the 14 LNGB projects offer two or more education pathways beyond formal education, which may allow for comparability between types of pathways in response to the research questions.[13]

23. How do different LNGB pathways mitigate barriers that the most marginalised adolescent girls face in education?

    a. This includes understanding *who* the girls are, *how* have they been identified (recognising the potential challenges of identifying out-of-school girls who are the most marginalised) and *which* education pathway the projects' considered most appropriate for the girls.

    b. This will also include consideration of how the LNGB projects address barriers to participation in formal schooling and/ or work opportunities, as well as wider considerations of how they tackle harmful gender and social norms.

    c. This will also explore the extent to which LNGB projects complement existing government strategies and programmes to target the most marginalised girls currently outside of formal education systems or fill gaps where these do not exist.

24. To what extent, and how, have LNGB pathways influenced the most marginalised adolescent girls' learning and/ or transition to formal schooling and/ or work opportunities?

    a. This question will consider the intended purpose[14] of the LNGB projects (such as the expected outcomes) and the types of interventions implemented.

    b. As identified in the project Log frames, learning outcomes typically include literacy, numeracy, and life skills improvements, while transition outcomes include transitions to formal education and/ or vocational training and/ or safe labour opportunities.

25. In what ways have LNGB pathways enhanced the most marginalised adolescent girls' agency and choice in education and beyond?

    a. Consideration will be given to how the LNGB projects have opened up new opportunities for adolescent girls and whether LNGB projects encouraged changes in their perceptions about the types of opportunities available to them.

26. Across these questions, we will consider the implications for girls of different ages, in particular for those in earlier and later adolescent phases.

27. The political economy analysis will provide context for these questions to ensure the findings are considerate of the wider factors that influence the girls, their wider milieu and the LNGB projects.

3.2. Proposed Data Sources

1. As discussed above, the key data sources for this study include project documentation (including girls' empowerment plans and labour market analyses, where available), project quantitative data (both external evaluator data and project monitoring data, to the extent possible), government sources (education sector plans and policy documentation) and primary qualitative data collected by the IE (including key informant interviews with IPs, and in-depth fieldwork in selected contexts).

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[13] This will include consideration of the duration of the programmes, as well as other differences.

[14] It should be noted that the purpose of LNGB projects in some cases may have been multi-faceted, or the objective may have been unclear. As part of the mapping out what is known about each of the different LNGB projects, we will attempt to unpack this information from project documentation.

28. The project documentation will be collected and analysed for all 14 projects, where available. The purpose of this will be to provide a 'portfolio-level' review of the projects' beneficiaries, interventions, expected outcomes and reported findings based on the research questions. Additionally, it will include examining and investigating pertinent contextual factors as identified and reported in project documentation. The portfolio review will also analyse whether there was an evolution around the approach and design of the LNGB projects, and what the reasons behind these changes were. The team may seek to use the preliminary findings of this analysis to inform the design of the primary qualitative research tools. This will enable the team to triangulate findings as reported in project documentation with those that emerge from analysis of the primary qualitative data.

29. The primary qualitative data collection with IPs (through key informant interviews) will aim to take place with as many of the 14 IPs as possible (the final number will be contingent on IPs' agreement to be interviewed). The purpose of these interviews will be to capture further understanding surrounding IPs' choices and changes in the design and implementation of education pathways beyond formal schooling, how they have identified and targeted girls, what they identify as being more or less effective in terms of learning/ transitions and wider lessons learnt.

30. The in-depth qualitative data collection in selected contexts is intended to identify *who* the projects' interventions target/ include/ reach and *why/ how* they were identified; *how well* they are perceived to be working including in relation to transitions to formal schooling and /or work (depending on objectives of the programme)*; why* some of the interventions have been more successful than others in achieving set objectives and in what contexts. The in-depth PEA for these selected projects will include a review of country-specific factors, policies, and literature as well as the collection of primary qualitative data through key informant interviews with a range of stakeholders (including government representatives, implementing partners, community leaders, schools, and girls).

31. *Table 1* summarises the research questions and proposed data sources.

Table 1: Research questions and proposed data sources

Research Questions	Proposed Data Sources
1. How do different LNGB pathways mitigate barriers that the most marginalised adolescent girls face in education?	Project documentation Government policies, education sector plans Project quantitative data In-depth qualitative data (KIIs/ IDIs/ FGDs) in selected contexts
2. To what extent, and how, have LNGB pathways influenced the most marginalised adolescent girls' learning and/ or transition to formal schooling and/or work opportunities?	Project documentation Project quantitative data In-depth qualitative data (KIIs/ IDIs/ FGDs) in selected contexts
3. In what way have LNGB pathways enhanced the most marginalised adolescent girls' agency and choice in education and beyond?	Project documentation Project quantitative data In-depth qualitative data (KIIs/ IDIs/ FGDs) in selected contexts

3.3. Study Design Stages

32. The study design stage will commence following approval of this ToR (July 2022) and culminate in the submission of the Research Design Note (September 2022). The design stage will be iterative and includes the following phases (some of which may occur in parallel):

   a. **Rapid review of external evidence:** This will entail a rapid review of evidence on education pathways beyond formal schooling (as included / defined in this study) to frame and contextualise the study.

    b. **Review of LNGB projects' documentation:** This will involve identifying projects' implemented interventions and intended outcomes and other relevant information to inform the design of the qualitative tools, with a focus on barriers faced by marginalised girls, project design, context, delivery, and sustainability.

    c. **Review of LNGB quantitative data and analytical methods:** This is required to assess the feasibility of using external evaluator data and /or projects' monitoring data, and the types of analyses possible with the available data.

    d. **Contacting all LNGB IPs:** We will request their internal monitoring datasets to support the above review of quantitative data and engage with them from the design of the study to ensure the final research questions align with IPs' learning priorities. We will reach out to all 14 IPs involved in education pathways beyond formal schooling to invite them to participate in key informant interviews in addition to the shortlisted IPs where we will carry out in-depth, extensive primary data collection. Active engagement from the IPs will support the IE team during the fieldwork, including developing and contextualising the research tools, identifying girls/ other key respondents, monitoring on-the-ground realities and situations, as well as promoting the uptake and dissemination of the study.

    e. **Project selection for primary data collection:** We will develop shortlisting criteria in response to the final research questions to identify the selected projects where we will collect in-depth primary data. Shortlisting criteria may include any one or more of the following: availability of quantitative data; representation of geographical countries/ regions; potential sample size of girls, etc. We will consult with the FM colleagues including SPAs and FCDO Regional Education Advisors (REAs) to assess whether there are any particular IPs that could be considered for inclusion/ exclusion in the study. Once the selection criteria and shortlist of projects have been developed, we will share these with the FCDO for their approval of the selected projects, prior to contacting the IPs.

    f. **Finalisation of primary data collection methods:** Based on the rapid review of evidence, review of documentation and final project selection, we will finalise the methods to be used for the primary data collection.

    g. **Development of Research Design Note**: As discussed above, the final deliverable for this phase is the Research Design Note. This will include the development of the research design, any changes from the ToR, the research questions, methods and analysis plan, as well as the upcoming deliverables/ phases of work.

33. The design of the qualitative tools will begin during the study design stage and continue following the submission of the Research Design Note. The final qualitative tools will be submitted to the FCDO for approval in November 2022. This will include the following:

    a. **Initial design of qualitative tools:** We will design the qualitative research tools for each chosen method by IP, stakeholder group and context. While the tools will be individualised, we will endeavour to maintain a level of consistency to support in the analysis stage. The design of the tools will be informed by the review of the project documentation, to triangulate the data/ findings.

    b. **Review of tools by IPs and IE's Southern Academic Partners (SAPs):** We will share the tools with the IPs and the IE's SAPs to receive their feedback – particularly around the framing of questions so that they are contextualised and culturally appropriate. Additionally, IP feedback will be valuable to ensure the tools align with IPs' learning priorities as well.

    c. **Development of ethical forms:** We will develop consent/ assent forms, in line with the GEC IE Ethical Research and Safeguarding Framework, for all respondents participating in in the data collection. Further details about these forms will be included in the Research Design Note.

    d. **Applying for in-country research approvals:** We will begin the process of applying for government research permissions once the countries for fieldwork are selected, including understanding the types of research permissions required. Once the fieldwork tools are approved, we will complete the process of applying for, and obtaining in-country ethical permissions.

3.4.   Fieldwork

34. The fieldwork for primary data collection for this study is expected to take place between January 2023 to April 2023. Timing will be dependent on when learning centres are open and avoidant of key holiday times. This includes both training the data collection partners and the data collection, cleaning, and processing of transcripts. Primary data collection will take place with the support of contracted local data collection partners and managed on a day-to-day basis by the IE's Fieldwork Manager. The study team will remotely supervise and liaise with the Fieldwork Manager/ data collection partners throughout the data collection phase.

35. We anticipate that the following categories of stakeholders will be included for data collection:

    a. **Girls engaged by the projects:** Girls' perspectives will be the primary focus of the study in order to understand the extent to which they view that they have been able to exercise agency and choice in their education pathways and transitions into formal schooling and/ or types of work, including whether and how the programmes have influenced this.

    b. **Educators:** To understand educators' perceptions of the education pathways beyond formal schooling, the support they have received from projects, with a particular focus on understanding the *types* of pedagogies being implemented to support girls in exercising agency and choice (i.e., gender-responsive practices).

    c. **Community members/ leaders:** To understand their perceptions of education pathways beyond formal schooling and in particular community sensitisation activities in supporting girls including in their transitions to school/ work, as well as other context-specific barriers/ enabling factors/ incentives. This could involve discussions through those involved in community structures that are part of the education pathways.

    d. **Government representatives (district-level and national-level) from various sectors:** To understand whether the perceived 'value' has changed (e.g., are these programmes still viewed as 'second-best') by governments, and coherence across sectors involved (e.g., Ministries of Education, Youth, Labour, etc.) in supporting them.

36. To the extent possible, we will collect /disaggregate data and analyses on indicators such as age and other intersectional characteristics (i.e., disability status; socio-economic status; location; orphan status; pregnancy status etc.).

37. All primary data collected will adhere to the GEC IE Ethical Research and Safeguarding Framework (further described in Section 4).

38. Upon completion of the fieldwork, a Fieldwork Report will be submitted to the FCDO (April 2023).

3.5.   Analysis

39. This phase will include the coding and analysis of the primary qualitative data collected, and analysis of the secondary data (quantitative and project documentation), where relevant. The analytical framework used to answer the research questions will be developed in an iterative manner. A preliminary framework will be provided during the research design phase and finalised as the analysis phase commences.

3.6.   Validation of Emerging Findings

40. This stage will include consultations with key stakeholders such as the IPs, the IE's Southern Academic Partners and the ESWG to validate the findings and ensure they are factually correct.

3.7.   Reporting

41. This will include the development of the key outputs of this study, including an emerging findings workshop with the ESWG, a final report, a webinar with the IPs, a policy brief and other possible communication outputs.

4. Research Ethics

42. All activities conducted as part of this study will adhere to the guidelines for ethical research as per the Ethical Research and Safeguarding Framework, which is the overarching ethical framework for the IE.

43. The guidelines in the framework are developed to ensure that all primary research (involving individuals, stakeholders, or other programme stakeholders) is conducted ethically and safely. The study will give precedence to the rights and dignities of its participants in efforts to protect them from harm.

44. The Ethical Research and Safeguarding Framework is fully compliant with the guiding concepts and principles set out in FCDO's Evaluation Policy (2013) and FCDO's Research Ethics Guidance (2019); and the UK Data Protection Act (2018).

45. The research design note will include an ethical research and safeguarding section pertaining specifically to this study. The ethical permissions will be applied for and adhere to the Cambridge Faculty of Education ethics process.

46. The process of obtaining all required government research permissions for primary data collection will commence as soon as the projects are shortlisted, and the countries are selected.

5. Key Limitations, Risk Assessment and Mitigation Plan

Table 2: Key limitations, risk assessment and mitigation plan

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating Action	Impact following mitigation
Risks of attrition/ relocation due to Covid-19/ other disruptions may make it difficult to track and sample girls/ other beneficiaries for primary data collection.	High	High	We will liaise with IPs and the data collection partners to identify an available sample of girls, and oversample the girls early on, as a contingency plan for any risks of ongoing relocation/ attrition till the time of data collection.	Moderate
Obtaining research permissions/ ethical approvals in-country may be delayed.	High	High	We will prioritise project selection early on in the research design phase to begin developing relationships with IPs/ data collection partners and looking into the types of research permissions required for each context. We will also commence developing the fieldwork tools to support in applying for research permissions as early as possible.	Moderate
Primary data collection in fragile or conflict-affected areas may not be feasible, due to the risks to/ reduced safety of LNGB beneficiaries, other stakeholders, and data collection partners.	Moderate	High	We will continue to monitor the LNGB project contexts' FCAS status, through communication with the FCDO and FM, to inform decision making around primary data collection feasibility and safety in those projects.	Moderate
Organisational risks (such as changes in staff in the IE, FM, FCDO; delays in obtaining relevant information etc.) may affect the progress of the study.	High	Moderate	We will use our regular meetings within the IE team and with the FM and FCDO to provide updates as well as keep track of tasks required to meet deliverable deadlines. In the instance of changes in staff, we will ensure there is adequate time for handovers/ transitions.	Low
Limited availability of longitudinal quantitative data, as well as concerns about 'representativeness' of these data (as LNGB endlines include only a certain cohort of girls), may limit opportunities to analyse changes over time and infer generalisable findings.	High	Moderate	We will use the research design phase to scope these data and the extent to which longitudinal analysis is possible with the available data. We will also liaise with IPs for their internal datasets to assess whether it is possible to use both internal and external evaluators' datasets/monitoring data.	Low
Rises in Covid-19 cases may impact face-to-face data collection in the case of restricted	Moderate	High	We will continue to monitor the Covid-19 situation in the selected project contexts, through communication with the FM, IPs, and data collection partners to assess the feasibility of conducting face-to-face data collection. We will	Moderate

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating Action	Impact following mitigation
movement or restrictions on in-person gatherings.			develop a contingency plan in the instance we require pivoting to remote data collection.	
Key stakeholders (i.e., community leaders/ government officials) may not be easily accessible or may refuse to participate in the primary data collection.	Moderate	Moderate	We will work closely with IPs/ SPAs and our Fieldwork Manager to identify a larger sample of stakeholders in case of refusals to participate. We will contact these stakeholders early on to factor in delays in accessing stakeholders.	Low

6. Work Plan and Expected Deliverables

This section describes the work plan, with the time required to meet each deliverable presented in *Figure 1.* The work plan has been designed to incorporate time required for stakeholders to provide their feedback, as well as the subsequent time needed for the IE team to respond to comments and integrate feedback. Additionally, we have accounted for summer holidays in August as a time where colleagues and stakeholders are less likely to be available, as well as holidays in December (which impacts fieldwork, particularly if learning centres/ spaces are closed).

Figure 1: Work plan

Activity	Milestone Date	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct
Development of TORs																			
Submit to FCDO/ ESWG for review	**31/05/2022**	▓																	
Update TORs based on comments received			▓																
Submit Final ToR to FCDO	**30/06/2022**		█																
Research Design Phase																			
Develop Research Design Note				▓	▓	▓													
Submit Research Design Note to FCDO/ ESWG	**15/09/2022**					█													
Revise Research Design Note						▓	▓												
Research Design Note approved by FCDO	**28/10/2022**						█												
Develop research tools							▓	▓											
IPs/ SAPs/ FCDO review research tools and tools updated	18/11/2022							▓											
Research tools approved by FCDO	**30/11/2022**							█											
Obtain research/ethical permissions						▓	▓	▓											
Fieldwork Phase																			
Enumerator training & fieldwork (allowing for holidays)										▓	▓	▓							
Submit draft Fieldwork Completion Report to FCDO	**30/04/2023**												█						
Analysis and Reporting Phase																			
Coding and analysis											▓	▓	▓	▓					
Develop draft report														▓					
Submit first draft report to FCDO	**18/06/2023**														█				
Revisions to report following FCDO/ ESWG review																▓			
Submit second draft report to FCDO, ESWG, IPs, SAPs	**31/07/2023**															█			
Revisions to report following comments																	▓		
Submit third /final report to FCDO	**29/09/2023**																	█	
FCDO approves final report	**20/10/2023**																		█

The key deliverables for each phase of the study, along with the dates by which we would receive FCDO approval, are listed in *Table 3.*

Table 3: Table of deliverables

Deliverable	Milestone Date
Terms of Reference	30th June 2022
Research Design Note	28th October 2022
Research Tools	30th November 2022

Deliverable	Milestone Date
Fieldwork Completion Report	30th April 2023
Draft Report (FCDO, ESWG)	18th June 2023
2nd Draft Report (FCDO, ESWG, IPs, SAPs)	31st July 2023
Final Report Submission	29th September 2023
Knowledge Products (e.g., blog posts, webinar, policy brief)	To be discussed with the FCDO

7. Team Composition

47. This study will be led by a core team under the guidance of the Principal Investigator and Lead Author (Pauline Rose), IE Team Leader (Monazza Aslam) and Deputy Team Leader (Shenila Rawal). The study will be led by the Research Lead (Asma Zubairi) and Qualitative Analyst (Romanshi Gupta). The study will be managed by the IE Programme Manager (Louise Cathro) and Assistant Programme Manager (Angela Nkonu). Additional support will be brought on as required to support with the data transcription, cleaning, coding, and analysis.

48. The quantitative data analysis will be led by the Synthesis Lead (Majo Ogando-Portela).

49. The Political Economy Analysis will be led by the IE Team Leader (Monazza Aslam) and Deputy Team Leader (Shenila Rawal).

50. Quality assurance processes will be overseen by the Programme Director (Simon Griffiths), Technical Director (Pauline Rose), Team Leader (Monazza Aslam) and Deputy Team Leader (Shenila Rawal).

51. Data collection, including enumerator training, fieldwork management and data quality assurance, will be managed by the IE Fieldwork Manager (Julia Midland). Local partners will be contracted to support with in-country data collection. Southern academic partners will also be engaged throughout the study – including from the research design phase to the reporting phase – to provide analytical and advisory support to help inform and contextualise the research findings.

8. Stakeholder Engagement

52. The IE team will engage with the following external stakeholders over the duration of the study as needed (where relevant, some of these stakeholders will be consulted through the Evaluation Studies Working Group (ESWG)):

- FCDO UK;

- FCDO Regional Education Advisors;

- GEC II Fund Manager;

- IPs;

- Beneficiaries of GEC II interventions; and

- Other bilateral and multilateral agencies collaborating with GEC II or otherwise operating in the same sectors or thematic areas.

53. Ongoing engagement with the IPs to receive their input and integrate their feedback is a critical element of this study. This will ensure we also have identified relevant and up-to-date documentation and data for review, and that our findings are factually accurate. We will engage with IPs as per the *IP*

Engagement Plan developed by the IE and refined on an ongoing basis as each of the studies are completed and learnings are identified.

54. Engagement with the project beneficiaries who will be sampled for primary data collection will be participatory to ensure they can meaningfully contribute to the study.

A communication strategy will be developed by the FM in collaboration with the IE team to promote dissemination of the study and key outputs - particularly in-country/ amongst local stakeholders - and continued engagement with wider stakeholders.

Annex B: Research Design and Methodology

This annex includes: the research framework which outlines the methods and data sources for answering the research questions, followed by the strategies employed for the portfolio-wide review of all 14 Leave No Girl Behind (LNGB) projects and the three case study LNGB projects selected for a more detailed analysis. For the case studies, the annex also includes the selection processes for identifying three projects for inclusion in the study; the sampling strategy for including learning centres for primary qualitative data collection; strategy for identifying respondents; and replacement strategies.

1. Research Design and Analytical Framework

1.1. Development of research design and questions

The research questions for this study were developed through an extensive iterative and consultative process conducted throughout the finalisation of the Terms of Reference (ToRs) and the desk-based review. This resulted in the study focusing on three overarching research questions (RQs). The study design intentionally focuses on the perspectives, agency and choice of marginalised girls. The first two research questions do this through prioritising the voice of girls themselves with respect to their experience before and during the LNGB projects. The third research question more explicitly draws out issues relating to girls' agency and choice in relation to their respective education and livelihood journeys. The specific Research Questions (RQs) are as follows:

RQ1: How do LNGB projects mitigate barriers that the most marginalised adolescent girls face in education?

RQ2: To what extent, and how, have LNGB projects influenced the most marginalised adolescent girls' learning outcomes?

RQ3: How have LNGB projects influenced the most marginalised adolescent girls' transition to formal schooling and/ or work opportunities, and agency in making decisions?

The study also includes two cross-cutting themes throughout the design, analysis, and reporting which related to:

- **Political economy analysis (PEA):** This analysis explored the following question: how have the political, economic, and socio-cultural environment and other wider structural factors influenced how LNGB education pathways beyond formal schooling have been able to support marginalised girls' learning and future opportunities? The PEA has been conducted for the case study countries in this study.

- **Gender equality and social inclusion (GESI):** This study integrated a GESI lens throughout, with a focus on the most marginalised and the intersecting disadvantage they face. The study centres girls' agency, choices, and voice, which were incorporated into the design of the primary data collection tools and reporting of findings.

1.2. Initial review of LNGB project documentation

An initial review of GEC II portfolio documentation from the 14 projects that are part of the LNGB window was conducted to better understand the background characteristics of the girls whom projects targeted, the barriers they faced participating in education, the post-project transition pathways offered to girls, and the activities implemented to support marginalised adolescent girls.

A key purpose of the desk-based document review was to undertake a detailed activity mapping exercise of project design and implementation information. This was harvested from multiple project documents, including the theory of change, baseline, midline and endline evaluation reports.

1.3. Rapid review of wider evidence

A rapid review of existing evidence was undertaken to inform the framing and contextualisation of the study (see *Section 3.1* for the review). It also informed the research design, in particular the design of the study tools. The review of existing evidence was conducted using a purposive search strategy, as outlined below.

Themes

The search prioritised literature addressing key themes relevant to the study, including:

- Education pathways beyond formal schooling for marginalised children and adolescents.
- Transition pathways from education pathway beyond formal schooling.
- Outcomes (foundational learning, agency, decision-making) associated with attending programmes relating to education pathways beyond formal schooling.
- Issues of agency and choice related to girls and young women's education and transition pathways.

Search strategy

Literature was identified through: keyword searches in academic journals and databases (primarily using the University of Cambridge's academic search engine (iDiscover)); "snowballing" techniques to identify further literature cited in the reference lists of these articles; recent publications from recognised international agencies and organisations such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), and the World Bank; and purposive document selection as recommended by key stakeholders, such as key staff from implementing partners representing the Fund Manager. GEC II documentation such as learning briefs and thematic reports were included to ensure the study incorporated key GEC project and portfolio-level lessons. The search was limited to research in low-and-middle-income countries published over the past 10 years.

Limitations

The review sought to define and introduce the concepts utilised in this report with the aim of informing the framing of the study, rather than being an extensive or systematic review of all literature on the topic.

1.4. Review of key documentation relating to education policy context of Ghana, Kenya, and Nepal

Section 4 of the main report focuses on the education policy contexts of Ghana, Kenya, and Nepal, where the three LNGB projects of focus for this study were implemented. This was done using a desk-based review, as outlined below.

Themes

The search prioritised literature related to education pathways beyond formal schooling on:

- Government policies (specifically for children and adolescents).
- Key stakeholders (organisations, government departments) active in the sector.
- Challenges relating to this part of the education system.

Search strategy

Literature was identified through a desk-based search using search engines which helped identify key government documentation including education sector plans and legal frameworks; rapid online keyword searches in academic journals and databases; "snowballing" techniques to identify further literature cited in the reference lists of these articles; recent publications from recognised international agencies and organisations such as the Global Partnership for Education, UNICEF, UNESCO, and the World Bank; LNGB external evaluation data relating to projects implemented in Ghana, Kenya and Nepal; and documentation relating to other implementing agencies (outside GEC) running education programmes beyond formal schooling.

Limitations

- While the focus of this study is on the most marginalised adolescent girls, not all documentation had a gender or age breakdown of programmes. Furthermore, there was little to no information related specifically to the marginalisation of groups targeted by these programmes.

- Ghana had a lot more information available due to its large and long-standing Complementary Basic Education (CBE) programme. Nepal had less information than either Ghana or Kenya.

1.5. Consultations with various stakeholders

Throughout this study, the IE team consulted with various stakeholders about the different interim outputs relating to the report.

- During the finalisation of the ToRs and Research Design Note, extensive feedback was received from key stakeholders, including the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), the Independent Advisory Group (IAG) and the Fund Manager (FM). The Independent Evaluation (IE) research team for the study responded to comments that these stakeholders submitted, and provided a rationale for how the feedback was considered and any further action that was required. The research team also solicited direct feedback on the proposed research questions from Senior Portfolio Advisers (SPAs) through a webinar. A separate meeting with the FM was also held to solicit feedback on the shortlisted projects that the IE was proposing.

- The research tools and consent/ assent forms were reviewed by the FCDO and FM, the implementing partners (IPs) of the three LNGB projects which had been selected for the study, (and our Southern Academic Partner – African Population and Health Research Centre (APHRC).[15] Involving the IPs and Southern Academic Partner ensured that the tools were relevant to the project and contexts the study would be working in, and drew on their wider expertise of the topic. Collaborations and consultations with the partners ensured that the tools designed by the team were able to generate accurate, context-relevant findings in response to the research questions, and to generate findings relevant to the wider programmatic and policy efforts.

- The draft versions of the report were reviewed by the FCDO, FM, IAG, IPs and Southern Academic Partners.

2. Research design and methods

2.1. Research design and methodological approach

The study drew on secondary quantitative and documentary data, as well as primary qualitative data.

All 14 LNGB projects were included for analysis for the portfolio-level review, using secondary data sources. *Table 4* lists the details of all 14 LNGB projects. Of these 14 projects, three were selected as in-depth case studies, using primary qualitative data. Information on the criteria used to select these three LNGB projects is presented further below in *Section 3.3.1.*

Table 4: Details of 14 LNGB projects

Country	Implementing Partner	Project Name	*Project Name (Abbreviation)*
Afghanistan	Aga Khan Foundation	Steps Towards Afghan Girls' Education Success	*STAGES LNGB +*
Ethiopia	People in Need	Improving Access to Education in Ethiopia for Most Marginalised Girls	*CHANGE*
Ethiopia	Population Council	Biruh Tesfa for All	*BtA*
Ghana	World Education	Strategic Approaches to Girls' Education	*STAGE*

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[15] Our second Southern Academic Partner – BRAC – had not been contracted at this point.

Country	Implementing Partner	Project Name	*Project Name (Abbreviation)*
Kenya	ActionAid	Education for All	*EfL*
Malawi	Link Education International	Transformative Empowerment of Adolescent Marginalised Girls	*TEAM Girl*
Nepal	Street Child	Marginalised no More	*MnM*
Nepal	People in Need	Accelerating Life Skills Literacy and Numeracy of Out of School Adolescent Girls	*Aarambha*
Nepal	Voluntary Services Overseas	Empowering a New Generation of Adolescent Girls with Education	*ENGAGE*
Pakistan	International Rescue Committee	Teach and Educate Adolescent Girls with Community Help	*TEACH*
Pakistan	ACTED	Closing the Gap	*Closing the Gap*
Sierra Leone	International Rescue Committee	Every Adolescent Girl Empowered and Resilient	*EAGER*
Somalia	CARE	Adolescent Girls' Education in Somalia	*AGES*
Zimbabwe	Plan International	Supporting Adolescent Girls' Education	*SAGE*

2.1.1. Data sources used

To answer the three research questions, the team used a mixture of methods and data sources:

Portfolio-wide:

- Documentary analysis of external evaluation (EE) project documentation for all 14 LNGB projects.
- Quantitative analysis of secondary EE project data for 13 out of the 14 LNGB projects.[16]
- Qualitative key informant interviews (KIIs) with all 14 IPs from each of the LNGB projects.

Three case studies:

- Quantitative analysis of project monitoring data.
- Qualitative key informant interviews, individual interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) and River of Life data collection.

Table 5 maps the different sources of data used for the three research questions.

Table 5: Research matrix

Research Questions	Primary data methods/ sources	Secondary data sources	Participant to be interviewed for primary data collection
RQ1: How do LNGB projects mitigate barriers that the most marginalised adolescent girls face in education?	• KIIs with 14 LNGB IPs. • In-depth qualitative data from three case study LNGB projects (various stakeholders).	• Project documentation (all 14 LNGB projects) • Project EE data (13 LNGB projects)	• Implementing *partner (all 14 LNGB projects)* • Downstream partner *(3 case study LNGB projects)* • Girls engaged by LNGB projects *(3 case study LNGB projects)* • Community members/ leaders *(3 case study LNGB projects)* • Educators *(3 case study LNGB projects)* • Transition pathway providers *(3 case study LNGB projects)* • Government representatives *(3 case study LNGB projects)*

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[16] Excludes *STAGE LNGB +* (Afghanistan) for which the research team did not have data.

Research Questions	Primary data methods/ sources	Secondary data sources	Participant to be interviewed for primary data collection
RQ2: To what extent, and how, have LNGB projects influenced the most marginalised adolescent girls' learning outcomes?	• KIIs with 14 LNGB IPs. • In-depth qualitative data from three case study LNGB projects (various stakeholders).	• Project documentation (all 14 LNGB projects) • Project EE data (13 LNGB projects)	• Implementing *partner (all 14 LNGB projects)* • Downstream partner *(3 case study LNGB projects)* • Girls engaged by LNGB projects *(3 case study LNGB projects)* • Community members/ leaders *(3 case study LNGB projects)* • Educators *(3 case study LNGB projects)* • Transition pathway providers *(3 case study LNGB projects)* • Government representatives *(3 case study LNGB projects)*
RQ3: How have LNGB projects influenced the most marginalised adolescent girls' transition to formal schooling and/ or work opportunities, and agency in making decisions?	• KIIs with 14 LNGB IPs. • In-depth qualitative data from three case study LNGB projects (various stakeholders).	• Project documentation (all 14 LNGB projects) • Project EE data (13 LNGB projects) • Project monitoring data (three case study LNGB projects)	• Implementing *partner (all 14 LNGB projects)* • Downstream partner *(3 case study LNGB projects)* • Girls engaged by LNGB projects *(3 case study LNGB projects)* • Community members/ leaders *(3 case study LNGB projects)* • Educators *(3 case study LNGB projects)* • Transition pathway providers *(3 case study LNGB projects)* • Government representatives *(3 case study LNGB projects)*

3. Portfolio review analysis

3.1. Review of LNGB project documentation

3.1.1. Overview

Two main sources of project-level documentation were included for the analysis in the report:

- External evaluation reports
- Project technical monitoring reports

3.1.2. Process

The FM provided technical monitoring and external evaluation reports for relevant GEC II projects to the Independent Evaluation team for the purposes of this study (in this case all 14 LNGB projects). The team conducted a review of the project documentation using a simple coding framework in Microsoft Excel to capture information for the three overarching research questions relevant for this study (see *Table 6*).

In addition, the team mapped out key activities incorporated into the project design of all LNGB projects and, where possible, divided this between activities intended for when girls were enrolled on the LNGB programme and for when they transitioned into education, skills, or work-related opportunities.

Table 6: Coding framework for technical monitoring and external evaluation reports

Node	Sub node
Who the project target	• Girls who have never been to school. • Girls who dropped out of school. • Child brides or pregnant girls. • Orphaned or fostered girls. • Girls living in extreme poverty.

Node	Sub node
	• Girls living in remote locations. • Girls with disabilities and special needs • Girls who are victims of modern forms of slavery. • Girls living with HIV or AIDS. • Girls who have experienced violence and conflict. • Girls with high chore burden. • Girls who don't speak language of instruction spoken in formal schooling. • Girls living in pastoralist communities. •
Barriers to participating in education	• Economic (work or costs). • Travel to school (safety or distance). • Disability or school cannot meet special needs. • Social norms. • Unfavourable attitude of parents. • High chore burden. • Early marriage/ teenage pregnancy. • School level barriers (inadequacy of teachers, infrastructure and learning materials). • Gender based violence and child abuse. • Sexual exploitation and trafficking. • Migration. • Natural disasters.
Transition pathway	• Formal schooling. • Informal schooling. • Skills development training. • Paid employment. • Entrepreneurship.
Key activities (during LNGB programme)	• Childcare support for girls with children. • Financial support for household/ communities. • Curricula development/ adaptations. • M & E activities. • Construction/ rehabilitation of learning spaces. • Recruitment of LNGB educators. • Material/ financial support for girls. • Psycho-social support and creation of safe spaces. • Engagement with government stakeholders. • Training of LNGB educators. • Life skill classes. • Literacy and numeracy classes.
Key activities (transition pathway)	• Training of formal schooling teachers. • Remedial/ bridging classes. • Material/ financial support for girls. • Training of girls' caregivers. • Financial support for girls' caregiver. • Support in finding vocational training/ employment. • Employment-related training for girls. • Material/ financial support for girls. • Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) facilities. • Loan groups for girls.

Limitations

- Evaluation reports varied in length and scope meaning that project documentation was not directly comparable. Analysis should therefore not be considered of equivalent scope for all projects, but indicative only of general patterns emerging from the available documentation.

- The intervention mapping sought to identify the key features of project interventions both during the LNGB project, and when girls transitioned onto different pathways (education, skills or work-related). However, there was a large variation in the nature, content, and depth of this documentation set, especially when mapping out interventions when girls transitioned to different pathways. For this reason the types of interventions may have been under-reported, and the intervention mapping should be considered indicative rather than exhaustive.

3.2. Project External Evaluation (EE) data

3.2.1. Overview

Project external evaluations collected learning assessments, girl surveys, household surveys, and primary caregiver surveys. These were collected at the beginning (baseline) of the programme pathway, *after* girls enrolled into the project, and at follow-up (midline or endline), *before* girls completed the programme pathway. In addition, projects engaged in monitoring girls *during* and *after* programme completion to track their progress.

3.2.2. Projects and cohorts included in the study and sample sizes

The LNGB supports girls and young women in 10 countries through 14 projects. Each project enrols beneficiaries in cohorts. In most cases[17], cohorts were grouped based on the timeline of intervention received, such as Cohort 2 enrolling after Cohort 1. In other instances[18], in addition to the timeline, cohorts distinguished between girls based on the specific programme pathways they are assigned to. For example, the *Closing the Gap* programme's Literacy and Numeracy (L&N) cohort caters to older girls (14-19-years-olds) and Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) cohorts to younger girls (10-13-years-olds).

As a result, external evaluations adopted a cohort-based approach to track a subsample of cohorts over time. Across all 14 LNGB projects, a total of 50 cohorts of girls have received interventions. However, not all cohorts enrolled were intended to undergo external evaluation. *Table 7* provides a summary description of projects' data availability, including sample size of girl beneficiaries (i.e. treated) included for analysis (highlighted in bold). For further details, refer to *Table 8*.

Table 7: Summary of project and cohort data availability

	Projects	Cohorts	Sample size (treatment)	Sample size (non-treated)
All cohorts	14	50	-	-
Set to be externally evaluated	14	36	-	-
Baseline conducted	14	32	-	-
Baseline data received by IE	**13**	**30**	**17,664**	663
Follow-up conducted	12	27	-	-
Follow-up data received by IE	**11**	**22**	**11,841**	0

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[17] *EfL, STAGES (LNGB+), EAGER, TEAM Girl, CHANGE, Aarambha, SAGE, BTA, MnM,* and *ENGAGE.*
[18] *Closing the Gap, AGES, TEACH*, and *STAGE.*

Table 8: Project and cohort data availability

Project	Country	Cohort	Status of external evaluation data				Access to EE data as of June 2023		
			Externally evaluated	Baseline conducted	Midline conducted	Endline conducted	Baseline	Midline	Endline
Closing the Gap	Pakistan	C1 L&N	Yes	Yes	No (by design)	No (by design)	Yes	N/A	N/A
		C2 L&N	Yes	No (by design)	No (by design)	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes
		C3 L&N	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
		C4 L&N	Yes	Yes	No (by design)	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
		C1 ALP	Yes	Yes	No (by design)	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
EfL	Kenya	C1	Yes	Yes	No (by design)	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
		C2	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
		C3	Yes	Yes	No (by design))	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
STAGES LNGB+	Afghanistan	C1	Yes	Yes	No (by design)	No	Yes, but not used[19]	N/A	N/A
AGES	Somalia	C1 ABE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
		C1 NFE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
		C1 Formal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
		C2 ABE	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
		C2 NFE	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
		C2 Formal	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
		C4 NFE	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	N/A
		C5	Yes	Yes	No (by design)	No	No	N/A	N/A
TEACH	Pakistan	C1 Learn	Yes	Yes	No (by design)	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
		C1 Earn	Yes	Yes	No (by design)	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
		C1 Distant	Yes	Yes	No (by design)	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
		C2 Learn	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
		C2 Earn	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
		C2 Distant	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
EAGER	Sierra Leone	C1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, but not used[20]
		C2	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
		C3	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
TEAM Girl	Malawi	C1	Yes	Yes	No (by design)	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
		C2	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
		C3	Yes	Yes	No (by design)	No	Yes	N/A	N/A
CHANGE	Ethiopia	C1	Yes	Yes	No (by design)	No (by design)	Yes	N/A	N/A
		C2	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
		C3	Yes	Yes	No (by design)	No	Yes	N/A	N/A
		C4	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Aarambha	Nepal	C1	Yes	Yes	No (by design)	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
		C2	Yes	Yes	No (by design)	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
		C3	Yes	Yes	No (by design)	No	Yes	N/A	N/A
		C4	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A
SAGE	Zimbabwe	C1	Yes	Yes	No (by design)	Yes	Yes	N/A	No
		C2	Yes	No	N/A	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
		C3	Yes	No	No (by design)	Yes	N/A	N/A	No
		C4	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	No

[19] Data were not suitable for analysis due to a lack of accompanying data collection tools and codebooks for reading the data.
[20] For *EAGER,* data from midline were used instead of endline as learning data were only available in midline.

Project	Country	Cohort	Status of external evaluation data				Access to EE data as of June 2023		
			Externally evaluated	Baseline conducted	Midline conducted	Endline conducted	Baseline	Midline	Endline
BtA	Ethiopia	C1	Yes	Yes	No (by design)	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
MnM	Nepal	C1	Yes	Yes	No (by design)	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
		C2	Yes	Yes	No (by design)	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
		C3	Yes	Yes	No (by design)	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
ENGAGE	Nepal	C1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, but not used[21]	Yes
STAGE	Ghana	C1 Formal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, but not used[22]	Yes
		C1 NFE	Yes	Yes	No (by design)	No (by design)	Yes	N/A	N/A
		C2 NFE	Yes	Yes	No (by design)	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
		C3 NFE	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of projects (out of 14)			14	14	4	12	13	4	10
Number of project cohorts (out of 50)			36	32	7	25	30	4	18

Out of the 50 cohorts, only 36 were set to be evaluated (for details, see fourth column of *Table 8* above), with baseline data collected for 32 of them.[23] One project (*AGES* C5) had not submitted to the FM recent cohort data collected, and another had data issues.[24] **This left 30 cohorts from 13 projects with baseline data suitable for analysis.** The only project excluded from the study is *STAGES LNGB+* (Afghanistan). For details on the cohorts with baseline data used for analysis, see column eight on *Table 8.*

Projects EE typically conducted midline and/or endline evaluation points as follow-up rounds to the baseline. Of the 36 cohorts with baseline data collected, three cohorts decided not to conduct any follow-up round[25] - *Closing the Gap* (C1 L&N), *CHANGE* (C1), and *STAGE* C1 (NFE) -, and six cohort evaluations were planned to be conducted later in 2023 or 2024. Hence, follow-up rounds of evaluation were conducted for 27 cohorts from 12 projects.[26] **The team had access to data from 11 projects, and specifically, 22 out of the 27 cohorts with follow-up evaluation conducted.[27]**

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21 Endline data were used instead.
22 Endline data were used instead.
23 Closing the Gap L&N C2 collected only endline data (and were set out to be compared with baseline of L&N C1). Cohorts 2-4 of SAGE do not have externally evaluated baseline data.
24 Data for AGES C5 had not been submitted; STAGES LNGB+ data from Afghanistan were not accessible in a suitable format that allowed for analysis due to a lack of accompanying data collection tools and codebooks for reading the data.
25 Due to issues in collecting data for this cohort or due to design choices.
26 Of these, 20 cohorts only collected endline, six cohorts (from four projects) collected both midline and endline data (EAGER, ENGAGE, and STAGE C1 Formal), and one cohort (AGES C4 NFE) collected midline and has endline planned for 2024.
27 As of this writing, the AGES C4 midline, Aarambha C3 endline, and SAGE (C1, C3, and C4 endline) data were not available.

3.2.3. Methods of analysis

The quantitative analysis answered the three research questions, using descriptive and subgroup analysis, as follows:

- **Profiling of beneficiary girls** (RQ1).

- **Changes in girls' learning outcomes** (RQ2).

- **Alignment between desires and transition pathways offered to girls** (RQ3).
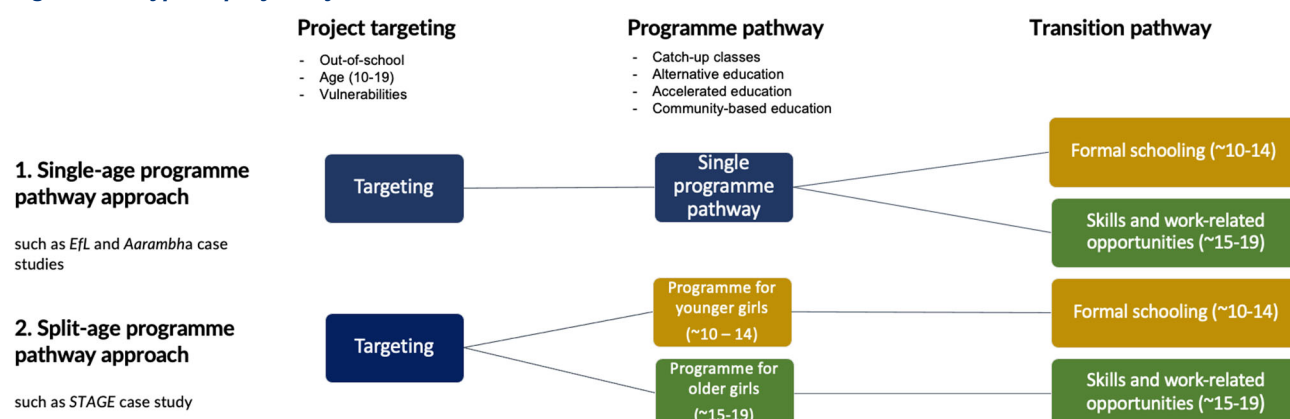
Whenever possible, sub-group analysis was conducted for two main groups, which differed significantly in terms of expected transition pathway, previous schooling experience and vulnerability indicators (including marriage and childbearing)[28]:

- Younger girls (with age defined by the project) who are categorised under the **'formal schooling pathway'** for analysis purposes.

- Older girls, who, depending on the project, have a range of options such as vocational training, apprenticeship, employment, self-employment, or skill development leading to employment. These older girls are classified under the **'skills and work-related opportunities'** for analysis.

The decision to divide these groups this way stemmed from project documentation and discussion with the IPs, which revealed that girls are encouraged to pursue specific transition pathways based on their age. *Figure 2* illustrates a typical project cycle design – ***younger girls, typically aged 10-14***[29], were placed onto (re)enrolling in formal schooling as their transition pathway, while ***older girls (typically aged 15 and above)***, were usually encouraged to pursue pathways leading to skills and work-related opportunities (vocational training, entrepreneurship/self-employment, or gaining employment).[30]

Figure 2: A typical project cycle

Insights gained from conversations with IPs revealed that younger girls were placed onto the formal schooling path and had limited options regarding other pathways. On the other hand, older girls were placed on a work opportunities pathway and had the choice to pursue different pathways leading to employment. In the case of projects where older girls were technically given the option to (re) enrol back into formal school, they were discouraged from doing so.

RQ1: Profiling of girls

Methods

For RQ1, **we conducted a cross-sectional profiling of all girls included in the LNGB EE portfolio-level dataset** to gain insights into the schooling experience they and their households had, and the various barriers faced by LNGB girls when they first joined the programme. We analysed girls separately according to the age-

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[28] The Limitations section describes the data constraints, methodological choices and assumptions made to create these subgroups

[29] This can differ by project, but most projects follow this age range. In TEAM Girl, for example, the age range is 10-13 instead.

[30] Older girls from *Closing the Gap* project, as an exception, had the sole option of either transitioning to vocational training (age 14-17) or employment (aged 18 and above) based on their age but could not choose. Older girls in *TEAM Girl, Aarambha*, and *MnM* also had the option to re-enrol into formal schooling.

transition pathway they were placed in. The quantitative data do not provide insight into the specific measures projects took to address these barriers.

In terms of barriers to schooling, we looked into the marginalisation criteria projects used for targeting girls. Although there was no perfect match between the criteria set out by projects and the information collected by the external evaluations about the girls, it was possible to match on some characteristics.[31] This included a girl's out-of-school status, marital status, pregnancy and childbearing, orphanhood, disabilities, chore burden, poverty[32], and household head or caregiver education. We looked at the extent to which LNGB projects supported the most marginalised girls by comparing them to population statistics by country using Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), and UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) data.[33] Based on this, the LNGB projects succeeded in reaching adolescent girls who were more marginalised compared with the national population in their age group. For example, they reached a higher proportion of older girls who are married or are mothers compared with the overall population (see *Table 9*).

Table 9: Comparison of background characteristics of LNGB girls with DHS data

| Country | Does not own land (%) | | Household has no education | | | | 15–19-year-olds who are married (%) | | 15–19-year-olds who have given birth (%) | |
| | | | Male (%) | | Female (%) | | | | | |
	LNGB evaluation	DHS	LNGB evaluation	DHS	LNGB evaluation	DHS	LNGB evaluation	DHS	LNGB evaluation	DHS
Ethiopia	9	38	60	35	85	49	21	20	20	10
Ghana	34	62	77	26	72	18	23	7	55	11
Kenya	12	34	41	11	59	16	59	13	76	15
Malawi	21	24	31	8	42	14	14	27	39	22
Nepal	36	23	78	21	95	40	52	28	27	13
Pakistan	58	73	56	34	68	50	12	14	9	6
Sierra Leone	27	47	-	29	-	39	45	15	66	18
Somalia	71	83	19	46	27	48	6	21	8	18

We also looked at the differences in barriers between girls who went to school and dropped out compared to those who never went to school.

Additionally, we were able to examine the barriers to schooling faced by girls before joining the programme reported by caregivers, alongside other potential barriers, such as girls' and primary caregivers' (PCGs') perceptions about schooling, as well as impediments that project implementers reported while the programmes were implemented.

Sample

Profiling of baseline characteristics (RQ1) included 16,843 beneficiary girls, from 29 cohorts across 13 projects, for whom data on transition pathways data were available.[34] As projects (and cohorts) collected different information, each variable we looked at had different sample sizes. While it would have been possible to use a sub-sample to get consistency of sample sizes (so the same girls are in all analyses) this would have drastically lowered the sample size, so we did not keep the sample size consistent.[35]

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31 It was not possible to combine the monitoring data with external evaluation due to a lack of identifiers; therefore, we relied on the information collected by external evaluations for the profiling of girls.

32 Four projects (STAGES LNGB+, TEAM Girl, CHANGE, and STAGE) specifically targeted girls in extreme poverty. The classification was part of the monitoring data but was not included in the external evaluations. The external evaluations collected several economic indicators that shed light on the various degrees of poverty but did not categorise girls as living in extreme poverty.

33 Afghanistan and Zimbabwe were excluded from this comparison as we lack evaluation data for STAGES (LNGB+) and SAGE, which are the only projects in these countries. STAGES (LNGB+) lacked suitable data for baseline analysis and SAGE only had data from the girl survey, which lack data variables for comparison.

34 The initial sample comprised 17,664 beneficiary girls; but this sample reduced when we cross-tabulated key variables. For instance, 95% (16,843) of the sample could be categorised by age-transition pathways. TEACH Distant C1 was excluded from this research question (leaving 29 out of 30 cohorts). The cohort did not have a clear transition pathway, as it was implemented during COVID-19 as an additional layer to the existing Learn and Earn cohorts (see Limitations section).

35 For instance, 91% of the initial sample had data on marital status, motherhood and orphanhood collected. Fewer projects, however, collected data on other key variables such as reasons for girls not being in school, which accounted for 57% of the initial sample.

RQ2: Changes in learning

Methods

For RQ2, **we first examined the starting learning levels of LNGB girls, and then compared learning outcomes over time.** In order to facilitate a comparison between both data points, we limited the sample to a subset of projects that have follow-up data and learning data available.

To examine changes in learning over time we compared baseline with midline, or midline to endline – where we use the most recent evaluation point, where possible.[36] We used ordinary least squares analysis (OLS) of the changes in learning between data collection periods. This simple model was used to estimate the (non-causal) impact of the programme on learning outcomes of girls. Due to a lack of data on girls who did not receive interventions, we cannot do more robust analysis.

We did this for **a panel sample of girls** (limited to the same girls recontacted in both periods). We conducted the analysis by age-transition pathway fixing the status at baseline. We were not able to include any covariates in the simple difference analysis because the sample sizes would drop significantly. Hence, the difference estimates showed progress made by the treatment girls over time, disregarding any bias introduced by differences in their characteristics.

The statistical significance of the simple difference coefficients was reported for P-values below 0.05 and 0.10. The statistical analysis was conducted in Stata, using the reg command for descriptive statistics and cross-sectional difference regressions, with standard errors clustered at the project level. As with previous IE studies, we used project-equal level weighting.

Tools and measures used by projects

All LNGB projects used the standardised and structured Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA)/ Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) tests. While there are clearly defined subtasks for each assessment, projects sometimes only used a selection of subtasks, or adapted them for their own means. We calculated aggregate literacy and numeracy scores using all subtasks from the projects – but for the subtask analysis, we only used standardised subtasks as shown in *Table 10*.

Table 10: Learning assessment subtasks

Assessments	Subtasks	Subtask names
EGRA	Subtask 1	Letter sound identification (phonological awareness, mapping sounds to letters)
	Subtask 2	Letter name identification
	Subtask 3	Familiar word (phonics. i.e. recognition of words)
	Subtask 4	Oral reading fluency (passage reading), expressed in words-per-minute (wpm)
	Subtask 5	Reading comprehension
	Subtask 6	Listening comprehension
	Subtask 7	Dictation
	Subtask 8	Letter cluster identification
	Subtask 9	Real life reading
EGMA	Subtask 1	Number identification
	Subtask 2	Quantity Discrimination
	Subtask 3	Missing Numbers
	Subtask 4	Addition level 1
	Subtask 5	Addition level 2
	Subtask 6	Subtraction level 1
	Subtask 7	Subtraction level 2

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36 For the three projects with both midline and endline data were available (EAGER, ENGAGE, STAGE), the endline data were used - except for EAGER, where no learning data were available at endline meaning so baseline to midline data were used.

Assessments	Subtasks	Subtask names
	Subtask 8	Word problems
	Subtask 9	Multiplication
	Subtask 10	Division
	Subtask 11	Fractions

Sample

When we examined the starting learning levels of girls, the **total sample for this analysis comprised 9,731 girls from 17 cohorts across 10 projects**.[37] The analysis on change in learning outcomes was conducted on **a panel sample with 17 cohorts[38] (disregarding transition pathways) and 16 cohorts[39] when transition pathways are considered (6,048 and 5,315 girls, respectively).**

Attrition bias in panel analysis of learning

When reviewing the results from the panel analysis, we examined attrition in the samples – as systematic attrition can bias our estimates of changes in learning outcomes over time when girls who are recontacted differ significantly compared to girls not recontacted.

In doing so, the study team matched girls' unique identifiers between baseline and follow-up (including midline or endline) to define if a girl was re-contacted in the follow-up. Attrition, defined as the percentage of girls whose data were collected at baseline but were not re-contacted at midline or endline, was calculated with a subset of project cohorts suitable for panel learning analysis (17 and 16 cohorts), and only for girls whose change over time in learning could be investigated. Hence, we calculated attrition for girls with available learning data in both baseline and follow-up only (using the most recent follow-up except for *EAGER* to be consistent with the learning sample). As the sample is restricted by availability of learning data, attrition figures did not match with rates reported in the evaluation reports.

The attrition rate calculated for this subsample is 41%. Overall, 6,048 LNGB supported girls with learning data were recontacted. When restricting the sample further as it relates to transition pathway, attrition rates increased to 44% and 5,315 girls were recontacted.

Table 11: Number of LNGB observations with available learning data

Sample	Sample at baseline	Sample at follow-up	Girls recontacted at follow-up	
	N	N	N	% recontacted
Treatment (projects with common unique identifiers: 10 projects and 17 cohorts)	10,305	9,696	6,048	58.69
Treatment (projects with common unique identifiers and transition pathways: 10 projects and 16 cohorts)	9,501	N/A[40]	5,315	55.94

To test for attrition bias, the study team compared baseline overall level of literacy and numeracy for girls who were and were not recontacted, both for all sample, and by transition pathway.

Table 12 illustrates attrition bias in terms of overall literacy and numeracy, comparing between girls who were and were not recontacted at follow-up. As attrition bias is a concern for panel analysis, the calculation is done with cohorts with both valid learning data and valid unique identification across rounds only. For both the overall sample and for each transition pathway, there is little evidence of attrition bias, with girls who were recontacted

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37 The sample was restricted to projects with baseline, follow-up, and transition pathway data. As such, it excluded the following projects (cohorts): AGES (C4 NFE), TEAM Girl (C3), CHANGE (C1 and C3), Aarambha (C3, C4), SAGE (C1), MnM (C1, C2, and C3), TEACH (C1 Distant), STAGE (C1 NFE, C2 NFE).

38 The 17 projects differ from the projects included for starting learning levels (TEACH C1 Distant was included and Closing the Gap C1 L&N was excluded as it did not have any recontacted girls).

39 TEACH C1 Distant was excluded due to not having transition pathway data.

40 Number of girls at follow-up is not reported here as we can only categorise transition pathway in baseline and not in the follow-up rounds.

scoring about the same as girls who were not recontacted (all differences not statistically significant). This implies that there is no significant difference in literacy and numeracy performance of recontacted and lost girls.

Table 12: Attrition bias overview for all baseline samples and by transition pathway

		Overall literacy	Overall numeracy
Overall sample	Lost girls	30.14%	44.20%
	Recontacted girls	30.41%	43.85%
	Difference between lost and recontacted girls	-0.27%	0.34%
	P-value	0.69	0.60
Formal schooling pathway	Lost girls	31.19%	46.73%
	Recontacted girls	29.78%	47.95%
	Difference between lost and recontacted girls	1.41%	-1.22%
	P-value	0.11	0.15
Skills and work-related opportunities pathway	Lost girls	28.88%	39.49%
	Recontacted girls	28.00%	38.83%
	Difference between lost and recontacted girls	0.88%	0.66%
	P-value	0.41	0.56

RQ3: Alignment with transition pathways

Methods

For RQ3, **external evaluation data can only be analysed as it relates to girls' choice on pathway preference.** This is because EE data are only available during the programme pathway (prior to girls transitioning).

Programme design of LNGB is such that younger girls did not have a choice but to follow the assigned formal track with the intention of (re)-enrolment into formal school, while older girls were provided choices among the individual pathways including schooling, vocational training, employment, or self-employment. Even then, the option of (re)-enrolment into formal schooling for older adolescent girls was usually limited, with 3 out of 4 LNGB projects offering older girls this option reported discouraging older girls from choosing formal schooling. **As such, the study team concludes that girls had limited options and choice regarding their transition pathways**.

For girls' pathway preference, the study team considered preferences against the pathway assigned to them. For example, for girls who had transitioned to the formal schooling track the study team disaggregated data between those that had a preference to (re) enrol into formal schooling versus those who wished to transition to skills and work-related opportunities.

Sample

In this analysis, not many projects collected data on pathway preferences. **Therefore, the sample was limited to 925 adolescent girls from three projects (*TEACH* (Learn, Earn), *TEAM Girl*, *ENGAGE*) and four cohorts.**

3.2.4. Limitations

Absence of a comparison group

1. **In this study, we exclude data collected on non-treated groups.**[41] Consequently, any improvements observed in the analysis of learning changes over time cannot be attributed to the projects.

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41 Apart from the Aarambha project, the LNGB window projects do not incorporate comparison groups into its evaluation designs due to ethical implications of not providing interventions to highly marginalised girls. Aarambha's design, however, phases the interventions to allow to incorporate a non-treated group, who later receives the intervention in upcoming cohorts.

Transition pathways

2. As external evaluation data are collected prior to girl's transition, there is no way of knowing the specific transition pathways girls selected after completing the education programmes using the evaluation data.

   The distinction between transition pathways based on age proved to provide valuable context for interpreting the study team's findings. Since the team lacked data on the specific pathways girls transitioned to (as external evaluation data collected prior to girl's transition and monitoring data could not be merged across all projects), we extracted information from baseline project reports regarding the age range for which the projects tailored their interventions and pathways, and then used project age-range descriptions to categorise girls into two groups using their age at baseline: younger girls (on the pathway to formal schooling) and older girls (on the pathway to skills and work-related opportunities).

3. *Table 13* tabulates the baseline transition pathways using age of girls based on information from the baseline reports. The categorisation of girls into age-groups and intended pathways was carried out while considering some assumptions, exclusions of data and implications.

- As discussed in Point 2, girls were assigned to transition pathways based on their age. As such, girls without age information were dropped from the analysis (n = 29).

- It was not possible to separate out options among various skills and work-related opportunities (such as vocational training and employment) at portfolio level. In six projects[42], it was possible to separate girls into vocational training and employment (for example, in *Closing the Gap*, girls aged 14-17 could only select vocational training and girls age above 18 could only select employment. In *AGES*, all girls aged 17-19 only had the option of transitioning into employment). However, this was not the case in the eight remaining projects, where older girls had the option of choosing among various skills and work-related opportunities. As it was not possible to distinguish which skills and work-related opportunities they pursued from the data for all projects, the study team grouped girls pursuing skills and work-related opportunities into 'skills and work-related opportunities pathway'.

- In the case of projects where older girls had the option of going into formal schooling or vocational training or employment (such as *Aarambha* and *TEAM Girl*), the study team assumed they transitioned to vocational training or an employment track. As some older girls technically still had the option to enrol in formal schooling, this could potentially result in another source of misclassification.

- *TEACH* C1 Distant is excluded from analysis as the programme did not have a clear transition pathway, due to it being implemented during Covid-19 as an additional layer to the existing Learn and Earn cohorts.

- *TEAM Girl* used age of girls at endline to categorise girls into different preferred transition pathways. Using this information, we merge endline age for categorisation. For girls who were not recontacted (no endline data), we used baseline age plus two years (programme duration) for the pathway categorisation.

- As the transition pathway information is categorised using baseline age, the analysis done for change over time which distinguishes by girls' transition pathways used the panel sample of girls and fixed the pathway using age at baseline.[43]

Table 13: Girls' transition pathways at baseline (treatment girls only)

Girls' transition pathways	N	% of BL data	Subgroup analysis
Formal schooling	6,757	38.25	Formal schooling pathway
Skills training leading to employment / employment / entrepreneurship	6,761	38.28	Skills and work-related opportunities pathway
Vocational training	1,422	8.05	
Employment / entrepreneurship	1,903	10.77	
Non-formal schooling under Covid-19	792	4.48	Unclassified
Unknown	29	0.16	

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42 Including Closing the Gap, AGES, TEAM Girl, Aarambha, SAGE, and ENGAGE
43 Attempts have been made at categorising transition pathway at follow-up. However, data on girls' ages are not always consistent across rounds.

Girls' transition pathways	N	% of BL data	Subgroup analysis
Total	17,664		

Marginalisation criteria and variables

1. Projects targeted girls into projects based on specific criteria. Not all these criteria were part of the evaluation data collection tools. Instead, common vulnerabilities collected through external evaluations are analysed. The vulnerabilities projects used to target girls were instead analysed using the three case studies of monitoring data.

2. The study team was limited by the data collected, and there are several constraints when combining data from different sources. As projects followed different targeting and sampling strategies, they do not always collect the same data. The samples differ (e.g., different girls and different projects) when we look at different factors (variables). Due to this difference, maintaining a consistent sample size by including only girls with available data in all variables led to significant reduction in sample size. Therefore, profiling of girls instead maximised the data available. Similarly, for examining changes over time, the study team was not able to include any covariates in the analysis as our sample size would drop significantly.

3. Projects took individual decisions when administering learning assessments which hindered aggregation on the portfolio level. For example, *MnM* external evaluation data did not include subtask scores despite the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) tool[44] submitted showing these. Instead, the submitted dataset only included categorisation as 'beginner / letter / word / paragraph / story' for literacy which could be used for integration with other projects and to create % correct scores. For numeracy, the subtasks were categorised as 'can / cannot do' which provides extremely limited information and cannot be integrated with other projects or used for analysis of % correct scores. *ENGAGE* took a decision to omit multiplication and division subtasks as girls did poorly when calibrating the tool but reintroduced the subtasks in endline. The project also combined addition and subtraction exercises, and in endline, multiplication and division (which are considered separate in other projects). As such, these subtasks were utilised to calculate the aggregate numeracy scores but could not be used for subtask analysis alongside the other projects which reported the subtasks separately.

4. Data related to agency and choice were limited. Changes in outcomes could only be done with a subset of projects, which would not be considered representative of the LNGB portfolio. Therefore, results of research questions 2 and 3 on changes in self-efficacy and pathway preference should be read as individual case studies.

4. Case study analysis

4.1. Overview

As outlined in the Research Framework above (*Section 2.1),* the research design for this study identifies two main methods for the case study review:

- **Monitoring data** were collected directly from the three IPs, and includes data while girls were enrolled on the LNGB projects, their transition and post-transition status.
- **Primary data collection tools** which were developed iteratively, and in response to all three overarching questions, together with the cross-cutting themes relating to PEA and GESI. The research tools were developed to capture different stakeholder perspectives around similar themes. This was done to ensure better triangulation between different stakeholder groups around a given set of themes.

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44 Assessing Early Reading Ability

4.2. Monitoring data

4.2.1. Overview

Project monitoring data were available for the three LNGB case studies which were the focus of this report (*Aarambha, EfL* and *STAGE*). It contained data both during programme pathway and after the girls had transitioned. As such, analysis using monitoring data complemented analysis using EE data, which only have information during programme pathway.

4.2.2. Data availability

STAGE

STAGE girls were monitored throughout the project length, including when they transitioned to formal school (formal track) or finished the programme intervention of accelerated learning and vocational training classes (non-formal track). Only a sub-sample of 380 girls in the non-formal track (<5%) were selected by the project to investigate levels of satisfaction and perceptions of effectiveness of the vocational training that they received for their subsequent income generating activities.

STAGE monitoring data included information collected on girls' characteristics (e.g., age) and vulnerabilities (including poverty, living in remote areas, being child brides, being married). Most of these vulnerabilities are related to the targeting criteria for their inclusion in the project. For girls in the formal track who successfully transitioned, we also have information on their entry grades.

At the time of writing this report, data were available for all the four cohorts from the formal and non-formal tracks. However, the availability of data varied from cohort to cohort. Specifically, for Cohort 1 of the non-formal track, the final list of girls graduating from vocational training was the only information available. This did not include information on girls' characteristics or vulnerabilities. Therefore, this cohort was excluded from the analysis, leaving us with one formal track cohort and two non-formal track cohorts.

Monitoring data for STAGE girls were gathered by each downstream partner using semi-standardised forms. The information collected used girls' names rather than their unique identifiers. This presented a challenge at the time of merging across different sources (e.g. ALPS monitoring form and vocational training form), especially for the non-formal track cohorts. In addition to different spellings of the same name there were also cases where some girls were registered with local names (or the names community members were familiar with) at the time of enrolment, but when graduation certificates were issued (and registered in the monitoring data) the names used were those in their birth certificates.[45] During the data cleaning and merging, the study team was able to deal with most of the cases where names were spelled differently. However, girls registered with different names were dropped for the analysis.[46] Appending and merging the data for all downstream partners and across sources resulted in a sample that included 7,935 girls in the formal track (for Cohort 1) and 6,767 girls in the non-formal track (for both C2 and C3 combined). Excluding girls in the list of dropouts, the sample size for the non-formal track decreases to 6,114. The merging figures are presented in *Table 14*.

Table 14: Percentages of girls who cannot be merged in non-formal cohorts

		Non- Formal track – Cohort 2			Non- Formal track – Cohort 3		
		Data received	Total merged	% not merged	Data received	Total merged	% not merged
Master list	**Attendance**	3,516	3,428	2.50%	2,743	2,686	2.08%
	Drop out	328	324	1.22%	329	329	0.00%
Total master list merged		3,844	3,752	2.39%	3,072	3,015	1.86%
Graduation list		3,418	3,134	8.31%	2,907	2,264	22.12%

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45 Insights gathered through conversations with MEL lead.
46 Findings need to be caveated by the fact that we were not able to merge a group of girls due to a lack of unique identifiers. Therefore, dropout/ attrition and graduation rate estimates will have a margin error from 2.2 to 14.7%, respectively.

The monitoring data available for the *STAGE* project allowed the team to explore RQ1 as profiles relating to girls' vulnerabilities and respective transition pathways were available. For girls in the formal track, the study team was also able to answer questions related to successful transition into formal schooling (RQ3). However, the data lacked information on girls' status after graduating from the vocational training (non-formal track). As a result, it was not possible to answer questions related to successful transition after the programme finished for this group.

EfL

Girls from the three cohorts were monitored throughout the project from the moment they joined the catch-up centres to the time they graduated from the non-formal pathways and beyond. The most recent tracking was carried out in 2023 and it included information on gainful employment and starting new businesses (non-formal pathways) and entry grades (formal pathway). The monitoring data also included information on girls' characteristics – such as age at the time of joining the project, and specific vulnerabilities (e.g., having a disability, being married, being pregnant or having children), as well as information on transition (or dropout), graduation status, and post-graduation outcomes. This complements the insights gained through the examination of external evaluation data which were collected before transition pathways were assigned to or chosen by girls. These data allow the study team to answer research questions related to the profiling of girls (RQ1) and their transitions (RQ3).

The monitoring data includes 5,701 girls from the three cohorts with most girls (>80%) being in the 15-20 age group. The sample sizes by cohort and age group are presented in *Table 15*.

Table 15: Number of EfL girls, by cohort

	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	Total
Girls aged 9-14	120 (19%)	404 (17%)	476 (17%)	1,000
Girls aged 15-20	526 (81%)	1,923 (83%)	2,252 (83%)	4,701
Total	**646**	**2,327**	**2,728**	**5,701**

The way the data are collected allowed the study team to track retention and dropout (both during the time at the learning centre, and during transition phases), together with successful transition at different points in time. For each of the different stages the study team did this by disaggregating the characteristics and vulnerabilities of girls. This helped answer RQ1 and RQ3.

Aarambha

The monitoring data from the *Aarambha* project included data from the time girls were enrolled at the learning centre, during the transition pathway, and post-transition. Most recently, girls were tracked in December 2022. This was two years after girls in Cohort 1 had transitioned to their respective pathways, one year after girls in Cohort 2 had transitioned, and one month after girls in Cohort 3 had transitioned. For the post-transition, the programme tracked only girls who received cash grants, which were given to them after the transition period.

Monitoring data included information related to girls' characteristics (age) and vulnerabilities (other than marital and motherhood status, the project also collected data on employment and disability). Contained within the monitoring data was girls' status regarding transitions which was tracked via enrolment trackers (for the formal schooling pathway) and employment trackers (for the vocational training pathway). Enrolment trackers contained information on the grades into which girls transitioned, their current grades, attendance, and girls' performance at school (as perceived by girls and the schools). Employment trackers contained information on whether girls started their business and business type.[47]

For Cohorts 1 and 2, the study team received enrolment and employment trackers for two timepoints from the *Aarambha* IP: April/July 2022 and December 2022. In this case study, we report the results of the most recent one (most recent status of enrolment/employment). For Cohort 3, the study team received the enrolment tracker for December 2022, but not the employment tracker as data were scheduled to be collected in June 2023. Cohort 4 had started their intervention in the Community Learning Centres (CLCs) in September 2022, and hence had no transition data as of December 2022.

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[47] The programme does not systematically track girls transitioning into informal schooling or safe employment.

Table 16: Availability of enrolment and employment trackers

	Enrolment tracker	Employment tracker
Cohort 1	July 2022 and Dec 2022	April 2022 and Dec 2022
Cohort 2	July 2022 and Dec 2022	Dec 2022
Cohort 3	Dec 2022	Not available

Data relating to Cohorts 2 and 3 were linked with unique identifiers. This enabled the study team to merge across a master list of girls, enrolment trackers, and employment trackers. For Cohort 1, however, the merging of the trackers to the master list of girls had to be done using girls' names and CLCs. As a result, 13 girls (1 per cent of girls who transitioned) were not merged and were dropped from the analysis.

The availability of monitoring data of *Aarambha* allowed the study team to answer part of RQ1 in profiling girls' vulnerabilities by transition pathways, and RQ3 on whether girls successfully transitioned after the programme finished.
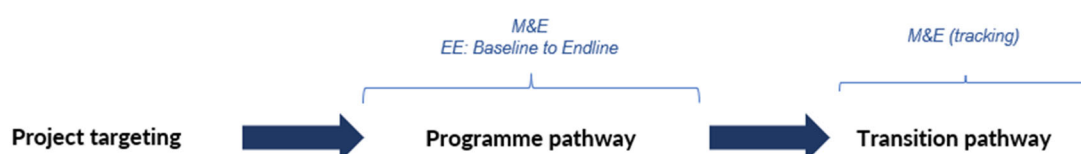
Methods of analysis

The quantitative analysis used project monitoring data contributed to answering two research questions through descriptive and subgroup analysis, presented as follows:

- **Profiling of beneficiary girls** to answer RQ1

- **Examination of actual transition pathways taken by girls and factors contributing to the decision**, to answer RQ3

Analysis using project monitoring data aimed to complement analyses which the external evaluation (EE) data were unable to answer. As illustrated in *Figure 2*, while EE data are available only during the programme pathway, monitoring data, on the other hand, are available both during programme pathway and after the girls had transitioned. As such, the case studies were able to provide information on elements relating to RQ1 and RQ3 that could not be answered using the EE data.

For RQ1, monitoring data offered analyses by marginalisation criteria that each project used to target girls. Many of these criteria were not available in the EE data (including girls living in remote area (STAGE), modern slavery and girl being head of household (EfL)). Similar to the EE data, we conduct profiling of beneficiary girls based on their transition pathways.

For RQ3, monitoring data helped to answer the ways that LNGB pathways influenced girls' transition to formal school and skills and work-related opportunities. Given that EE data were collected prior to girls transitioning, it is not possible to analyse any outcomes relating to transition using the EE data. With monitoring data, however, we can investigate actual transition pathways the girls selected, characteristics of girls who transitioned compared to those who dropped out, and girls' preferred transition pathways. To investigate factors contributing to girls' transition outcomes, we used Linear Probability Models (LPM). The model predicts the likelihood of girls with specific characteristics in having the outcome of interest (transition pathway, attrition, or graduation).

Figure 3: Project cycle and source of quantitative data

4.2.3.   Limitations in monitoring data analysis

Data availability and quality

1. Monitoring data for STAGE girls were gathered by each downstream partner using semi-standardised forms. The information was collected using girls' names and not with unique identifiers, which presented a challenge at the time of merging across different sources (e.g. ALPS monitoring form and vocational training form), especially for the non-formal track cohorts.

2. Data from the Cohort 1 of non-formal track in STAGE were excluded from the analysis as there was no information on girls' characteristics and vulnerabilities, nor dropouts.

4.3.   Primary data collection

4.3.1.   LNGB project selection strategy

The IE team identified **three LNGB projects** from which to collect in-depth primary qualitative data. **Six essential criteria** were identified, which LNGB projects needed to fulfil to be shortlisted as a case study. For projects that met all six criteria, a further four criteria were identified for consideration for the final selection (*Table 17*).

Table 17: Selection criteria for LNGB projects

Criteria	Essential	Further consideration	Rationale
Project must target both younger (10-14) and older (15-19) adolescent girls as the intended beneficiaries.	✓		The challenges, opportunities and needs of girls can vary significantly over the 10-19 years of age which is the official age range targeted by LNGB projects.
Project must have more than one education pathway for marginalised girls beyond formal schooling.	✓		Projects which offer more than one education pathway (e.g., accelerated education *and* community-based education) may allow for comparability.
Avoid in-depth qualitative data collection with projects selected in previous IE studies.	✓		Over the duration of the IE period the team endeavours to include as many different projects as case studies for in-depth qualitative research.
Feasibility to carry out primary research in country.	✓		Primary data collection must take place in a safe, timely and cost-effective way without risk of harm to participants or fieldworkers.
Availability of quantitative data relating to project outcomes	✓		This enables the team to further explore quantitative findings through the qualitative data
Capacity and willingness of selected IP to engage with the IE team during the timeframe of the study.	✓		IP engagement is crucial for our data collection processes, as they need to support access to participants.
Length of programme		✓	Given the programmes followed across most LNGB projects are similar, variation in the duration may draw useful insights related to programme design.
Project status		✓	The willingness of IPs or ability to track stakeholders involved in the

Criteria	Essential	Further consideration	Rationale
			study may prove more challenging if the project has closed.
Geographical spread		✓	This will enable representation from the key regions of the GEC II.
Beneficiary characteristics		✓	A spread of characteristics of the most marginalised girls across the shortlisted LNGB projects is important for this study.

Application of the selection protocol based on essential criteria

Essential criteria

a. Project needed to target both younger and older adolescent girls

Adolescence as defined in the LNGB Window includes girls aged between 10 and 19 years (recognising that actual project beneficiaries may be younger or older than this age range). The study aimed to explore the different experiences of younger (aged 10-14 years of age) and older adolescent girls (aged 15-19 years of age). The rationale for this (as set out in the rapid evidence review) was that younger and older adolescent girls faced very different challenges and needs. In addition, the review of LNGB project documentation indicated that some projects also provided specific and differentiated support to younger (10 to 14 years of age) and older (15 to 19 years of age) adolescent girls.

This criterion did not exclude any of the 14 projects.

b. Project must offer more than one type of transition pathway[6]

A key element of this study was to explore girls' agency, choice and what they went on to do after their time at the LNGB learning centre. Of the 14 LNGB projects, 12 offered more than one type of transition pathway for girls to graduate onto.

This criterion excluded the following projects which only implemented one programme:

1. *EAGER* (Sierra Leone); and
2. *STAGES LNGB +* (Afghanistan).

c. Avoid duplication of projects for in-depth data collection across IE studies

To ensure that the GEC II IE studies collected primary data with as many of the GEC II projects as possible, and also did not overwhelm project personnel with demands across multiple evaluation studies, this study excluded four LNGB projects which had been selected for primary data collection for previous GEC evaluations and the Rapid Research Learning Fund (RRLF).

This criterion excluded the following projects:

1. *TEAM Girl* (Malawi) [fourth study];
2. *EAGER* (Sierra Leone) [second study];
3. *ENGAGE* (Nepal) [fourth study]; and
4. *MnM* (Nepal) [RRLF].

d. Feasibility of carrying out primary research in-country

The feasibility of carrying out fieldwork was judged in relation to security, time and resource constraints. This was primarily through a consideration of how these factors could affect researchers, partners, and participants on the ground who were involved in the study.

Given the political situation in Afghanistan, it was deemed too high a risk to carry out fieldwork in this context. While research activities were possible in Somalia[7], the team's correspondence with the IP in Somalia indicated the very evident risks to collecting data. For example, correspondence with the IP had indicated that

project beneficiaries and other stakeholders associated with the project were targets for militants given their work around girls' education.

This criterion excluded the following projects:

1. *STAGES LNGB +* (Afghanistan).
2. *AGES* (Somalia).

e. Availability of quantitative data relating to project outcomes

Research Question 2 includes a particular focus on how and to what extent LNGB projects have influenced marginalised girls' learning and transition outcomes. The intention is to link the findings from the quantitative data with the qualitative data to the extent possible. Thus, this criterion requires that projects must have baseline data and at least midline or endline data for at least one cohort. A review of all LNGB projects' external evaluator data to map data availability based on baseline, midline and endline data by cohort and programme was undertaken. Projects with data for at least one cohort, and which also break this down by programme pathway include: (1) *STAGE* (Ghana); (2) *Closing the Gap* (Pakistan); and (3) *TEACH* (Pakistan).

Projects which were excluded for not meeting the criterion relating to the availability of quantitative data include the following projects:

1. *STAGES LNGB +* (Afghanistan);
2. *CHANGE* (Ethiopia); and
3. *BtA* (Ethiopia).

f. Capacity and willingness of IPs to be involved in study

The final essential criterion for project selection was the IPs' capacity and willingness to engage with the study, given the need to consult with them at various stages including fieldwork tool design, sampling, factual accuracy of reporting, etc., and require their facilitation for accessing the fieldwork sites and participants. Our contact with all 14 IPs allowed the team the opportunity to collect project documentation relevant for this study. During our initial correspondence with all 14 IPs, four expressed an explicit interest to be involved in the study. These were: (1) *STAGE* (Ghana*); (2) *MnM (*Nepal); (3) *EAGER* (Sierra Leone); and (4) *SAGE* (Zimbabwe).

Desirable criteria/ other considerations

Together with essential criteria, the following was also taken into consideration when shortlisting the LNGB projects for this study.

g. Length of programme

The majority of LNGB projects with more than one programme pathway were those where the intended pathway was for beneficiary girls to return to formal schooling, or for adolescent girls to follow other transition pathways (e.g., income generating activities, vocational skills etc.). One potential focus of this study is to understand whether differences in the length of the programme influence girls' outcomes.

A review of the projects shows little differentiation in the duration of programmes between the different LNGB projects. The one exception is *SAGE (Zimbabwe)*. The length of the programme looking at pathways beyond formal schooling was longer compared to other LNGB projects.[8]

h. Status of project

The study involves interviewing girls who are direct beneficiaries of the project, involving coordinating with IPs. While the ToR states that the project design should not be contingent on whether the project is still active, it should also be recognised that the likelihood of being able to identify and collect data from beneficiaries after the project has ended will be more challenging for closed projects (but not impossible). It may mean less willingness on the part of IPs to be involved, or else it may be difficult to organise interviews with stakeholders (including girls) who may either be unwilling or who may have moved locations since the end of the project.[3]

i. Geographical spread

The six projects which met the essential criteria were located across five countries in West Africa (Ghana), East and Southern Africa (Kenya x1 and Zimbabwe x1) and South Asia (Nepal x1 and Pakistan x2).

For the purpose of this study we proposed:

- Including projects in both sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia;
- Where possible, including contexts which have not been included in previous and ongoing GEC II Evaluation Studies;

j. Project beneficiary characteristics

Given the research focus of the study is on the most marginalised girls, a spread of different characteristics of the most marginalised groups was a further consideration. For the six shortlisted projects, *STAGE* (Ghana) focused on teenage mothers; *EfL* (Kenya) focused on girls who have faced or survived conflict; *SAGE* (Zimbabwe) focused on girls from religious minorities. Projects in Pakistan presented their target beneficiary girls as those living in contexts with strict social norms, but more background research would have been required to understand beneficiary characteristics.

Shortlisted projects

Based on this process using the criteria set out, the study team shortlisted six LNGB projects *(Table 18)*. The IPs for all six projects were contacted in August 2022 to evaluate further their suitability as well as to gather information concerning the feasibility of collecting primary data. During this process, two IPs indicated their unavailability to engage with the study: (1) *SAGE* (Zimbabwe) – the IP declined to participate in the study due to an external evaluation of the project taking place in 2023 which would limit the team's capacity to support this study; and (2) *TEACH* (Pakistan) – the IP indicated that because the project would be closing in October 2022, by the time fieldwork was due to commence (January 2023) there would have been no field staff to facilitate data collection. Additionally, extreme weather conditions in Balochistan during the planned fieldwork period would have meant communities and fieldwork sites were inaccessible to the data collection team.

The team selected the remaining four projects, which had been agreed with FCDO in August 2022: (1) *STAGE* (Ghana); (2) *EfL* (Kenya); (3) *Aarambha* (Nepal); and (4) *Closing the Gap* (Pakistan). The four selected projects offered a good geographical mix (i.e., two in South Asia, one in East Africa and one in West Africa), and all four IPs confirmed their willingness to participate in the study. However, the August 2022 floods which subsequently affected one-third of Pakistan's population – including in locations where the *Closing the Gap* project operated – meant it was not feasible to collect primary data for this study. In agreement with the FCDO, the study team proceeded with the remaining three projects and did not replace *Closing the Gap*. See *Table 19.*

Within each of the LNGB projects, two learning centres per project were selected. More details on the criteria used to select these centres are presented in *Section 4.3.3.*

Table 18: Selected LNGB projects from those that were shortlisted

Country	IP	Project	Shortlisted	Agreed to Participate?	Selected
Ghana	World Education Inc	STAGE	✓	✓	✓
Kenya	Action Aid	EfL	✓	✓	✓
Nepal	People in Need	Aarambha	✓	✓	✓
Pakistan	ACTED	Closing the Gap	✓	✓	✗
Pakistan	IRC	TEACH	✓	✗	✗
Zimbabwe	VSO	SAGE	✓	✗	✗

Details of shortlisted projects

A summary overview of the three LNGB projects is presented in *Table 19.* This includes key information relevant to this study including the number of girls reached, who the other key beneficiaries targeted by the study were, what the key interventions were, and the transition pathways girls could join after completing their time at the LNGB learning centre.

Table 19: Overview of EfL, STAGE and Aarambha projects

Project	Number of girls reached (direct)	Other key beneficiaries	Key Interventions	Locations project works in (fieldwork sites in red text)	Length of time at learning centre	Transition pathways
EfL (Kenya)	**5,701**	• Caregivers • Education Facilitators • Mentors • Community • Boys • Parents/ caregivers • Formal schoolteachers	*During LNGB (at learning centre)* • Basic literacy and numeracy classes. • Life skills sessions (career counselling, adolescent sexual and reproductive health, self-efficacy). • Material support (scholastic and hygiene kits, assistive devices for girls with disabilities, milk, and child-minder at learning centre for girls with children). • Career counselling services. • Recruitment and training for educators, facilitators, teacher aides, teacher coaches, mentors, and project staff. • Community and household sensitisation activities. • Awareness raising on importance of girls' education. • Establish safe girl spaces for psycho-social support. *After LNGB (transition period)* • Provide girls/ caregivers with financial support to buy scholastic kits and other expenditures relating to school (formal track). • Training of teachers in formal schools (formal track). • Provide girls' caregivers with training and business start-up kits for further economic empowerment (formal track). • Girl clubs (formal track). • Provide girls training and business start-up kits (apprenticeship, entrepreneurship, and vocational training track). • Child minder at Technical and Vocational College (vocational training track).	**Garissa** Isiolo **Kilifi** Kisumu Migori	6-to-9 months	Girls aged 10-14 • Formal schooling Girls aged 15-19 • Apprenticeship • Vocational training • Entrepreneurship
STAGE (Ghana)	**17,014** - 8,245 on formal track - 8,769 on non-formal track	• ALP facilitators • Boys • Formal School Teachers • Parents/ caregiver • Community members	*During LNGB (at learning centre)* • Basic literacy and numeracy classes (Formal Track (FT) and Non-Formal Track (NFT)). • Life skills classes (FT and NFT). • Scholastic kits (FT and NFT). • Community sensitisation (FT and NFT).	Central (*) Eastern (*) Oti (*) Northern **Upper East** **Upper West**	9 months (FE track) 6 months ALP + 3 months income-generating	Girls aged 10-14 • Formal schooling Girls aged 15-19 • Entrepreneurship • Vocational training

Project	Number of girls reached (direct)	Other key beneficiaries	Key Interventions	Locations project works in (fieldwork sites in red text)	Length of time at learning centre	Transition pathways
			• Engagement with religious and traditional leaders (FT and NFT). • Recruitment and training of educators (FT and NFT). • Identification of master crafts people (NFT). • Home visits to discuss importance of schooling (FT). • Vocational training from master craftspeople (NFT). • Catch up classes during COVID-19 (FT). • Engagement with government officials. *After LNGB (transition period)* • Scholastic school transition kits (FT). • Establishment of bicycle banks within girls' communities (FT). • Training of teachers at formal schools (FT). • Home visits to discuss importance of schooling (FT). • Provide girls' caregivers with training for further economic empowerment (FT). • Bridge/ catch-up classes (FT). • Train master crafts persons in gender responsive pedagogy and safeguarding (NFT). • Funds for income generating activity (NFT). • M&E activities to collect feedback from girls, caregivers, teachers, and master craftspeople (FT and NFT).	(*) NFT only	activities (IGA) (NFE track)	
Aarambha (Nepal)	**8,500**	• Aarambha facilitators and mentors • Teachers • Community members • Families • In-school boys + girls • Government authorities	*During LNGB (at learning centre)* • Basic literacy and numeracy classes. • Life skills classes – financial literacy, family planning, self-efficacy. • Training of female facilitators and mentors. • Engagement with families. • Recruit community change champions to combat harmful gender norms. • Curriculum development and adaptation. • Gender transformative workshops (with girls, boys, community, family members and government stakeholders).	**Bara Rautahat**	9-11 months	Girls aged 10-19 • Formal schooling Girls aged 15-19 • Vocational training

Project	Number of girls reached (direct)	Other key beneficiaries	Key Interventions	Locations project works in (fieldwork sites in red text)	Length of time at learning centre	Transition pathways
			After LNGB (transition period) • Gender responsive pedagogical training for teachers (formal track). • Psychosocial counselling (formal track). • Training of teachers at formal schools in gender responsive pedagogical training (formal track). • Vocational skills training (vocational training track). • Bridge/ catch-up classes (formal track). • Cash and non-cash grants to girls/ girls' families to enable girls to pursue life plans (formal, vocational training track and post-transition).			

4.3.2. Primary data collection tools

Stakeholders from whom primary data were collected include: girls targeted by the project; educators who taught girls while they were enrolled on the LNGB learning centres; transition pathway providers (teachers, skills and business coaches) who taught/ mentored girls after they transitioned to education or skills and work-related opportunities after completing the LNGB projects; community members who projects engaged with; and downstream partners who implemented activities.

The tools were standardised to facilitate comparisons at the analysis stage, while allowing for adaptations appropriate to context. All tools were translated from English into the local languages to facilitate data collection.

The four methods, the key research design rationale and limitation considerations are outlined in *Table 20*.

Table 20: Research design, primary qualitative methods and limitations

Method	Rationale	Limitations and mitigation strategies
Semi-structured open-ended in-depth interviews	Semi-structured open-ended interviews (including in-depth and key informant) provide key topics (translated for context) and probes. This improves comparability of responses across countries, projects, and stakeholders. Key informant interviews provide information to inform the wider contexts within which the LNGB projects are working. In-depth interviews designed for girls help them to build upon the experiences shared in their River of Life drawings regarding key interventions and themes.	*Limitations* Respondents may feel obliged to portray a particular topic or intervention in a certain light, particularly if direct beneficiaries of the project are being interviewed.t Interviews depend on trust and rapport between interviewees and facilitators, which can be hard to establish in a short time frame. Interviews require a high degree of facilitator knowledge and skill, and therefore require careful recruitment and appropriate training on both the instruments and the content. Facilitators' own observational, cultural, and other biases may be reflected in the way questions are framed. Data generated through interviews can be difficult to generalise and there is a risk of perspectives not representing those of the wider population. Sensitive areas – such as gender-based violence – may be triggering for girls.
Semi-structured open-ended key informant interviews		*Mitigation strategies* To overcome these challenges, highly qualified facilitators were recruited through data collection partners in-country. An open-ended concluding question also provided respondents with the opportunity to raise any important issues not already covered. Facilitators were trained in the use of directing prompts, or re-asking questions in a way that respondents could better engage with questions. Questions about sensitive areas were kept to a minimum, training on safeguarding protocols for the respective projects built into the training and pilot process, and a psycho-social counsellor was present.
Focus group discussions	Group discussions can be less intimidating than in-depth or one-on-one interviews and facilitate a livelier discussion among respondents, particularly those	*Limitations* Focus groups can feel contrived and intimidating for participants not used to this kind of research, particularly from marginalised communities and groups.

Method	Rationale	Limitations and mitigation strategies
	from the same community, with diverse perspectives. Focus group discussion instruments for use with beneficiaries were written to use familiar and unthreatening language, and open-ended questions.	Focus groups require a high degree of facilitator knowledge and skill, and therefore require careful recruitment and appropriate training on both the instruments and content. Facilitators' own observational, cultural, and other biases may be reflected in the way the questions are framed. Data generated through group discussions can also be difficult to generalise, owing to the interactions between groups and the risk of perspectives not representing those of the wider population. There is a risk of more and less active participants
		Mitigation strategies Facilitators were trained on ensuring equitable inclusion of respondents, directing prompts, or re-asking questions to respondents who were shy or less engaged. Focus group discussions were split by gender to try to reduce some of the power imbalances which may otherwise have arisen.
River of life participatory methods	Participatory methods can help elevate the voices of the most marginalised girls and centre their perspectives by reducing the power distance that is typically present between researchers and participants in more traditional data collection methods. It can also be a mechanism through which more sensitive themes can be explored e.g., gender-based violence. Participatory methods can be used by linking this to in-depth interviews and making interview guides more context specific to the girl.	*Limitations* Participatory methods like the River of Life require a high degree of facilitator knowledge and skill, and therefore require careful recruitment and appropriate training on both the instruments and content. There is a risk of triggering participant distress as they recall distressing past events in their drawings. The speed at which participants complete the exercise according to the facilitator's instructions may differ significantly from participant to participant. *Mitigation strategies* Training on safeguarding protocols for the respective projects was built into the training and pilot process, and a psycho-social counsellor was present. The facilitator was supported by other data collectors who, if needed, could provide more one-on-one support to participants who were slower at completing the instructions.

Table 21: Summary of primary qualitative methods by stakeholder

Respondents	Primary qualitative methods		
	KIIs/ IDIs	**FGDs**	**Participatory Methods**
Girls	✓		✓
Educators	✓		
Transition pathway providers	✓		
Community groups		✓	
National and sub-national government officials	✓		

Respondents	Primary qualitative methods		
	KIIs/ IDIs	FGDs	Participatory Methods
Downstream partners	✓		

Centring girls' voices through the use of participatory methods

A primary objective of this study was to centre the perspectives of marginalised adolescent girls to understand whether engagement in the LNGB projects met their needs and promoted their agency and life choice. To do this, the study considered research data collection methods which were able to address the power dynamics resulting in the marginalisation of this group, and consequently make their perspectives invisible (Pincock & Jones, 2020). This required creating space afforded to girls where they felt comfortable to express themselves.

Participatory data collection research methods were embedded as central to achieving this objective as they can address the unequal power relations between "researcher" and "researched". By their very nature, participatory methods are *"often seen as inherently 'youth-friendly' because they are generally more enjoyable"* (Pincock & Jones, 2020). Participatory data collection research methods can also be used to elevate voices of groups who may otherwise be invisible, by considering the structural and relational marginalisation these groups may face (Alanen & Mayall, 2003; Kellett, 2010). These methods are often visual in nature and can be an effective way of elevating the voices of marginalised adolescents which traditional data collection methods are often unable to do (Pincock & Jones, 2020). Traditional approaches which focus on questionnaires and surveys, for example, are not just devoid of context but may fail to sufficiently engage young people, or else actively exclude those who are not literate (Smith & Barker, 1999). One-off interviews between adult researchers and young people can, similarly, reinforce rather than minimise pre-existing hierarchies (Alanen & Mayall, 2003; Mayall, 2000). Participatory methods aim to take into account which research data collection tools work best for adolescents, given that those used to collect data from adults do not necessarily always translate well to this subset of the population (Hieftje et al., 2014).

Visual participatory methods have often been used to help document social realities and have been more commonly associated with research collection methods that engage adolescents. The most common visual methods are drawings, photography, montage, photovoice and video tools. Visual methods can help convey complex meanings, experiences and realities in contexts which may otherwise be difficult to do if relying on the spoken or written word (Pincock & Jones, 2020).

Taking into account these criticisms of more traditional data collection methods and the objectives of this study, the design of this study centred around the ***Rivers of Life*** visual participatory method which allows participants to map out and provide critical insights into their lives (Pridmore & Yates, 2006). This method allows for a focus on critical moments in participants' lives; experience of services; peer and family influences; barriers and negative experiences; and enablers and empowering experiences (Percy-Smith, n.d). The "highs" of the river, for example, are meant to represent positive experiences in a participant's life, while the "lows" may reflect negative experiences. The metaphor of a river used to depict a personal journey or history is widely understood across different cultures and contexts.

In the context of this study, the River of Life method enabled girls to unpack choices they experienced during their education and livelihood journeys, changes over time, stakeholder influences and aspirations for the future. Each girl was asked to chart out their individual education and livelihood journeys represented through the metaphor of a river. They were asked to map this against a timeline spanning from before they enrolled into the LNGB project right the way through to one year into the future.

The objective of the *Rivers of Life* session was to collect information on the following:

- A girl's education and livelihood journey before, during and after the LNGB programme, and one year into the future.

- Obstacles/ enablers girls identified in their individual education and livelihood journeys (both before, during and after completing the LNGB programme.

- The consequences of these obstacles/ enablers on girls' participation and learning when it came to their education and livelihoods.

- Stakeholders who acted as enablers/ barriers in affecting their education and livelihood journeys.

- Alternative choices or directions the girl would have chosen had they not had support from the LNGB project.

- A girl's life aspirations for one year from the present.

4.3.3. Sampling of learning centres

The sampling approach for primary data collection was purposive and iterative, developed in consultation with the IPs. It aimed to maximise project comparability by engaging with respondents from various system levels (national, regional, community, learning centre, skills training programme) in each of the three project contexts.

Location and learning centre selection

For each of the three LNGB projects, two geographical locations were selected which differed by district, region, or county. One learning centre per geographical location was selected, meaning there were a total of two learning centres per country from where primary data were collected. For this study, a learning centre is defined as the physical centre used by each of the selected LNGB projects to implement GEC II programming.

The criteria for selection were as follows:

- The IE team only selected centres from which girls from the latest cohort had graduated (Cohort 3).

- The learning centre/ community had to have a minimum number of five girls for each of the transition pathway offered by the LNGB project once they had graduated from the learning centre, together with at least five girls who had dropped out of the LNGB project before completing.

- Each of the learning centres were from a different geographic location i.e., counties in Kenya – Garissa and Kilifi; districts in Nepal – Bara and Rautahat; or regions in Ghana – Upper East and Upper West.

Kenya

The *EfL* project, implemented by ActionAid, offered four transition pathways to girls graduating from the programme on completion: formal schooling, vocational education, apprenticeships, or entrepreneurship tracks. The team selected centres with enough girls graduating from Cohort 3 (the latest cohort) with at least five girls transitioning from each of these tracks[48] and at least five girls who had dropped out of the *EfL* project.

The final two learning centres were selected by ensuring a sufficient regional difference based on the five counties that the *EfL* project operates in. The IE team selected Pamoja Centre in Garissa (largely pastoralist) and Dakacha Centre in Kilifi.

Nepal

In Nepal, the *Aarambha* project is implemented by People in Need (PIN). The local implementing partners that PIN works with are Aasaman Nepal which manages literacy and numeracy classes, and Social Organisation District Coordination Committee (SODCC) which manages the training relating to life skills and TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training).

The *Aarambha* LNGB project offers two transition pathways to girls graduating from the programme upon completion: (1) formal schooling and (2) vocational education. The IE team selected learning centres from which Cohort 3 girls had graduated (latest cohort). Within each centre, the requirement was for a minimum of at least five girls who had graduated from each of the formal and vocational education tracks, together with at least five girls who had dropped out of the *Aarambha* project.

Based on this, seven learning centres were shortlisted that met these criteria. The final two centres were selected by ensuring that one centre was in Bara District and one in Rautahat District, both in the Terai area

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48 Vocational education and apprenticeship were combined as in the case of some centres vocational education was not available because there was no nearby institute. Therefore, girls were offered the option of selecting an apprenticeship track in its place.

of Nepal which borders India. While these districts are not representative of the wider socio-cultural diversity of Nepal, they are the only two districts the *Aarambha* project operates in.

Ghana

In Ghana, the *STAGE* project was implemented by World Education. World Education worked with a local implementing partner, Link Community Development Initiative, in the Upper East region and ProNet in the Upper West region.

The *STAGE* LNGB project offered a formal and a non-formal track for girls enrolled on the programme. Girls on the formal track transitioned onto formal schooling, while girls on the non-formal track transitioned onto the entrepreneurship track. Communities within which the *STAGE* project operated were offered either both these pathways or just one of the pathways. For Study 5, the research teams shortlisted communities where the *STAGE* project operated both a formal and non-formal track, and where sufficient girls (at least five or more) had: (1) transitioned to formal schooling; (2) transitioned to entrepreneurship activities; or (3) dropped out.

Based on these criteria, the IE team shortlisted six communities which fulfilled these conditions. The selection of the final two communities was undertaken by ensuring that there was sufficient regional representation. The two last communities selected were from the Upper East and Upper West regions (see *Table 22* for final target samples for each country).

The three LNGB projects operate in several locations across the countries they are working in. *Table 22* gives a brief overview of the background characteristics of the locations that were eventually selected for primary data collection.

Table 22: Project locations and final section

LNGB project	Locations selected	Characteristics of selected locations
EfL (Kenya)	Garissa	Garissa is mainly made up of pastoralist communities with goat herding being one of the main sources of livelihood. Garissa's population is mainly made up of ethnic Somali.
	Kilifi	Kilifi is a coastal region off the coast of Mombasa.
Aarambha (Nepal)	Bara	Some of the municipalities of Bara district border India which present unique socio-economic and cultural practices. This includes, for example, cross-border marriages.
	Rautahat	Rautahat is the area with the largest percentage of Muslims residing in the district.
STAGE (Ghana)	Upper East	The Upper East and Upper West regions of Ghana have amongst the highest incidences of poverty.
	Upper West	These two regions also have the highest proportion of out-of-school children and adolescents in the country.

4.3.4. Sampling of stakeholders

Girls

The selection of the girl respondents was based on the following steps:

- Sampling was limited to the latest cohort of girls who had graduated from each of the respective LNGB programmes (Cohort 3). The rationale behind selecting the most recent graduates of each of the LNGB programmes was two-fold. The first was that girls from the most recent cohort were more likely to still be in the immediate vicinity, and available for data collection. The second was that they would have a better sense of recall when asked about the LNGB programme, having graduated more recently compared to earlier cohorts.

- Given that the focus of this study is on the most marginalised, information pertaining to girls' markers of marginalisation provided to the IE team by the IPs meant that when it came to the selection of shortlisted girls, the IE team, where this was possible, targeted girls with background characteristics

typically associated with the most marginalised (and the intersection of different characteristics of marginalisation). These markers differed by project and were as follows:

- o *STAGE (Ghana):* Living in extreme poverty, girls living in remote areas, teenage mothers, fostered girls.
- o *EfL (Kenya):* Disability, marital status, has a child/ is pregnant, has experienced modern day slavery.[4]
- o *Aarambha (Nepal):* Ethnicity, marital status, has children.

- Selection was also based on the age of the girl (based on the information that the IP provided) to ensure a sufficient mix of younger and older adolescents per transition pathway, or those that had dropped out.

Transition pathway providers

Transition pathway providers were defined as those who had taught, trained, or employed the girls who had been enrolled on the LNGB projects once they graduated onto their respective transition pathways. Transition pathway providers who were selected to take part in the study (teachers, vocational trainers, and employers) needed to be directly linked to the girls participating in the study. Initially, two transition pathway providers per pathway (2x teachers, 2x vocational/ apprenticeship trainers, 2x employers) were selected in each research location. However, in all three countries, the number of transition pathway providers named by the IP was below the target originally set out by the research team. This was often due to there being only one transition provider assigned to all the girls who transitioned onto a certain track (e.g., formal schooling). In certain cases, it was because these transition pathway providers had moved out of the vicinity and could not be contacted by the IP.

Educators

Educators were selected to ensure they were the same as those who had taught the girls selected for this study. In most cases, only one or two educators had taught all the girls in each cohort at a given centre.

Community members

Focus Group Discussions comprised community members, separated by gender, with whom the LNGB project had directly engaged. For each site, there was one group completed with men and one with women.

Government officials

Government officials were selected at the national and district levels based on if they had engaged with the LNGB project in their country.

4.3.5. Target versus achieved sample

The numbers targeted, and the achieved sample for each type of research, by country, is displayed in *Table 23*. IPs sent information to the IE team, from which the IE team selected girls based on the criteria associated with the girls' background characteristics (age and markers of marginalisation). Once the list of names was identified, this information was sent to the IPs, data collection partner and fieldwork manager. Data collection partners worked with downstream partners in each of the six contexts to get a list of names (and their corresponding background information) relating to other stakeholders.[49] This information was then sent to the IE team.

The IE team selected from each stakeholder list the preferred first choice participants and, where numbers allowed, a second choice (or replacement) participant was selected in the place of participants who were unavailable. As far as possible, replacements were selected with identical background characteristics (e.g., transition pathway, age, characteristics of marginalisation).

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49 For national level government stakeholders the data collection partners worked directly with IPs.

Table 23: Target and achieved sample, by country

Stakeholder	Target Sample per LNGB project	Achieved Sample			
		Kenya	Nepal	Ghana	Total
River of Life Workshops	6 - 8	7	6	6	19 workshops (98 girls)
Girls (semi-structured interview)	30 - 40	38	29	31	98
Girls on formal schooling pathway	10	12	13	10	35
Girls on skills training pathway	10	10	12	-	22
Girls on employment pathway	10	11	-	11	22
Girls who dropped out	10	5	7	7	19
Educators (semi-structured interview)	8	7	4	2	13
Transition Pathway Provider (semi-structured interview)	12 - 16	10	8	6	24
Community Members (Focus Group Discussion)	4	4	4	4	12
Local Government (key informant interview)	4	4	4	3	11
Central Government (key informant interview)	2	2	1	2	5
Downstream Partner (key informant interview)	2	2	4	2	8

4.3.6. Data collection partners and process

In each country, the IE team identified and contracted a local partner. Working with local partners ensured that the researchers collecting data had the specialist expertise in working with marginalised subsets of the population and had some experience of working with participatory data collection methods. These local partners were responsible for recruiting qualitative researchers and facilitators with the relevant skills required for the primary data collection. The local data collection partners (DCPs) were:

- Ghana; Practical Sampling International;
- Kenya: Research Options; and
- Nepal: Rooster Logic.

Most of the fieldwork took place between January and March 2023. Due to the sensitivities of working with girls, fieldwork staff were selected by the local data collection partners based on previous experience working with girls from marginalised backgrounds. A sufficient number of female fieldwork staff were selected to ensure girls would be interviewed by females.

Training

Training for interviewers, moderators, supervisors, transcribers, and psychosocial counsellors was designed in collaboration with the IE team and Fieldwork Manager (Julia Midland). The training lasted six days in each country.[50] Face-to-face training was delivered by a group comprising the Fieldwork Manager, the Research Lead, a specialist in participatory methods, and additional consultants.

Before starting in-country training with local field teams, the team was trained on the project's overarching goals and all the research tools, with a special focus on the purpose and intent of each tool, by the study team. In each country, training took place in person over six days. In Kenya, training took place at Research

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[50] In Ghana, the psychosocial counsellors attended all six days of training. In Kenya, the equivalent was five days while in Nepal, the psychosocial counsellors attended two out of the six days of the training.

Plus offices in Nairobi from 12th to 18th January 2023. Training took place in Nepal at the Entrance Café Chakupat in Kathmandu between 22nd and 28th January 2023. In Ghana, training was held at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research Institute in Accra between 30th January and 4th February 2023.

In each country, trainers collated detailed notes throughout each training to share with the larger training team highlighting challenges, proposed changes to the methodology, and lessons learned. This allowed the training to develop and improve over time so that best practices were institutionalised across all trainings and teams learned from what had and had not worked in the past.

The approach to training throughout the six days involved a combination of trainers introducing participants to the study, group discussion around topics addressed in the training, the practice of tools, and participant feedback. The training schedule allowed for sufficient time per tool, with all three teams given extra time to practice the River of Life tool which they were less familiar with. In addition, the first day of training in each country included a briefing from the national IPs to offer insight into the LNGB project. All the following additional topics were covered over six days:

- The study's overview, objectives, and purpose;
- Research methodology, sampling, and quality control;
- Safeguarding, research ethics, consent, and interview techniques;
- Data protection;
- Research tool review;
- An introduction to participatory methods;
- In-depth review of the River of Life method;
- Interview and moderation techniques;
- Effective moderation, including how to deal with challenges;
- Role playing and mock interviews; and
- Unique ID codes and transcripts.

The training aimed to ensure that enumerators could efficiently and effectively conduct the research required; this included ensuring that enumerators followed and strictly adhered to the programme's safeguarding practices and ethical protocols. Specialised supervisor training took place at the end of enumerator training and included sample management, data verification, and team logistics and management.

In each country, training managers sent daily updates with feedback from the DCPs to the IE team, allowing the IE team to review and adapt the research design as needed.

Piloting of tools

After the six-day training was completed, all teams piloted the tools over two days. The purpose of the piloting was to test for research tool sensitivities and comprehension, and to allow research staff the opportunity to practice prior to commencing fieldwork.

In each country, local teams worked closely with the IPs to identify and contact selected respondents before the piloting period to ensure that all required research activities could be completed in the condensed period. Consent and assent forms were completed for all girls selected for participation in River of Life and SSI activities. In addition, the day prior to commencing research activities, local teams met with community leaders to discuss the purpose of the pilot and to make logistical arrangements.

All three data collection partners submitted transcripts and observation narratives from the pilot, which were then reviewed by the IE team.

Once the IE team reviewed the transcripts and provided feedback to the Fieldwork Manager and External Consultant, an additional day of training was carried out in each country which was intended to review the lessons learnt from the pilot, and also offer feedback on any issues arising with the transcripts based on feedback from the IE team. The post-pilot training mainly focussed on clarification of the intent of some of the questions and their wording. Few other issues were raised.

4.3.7. Data collection

Fieldwork across all countries took place between 27th January and 25th February 2023.

The Fieldwork Manager and data collection partners upheld rigorous standards to ensure quality control, including but not limited to the following:

- Completing all data collection in line with standard research practice and compiled with ethical standards of consent. All staff were transparent with respondents regarding the aim and objectives of the project and fully explained the process prior to commencing interviews.
- Audio recordings of all IDIs, KIIs, and FGDs.
- Holding debrief meetings at the end of each day of fieldwork.
- All interviewers, transcribers, moderators, supervisors, and psychosocial counsellors recruited to work on this study signed a non-disclosure and confidentiality agreement before engaging in fieldwork.
- Daily calls and check-ins between the Fieldwork Manager and the local research teams allowed for resolution of issues during fieldwork, as needed. Further, the Fieldwork Manager worked closely with the IE team to manage the data collection process through regular calls.

4.3.8. Data transcription

The IE team worked with the three DCPs to ensure the delivery of quality data.

IDIs, KIIs and FGDs

- All qualitative interviews (IDIs and KIIs) and FGDs were audio recorded with the consent/assent of all research participants; transcription began as soon as the audio files were received by local partner staff.
- Respondent-identifying information was anonymised during transcription. Where respondents' telephone numbers were taken, the database of contacts was detached from the responses. All audios and transcripts were assigned unique identifiers to maintain the confidentiality of the study participants.
- All DCPs employed transcription specialists fluent in both English and the local language of the interview. Members of the transcription teams attended the full enumerator training to ensure that they understood the context and intent of all research instruments.
- All interviews completed in English were transcribed verbatim and verified by team supervisors, who listened to the audio files while reading the transcript to ensure quality transcription. Most interviews, however, were completed in local languages – Kiswahili and Somali in Kenya, Nepali, and Bhojpuri in Nepal, and Dagaare and FraFra in Ghana. For these interviews, the team translated to English while transcribing. As with the English language interviews, these transcripts were verified by supervisors who listened to the audio recordings while reviewing the translated transcripts. All transcripts were compared line-by-line against the original audio files. In addition, moderators reviewed each transcript to ensure they accurately represented what had been discussed during the interviews in all three countries.

River of Life photos

River of Life drawings completed by each girl were checked by field supervisors to ensure that all the information relating to each of the steps of the River of Life was reflected and easy to interpret. An important part of the River of Life workshop process involved the facilitators reviewing each girl's River of Life at the end of the workshop and ensuring the following:

- That each *River of Life* has a clearly visible unique identifier code (specific to the girl).
- Where something is not immediately clear to all the facilitators present at the workshop, seek immediate clarification from the girl.
- Amend/ annotate the *River of Life* to incorporate all corrections/ amendments.
- Translate any text which is written on the *River of Life* in a language other than English into English.
- Translate the meaning of pictures that girls drew on their River of Life drawings.

Ten photographs – five pre-annotation and five post-annotation – were required deliverables for each River of Life completed by a girl. Each set of five included one complete photo that depicts the entire River of Life

sheet and four close-up photos, one for each stage of the River of Life timeline (pre-LNGB programme, during the LNGB programme, after the LNGB programme and future aspirations). All photos were reviewed by supervisors as part of the transcription and narrative process completed by local partners. Anything that was not clear or that depicted incomplete annotation was redone alongside revised annotated River of Life workshop sheets prior to final delivery.

Transcripts and narratives were delivered to the IE team in batches to allow the team to review them, ensure anonymity and quality, and provide feedback to the local partners. Following feedback, the local partner submitted revised transcripts with all issues rectified. Final versions were organised and coded by the IE qualitative analysis team.

One further step to support this process was that DCPs also submitted a workshop report which related to the River of Life workshop as an extra layer of information that the IE team could use to interpret the data.

Transcript and narrative cleaning

All transcripts were proofread by the local partner staff and edited in line with project requirements to ensure a high level of accuracy. Free flow notes collected by the notetakers were typed and edited and used to complete questions included in a notetaking template provided by the IE team. All personally identifiable information was removed during transcription to produce fully anonymised documents for delivery.

Prior to delivery to the IE team, all transcripts were reviewed by a team comprising the Fieldwork Manager and two external quality control (QC) consultants. The consultant who attended in-country training in Kenya and co-led training in Nepal managed the initial QC of River of Live photos for all three countries and all Nepal deliverables. The other consultant managed the initial QC of all transcripts from Kenya and Ghana. During initial QC checks, the consultants reviewed each deliverable for anonymity, comprehension, defined local terms, and completion of all administrative and background details. Once the initial review was complete, all deliverables were then reviewed by the Fieldwork Manager before delivery to the IE team.

Verification

Transcripts were reviewed for accuracy by checking them line-by-line against the original audio files. This ensured that no content was lost in the transcription process and that translations were accurate.

4.4. Data analysis for case study review

4.4.1. Primary data

River of Life participatory method

In total, the data analysis team received photos of **98 Rivers of Life** (these included photos of pre-annotated and post-annotated Rivers of Life). The classification sheet (see further below) was used to capture data from each of the individual Rivers of Life in Microsoft Excel. The data from the annotated River of Life drawings recorded information which was consistent across all the drawings, and which fell under the following categories:

- Barriers;
- Enablers;
- Aspirations;
- Choices/ alternative pathways girls could have gone onto;
- Stakeholders whom girls identified as being barriers to their education and livelihood journeys; and
- Stakeholders whom girls identified as being enablers in their education and livelihood journeys.

These data were captured separately for the four different time frames that the River of Life pertained to. These periods related to 1. before girls joined the LNGB project, 2. when girls were enrolled on the LNGB project, 3. after leaving the LNGB project to the present day, 4. one year into the future.

FGDs, IDIs and KIIs

To answer the research questions, **172 primary qualitative transcripts** received in English were analysed. This section describes how these data were analysed.

Computer-assisted qualitative analysis software

The primary qualitative data (transcripts) was analysed using computer-assisted qualitative analysis software (Nvivo). Through Cloud Collaboration licensed software, a team of 9 coders was able to simultaneously code 172 transcripts gathered for the study. A list of thematic areas that were collected from each of the stakeholders is presented in *Table 24*.

Table 24: Thematic breakdown for semi-structured interviews

Stakeholder Group	Themes	Research Questions addressed
Girls engaged by the project	• Previous experience of school compared to LNGB programme (applicable only to girls who had attended school). • Effect of project/ interventions on overcoming barriers associated with accessing education. • Practical effect of what skills acquired from LNGB project have helped achieve. • Effect of project/ interventions on girls' perceptions about aspects relating to their education, and other aspects of their lives. • Effect of project/ intervention on girls' agency and decision-making. • Girls' perceptions of changes in social norms relating to household and community attitude. • Project/ intervention effect and appropriateness on girls' transition choices. • Project/ intervention effect and appropriateness on girls' aspirations for the future. • Attitudinal, environmental, and institutional barriers/ enablers to implementing educational pathways beyond formal schooling.	Research Question 1 Research Question 2 Research Question 3
Educators	• Effect of project/ interventions on overcoming barriers associated with girls accessing education. • Effect of project/ interventions on girls' learning outcomes and life skills. • Effect of project/ interventions on girls' transition pathways. • Perceived effect of interventions on teachers' attitudes in teaching different marginalised adolescent girls. • Perceptions on changes in household/ community attitudes to girls' education/ transition pathways. • Attitudinal, environmental, and institutional barriers/ enablers to implementing educational pathways beyond formal schooling.	Research Question 1 Research Question 2 Research Question 3
Transition pathway providers	• Barriers faced by girls in community in accessing formal schooling/ vocational training institutes/ entrepreneurship/ apprenticeship programmes. • Perceived differences between LNGB graduates versus others enrolled on the course. • Skills required for transition pathway versus skills gaps for LNGB graduates. • Attitudinal, environmental, and institutional barriers/ enablers to implementing educational pathways beyond formal schooling.	Research Question 1 Research Question 2 Research Question 3

Stakeholder Group	Themes	Research Questions addressed
Government officials	• Government strategy/ policy/ law and what it says regarding out-of-school adolescents. • Gaps/ challenges in following strategy/ policy/ law. • What is being done in practice e.g., education pathways beyond formal schooling. • Shifts in policy environment with respect to second-chance programmes. • Alignment of the design and delivery of LNGB project to district or national-level strategies. • Contribution of the design and delivery of LNGB project to district or national-level strategies. • Attitudinal, environmental, and institutional barriers/ enablers to implementing educational pathways beyond formal schooling.	Research Question 1 Research Question 2

All interviews and FGDs were analysed using a thematic approach. Once the interview transcripts were made available for analysis, a coding framework was developed. As an initial step this involved the Independent Evaluation team for the study developing a coding framework based on the research tools. For this study, we developed a singular codebook for all transcripts, rather than developing codebooks for each stakeholder-specific transcript. This meant that when it came to the analysis, we could examine what had been coded *across* stakeholders in each of the contexts (as well as across the three contexts).

The codes were reviewed on a weekly basis during meetings within the coding team, at which point the coding framework was added to or adapted as needed. The final codebook, with the corresponding descriptions of the codes, is presented in *Table 25*.

Table 25: Final codebook for primary qualitative coding

Name	Description of codes
00. Barriers	
1.1 Economic or Financial	Economic or financial barriers such as high education or business costs/ the need to earn money
1.2 Travel - long distance	Challenges related to long distances between school/ learning space and home
1.3 Travel - unsafe	Challenges related to girl's safety in travelling to school/ learning space
1.4 Community attitudes	Negative community attitudes towards girl's education
1.5 Family attitudes	Negative family attitudes towards girl's education (i.e., not a priority, not worth it, etc.)
1.6 High chore burden or family responsibilities	High chore burden or family/ caregiving responsibilities which affected access to or participation in education
1.7 Early marriage	Girl got married early which affected access to or participation in education
1.8 Adolescent pregnancy	Girl became pregnant as an adolescent which affected access to or participation in education
1.9 Health (emotional or physical)	Emotional or physical health-related issues which affected access to or participation in education (e.g., injury/ accident or anxiety)
1.10 Inadequate number of teachers	Not enough teachers which affected access to or participation in education
1.11 Insufficient learning materials	Not enough learning materials which affected access to or participation in education
1.12 Infrastructural issues	Infrastructural challenges (e.g., inaccessible classrooms) which affected access to or participation in education
1.13 Exam performance	Low performance in assessments or exams which affected progression or transition in education
1.14 Weather	Weather or climate related barriers (e.g., drought, floods, natural disasters)
1.15 GBV and child abuse	Barriers related to gender-based violence and/or child abuse (including at the school)
1.16 Sexual exploitation and trafficking	Barriers related to sexual exploitation and/ or trafficking (including at the school)
1.17 Migration	Barriers related to migration away from community (including seasonal migration) and school

Name	Description of codes
1.18 Access to water or sanitation	Issues related to safe/ hygienic water or sanitation facilities
1.19 Other	Any other barriers
01. Enablers	
1.1 Family support	Family support enabled girl to receive education
1.2 Community support	Community support (including community committees) enabled girl to receive education
1.3 Govt policies	Government policies to support girls' education
1.4 Other	Other enabling factors to girls' education
02. Project design	
2.1 Target girls and reasons	Description of any specific marginalised sub-groups and reasons why they targeted these girls
2.2 Objectives and reasons	Objectives of the LNGB project in relation to girl's education and reasons why
2.3 What project could have done differently	What respondents said could have been done in relation to the project design (e.g., how it targeted girls, intervention types, etc.)
03. Enrolment in LNGB	
3.0 Reason for enrolling in LNGB	Reasons why the girl enrolled in LNGB
3.1 Decision-maker	The decision-maker(s) involved in the girl's enrolment to LNGB. *To be double-coded to the relevant stakeholder sub-code under X.0: Stakeholder Group*
3.2 How LNGB enrolled girls	How the programme enrolled girls (i.e., through community campaigns, household enrolment)
3.3 Challenges at time of joining	
3.3.1 Description and reasons	Description of challenges girls faced at the time of joining the programme, and reasons for these challenges.
3.3.2 Effect of challenges	Description of the effect of these challenges.
3.3.3 How LNGB addressed challenges	Description of how the project tried to address these challenges.
3.4 No challenges at time of joining	If respondents report there were no challenges at the time of joining.
3.5 Family attitudes	Attitudes of girl's family towards enrolment in LNGB
04. After joining & during LNGB	
4.1 Challenges after joining project	Description of challenges girls faced joining the programme, and reasons for these challenges.
4.1.1 Dropped out mid-way	Please use this code if the girl dropped out mid-way (voluntarily/involuntarily)
Project response	Description of how the project responded to girls dropping out (i.e., tried to encourage them to (re) enrol, trace them, etc.)
Reason	Reason for why the girl dropped out mid-way (if against her own choice) – e.g., financial burden, caregiving responsibilities, etc.
4.1.2 Difficulties adjusting	Please use this code if the girl had difficulties adjusting to the LNGB project after joining (e.g., difficulties learning after having been out-of-school)
4.1.3 Caregiving responsibilities	Please use this code if the girl had caregiving responsibilities which affected her engagement with the LNGB programme.
4.1.4 Project response to challenges	How the project responded to the challenge (e.g., any additional support towards the girl)
4.1.5 Effect of challenge	The effect/ consequence of the challenge (if at all)
4.1.6 No challenges after joining	If girls reported that they faced no challenges after joining
Other	Any other information
4.2 Positives of project	Description of positives of the project after girls joined
4.2.1 Learning literacy and numeracy	If learning literacy and numeracy skills were seen as a positive of the programme.
4.2.2 Learning life or VT skills	If learning life skills or vocational skills were seen as a positive of the programme.
4.2.3 Making friends	If making friends was seen as a positive of the programme

Name	Description of codes
4.2.4. Other	Any other information not captured above
05. Project interventions	
5.0 Cash or in-kind support - general	If the project provided cash or in-kind support
5.1 Bursary support for school	If the project provided bursary support for school (e.g., scholarship or fees)
5.2 Transport provision	If the project provided transport for girls to/ from the learning centre.
5.3 Training of educators	If the project trained educators to provide the learning curriculum
5.4 Safeguarding and child protection	If the project had safeguarding and child protection related interventions (e.g., referral pathways, support mechanisms, counselling)
5.5 Infrastructural adaptations	If the project adapted infrastructure (e.g., rehabilitating community centres to become learning centres), including adaptations for girls with disabilities
5.6 Engagement with families	If the project included interventions for family members related to girls' education
5.7 Community sessions	If the project included interventions at the community-level – i.e., sensitisation or awareness campaigns or radio/ dramas – related to girls' education
5.8 Provision of materials	If the project provided learning materials or other in-kind resources to girls
5.9 Cash support for business	If the project provided cash support (e.g., grant or seed money) for girls to set up their small businesses
5.10 Support for GWCs	Support for girls with children
5.11 Literacy and numeracy sessions	Provision of literacy and numeracy sessions/ classes
5.12 Life skills; financial lit sessions	Provision of life skills or financial literacy skills sessions/ classes
5.13 Engagement with govt	If the project conducted any engagement or outreach activities with the government
5.14 Creative activities (song, play, dance)	If the project incorporated any creative activities (singing, dancing, playing)
5.15 Monitoring/checking on girls	If the project monitored/ checked on girls during or after they completed the sessions
06. Learning opportunities (Formal schooling)	
6.0 Reason for choosing formal schooling	Description of why the girl chose the formal schooling track as transition pathway, in the first instance
6.1 Girls who (re) enrolled into formal schooling	
6.1.1 Reason for joining school	Description of why girls (re) enrolled into formal schooling. Double-code to sub-codes under *X.0 – Stakeholder* if another stakeholder is mentioned in the reason
6.1.2 Role of project	Description of how the project influenced girls to (re) enrol into formal schooling
Encouraging girls to join school	If the project encouraged girls to join school
Mitigating challenges during transition	If the project mitigated challenges during transition period
6.1.3 Effect of joining school	Description of how joining school has affected the girl (Could be positive or negative)
6.1.4 Challenges in joining school	
Family-related challenges	If family-related challenges were present at the time of, or after joining school
Financial challenges	If financial challenges were present at the time of, or after joining school
Learning challenges or gaps	If learning challenges were present at the time of, or after joining school
Other	Any other challenges mentioned by girls
6.2. Girls who wanted to but could not rejoin school	
6.2.0. Number of girls	If respondents mention the number of girls who could not (re) enrol into school
6.2.1 Reason for not being able to join school	Description of why girls who wanted to (re) enrol school, were not able to. Double-code to the relevant sub-code under *X.0 – Stakeholder* if another stakeholder is mentioned in the reason
Family	If the reason for not joining school is family-related (i.e., family did not permit it)

Name	Description of codes
Financial barrier	If the reason for not joining school is financial-related (i.e., had to earn instead)
Moved away	If the reason for not joining school is because the girl moved away
6.2.2 How project tried to help	Description of how the project tried to help girls (re) enrol into school (if at all)
6.3 Role of LNGB in facilitating transition	
6.3.1. Assessment of learning changes	If respondents discuss assessments of learning changes of girls, which helped girls in their transition to formal schooling
6.3.2 Examples of teaching practices	If respondents provide examples of teaching practices, and any links to how this would have helped facilitate girls' transition to formal schooling.
6.4 Alternative pathway choice if not formal schooling	Description of what the girl's alternative pathway choice would have been if not formal schooling
6.4.1 Reason	Reason for the girl's alternative pathway choice if not formal schooling
6.4.2 Reason why not selected	Reason for why the girl did not choose this alternative pathway
6.5 Attitudes towards formal schooling	
07. Transition opportunities – Vocational Training	
7.0 Reason for choosing Vocational Training	Description of why the girl chose the vocational track as transition pathway, in the first instance
7.1 Type of Vocational Training chosen	
7.1.1 'Traditional'	Description of whether the girl chose a vocational track such as hairdressing/ sewing/ beauty
Reason - external factors	Whether the reason for selecting this particular livelihood/ vocation was because of external factors and not what the girl originally wanted to do herself (e.g., what is considered appropriate in the community, family influence, project influence, etc.)
Reason - own choice	Whether the reason for selecting this particular livelihood/ vocation was what the girl originally wanted to do herself
Role of LNGB	The role of the project in which type of vocation/ livelihood the girl chose (e.g., provided guidance counselling, did market research, etc.)
7.1.2 'Non-traditional'	Description of whether the girl chose a vocational track such as plumbing/ mechanics/ electrical/ mobile repair
Reason - external factors	Whether the reason for selecting this particular livelihood/ vocation was because of external factors and not what the girl originally wanted to do herself (e.g., family influence, project influence, etc.)
Reason - own choice	Whether the reason for selecting this particular livelihood/ vocation was what the girl originally wanted to do herself
Role of LNGB	The role of the project in which type of vocation/ livelihood the girl chose (e.g., provided guidance counselling, did market research, etc.)
7.2 Girls who did not transition to Vocational Training	
7.2.1 Number of girls	Any information on the number of girls who did not transition to vocational training
7.2.2 Reason - external factors	Whether the reason for not transitioning was because of external factors (e.g., financial reasons, family influence, project influence, etc.)
7.2.3 Reason - own choice	Whether the reason for not transitioning to vocational training was the girl's own choice
7.3 Role of LNGB in facilitating transition	
7.3.1 Financial support	If respondents say the financial support provided by LNGB helped facilitate the girl's transition to the vocational track
7.3.2 Skill-building	If respondents say the skills built during the LNGB project helped facilitate the girl's transition to the vocational track
7.3.3 Equipment	If respondents say the equipment (e.g., sewing machine) provided by the LNGB project helped facilitate the girl's transition to the vocational track
7.4 Alternative pathway choice if not Vocational Training	Description of what the girl's alternative pathway choice would have been if not Vocational Training
7.4.1 Reason	Reason for the girl's alternative pathway choice if not Vocational Training
7.4.2 Reason why not selected	Reason for why the girl did not choose this alternative pathway

Name	Description of codes
7.5 Attitudes towards Vocational Training	Others' attitudes towards girl's Vocational Training pathway
7.6 Effects	Effects of joining the Vocational Training pathway (could be positive or negative)
08. Transition opportunities – Income-Generating Activities (IGA)	
8.0 Reason for choosing IGA	Description of why the girl chose the income-generating track as transition pathway, in the first instance
8.1 Type of IGA chosen	
8.1.1 'Traditional'	Description of whether the girl chose an income-generating track such as hairdressing/ sewing/ beauty
Reason - external factors	Whether the reason for selecting this particular income-generating activity was because of external factors and not what the girl originally wanted to do herself (e.g., what is considered appropriate in the community, family influence, project influence, etc.)
Reason - own choice	Whether the reason for selecting this particular income-generating activity was what the girl originally wanted to do herself
Role of LNGB	The role of the project in which type of vocation/ livelihood the girl chose (e.g., provided guidance counselling, did market research, etc.
8.1.2 'Non-traditional'	Description of whether the girl chose an income-generating activity such as plumbing/ mechanics/ electrical/ mobile repair
Reason - external factors	Whether the reason for selecting this particular livelihood/ vocation was because of external factors and not what the girl originally wanted to do herself (e.g., family influence, project influence, etc.)
Reason - own choice	Whether the reason for selecting this particular livelihood/ vocation was what the girl originally wanted to do herself
Role of LNGB	The role of the project in which type of vocation/ livelihood the girl chose (e.g., provided guidance counselling, did market research, etc.)
8.2 Girls who did not transition	
8.2.1 Reason - external factors	Whether the reason for not transitioning was because of external factors (e.g., financial reasons, family influence, project influence, etc.)
8.2.2. Reason - own choice	Whether the reason for not transitioning to vocational training was the girl's own choice.
8.3 Role of LNGB in facilitating transition	
8.3.1 Financial support	If respondents say the financial support provided by LNGB helped facilitate the girl's transition to the vocational track
8.3.2 Skill-building	If respondents say the skills built during the LNGB project helped facilitate the girl's transition to the vocational track
8.3.3 Equipment	If respondents say the equipment (e.g., sewing machine) provided by the LNGB project helped facilitate the girl's transition to the vocational track
8.4 Alternative pathway choice if not IGA	Description of what the girl's alternative pathway choice would have been if not IGA/ entrepreneurship
8.4.1 Reason	Reason for the girl's alternative pathway choice if not IGA/ entrepreneurship
8.4.2 Reason why not selected	Reason why the girl did not choose this alternative pathway
8.5 Attitudes towards IGA	Others' attitudes towards girl's IGA pathway
8.6 Effects	Effects of joining the IGA pathway (could be positive or negative)
09. Changes in girls	
9.0 Aspirations	
9.0.1 Type of aspiration	What type of aspiration the girl mentions having (e.g., to continue education, to join a particular sector, etc.)
9.0.2 Reason	The reason for this aspiration
9.0.3 Challenge to achieving aspiration	Any challenges the girls foresee which may affect the likelihood of achieving their aspiration (e.g., family-related, community-related, financial)
9.0.4 Role of LNGB in changes	How the LNGB project has contributed to any changes in their aspirations
9.0.5 No change	No change in the type of aspiration since participating in the LNGB project
9.1 Learning outcomes	

Name	Description of codes
9.1.1 Increased - details	Details on self-reported (or other respondents reporting) increases in learning since participating in LNGB
9.1.2 Decreased - details	Details on self-reported (or other respondents reporting) decreases in learning since participating in LNGB
9.1.3 Same - details	Details on no changes in learning (self-reported (or other respondents reporting))
9.1.4 Role of LNGB in changes	Any mention of how the LNGB project (if at all) contributed to changes in learning
9.2 Socio-emotional outcomes	
9.2.1 Confidence; self-esteem	
9.2.1.1 Increased - details	Details on self-reported (or other respondents reporting) increases in girls' confidence or self-esteem since participating in LNGB
9.2.1.2 Decreased - details	Details on self-reported (or other respondents reporting) decreases in girls' confidence or self-esteem since participating in LNGB
9.2.1.3 Same - details	Details on no changes in confidence or self-esteem (self-reported (or other respondents reporting))
9.2.2 Role of LNGB in changes	Any mention of how the LNGB project (if at all) contributed to changes in girls' confidence/ self-esteem.
9.2.3 Stress; pressures of life	
9.2.3.1 Increased – details	Details on self-reported (or other respondents reporting) increases in girls' stress or pressures in life since participating in LNGB
9.2.3.2 Decreased – details	Details on self-reported (or other respondents reporting) decreases in girls' stress or pressures in life since participating in LNGB
9.2.3.3 Same – details	Details on no changes in girls' stress or pressures in life (self-reported (or other respondents reporting))
9.3. Decision-making	
9.3.0 In household	Decision-making in the household (e.g., household purchases, related to household members)
9.3.0.1 Increased – details	Details on self-reported (or other respondents reporting) increases in decision-making since participating in LNGB (*including having a say in these decisions)
9.3.0.2 Decreased – details	Details on self-reported (or other respondents reporting) decreases in decision-making since participating in LNGB (*including having a say in these decisions)
9.3.0.3 Same – details	Details on no changes in decision-making (self-reported (or other respondents reporting)) (*including having a say in these decisions)
9.3.1 In education	Decision-making in education (e.g., going to school)
9.3.1.1 Increased - details	Details on self-reported (or other respondents reporting) increases in decision-making since participating in LNGB (*including having a say in these decisions)
9.3.1.2 Decreased - details	Details on self-reported (or other respondents reporting) decreases in decision-making since participating in LNGB (*including having a say in these decisions)
9.3.1.3 Same - details	Details on no changes in decision-making (self-reported (or other respondents reporting)) (*including having a say in these decisions)
9.3.2 In IGA	Decision-making in income-generating activities (e.g., to join employment, or set up own business)
9.3.2.1 Increased - details	Details on self-reported (or other respondents reporting) increases in decision-making since participating in LNGB (*including having a say in these decisions)
9.3.2.2 Decreased - details	Details on self-reported (or other respondents reporting) decreases in decision-making since participating in LNGB (*including having a say in these decisions)
9.3.2.3 Same - details	Details on no changes in decision-making (self-reported (or other respondents reporting)) (*including having a say in these decisions)
9.3.3 In marriage	Decision-making in marriage (e.g., to get married, or if is married, in decisions with spouse)

Name	Description of codes
9.3.3.1 Increased - details	Details on self-reported (or other respondents reporting) increases in decision-making since participating in LNGB (*including having a say in these decisions)
9.3.3.2 Decreased - details	Details on self-reported (or other respondents reporting) decreases in decision-making since participating in LNGB (*including having a say in these decisions)
9.3.3.3 Same - details	Details on no changes in decision-making (self-reported (or other respondents reporting)) (*including having a say in these decisions)
9.3.4 Other environments	Decision-making about any other environments mentioned (e.g., health clinics, markets, friend's homes)
9.3.4.1 Increased – details	Details on self-reported (or other respondents reporting) increases in decision-making since participating in LNGB (*including having a say in these decisions)
9.3.4.2 Decreased - details	Details on self-reported (or other respondents reporting) decreases in decision-making since participating in LNGB (*including having a say in these decisions)
9.3.4.3 Same – details	Details on no changes in decision-making (self-reported (or other respondents reporting)) (*including having a say in these decisions)
9.3.5 Role of LNGB in changes	Any mention of how the LNGB project (if at all) contributed to changes in decision-making
9.4 Most significant change	The 'most significant change' (if mentioned by the girl during her River of Life)
9.4.1 Interactions and role in the family	Family-interactions and role within the family (e.g., improved communication, taken more seriously, etc.)
9.4.2 Literacy	Literacy skills (reading/ writing)
9.4.3 Vocational skills	Vocational skills
9.4.4 Independence	Increased independence (emotional, financial, physical, etc.)
9.4.5 Returning to school	Opportunity to return to formal schooling
9.4.6 Project support – food, expenses, materials	Support from the project in the form of food, materials, financial grants
9.4.7 Family or community attitudes	Changes in family or community attitudes towards the girl
9.4.8 Other	Any other significant changes
X.0 Stakeholder group	Double-code group for stakeholders mentioned as influencing any decisions or having a role in any of the responses
Community member	Any members of the community
Educator (LNGB project)	The educator in the LNGB project (e.g., basic literacy & numeracy educator, LNGB mentor, etc.)
Employer	Employer (after transitioning)
Father	Girl's father
FE Teacher (after LNGB)	Formal schooling teacher (after LNGB, for girls who transitioned to formal schooling)
Girl	Girl herself
Mother	Girl's mother
Sibling	Girl's sibling(s)
Spouse or partner	Girl's spouse or partner
VT Trainer	Vocational trainer (after LNGB, for girls who transitioned to VT)
X.00 Girl type; track	Double-code group for the 'type' of girl, based on her pathway.
Girl - DO	Girl – dropped out
Girl - ENTR	Girl – entrepreneurship
Girl - FE	Girl – formal schooling
Girl - VT	Girl – vocational training
X.1 Changes in barriers since LNGB	Double-code group for changes in barriers girls face in education, since the LNGB project began.

Name	Description of codes
No - same	No change in the barriers faced (barriers have remained the same)
Yes - less	Yes – less barriers faced since participating in LNGB
Yes - more	Yes – more barriers faced since participating in LNGB
X.2 Time-frame	Double-code group for the time-frame discussed
X.2.1 Before LNGB	The time-frame prior to joining LNGB
X.2.2 Enrolled; during LNGB	The time-frame at the time of enrolment and during LNGB
X.2.3. After LNGB; transition	The time-frame after the LNGB, during the transition phase
X.2.4. Future	The time-frame for the girl's future (1-5 years into the future)
X.3 Differences between LNGB and non-LNGB girls	Double-code group for any differences mentioned between girls who were part of LNGB and girls who were not
No - details	No differences + details
Yes - details	Differences mentioned + details
X.4 Differences between girls who completed; dropped out midway	Double-code group for any differences mentioned between girls who completed LNGB and girls who dropped out mid-way
No - details	No differences + details
Yes - details	Differences mentioned + details
X.5 Differences between girls who transitioned; didn't transition	Double-code group for any differences mentioned between girls who transitioned from LNGB and girls who completed the programme but didn't transition from LNGB
No - details	No differences + details
Yes - details	Differences mentioned + details
X.6 Differences between girls and boys	Double-code group for differences between girls and boys
No - details	No differences + details
Yes - details	Differences mentioned + details
X.7 Differences between girls; age	Double-code group for differences between girls based on age (primarily, girls aged 10-14 and girls aged 15-19)
No - details	No differences + details
Yes - details	Differences mentioned + details
X.8 Differences between girls; socio-economic	Differences between girls based on socio-economic characteristics (e.g., religion, caste, ethnicity, community)
No - details	No differences + details
Yes - details	Differences mentioned + details
X.8b Differences between girls; based on transition pathway	
No - details	No differences + details
Yes - details	Differences mentioned + details
X.9 Differences between girls: disability	Differences between girls based on disability status
No – details	No differences + details
Yes – details	Differences mentioned + details
X.10 Great quotes for report	Double-code group for really great quotes/ anecdotes that can be used in the final report
X.99 Other	Catch-all code for any relevant information that cannot be coded to the above codes

Analysis of the coded data was conducted using three main analytical features of Nvivo:

- **Simple coding queries:** This allowed analysts to gather data which has been coded at different combinations of different nodes (top level codes) or from cases with specific attributes (for instance differentiated by type of stakeholder, by gender, by age, or any other demographic logged in the classification sheet).
- **Matrix queries:** This enabled analysts to compare different demographic groups, contexts, or attributes by codes, and to visualise the data through matrices, or tables.
- **Cross-tabulation queries:** This enabled analysts to look at additional levels and disaggregate data looking at combinations to do with, for instance, age, gender, or type of stakeholder.

Respondent attribute classification sheet

The study team developed a classification sheet to catalogue unique respondent IDs and attribute data for all **172 respondents** who participated in any of the primary research methods for this study. This included details on the type of stakeholder interviewed, their location (country and sub-national information), age, and gender. For girls interviewed, further information included in the classification sheet was the transition pathway they followed after leaving the project (or if they dropped out), and their marriage, child, and disability status.

4.4.2. Limitations and mitigation strategies in primary data analysis

- Given the strict timelines which the study was required to adhere to, there was a limited window available to code the 172 transcripts and 98 Rivers of Life. This meant that coders were assigned responsibility for transcripts emanating from a specific stakeholder. Together with this, coders recruited for this study were, in large part, those that had not been involved in conceptualising nor collecting the data. To address these challenges:
  - The study team undertook a half day of training to describe the research design, tools, coding framework, and expectations from the analysis.
  - Coders were each given the same transcripts to practice against to validate whether the codes contained in the coding framework were sufficient to capture the transcript data, and whether coders were all assigning them to the same codes.
  - A weekly check-in was arranged with all coders to discuss progress, challenges, emerging codes, and suggested priority areas for analysis.
  - An excel document was created to allow coders to log issues arising from the coding which was reviewed in real time by the IE team, and which was accessible by all coders so that they may know how to address similar challenges.

5. Ethical Research and Safeguarding

All research undertaken for this study was conducted in line with the research and safeguarding protocols set out in the Independent Evaluation of the GEC II Ethical Research and Safeguarding Framework. This Framework forms the overarching ethical framework for all research and data collection protocols for the GEC II IE. These guidelines relate to the design, implementation and reporting of all activities conducted as part of the IE. The Ethical Research and Safeguarding Framework is compliant with the guiding concepts and principles set out in the FCDO's Evaluation Policy (2013) and the FCDO's Research Ethics Guidance (2011); the DFID Ethical Guidance for Research, Evaluation and Monitoring Activities (2019); and the UK Data Protection Act (2018). The Framework can be referred to in *Annex D.*

5.1. Research permissions

All necessary research permissions were obtained from relevant government departments in each of the sampled countries prior to data collection taking place. These were managed through our local data collection partners in each of the sampled countries, who submitted the research application and managed all processes associated with gaining the approvals needed.

A summary of the required approvals for each country, including the date official approval was received, can be found in *Table 26* below, followed by details of the steps taken in each country.

Table 26: National level ethical approval required, by country

Country	Approving body	Date Approval Received
Kenya	NACOSTI (National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation), the national body that approves all research in Kenya.	January 2023
Nepal	Not required	Not applicable
Ghana	Council for Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR)	January 2023

5.1.1. Kenya

At the county level, Research Plus obtained permission from the county commissioners of Kisumu (where the pilot took place) and Kilifi to carry out the research in the counties and present to the local administration (Chief) at the location the research team visited. For Garissa, the IE team had acquired this permission earlier in the year for a separate, non-GEC study, which remained valid for the fieldwork undertaken for this study.

In addition, Research Plus worked directly with Sub National Education offices of Kisumu (pilot site), Garissa, and Kilifi for permission to conduct any activities that would be undertaken in schools, vocational training centres, etc. The DCP sent an advance team to meet with these officials before fieldwork to ensure that all permission was in place before research teams arrived on site. During these meetings, the team also obtained permission for the required subnational KIIs.

5.1.2. Nepal

As stated above, no formal national or regional permission was required for the work in Nepal. However, at the community level, Rooster Logic worked in close collaboration with the local Implementing Partners to inform local government of the data collection activities and facilitate the research.

5.1.3. Ghana

At the community level, the DCP worked closely with the IP to meet with community leaders in all research areas prior to the start of piloting and fieldwork. Permission to begin fieldwork was obtained in these courtesy meetings.

5.2. Ethical clearance

In addition to national in-country ethical clearances for this study, ethical approval was also granted by the Faculty of Education at the University of Cambridge.

5.3. Rights and dignity of research participants

5.3.1. Consent and assent forms

The IE team developed comprehensive assent (for unmarried respondents under 18 years of age) and consent (for respondents above 18 years of age and married respondents under 18 years of age) forms that were read out to each respondent before undertaking primary research. These assent and consent forms allowed for oral consent as well as written consent to cater for varying literacy levels among respondents. The content of these forms included the purpose of the research study, the request for participation, and an option for respondents to revoke assent or consent to participate if at any point they felt uncomfortable during the interview, River of Life workshop, or focus group discussion.

Data collection partners were trained in the use and protocols of administering these tools, together with thinking about the possible scenarios that might arise.

5.3.2. Safeguarding concerns

The inclusion of specialised training for working with marginalised populations and sensitive subjects was part of the training mandatory for all enumerators, supervisors, and psychosocial counsellors to attend. This

training offered specific considerations and protocols for working with adolescents with vulnerable characteristics, and what they must do in the event of a safeguarding concern.

Given that the study's focus was on the most marginalised girls, additional safeguarding measures were put in place for this study due to the additional vulnerabilities these girls were likely to experience. This was done by embedding into the research design a psychosocial counsellor who would be present at the River of Life workshop and individual interviews with girls. This was core to the research design as they would have the experience to know how to respond to trauma that girls may exhibit when responding to the facilitator. The vulnerable backgrounds these girls came from meant that they were more likely to recall a traumatic event (either during the River of Life exercise, or individual interview) and consequently need professional support. The presence of the psycho-social counsellor also assisted the data collection team to identify instances of trauma which may not be immediately recognisable. These would then be submitted as part of the safeguarding procedures.

During the actual data collection and analysis phase, any potential welfare or safeguarding incidents were raised by the DCPs, Fieldwork manager or IE team research team. These were reported to the FCDO, the FM, and the respective IPs.

In cases where members of the DCPs, Fieldwork Manager, or IE research team were led to believe that an adolescent was at risk of serious harm, action was taken to report this concern to the FCDO, the FM, and the respective IPs. This was done in line with the reporting mechanisms set out in the Ethical Research and Safeguarding Framework *(Annex D)*. Following the procedures outlined in the Ethical Research and Safeguarding Framework, the Tetra Tech Safeguarding Lead submitted a report on the concern raised to the FCDO and the FM *(Annex E)*. Throughout the course of fieldwork in all three countries, a total of 12 reports were filed (seven for Kenya and five for Nepal).

5.3.3.   Data management

Original copies of primary data were stored and organised to facilitate retrieval and analysis at the analysis stage, with data protection and privacy security checks (such as password protected access and encryption where necessary). The IE catalogued the data including details such as time, date, and location of data collection, language of data collection, duration of interview/ FGD, critical identifiers for all respondents, and other relevant pieces of information. Data translation, transcription, and cleaning was conducted by the local data collection partners. Consideration was made of how and when tools were translated from English into local languages, how primary data were recorded – e.g., hand-written notes, typed notes, audio recording, visual recording – and how data were translated back into English, where necessary. All primary data transcripts were anonymised, transcribed (e.g., transcribed from written text to computer/ digital copy) and translated into English (where necessary) as soon as feasible after collection. Primary data were cleaned, including checking for anonymity and missing data that may have occurred throughout processes associated with writing, transcribing (from audio to written transcript), translation (into and from English into the local language), storage, transmission (sharing from the primary data collectors to the IE team), or uploading/ digitisation.

5.3.4.   Quality Assurance Protocols

Our quality assurance protocols for data collection included the following:

All local partners ensured rigorous standards during fieldwork to ensure quality control. These standards included:

- All moderators, observers, quality control officers, and management staff recruited to work on this study signed non-disclosure and confidentiality agreements before they were engaged for fieldwork.
- Local partner staff ensured that all data collection was completed in line with standard research practice and complied with ethical standards of consent. All staff were transparent with respondents regarding the aim and objectives of the project and fully explained the process prior to commencing interviews.
- Throughout fieldwork, data collection control sheets to record the types and numbers of interviews conducted were completed by team leaders at the end of every interview day. Team leaders and research assistants went through every filled-out research tool cover sheet after the research assistants had checked the questionnaires and were satisfied that they were filled correctly.

- Research team supervisors accompanied researchers throughout fieldwork and offered feedback on facilitation/ moderation.
- Debrief meetings were held at the end of a fieldwork day.
- All local partners oversaw a systematic and transparent approach to data transcription.
- Daily calls and check-ins between the Fieldwork Manager and the local research teams allowed for the resolution of issues during fieldwork, as needed. Further, the Fieldwork Manager worked closely with the Tetra Tech team to manage the data collection process through updates and weekly calls as needed.

Our quality assurance protocols for this study require that each deliverable (including drafts) is reviewed prior to submission to the FCDO for consistency by the Principal Investigator and Lead Author, Deputy Team Leader, Team Leader, Technical Director, and Programme Director.

6. Methodological limitations and mitigation strategy

Table 27: Methodological limitations and mitigation strategy

Limitation	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating Action	Impact following mitigation
Limited availability of project data/ quality concerns regarding quantitative, longitudinal data impacted the type of analyses possible to assess changes over time.	High	Moderate	We used the quantitative data to the extent possible and communicated the rationale for including/ excluding certain datasets and the final methods to the FCDO as required, for their feedback. This study also included a substantial amount of primary qualitative data collection and analysis allowing us to fully respond to the research questions.	Low
While we endeavoured to include girls with all types of disabilities in our qualitative sample, it was not always possible to do so due to limited sample sizes.	High	Moderate	We liaised with IPs to identify the beneficiaries with different types of disabilities and incorporated this into our sampling approach as a criterion.	Low
Key stakeholders were not easily accessible or refused to participate in the data collection in some cases.	Moderate	Moderate	We liaised with IPs and our Fieldwork Manager to identify a larger sample of stakeholders in case of refusals, with replacements for refusals.	Low
Delays in obtaining research permissions/ ethical approvals.	Moderate	Moderate	We allowed sufficient time in the work plan to obtain all relevant permissions and scheduled this task as early as possible prior to the start of fieldwork.	Low
Disruptions in fieldwork time due to public holidays.	Moderate	Moderate	We planned fieldwork in the three countries according to their respective school calendars.	Low

Annex C: Research Tools and Consent/ Assent Forms

These are available on written request.

Annex D: Ethical Research and Safeguarding Framework

A universal framework has been prepared to cover all aspects of the IE's work can be provided separately on request.

Annex E: FCDO Response on Safeguarding

Since 2019, a new Safeguarding Operating Model has been supporting Implementing Partners (IPs) to meet the GEC 14 Minimum Standards for safeguarding. Safeguarding is the prevention of, mitigation of and response to violence, exploitation, abuse, and harassment. The Safeguarding Operating Model aims to move beyond due diligence to quality-focused and meaningful compliance. It focuses on constant review and reflection, and it intends to create a positive safeguarding culture. Support is provided to IPs through mediums including audits, capacity development, mainstreaming, case management and monitoring.

At the end of 2020, 98% of projects were meeting the GEC Safeguarding Minimum Standards. More is available on the GEC approach to safeguarding in the "Protection is Possible Report".

The safeguarding and welfare concerns which arose were raised by the IE to the FM and the FCDO. Each of these incident references was escalated by the GEC safeguarding team to implementing partners for investigation. As with all partners, the FM and the FCDO sought assurances through the established case management framework that they had undertaken safe, independent, and thorough investigations into the concerns, and taken robust action when wrongdoing was identified. This included providing vital support where necessary and importantly identifying whether preventative and response measures linked with school-related gender-based violence could be strengthened.