

Tetra Tech International Development

# Independent Evaluation of the Girls' Education Challenge Phase II – Lessons Learned Study

## Annexes

February 2025



# Tetra Tech International Development – Independent Evaluation of the Girls' Education Challenge Phase II – Lessons Learned Study

Client Name: Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)

Project Name: Independent Evaluation of the GEC Phase II

Contract Number: PO 10019

Partners:

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

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February 2025

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- 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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# Acronyms

<b>AGES</b>	Adolescent Girls Education in Somalia
<b>AI</b>	Artificial Intelligence
<b>EE</b>	External Evaluator
<b>EGMA</b>	Early Grade Mathematics Assessment
<b>EGRA</b>	Early Grade Reading Assessment
<b>EM</b>	Evaluation Manager
<b>FCDO</b>	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>FM</b>	Fund Manager
<b>GEC I</b>	Girls’ Education Challenge Phase I
<b>GEC II</b>	Girls’ Education Challenge Phase II
<b>GEC-T</b>	GEC Transition Window
<b>GPE</b>	Global Partnership for Education
<b>GWD</b>	Girls with Disabilities
<b>ICAI</b>	Independent Commission for Aid Impact
<b>IE</b>	Independent Evaluation
<b>IP</b>	Implementing Partner
<b>IW</b>	Innovation Window
<b>KII</b>	Key Informant Interview
<b>KLQ</b>	Key Learning Question
<b>KMWG</b>	Knowledge Management Working Group
<b>LNGB</b>	Leave No Girl Behind
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>MEL</b>	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
<b>MGCubed</b>	Making Ghanaian Girls Great
<b>ODA</b>	Overseas Development Assistance
<b>ODI</b>	Overseas Development Institute
<b>PbR</b>	Payment by Results

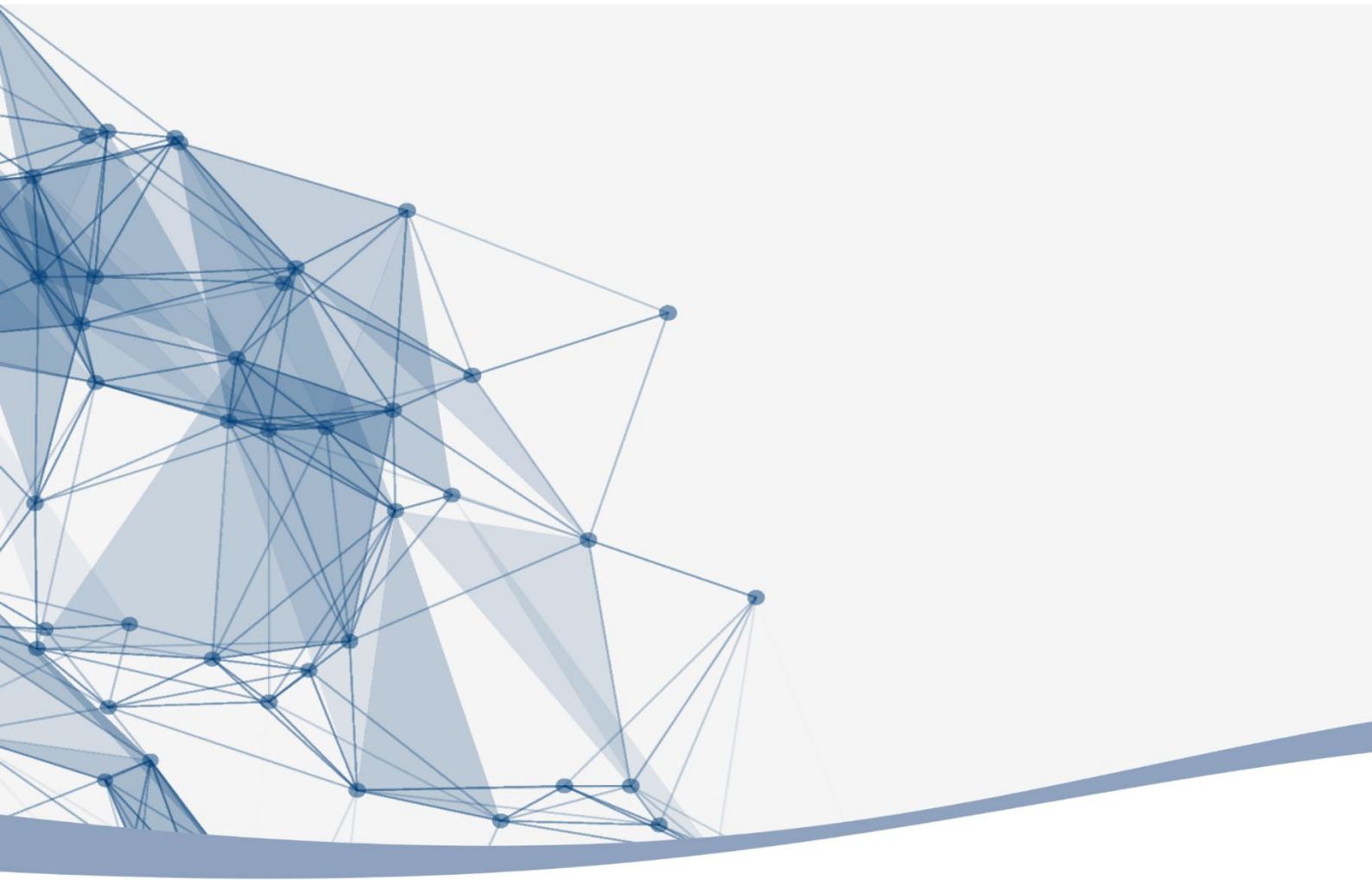
<b>PiP</b>	Portfolio in Practice
<b>PwC</b>	PricewaterhouseCoopers
<b>RAPID</b>	“Recommend, Agree, Perform, Input, and Decide” framework
<b>RRLF</b>	Rapid Research & Learning Fund
<b>SCW</b>	Step Change Window
<b>SeGMA</b>	Secondary Grade Math Assessment
<b>SeGRA</b>	Secondary Grade Reading Assessment
<b>SOMGEP</b>	Somali Girls Education Promotion Programme
<b>SP</b>	Strategic Partner
<b>SPW</b>	Strategic Partnership Window
<b>SRO</b>	Senior Responsible Owner
<b>SWS</b>	Structured Web Search
<b>ToR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>UKFIET</b>	United Kingdom Forum for International Education and Training
<b>UNGEI</b>	United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>ROSA</b>	Regional Office of South Asia
<b>VfM</b>	Value for Money
<b>WASH</b>	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

## Annex A: Terms of Reference for the Lessons Learned Study

Tetra Tech International Development

# Independent Evaluation of the Girls' Education Challenge Phase II – Terms of Reference for the Lessons Learned Study

August 2024



# Independent Evaluation of the Girls' Education Challenge Phase II – ToR for the Lessons Learned Study

Client Name: FCDO

Project Name: Independent Evaluation of the GEC Phase II

Contract Number: PO 10019

Partners:

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

Final Version

August 2024

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Programme Director

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## Acronyms

<b>FCDO</b>	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
<b>FM</b>	Fund Manager
<b>GEC</b>	Girls' Education Challenge
<b>GEC I</b>	Girls' Education Challenge Phase I
<b>GEC II</b>	Girls' Education Challenge Phase II
<b>GEC-T</b>	Girls' Education Challenge – Transition
<b>IE</b>	Independent Evaluation
<b>IP</b>	Implementing Partner
<b>IW</b>	Innovation Window
<b>KLQ</b>	Key Learning Question
<b>LNGB</b>	Leave No Girl Behind
<b>REAL</b>	Research and Equitable Access and Learning Centre
<b>RRLF</b>	Rapid Research & Learning Fund
<b>SCW</b>	Step Change Window
<b>SPA</b>	Senior Portfolio Advisor
<b>SPW</b>	Strategic Partnerships Window
<b>ToR</b>	Terms of Reference

# 1. Introduction

This document sets out the **Terms of Reference (ToR)** for the independent Lessons Learned Study for the Girls' Education Challenge Phase I (GEC I) and II (GEC II). The learning study is timed to coincide with the final stage of Phase II, which ends in March 2025. The study includes a two-stage preparatory phase:

- 1) The development of this ToR during June to July 2024, summarises:
  - Details of the context for the evaluation;
  - Key Learning Objectives and Key Learning Questions (KLQs);
  - Overview of evaluation methods and data;
  - Learning deliverables;
  - A study team and review study management; and
  - Ethics and safeguarding considerations.
- 2) The development of a detailed **Lessons Learned Study Design Note**, to be submitted in September 2024, will detail:
  - Full details of the lessons learned design and methods and data sources to be used;
  - Full details and justification of the sampling strategy to be used, where relevant;
  - Indicative questions for data collection tools;
  - Details of analysis to be undertaken;
  - Work plan and budget;
  - A Study Use and Influence Plan;
  - A detailed overview of the study team and management; and
  - Provisions for ethics and safeguarding aligned with the details of the work plan.

The Lessons Learned Study (including data collection, analysis, and reporting) will be completed between August 2024 and February 2025.

## 2. Background

### 2.1. Background to the GEC

#### GEC Phase I (2012-2017)

In 2012, the Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) launched the first phase of the Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) Fund, which ended in April 2017. This £355 million fund set out to improve the education outcomes of up to a million marginalised girls. The GEC worked through three funding windows: (1) the Step Change Window (SCW), (2) the Innovation Window (IW), (3) and the Strategic Partnerships Window (SPW).

Fifteen SCW projects were awarded funding of up to £30 million per project to apply tried and tested designs that could quickly and effectively expand education opportunities and improve the quality of education for girls at primary and secondary school levels. They operated in nine countries: Afghanistan, DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. Fourteen SCW projects were operating at the time of the endline evaluation, aiming to address multiple barriers to girls' education affecting individual girls, their households, communities, and schools.

IW projects operated in 12 countries: Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. The FCDO awarded funding of up to £2 million to each of the 19 projects, which set out to test novel approaches enabling marginalised girls to achieve education outcomes. Seventeen IW projects were operating at the time of the endline evaluation, aiming to address multiple barriers to girls' education affecting individual girls, their households, communities, and schools.

The SPW was comprised of four partnerships: Coca-Cola, Discovery Communications, Avanti Communications, and Ericsson. These partners implemented projects in Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria and Myanmar, with a total budget of

between £7 million and £27 million. DFID provided approximately half of the budget, with partners providing the other half as match funding.

GEC Phase II (2017-2025)

Following Phase I, the FCDO invested a further £500 million in the GEC Phase II programme. The purpose of GEC II over its eight-year implementation period (2017-2025) was to support 1.5 million marginalised girls with education and to improve their lives, as well as those of their families and communities. All projects have been designed and delivered by Implementing Partners (IPs) and GEC II is managed through a Fund Manager (FM) consortium led by PricewaterhouseCoopers. The GEC II programme ends in March 2025, with the last GEC II project ending in August 2024, the FM contract ending in December 2024, and the IE contract ending in March 2025.

GEC II was delivered through 41 projects in 17 countries and was structured by two funding windows:

- **The GEC- Transitions (GEC-T) Window** provided continued support to 1 million marginalised girls through 27 GEC Phase II projects helping girls transition to the next stage of education in 15 countries (Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe). These projects started implementing activities in mid-2017 with timeframes of between three and seven years.
- **The Leave No Girl Behind (LNGB) Window** funded 14 projects supporting up to 500,000 highly marginalised girls in 10 countries (Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nepal, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Zimbabwe). LNGB projects focused on supporting highly marginalised adolescent girls between 10-19 years of age into education or training while gaining skills, including numeracy and literacy. LNGB projects targeted highly marginalised girls, including those who either never enrolled in formal schooling or dropped out before achieving basic literacy and numeracy skills. The marginalised groups of girls targeted included girls with disabilities, girls at risk of early marriage and girls who are pregnant or have children. Projects started in late 2018, and enrolled beneficiaries in cohorts, which typically lasted from 9-12 months.

2.2. Overview of the GEC II Independent Evaluation

In 2020, the FCDO commissioned an Independent Evaluation of the GEC II to generate evidence and learning to understand what has worked well or less well, how, why, for whom and in which contexts. This evaluation is being conducted by a consortium of partners: Tetra Tech International Development (Tetra Tech), the Research for Equitable Access and Learning (REAL) Centre at the University of Cambridge; Fab Inc., Southern academic partners<sup>1</sup> and national/ regional research partners (depending on the location of the IE Team's research). The ToR for the IE required the IE Team to deliver:

- Seven in-depth thematic studies designed and implemented iteratively to respond to the emerging evidence and learning needs of the FCDO and FM.
- A Rapid Research and Learning Fund (RRLF) – a ringfenced fund to commission research relevant to GEC II and the FCDO's evidence and learning priorities.
- An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the GEC II Portfolio.
- A Lessons Learned Study covering GEC Phases I and II.

2.2.1. Current Status of the IE Studies

Table 1 below provides a summary of the current status of the IE Team's work – Studies 1-6 have been completed with Study 7 (Sustainability) and the Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the GEC II portfolio still ongoing.

Table 1: Status of GEC II IE work

IE Scope of Work	Status (End Date)	Case Study Projects (Window)
<a href="#">Study 1: Access and Learning</a>	Complete (Feb-22)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• EDT Kenya (GEC-T)</li><li>• Mercy Corps Nepal (LNGB)</li></ul>

<sup>1</sup> Seven Southern academic institutions are part of the IE consortium including: Centre for the Studies for the Economies of Africa in Nigeria; Institute of Social and Policy Sciences in Pakistan; University of Dar Es Salaam in Tanzania; Institute for Integrated Development Studies in Nepal; Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organization (APPRO); Africa Population and Health Research Centre in Kenya; and Centre for Social Research at Chancellor College in Malawi.

IE Scope of Work	Status (End Date)	Case Study Projects (Window)
<a href="#">Study 2: Teachers and Teaching</a>	Complete (Dec-21)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AKF Afghanistan (GEC-T)</li> <li>• BRAC Afghanistan (GEC-T)</li> <li>• Plan Ghana (GEC-T)</li> <li>• IRC Sierra Leone (LNGB)</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Study 3: Aggregate Impact of GEC-T Projects between Baseline and Midline</a>	Complete (Aug-22)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NA /Desk-based assessment (GEC-T)</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Study 4: Educating Girls with Disabilities in GEC II</a>	Complete (May-23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VSO Nepal (LNGB)</li> <li>• LINK Malawi (LNGB)</li> <li>• Viva /CRANE Uganda (GEC-T)</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Study 5: Education for Marginalised Girls Beyond Formal Schooling</a>	Complete (Oct-23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WEI Ghana (LNGB)</li> <li>• ActionAid Kenya (LNGB)</li> <li>• PIN Nepal (LNGB)</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Study 6: Value for Money of Reaching the Most Marginalised GEC Girls</a>	Analysis /Reporting (Jul-24)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PIN Nepal (LNGB)</li> <li>• PIN Ethiopia (LNGB)</li> <li>• LINK Malawi (LNGB)</li> </ul>
<i>Study 7: Sustaining Changes in Community Attitudes and Norms to Improve Girls' Education Outcomes</i>	Fieldwork (Feb-25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VSO SfS Nepal (GEC-T)</li> <li>• Camfed Zimbabwe (GEC-T)</li> </ul>
Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the GEC II Portfolio	Evaluation Design (Mar-25)	GEC-T & LNGB
<b>GEC Phase I &amp; II Lessons Learned Study (2012-2025)</b>	<b>ToR-24 (Feb-25)</b>	<b>TBC</b>
Rapid Research and Learning Fund ( <a href="#">RRLF</a> ):		
3. Six years later, what has become of them? A cohort study of Somali women and girls who participated in the Somali Girls Education Promotion - University of Portsmouth /Consilient Research (Somalia)	Complete (Dec-22)	N/A (GEC Phase I)
4. Adolescent Education, Health and Wellbeing Status in Four Counties in Kenya - Two Years into the COVID-19 Pandemic - Population Council (Kenya)	Complete (Jan-23)	N/A
5. Participatory Ethnography Research for Musahar Girls' Education - National Institute for Development Research (Nepal)	Complete (Jun-23)	LNGB

## 2.3 Rationale for a Lessons Learned Study

As detailed above, the IE team will conduct seven thematic research studies and two portfolio evaluations during GEC II, which supplement the window-level evaluations (baseline, midline, endline), process evaluation and a thematic study conducted by the GEC Evaluation Manager during GEC I.

Having been implemented since 2012, the GEC Phases I and II offer 12 years of learning from across its lifetime. GEC is the largest global girls' education programme to date and marks a significant investment both in girls' education programming and in monitoring, evaluation and learning about what works when implementing education programmes targeted to reach marginalised girls. The second phase scaled up the programme's investment, and also included a significant programme re-design as well as a new approach to evaluation and learning. The combination of these factors means that lessons from across GEC's two phases offer insights into different programme implementation modalities in different geographies in different operating and policy contexts.

This study will collate, organise and synthesise portfolio-level learning from across both phases of the GEC programme, and the two evaluation contracts (i.e., GEC Phase I Evaluation Manager and GEC Phase II Independent Evaluation) that supported them. It is, therefore, uniquely placed to add value to the education sector more broadly by summarising insights into the contextual factors, policy shifts and operating environment constraints that have affected the design and implementation of the GEC over its 12-year lifetime. It should be noted that the aim of the study is to provide lessons and recommendations at the portfolio level and not related to individual projects the GEC

funded. This limitation in scope is necessary given the time constraints of this study and means the findings will be useful for a broad range of audiences.

The IE team will be able to draw from a large range of secondary data sources produced by the IE, FM, IPs and other stakeholders throughout GEC. The team will also benefit from institutional memory spanning the lifecycle of the programme, with the IE's Technical Director, Studies Lead, Programme Director and Evaluation Lead who have all been involved in the GEC from the beginning. Furthermore, the team also maintain close relationships with other key stakeholders from the GEC I and GEC II programme offering the study team access to institutional memory from the FCDO, FM, IP and IE team perspectives. This combination of access, institutional memory and long programme implementation period is conducive to generating lessons about girls' education programming that will be useful for a broad range of education programmes' design and implementation now, and in the future.

## 3. Purpose and scope of work

### 3.1. Purpose and objectives

The purpose of the Lessons Learned Study is to provide stakeholders involved in girls' education with lessons learned from both phases of GEC about reaching the most marginalised girls through education programming, and lessons about the utility of different approaches to evaluation and learning used throughout the GEC. These lessons are intended to inform new education programmes such as the Scaling Access and Learning in Education (SCALE) initiative and the What Works Hub for Global Education as well as future policies and programmes.

In doing so, the study has **two objectives**:

- 1) Identify and share lessons and recommendations from the GEC programme, specifically considering the evolution of GEC from Phase I to Phase II, on:
  - a. How large-scale programmes can reach the most marginalised girls
  - b. How to approach evaluation and learning,
- 2) Disseminate these lessons and recommendations through accessible learning products that can be used by policymakers and programme managers as well as secondary stakeholders including national governments, implementing partners and other relevant stakeholders. These lessons can inform the design and implementation of other education programmes.

### Scope

The study will draw on policy-level, fund-level, and project-level learning across both phases of the GEC. However, the primary focus will be at policy- and fund-level. Project-level case-studies may be included to highlight relevant learning at this level. However, due to the time constraints of the study, these case studies will focus exclusively on projects that have already been included as case studies in other GEC IE studies and considered only where especially relevant to the key learning questions. This judgement will be informed by consultations during the design phase (see [Section 4.2](#)).

### Audiences

The primary audience for this study is the FCDO (GEC II Programme Team, FCDO Education Advisors, Regional Education Advisors, Girls' Education Department). The secondary stakeholder audiences for this study are other international donors, government ministries and other stakeholders investing in, implementing and providing MEL services for girls' education programmes.

### Key learning questions and sub-questions

Related to the overall purpose and objectives noted above, an initial review of the available documentation on GEC I and II and consultation with the FM, FCDO and GEC Fund Manager Senior Portfolio Advisors (SPAs) have determined the key learning questions below.

**KLQ1:** How and why did the approach to **reaching the most marginalised** change over the life of the GEC? What are the lessons learned from these changes and related recommendations for future education programmes?

1.1. How did the GEC define, target, and reach the most marginalised girls over the lifecycle of the programme?

## 1.2. What trade-offs were involved in targeting girls facing different dimensions of marginalisation?

- i) Key dimensions will include 1. whether the girls were in school or not, 2. their subgroup characteristics and 3. their wider environment.
- ii) How did GEC I and GEC II projects tackle barriers to girls' education both within the education environment as well as the wider community environment, and how and why did this change within and between GEC phases?

**KLQ2:** How and why did the approach to **evaluation and learning** change over the life of the GEC? What are the lessons learned from these changes?

2.1 How did the FCDO's evidence and learning needs change over the lifetime of the GEC programme? What were the main drivers for these changes?

2.2 How did the GEC's approach to evidence and learning change over the course of the GEC to respond to the changes in evidence and learning needs and/or changes in the programme's operating context? And with what effect in terms of the evidence that we produced?

2.3 How did the different approaches taken to evaluation and learning over the lifecycle of the programme contribute to stakeholder audiences' understanding of the GEC's performance and impact?

2.4 To what extent was evidence and learning generated by the IE, FM, and Implementing Partners during GEC I and during GEC II used by the FCDO and wider partners and stakeholders to inform decision-making in girls' education programmes and policy?

# 4. Study approach, methods and data sources

## 4.1. Study approach

The Lessons Learned Study will be a retrospective study, reflecting on the evolution of the GEC over its lifecycle. These reflections will be informed by the analysis of secondary data collected throughout the GEC (Phase I and Phase II) and the collection of supplementary primary data. The study will synthesise lessons identified from previous research and evaluative studies undertaken throughout GEC I and GEC II. Key informant interviews will be used to offer additional context and nuance to the learning trends identified through secondary data analysis and synthesis.

Combined, these sources will provide a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of GEC's programming and evaluation and learning approaches to the programme's design and evaluation.

*Annex 1* summarises the key methods the study expects to use in response to each of the KLQs and further information on these methods are provided, below. A detailed approach and methodology will be developed, and a Lessons Learned Study Design Note submitted, upon approval of this Terms of Reference.

## 4.2. Study design phases

The study design stage will commence following approval of this ToR (August 2024) and culminate in the submission of the Research Design Note (September 2024). The **study approach and methodology** will be staged across five phases:

### Phase 1: Study Design

**Stage 1** involves reviewing existing data on the GEC to frame the overall study and to inform the design of both the methodology and the report.

- Rapid review of secondary data from GEC I and GEC II: This will entail collation and initial review of the scope of existing learning briefs, evaluation reports, IE study reports and other relevant documentation. This phase will be used to develop a learning 'gap map' against the study's proposed KLQs. It will look at lessons learned reports and development programmes focusing on education, to frame and contextualise the study.
- Review and refinement of KLQs: Based on the availability of relevant data from secondary sources, the study team will refine and finalise the study's KLQs, ensuring these are both relevant to the learning demands of the study's primary audience and feasible to answer based on the data sources available.

**Stage 2** will involve designing the detailed approach and methods for the study and the submission of a Lessons Learned Study Design Note. Specifically, this stage will include:

- Designing a detailed methodology in response to the refined KLQs, informed by the data available as identified in Phase 1.
- Defining the scope of each KLQ. This study will focus primarily on learning at the fund- and policy level. However, during the design phase a selection of project case studies may be included where especially relevant for KLQs or sub-questions. Where project-level learning is included, sampling criteria will be developed to ensure the most relevant and useful case study projects from across the previous GEC 1 and GEC II studies are included in the study.
- Identifying data sources, including key informants for interviews and a list of key documents to be included in the secondary data review finalised.
- Finalising the stakeholder engagement plan (see [Section 9](#) for a draft engagement plan).
- Development of the Lessons Learned Design Note: The final deliverable for this phase is the Design Note. This will include a summary of the work undertaken during phase 1, a detailed study plan including the research questions, methods and analysis plan, the rationale for any change to KLQs, methods or scope agreed during the design phase, and details of the study's deliverables, work plan and team structure.

## **Phase 2: Review of secondary data and primary data collection**

This phase will include the collation and organisation of secondary data and the collection of primary data. Specifically, it will include a review of relevant programme documentation and the extraction and coding of relevant data from these documents against the KLQs.

During this phase, the study team will also conduct key informant interviews and focus groups if appropriate, with relevant stakeholders to inform the KLQs and respond to the gaps identified during the design phase. A detailed data collection plan and draft data collection tools will be included in the study design note.

## **Phase 3: Analysis and synthesis of data**

This phase will include the analysis of findings from both document review and key informant interviews. The analytical techniques used to answer each research question will be determined during Phase 1 of the study.

The study team will present emerging findings to selected study stakeholders, to be identified in the design phase (Phase 1).

## **Phase 4: Reporting**

This phase will result in the development and dissemination of the key outputs from this study, a draft report, a final report, and a final learning brief.

### 4.3. Indicative data sources

*Table 2* below details indicative secondary data sources that the study expects to draw from in response to the KLQs.

**Table 2: Repository of documents for the Lessons Learned Study**

Type of Document	GEC Phase I	Source	GEC Phase II	Source
<b>Business Cases</b>	GEC Phase I Business Case	2011; DFID	GEC Phase II Business Case	2015; DFID
<b>Evaluation Reports</b>	GEC Thematic Discussion Papers	2016; Fund Manager	Study 1: Access and Learning	2022; IE GEC
	Innovation Window: Baseline Report	2015; IE GEC	Study 2: Teachers and Teaching	2021; IE GEC
	Innovation Window: Midline Report	2017; IE GEC	Study 3: Aggregate Impact of GEC-T Projects between Baseline and Midline	2022; IE GEC
	Innovation Window: Endline Report	2017; IE GEC	Study 4: Educating Girls with Disabilities in GEC II	2023; IE GEC
	Step Change Window: Baseline Report	2015; IE GEC	Study 5: Education for Marginalised Girls Beyond Formal Schooling	2023; IE GEC
	Step Change Window: Midline Report	2017; IE GEC	Study 6: VfM of Reaching the Most Marginalised GEC Girls	2024; IE GEC
	Step Change Window: Endline Report	2017; IE GEC		
	Strategic Partnerships Window: Baseline Report	2016; IE GEC		
	Strategic Partnerships Window: Endline Report	2017; IE GEC		
	Process Review Report	2016; IE GEC		
	ICAI Review - UK Support to Marginalised Girls	2016; ICAI	ICAI Review - Assessing UK Aid's Results in Education	2022; ICAI
<b>FCDO Annual Reviews</b>	DFID Reviews Phase I (TBC)		Annual review (7)	2017-18-19-20-21-22-23; FCDO
<b>FM Annual Reports</b>	Quarterly Reports (14) (TBC)		Annual Reports from the FM (6) + Quarterly Reports (TBC)	2018-19-20-21-22-23; Fund Manager
<b>Newsletters, Learning Briefs and PiP</b>	FM Quarterly Newsletters Phase I	2014-15-16-17-18; Fund Manager	Learning Briefs Phase II (11)	2022-23-24; Fund Manager
	Thematic Reviews (10)	Multiple years; Fund Manager	Portfolios in Practice (7)	2023; Fund Manager
			Study Portfolio/ Portfolio Practice Evaluation	Ongoing; Fund Manager
<b>Rapid Research and Learning Fund (RRLF)</b>			Participatory Ethnography Research for Musahar Girls' Education - National Institute for Development Research (Nepal)	2023; IE GEC

## Independent Evaluation of the Girls' Education Challenge Phase II – ToR for the Lessons Learned Study

Type of Document	GEC Phase I	Source	GEC Phase II	Source
			Six years later, what has become of them? A cohort study of Somali women and girls who participated in the Somali Girls Education Promotion - University of Portsmouth /Consilient Research (Somalia) Adolescent Education, Health and Wellbeing Status in Four Counties in Kenya - Two Years into the COVID-19 Pandemic - Population Council (Kenya)	2022; IE GEC  2022; IE GEC
Additional Documents	GEC I Evaluation Strategy	2013; IE GEC	GEC-T MEL Guidance for projects	2017; Fund Manager
	Innovation Window Grant Recipient Handbook draft	2013; Fund Manager	Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning during Covid-19	2020; IE GEC
	Concept Note Template Step Change Window projects	2012; Fund Manager	COVID-19 Response FM	2020; Fund Manager
	Strategic Partnerships Window Practical Guide to Partnership Proposals	2012; Fund Manager	Impact of COVID-19 on GEC Evaluations	2020; IE GEC
	Step Change Grant Recipient Handbook	2013; Fund Manager	Response plan template for GEC-T and LNGB projects	2020; Fund Manager
	GEC I Process Review Report and Brief	2016; IE GEC	GEC COVID-19 conceptual framework	2020; Fund Manager
	UKES 2017 presentation and abstract: "The use and usability of Evaluation: staying on step ahead"	2017; IE GEC + FCDO	Keeping in contact with girls - COVID-19 Communication and Safeguarding Guidance	2020; Fund Manager
	Does skin in the game improve the level of play? Payment by Results (PbR) in the GEC	2017; Fund Manager	GEC project initial Covid-19 responses	2020; Fund Manager
			An effective crisis response: Lessons from the COVID-19 experience Research Feasibility Study	2022; Fund Manager 2020; REAL Centre

## 5. Research ethics

### 5.1. Ethical standards

Study activities will fully comply with the guiding concepts and principles set out in the IE's Safeguarding Framework document, the FCDO (2013) Evaluation Policy, the FCDO (2019) Ethical Guidance for Research, Evaluation and Monitoring Activities, the UK Data Protection Act (2018) and other applicable FCDO frameworks and guidance.

The scope of this report limits data collection to key informant interviews with stakeholders involved in the GEC delivery and other stakeholders in the broader girls' education sector. As such, the study design will not need a specific ethical framework for community-level fieldwork. However, certain groups may face barriers to participation or representation of their views in the study. All study activities will, include informed consent, the right to withdrawal and adaptations to data collection processes where feasible to accommodate the participation of diverse groups, such as accommodations for respondents that have a disability.

### 5.2. Data management and access to information

Clear protocols and data storage measures will be put in place to ensure the confidentiality of the data collected and to preserve the anonymity of the research participant(s). Data will be collected, stored, and processed for this contract in line with regulations set out in the UK Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation (2018), and all other applicable legislation.

Any digital research tools (e.g. online survey platforms) used will be under a licensing agreement with Tetra Tech or subcontracted organisations to ensure that IE confidentiality and data protection processes are strictly adhered to. Any digital tools developed by the IE will adhere to the FCDO's Principles for Digital Development where relevant. The FCDO will have unlimited access to the material produced by the study except for personal information within datasets or other measures to protect the privacy of individuals.

## 6. Risks and mitigation measures

*Table 3* below outlines the primary risks that the study will face and the proposed mitigation measures for these.

**Table 3: Key risks and mitigation strategies**

Risk	Details	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation strategies
Recall bias from stakeholders	The study will seek to obtain feedback from various stakeholders, including FM staff, IP staff and FCDO staff. Considerable time may have elapsed since some stakeholder's involvement in the GEC, and this study specifically focuses on retrospective questioning looking back to GEC Phase 1 (2012-2017).	Medium	Moderate	Potential recall /memory bias will be closely monitored during primary data collection. Prompts will be included in interview tools to let respondents self-assess the quality of their recollection. As much as possible, evidence (including secondary evidence) will be triangulated and cross-checked to mitigate the effect of potential bias on findings. Having multiple members of the IE team also been involved in GEC since the start of phase I also offers the opportunity for triangulation and challenge from the IE team members with institutional memory.

Risk	Details	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation strategies
Unavailability of key informants to support the study	Most of the GEC staff involved in GEC II have already moved to other assignments at the time of writing this ToR. This implies it may be difficult to access information and resolve queries.	Low	Moderate	The IE team will make efforts to engage with (current or former) FM and FCDO staff early, with early engagements made during the study design phase. Gathering up-to-date contact information will be key, and a 'snowballing approach' will be used to reach staff who has already moved on to other assignments or companies. Experience from previous studies suggests that this risk will be mitigated by the extensive networks of the GEC IE, donor, and FM teams.
Underreporting of negative perceptions of programming and desirability bias.	Respondents may be hesitant to report negative perceptions of programming.	Medium	Moderate	Given the GEC programme is now ending and will not be retendered there is less pressure for GEC stakeholders to have a positive bias in their reports, as the stakes are lower. In addition, questions about how learning from earlier in the programme was used are more likely to be answered objectively as respondents will be describing past events and how lessons were or were not used, rather than projecting expectations about future use.
Limited timeframe to conduct the study	Collection of data and analysis will be mostly conducted during a short window between October and December.	Medium	Moderate	The IE team will make efforts to engage with FM, IE and FCDO staff early to plan the Key Informant Interviews. Moreover, the IE team will be selective in its choice of documents for the desk-based review and prioritize documents according to their relevance to the KLQ.
Limited timeframe to promote study use and influence	Learning reporting is scheduled for early 2025, with final report approval in February 2025. This corresponds with the end of the IE contract. There is therefore limited time to disseminate the lessons learned study.	High	Moderate	The IE Team will take all reasonable efforts to work on deliverables early and to engage with stakeholders throughout the study to share the purpose, scope, and objectives of the study in advance of the dissemination of the report and learning brief. Once the IE contract ends, the FCDO will take on responsibility for the dissemination of findings.

## 7. Work plan

### 7.1. Expected timeline and deliverables

The study will be completed between August 2024 and February 2025. Document analysis and key informant interviews will take place between September and October 2024 with analysis and write-up being completed in October and November 2024. The Research Design Note will provide a detailed work plan with sequencing of activities. The expected deliverables for the study are detailed in [Table 4](#).

Table 4: Deliverables

Deliverables	Timeline
Research Design Note	September 2024
Emerging findings workshop	November 2024
Draft Report presenting findings, conclusions, and recommendations	December 2024
Final Report	February 2025
Learning Brief and summary presentation for dissemination to target stakeholder audiences	February 2025

## 8. Team composition

This study will be led by a core study team under the guidance of the Principal Investigator and **Lead Author** (Simon Griffiths), **Research Associate** (Libby Bligh) and **Lead Qualitative Analyst** (Pierre Canet).

The **Technical Director** (Pauline Rose), **Team Leader** (Monazza Aslam), **Deputy Team Leader** (Shenila Rawal), and **Evaluation Lead** (Paul Atherton) will provide leadership on specific aspects of the design, data collection, analysis and write-up of the report, as well as providing quality assurance across the entire study.

The study will be managed by **Programme Manager** (Louise Cathro) supported by **Assistant Programme Manager** (Robyn Nuttall).

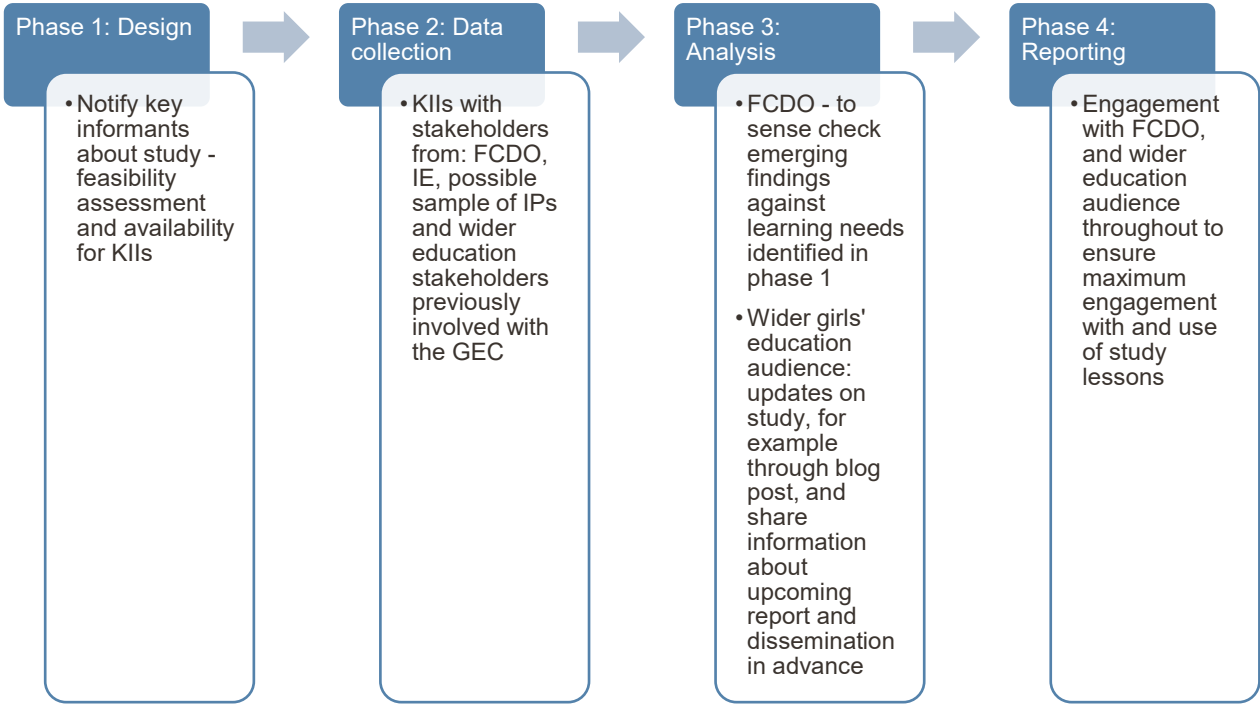
## 9. Stakeholder engagement

The Lessons Learned Study team will engage with the following external stakeholders over the duration of the study as needed:

- FCDO GEC programme team;
- Education stakeholders previously involved with the GEC; and
- Other organisations directly or indirectly involved in the GEC over its lifetime or otherwise operating in the same sectors or thematic areas.

*Figure 1* below outlines the anticipated key stakeholders that the study team will engage with during each study phase.

Figure 1: Expected stakeholder engagement by phase of study



## Annex 1: Stakeholder Matrix

See Excel document submitted separately.

## Annex B: Lessons Learned Study framework

Key Learning Questions	Sub-questions	Focus areas (internal)	Scope	Methods	Secondary data sources	Primary data sources
<b>KLQ1: How and why did the approach to reaching the most marginalised change over the life of the GEC? What are the lessons learned from these changes and related recommendations for future education programmes?</b>	1.1 How did the approach to reaching the most marginalised girls change at the programme level over its lifecycle?	<p>Changes in outcomes/ target beneficiaries in ToC</p> <p>Changes in definitions of marginalisation</p> <p>Changes in target strategies</p>	UK policy level / Fund level	<p>Mapping and synthesis across GEC I and GEC II projects to identify the definitions, and reach and targeting strategies used in GEC I and II and the evolution of these.</p> <p>Synthesis-guided KIIs</p> <p>Project case-studies, identified through document review.</p>	<p>Business Cases</p> <p>RfPs FM used for project procurement for GEC I and GEC II - we weren't involved in Phase II. call for proposals for LNGB. SG to save. RFP for phase II from Emma.</p> <p>Annual Reports from GEC I and GEC II</p> <p>LF/Theories of change GEC I and GEC II</p> <p>Programme / strategy documents from both phases</p> <p>GEC II Learning Briefs</p> <p>GEC I Baseline Report</p> <p>GEC II Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the GEC II Portfolio</p> <p>ICAI review - UK Support to Marginalised Girls</p>	<p>KIIs with Fund Manager</p> <p>KIIs with FCDO programme management and leadership</p> <p>KIIs with Strategic Partners in education sector</p> <p>FGD with in-country Education Advisors</p> <p>FGD with Implementing Partners</p> <p>FGD with External Evaluators</p>
	1.2. What trade-offs did the programme face in the aim to reach the most marginalised? (e.g. reaching the largest numbers versus the most difficult to reach; cost of reaching different groups.) How and why did this change?	<p>Trade-offs at fund level (scope? Geographic focus? Total ambition for girls reached?)</p> <p>Trade-offs at project level (cost/benefit? Number of girls supported? Additional resources needed and barriers faced?)</p>	Fund level		<p>GEC II study 5 - LNGB</p> <p>GEC II study 6 - VIM</p> <p>GEC II Portfolio evaluation</p> <p>Fund manager manuals</p>	<p>KIIs with FCDO programme management and leadership</p> <p>KIIs with Fund Manager</p> <p>Reflection workshop with IE study leads</p> <p>FGD with Implementing Partners</p> <p>FGD with external evaluators</p>
	1.3. How did the approach to tackling barriers to marginalised girls' education (both within the education environment as well as the wider community environment) change, and why?	<p>Barriers identified</p> <p>Strategies for tackling these</p>	Fund level	<p>Mapping and synthesis of barriers identified over lifetime of the programme, and approaches to these.</p> <p>KIIs</p> <p>Project case-studies where relevant, identified through the document review.</p>	<p>Annual Reports from GEC I and GEC II</p> <p>Theories of Change GEC I and GEC II</p> <p>GEC I and II Programme / strategy documents</p> <p>GEC I Baseline Report</p> <p>GEC II Portfolio Evaluation</p> <p>GEC II Learning Briefs</p>	<p>KIIs with FCDO programme management and leadership</p> <p>KIIs with Fund Manager</p> <p>FGD with Implementing Partners</p> <p>FGD with External Evaluators</p>
<b>KLQ2: How and why did the approach to evaluation and learning change over the life of the GEC? What are the lessons learned from these changes?</b>	2.1. How did the FCDO's evaluation and learning needs change over the lifetime of the GEC programme? What were the main drivers for these changes?	<p>Key policy junctures/shifts</p> <p>Key programme junctures and shifts (ICAI review - UK Support to Marginalised Girls)</p> <p>Responses to these junctures and associated demand for evaluation and learning</p> <p>Accountability vs learning focus</p>	UK policy level / Fund level	<p>Development of a timeline of critical junctures of programme context and any changes in evaluation and learning approach in response to these.</p>	<p>UKES presentation on learning from GEC I</p> <p>GEC I Evaluation Reports</p> <p>GEC II Business Case</p> <p>GEC II Learning Briefs</p>	<p>KIIs with FCDO programme management and leadership</p> <p>Internal reflection workshop - IE team</p> <p>FGD with in-country education advisors</p> <p>FGD with Implementing Partners</p> <p>FGD with External Evaluators</p>
	2.2. How did the GEC's approach to evaluation and learning change over the course of the GEC to respond to the changes in evaluation and learning needs and /or changes in the programme's operating context? And with what effect in terms of the evidence that was produced by the IE, FM and IPs?	<p>Evolution of theories of change and markers of success</p> <p>Changes in evaluation and learning strategy</p>	Fund level		<p>GEC II Business Case</p> <p>GEC II IE ToR, Inception Report, FCDO Annual Reviews</p> <p>IE Annual Reports - for phase I and phase II.</p>	<p>KIIs with FCDO programme management and leadership</p> <p>KIIs with Southern Academic Partners</p> <p>Internal reflection workshop - IE team</p> <p>FGD with External Evaluators</p>
	2.3. How did the different approaches taken to evaluation and learning by the IE, FM and IPs over the lifecycle of the programme contribute to stakeholder audiences' understanding of the GEC's performance and impact?	<p>Utility of evaluation and learning activities by FM</p> <p>Utility of evaluation and learning activities by IE</p> <p>Utility of evaluation and learning activities by IPs and external evaluators</p>	UK policy level / Fund level	Triangulation: programme document review and KIIs	<p>GEC I Process Study</p> <p>UKES Presentation</p> <p>GEC I Quarterly Newsletters</p> <p>GEC I Thematic Synthesis Papers</p> <p>GEC II IE ToR, Inception Report, annual reviews</p> <p>GEC II learning briefs</p>	<p>KIIs with FCDO programme management and leadership</p> <p>KIIs with strategic partners in education sector</p> <p>KIIs with Southern Academic Partners</p> <p>KIIs with the Fund Manager</p>
	2.4 To what extent was evaluation and learning generated by the IE, FM, and IPs during GEC I and during GEC II used by the FCDO and wider partners and stakeholders to inform decision-making in girls educations programmes and policy?	<p>Evidence of influence on programme decision making - FCDO, FM, IP</p> <p>Spillover to other programmes as a result of GEC network and its dispersal. For example UNICEF, GPE etc.</p>	UK policy level / Fund level	Triangulation: document review and KIIs	<p>GEC I and GEC II annual reviews</p> <p>GEC II Business Case</p> <p>Published programme documents and policy briefs from other education programmes, and other relevant documents found through the Structured Web Search.</p>	<p>KIIs with FCDO</p> <p>KIIs with strategic partners in education sector</p> <p>FGD with in-country education advisors</p>

## Annex C: List of study participants

This study also draws from a larger set of documents considered as secondary sources.

### Key Informant Interviews

Name	Stakeholder type	Relationship/ stake in GEC
<b>George McLaughlin</b>	FCDO	Former Girls' Education Programme Team Leader - GEC II Senior Responsible Owner (SRO)
<b>Matthew Harvey</b>	FCDO	Evaluation Lead – FCDO point of contact for IE Services
<b>Sabina Morley</b>	FCDO	Girls' Education Programmes Team Leader and Senior Education Advisor
<b>James Bonner</b>	FCDO	Former FCDO Evaluation Manager of the GEC I Evaluation Manager
<b>Judith Herbertson</b>	FCDO	Development Director
<b>Alicia Herbert</b>	FCDO	Director, Education, Gender, and Equality; and Gender Envoy, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
<b>Ian Attfield</b>	FCDO	Former Senior Education Advisor and Regional GEC Education Advisor
<b>Sally Gear</b>	FCDO	Former Technical lead on Gender and Education FCDO GEC II Key Education Partner (GPE)
<b>Louise Banham</b>	FCDO	Former Education Adviser, Interim SRO Former Regional GEC Education Advisor
<b>Sandra Barton</b>	FCDO	Education Team Leader Regional GEC Education Advisor
<b>Emily Woolf</b>	FCDO	Oversaw development of the Business Case for GEC II SRO for Phase II
<b>Rachel Hinton</b>	FCDO	Senior Social Development Adviser
<b>Paul Atherton</b>	FCDO	Former Education Economist
<b>Dr Asyia Kazmi</b>	Fund Manager	Former PwC FM Programme Director & Team Leader
<b>Emma Sarton</b>	Fund Manager	FM Learning Lead, previously FM Senior Portfolio Advisor
<b>Freda Wolfenden</b>	Fund Manager	Former Education Director and Team Leader for FM – PwC
<b>John Patch</b>	Fund Manager	Former PwC GEC I, FM Payment by Results Lead
<b>David Armstrong</b>	Fund Manager	PwC Partner – Director of the GEC I and former director of GEC II
<b>Sally Rosscornes</b>	Fund Manager	Former FM Qualitative Research Lead
<b>Jason Calvert</b>	Fund Manager	Former PwC FM MEL Lead for GEC I and start of GEC II
<b>Iram Zahid</b>	Fund Manager	Former Lead – Evaluation Team for the Fund Manager of GEC

Name	Stakeholder type	Relationship/ stake in GEC
<b>Amy Parker</b>	Fund Manager	GEC II LNGB Portfolio Lead Former GEC I Relief International Global Education Technical Lead Former GEC I Plan International Education Advisor
<b>Joseph Holden</b>	Fund Manager	International development consultant, economist, and evaluation expert.
<b>Sharon Tao</b>	Fund Manager	Former Education Director and Team Leader Phase II Former Senior Portfolio Lead Phase II
<b>Alicia Mills</b>	Fund Manager	Former LNGB Senior Portfolio Advisor and GESI Advisor
<b>Hetal Thukral</b>	Fund Manager/ Strategic Partner	Former Evaluation Lead and Senior Director for Evaluation & Research at School-to-School International
<b>Khadijah Fancy</b>	Fund Manager	Former Girls' Education expert since 2012 on GEC Principal Education Advisor at Cambridge Education
<b>Clare Convey</b>	Fund Manager	Communications Lead
<b>Sara Petersson</b>	Fund Manager	Former GEC Portfolio Manager High Risk Countries
<b>Aimee Reeves</b>	Fund Manager	Former Evaluation Lead Former GEC Evaluation Officer
<b>Cristina Bortes</b>	Fund Manager	Director
<b>Luis Benveniste</b>	Strategic Partner	Global Director – Education, World Bank
<b>Elaine Unterhalter</b>	Strategic Partner	Part of the first ICAI review team.
<b>Antara Ganguli</b>	Strategic Partner	Director, UNGEI Secretariat at UN Girls' Education Initiative Former Gender and Development Specialist UNICEF India
<b>Abijit Sharma</b>	Southern Academic Partner / External Evaluator / IE Data Collection Partner	Research and MEL Coordinator at Foundation for Development Management
<b>Ronald Luwangula</b>	Southern Academic Partner	Consultant at Cheshire Services Uganda

## Participants from the Focus Group Discussion with Implementing Partners

Name	Organisation
<b>Firoz Siddiqui</b>	VSO International
<b>Raj Dangol</b>	VSO International
<b>Aarzo Parajuli</b>	VSO International
<b>Priti Sharma</b>	VSO International
<b>Mohamed Diyat</b>	CARE
<b>Paul Ogienmo</b>	CARE
<b>Yusuf Amali</b>	CARE
<b>Angela Keenan</b>	Link Education International
<b>Nicolo Di Marzo</b>	Link Education International
<b>Samantha Ross</b>	Link Education International
<b>Faith Kembabazi</b>	VIVA /Children at Risk Action Network (CRANE)

## Participants from the Focus Group Discussion with External Evaluators

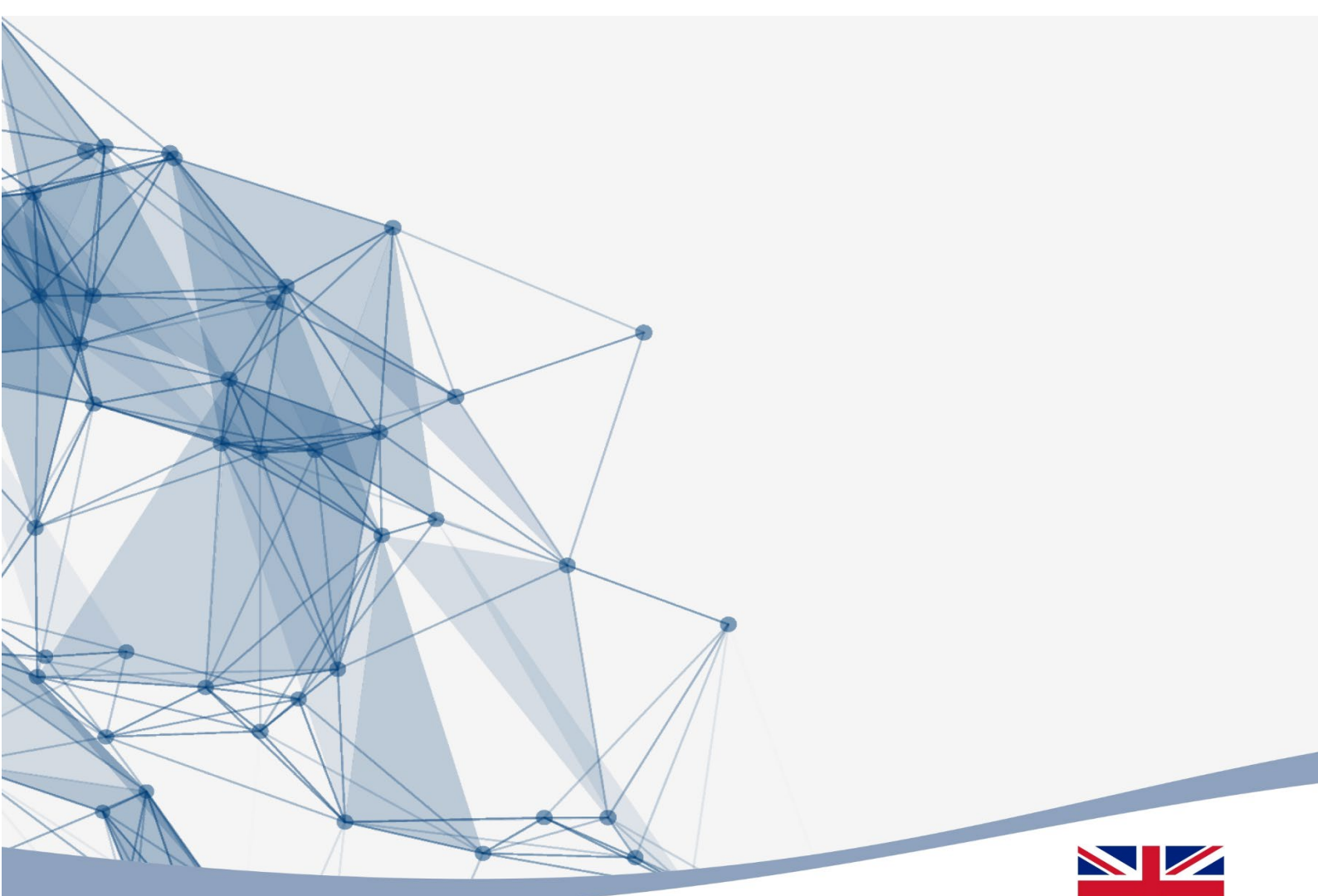
Name	Organisation
<b>Rebecca Evans</b>	Montrose International
<b>Bridget Brown</b>	Montrose International
<b>Zaki Ullah</b>	Glow Consulting (GEC II IE Data Collection Partner)
<b>Saeed Khan</b>	Glow Consulting (GEC II IE Data Collection Partner)
<b>David Hollow</b>	Jigsaw Education
<b>Deepa Shrestha</b>	Foundation for Development Management (GEC II IE Data Collection Partner)
<b>Abijit Sharma</b>	Foundation for Development Management (GEC II IE Data Collection Partner)
<b>Erin Satterlee</b>	Consilient Research (GEC II Rapid Research and Learning Fund Study Implementing Partner)
<b>Brenton Peterson</b>	Consilient Research (GEC II Rapid Research and Learning Fund Study Implementing Partner)
<b>Manar Zaki</b>	Consilient Research (GEC II Rapid Research and Learning Fund Study Implementing Partner)
<b>Tark Raj Bhatt (by email)</b>	National Institute for Development Research (GEC II Rapid Research and Learning Fund Study Implementing Partner)

## Annex D: Design Note for Lessons Learned Study

Tetra Tech International Development

# Independent Evaluation of the Girls' Education Challenge Phase II – Study Design Note for the Lessons Learned Study

October 2024



# Independent Evaluation of the Girls' Education Challenge Phase II – Study Design Note for the Lessons Learned Study

Client Name: FCDO

Project Name: Independent Evaluation of the GEC Phase II

Contract Number: PO 10019

Partners:

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

**Authors:** Rose, Pauline<sup>1</sup>; Aslam, Monazza<sup>2</sup>; Rawal, Shenila<sup>2</sup>; Atherton, Paul; Griffiths, Simon; Bligh, Libby; Canet, Pierre

October 2024

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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)

Simon Griffiths

Programme Director

Signature:



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<sup>1</sup> REAL Centre, University of Cambridge

<sup>2</sup> Oxford Partnership for Education Research and Analysis (OPERA)

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# Acronyms

<b>AI</b>	Artificial Intelligence
<b>ESWG</b>	Evaluation Studies Working Group
<b>FCDO</b>	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>FM</b>	Fund Manager
<b>GEC</b>	Girls' Education Challenge
<b>GEC II</b>	Girls' Education Challenge Phase II
<b>GEC-T</b>	Girls' Education Challenge – Transition
<b>GESI</b>	Gender and Social Inclusion
<b>IDI</b>	In-Depth Interview
<b>IE</b>	Independent Evaluation
<b>IPs</b>	Implementing Partners
<b>IW</b>	Innovation Window
<b>KII</b>	Key Informant Interview
<b>KLQ</b>	Key Learning Question
<b>LNGB</b>	Leave No Girl Behind
<b>ML</b>	Midline
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>OPERA</b>	Oxford Partnership of Education Research and Analysis
<b>PEA</b>	Political Economy Analysis
<b>REAL</b>	Research and Equitable Access and Learning Centre
<b>RQ</b>	Research Question
<b>RRLF</b>	Rapid Research and Learning Fund
<b>SCALE</b>	Scaling Access and Learning in Education
<b>SCW</b>	Step Change Window
<b>SPAs</b>	Senior Portfolio Advisors
<b>SPW</b>	Strategic Partnerships Window
<b>ToR</b>	Terms of Reference

# Project Acronyms

Case study project	Acronyms used in report	Project location(s)
Aga Khan Foundation	AKF	Afghanistan
Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee	BRAC	Afghanistan
Camfed International	Camfed	Zimbabwe
Cheshire Services Uganda	CSU	Uganda
Education Development Trust	EDT	Kenya
International Rescue Committee	IRC	Sierra Leone
LINK	LINK	Malawi
People in Need	PIN	Nepal, Ethiopia, Malawi
Plan International	Plan	Ghana
Viva	Viva/ CRANE	Uganda
Voluntary Service Overseas	VSO SfS	Nepal

# 1. Introduction, context, and background to the study

This document sets out the design of the Lessons Learned Study for the Girls' Education Challenge Phase I (GEC I) and II (GEC II). This study has been commissioned by the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) through the Independent Evaluation (IE) of GEC II contract, led by Tetra Tech International Development (Tetra Tech) and is due to take place between September 2024 and February 2025.

The learning study is a reflective study aimed at collating and sharing lessons from across both phases of the GEC programme to contribute to evidence and learning about education programmes based on the experience of the GEC – the largest global girls' education programme commissioned to date. The study is timed to coincide with the closure of the programme.

The remainder of this section provides background to the GEC programme and the Independent Evaluation contract. Section 2 introduces the Lessons Learned Study, Section 3 outlines the studies proposed approach and methods and Section 4 sets out key limitations, risks and mitigation strategies for the study. Sections 5, 6, and 7 then detail the study's ethics procedures, management arrangements, workplan and deliverables, respectively. Annex 4 at the end of this document provides a draft report structure for the study. Annexes 1-3 are separate documents and include the Study Framework, the list of stakeholders for key informant interviews and the document repository for desk-based review.

## 1.1. Background to the GEC

### **GEC Phase I (2012-2017)**

In 2012, the FCDO launched the first phase of the Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) Fund, which ended in April 2017. This £355 million fund set out to improve the education outcomes of up to one million marginalised girls. The GEC worked through three funding windows: (1) the Step Change Window (SCW); (2) the Innovation Window (IW); (3) and the Strategic Partnerships Window (SPW).

Fifteen SCW projects were awarded funding of up to £30 million per project to apply tried and tested designs that could quickly and effectively expand education opportunities and improve the quality of education for girls at primary and secondary school levels. They operated in nine countries: Afghanistan; Democratic Republic of the Congo; Ethiopia; Kenya; Mozambique; Sierra Leone; Somalia; Tanzania; and Zimbabwe. Fourteen SCW projects were operating at the time of the endline evaluation, aiming to address multiple barriers to girls' education affecting individual girls, their households, communities, and schools.

IW projects operated in 12 countries: Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. The FCDO awarded funding of up to £2 million to each of the 19 projects, which set out to test novel approaches enabling marginalised girls to achieve education outcomes. Seventeen IW projects were operating at the time of the endline evaluation, aiming to address multiple barriers to girls' education affecting individual girls, their households, communities, and schools.

The SPW was comprised of four partnerships: Coca-Cola; Discovery Communications; Avanti Communications and Ericsson. These partners implemented projects in Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria and Myanmar, with a total budget of between £7 million and £27 million. DFID provided approximately half of the budget, with partners providing the other half as match funding.

### **GEC Phase II (2017-2025)**

Following Phase 1, the FCDO invested a further £500 million in the GEC Phase II programme (GEC II). The purpose of GEC II over its eight-year implementation period (2017-2025) was to support 1.5 million marginalised girls with education; to improve their lives, as well as those of their families and communities. All projects have been designed and delivered by Implementing Partners (IPs) and GEC II is managed through a Fund Manager (FM) consortium led by PricewaterhouseCoopers. In 2020, the FCDO commissioned an Independent Evaluation IE of the GEC II to generate evidence and learning. The GEC II programme as a whole ends in March 2025 with the last GEC II project ending in August 2024; the FM contract ending in December 2024; and the IE contract ending in March 2025.

GEC II was delivered through 41 projects in 17 countries and was structured by two funding windows:

- **The GEC- Transitions (GEC-T) Window** provided continued support to 1 million marginalised girls through 27 GEC Phase II projects helping girls transition to the next stage of education in 15 countries (Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe). These projects started implementing activities in mid-2017 with timeframes of between three and seven years.
- **The Leave No Girl Behind (LNGB) Window** funded 14 projects supporting up to 500,000 highly marginalised girls in 10 countries (Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nepal, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Zimbabwe). LNGB projects focused on supporting highly marginalised adolescent girls between 10-19 years of age into education or training while gaining skills, including numeracy and literacy. LNGB projects targeted highly marginalised girls included those who either never enrolled in formal schooling or dropped out before achieving basic literacy and numeracy skills. The marginalised groups of girls targeted included girls with disabilities, girls at risk of early marriage and girls who are pregnant or have children. Projects started in late 2018, and enrolled beneficiaries in cohorts, which typically lasted from 9-12 months.

## 1.2. Overview of the GEC II Independent Evaluation

In 2020, the FCDO commissioned an Independent Evaluation of the GEC II to generate evidence and learning to understand what has worked well or less well, how, why, for whom and in which contexts. This evaluation is being conducted by a consortium of partners: Tetra Tech International Development Europe; the Research for Equitable Access and Learning (REAL) Centre at the University of Cambridge; Fab Inc; Southern academic partners<sup>1</sup> and national /regional research partners (depending on the location of the IE team's research). The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the IE required the IE Team to deliver:

- Seven in-depth thematic studies designed and implemented iteratively to respond to the emerging evidence and learning needs of the FCDO and FM.
- A Rapid Research and Learning Fund (RRLF) – a ringfenced fund to commission research relevant to GEC II and the FCDO's evidence and learning priorities.
- An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the GEC II Portfolio.
- This Lessons Learned Study covering GEC Phases I and II.

### 1.2.1. Current Status of the IE Studies

Table 1, below, provides a summary of the current status of the IE Team's work – Studies 1-6 have been completed with Study 7 (Sustainability) and the Portfolio Evaluation is still ongoing.

**Table 1: Status of GEC II IE work**

IE Scope of Work	Status (End Date)	Case Study Projects (Window)
<a href="#">Study 1: Access and Learning</a>	Complete (Feb-22)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDT Kenya (GEC-T)</li> <li>• Mercy Corps Nepal (LNGB)</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Study 2: Teachers and Teaching</a>	Complete (Dec-21)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AKF Afghanistan (GEC-T)</li> <li>• BRAC Afghanistan (GEC-T)</li> <li>• Plan Ghana (GEC-T)</li> <li>• IRC Sierra Leone (LNGB)</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Study 3: Aggregate Impact of GEC-T Projects between Baseline and Midline</a>	Complete (Aug-22)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NA /Desk-based assessment (GEC-T)</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Study 4: Educating Girls with Disabilities in GEC II</a>	Complete (May-23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VSO Nepal (LNGB)</li> <li>• LINK Malawi (LNGB)</li> <li>• Viva /CRANE Uganda (GEC-T)</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Study 5: Education for Marginalised Girls Beyond Formal Schooling</a>	Complete (Oct-23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WEI Ghana (LNGB)</li> <li>• ActionAid Kenya (LNGB)</li> <li>• PIN Nepal (LNGB)</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Study 6: Vfm of Reaching the Most Marginalised GEC Girls</a>	Complete (Jul-24)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PIN Nepal (LNGB)</li> <li>• PIN Ethiopia (LNGB)</li> </ul>

IE Scope of Work	Status (End Date)	Case Study Projects (Window)
		• LINK Malawi (LNGB)
Study 7: <i>Sustaining Changes in Community Attitudes and Norms to Improve Girls' Education Outcomes</i>	Fieldwork (Feb-25)	• VSO SfS Nepal (GEC-T) • Camfed Zimbabwe (GEC-T)
Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the GEC II Portfolio	Fieldwork/Analysis (Mar-25)	GEC-T & LNGB
<b>GEC Phase I &amp; II Lessons Learned Study (2012-2025)</b>	<b>ToR-24 (Feb-25)</b>	<b>TBC</b>
RRLF:		
Six years later, what has become of them? A cohort study of Somali women and girls who participated in the Somali Girls Education Promotion - University of Portsmouth /Consilient Research (Somalia)	Complete (Dec-22)	N/A (GEC Phase I)
Adolescent Education, Health and Wellbeing Status in Four Counties in Kenya - Two Years into the COVID-19 Pandemic - Population Council (Kenya)	Complete (Jan-23)	N/A
Participatory Ethnography Research for Musahar Girls' Education - National Institute for Development Research (Nepal)	Complete (Jun-23)	LNGB

## 2. Lessons Learned Study

Having been implemented since 2012, the GEC Phases I and II offer 12 years of learning from the largest global girls' education programme to date. This study will collate, organise and synthesise portfolio-level learning from across both phases of the GEC programme, and the two evaluation contracts (i.e., GEC Phase I Evaluation Manager and GEC Phase II Independent Evaluation) that supported them. It is therefore uniquely placed to add value to the education sector more broadly by summarising insights into the contextual factors, policy shifts and operating environment constraints that have affected the design and implementation of the GEC over its 12-year lifetime.

### 2.1. Purpose, scope, and objectives

The **purpose** of the Lessons Learned Study is to provide stakeholders involved in girls' education with lessons learned from both phases of GEC about reaching the most marginalised girls through education programming, and lessons about the utility of different approaches to evaluation and learning used throughout the GEC. These lessons are intended to inform new education programmes such as the FCDO's Scaling Access and Learning in Education (SCALE) initiative and the What Works Hub for Global Education as well as future policies and programmes.

In doing so, the study has **two objectives**:

- Identify and share lessons and recommendations from the GEC programme, specifically considering the evolution of GEC from Phase I to Phase II, on:
  - How large-scale programmes can reach the most marginalised girls; and
  - How to approach evaluation and learning.
- Disseminate these lessons and recommendations through accessible learning products that can be used by policymakers and programme managers as well as secondary stakeholders including national governments, implementing partners and other relevant stakeholders. These lessons can inform the design and implementation of other education programmes.

The study will primarily focus on programme /fund level learning across both phases of the GEC. This is to avoid duplicating the broad range of project-level evaluation and learning activities that have already been completed by

Implementing Partners (IPs), the Fund Manager (FM) and the Independent Evaluator (IE); and to inform strategic decision-making for future programming and policy decisions by the FCDO and wider stakeholders. This study will reflect on the evolution of the programme across both phases of the GEC drawing on programme level documentation and qualitative feedback from a diverse range of stakeholders. This study does not involve community level data collection. However, throughout both phases of the GEC, the Evaluation Manager (Phase 1) /Independent Evaluator (Phase 2) have collected primary data from marginalised girls through extensive evaluation and learning activities (for GEC Phase 2, these are set out in Table 1, Section 1.3.1); and the Fund Manager has compiled and produced learning products drawing on project-level evidence. This lessons learned study will draw insights from a comprehensive document review of these products to ensure that data collected from marginalised girls and their communities is represented in our analysis and used to inform the lessons presented in the study. Where especially relevant for a KLQ, we may also use examples from evidence at the project level to illustrate the implications of programme-level decision-making.

## 2.2. Audiences

The primary audience for this study is the FCDO (GEC II Programme Team, FCDO Education Advisors, Regional Education Advisors, Girls' Education Department). The secondary stakeholder audiences for this study are other international donors, government ministries and other stakeholders investing in, implementing and providing monitoring, evaluation and learning services for girls' education programmes.

## 2.3. Changes to the ToR

This Study Design Note builds on the ToR for this study submitted in August 2024. During the process of study design the following updates have been made:

### 1) The sub-questions for both learning questions have been revised.

For the marginalisation sub-questions, this involved reframing the sub-questions to focus on the *approach to reaching* the most marginalised girls *at the programme level*, for example by removing mentions of defining and targeting. We also clarified sub-question 1.2 on trade-offs to be clearer that the trade-offs are between reaching the most marginalised vs reaching the largest number of girls.

For KLQ 2, on evaluation and learning, the sub-questions were rephrased to be more explicit about the three stakeholder groups that produced evaluation and learning products: the FM, the EM /IE and the IPs and to clarify that the study will look at evaluation and learning activities from all three stakeholders.

### 2) The scope of the study has been broadened to include a more diverse range of voices.

The list of key informants has been broadened out to include a more diverse range of stakeholder groups including Southern Academic Partners and additional Regional Education Advisors and Strategic Partners in the education sector. Two focus group discussions have also been added to capture view from the GEC's Implementing Partners (IPs) and external evaluators. Some high-profile stakeholders, such as ex-Ministers, who may lack sufficient time and awareness of programme or policy-level details and are likely to be difficult to reach have also been removed.

# 3. Study design and methodology

## 3.1. Key learning questions and sub-questions

To respond to the purpose and objectives noted above, an initial review of the available documentation on GEC I and II and consultation with the FM and the FCDO have determined the key learning questions below.

**Key Learning Question (KLQ) 1:** How and why did the approach to **reaching the most marginalised** change over the life of the GEC? What are the lessons learned from these changes and related recommendations for future education programmes?

1.1 How did the approach to reaching the most marginalised girls change at the programme level over its lifecycle?

1.2. What trade-offs did the programme face in the aim to reach the most marginalised? (e.g. reaching the largest numbers versus the most difficult to reach; cost of reaching different groups.) How and why did this change?

1.3. How did the approach to tackling barriers to marginalised girls' education (both within the education environment as well as the wider community environment) change, and why?

**KLQ2:** How and why did the approach to **evaluation and learning** generated by the IE, FM and IPs change over the life of the GEC? What are the lessons learned from these changes?

2.1. How did the FCDO's evaluation and learning needs change over the lifetime of the GEC programme? What were the main drivers for these changes?

2.2. How did the GEC's approach to evaluation and learning change over the course of the GEC to respond to the changes in evaluation and learning needs and /or changes in the programme's operating context? And with what effect in terms of the evidence that was produced by the IE, FM and IPs?

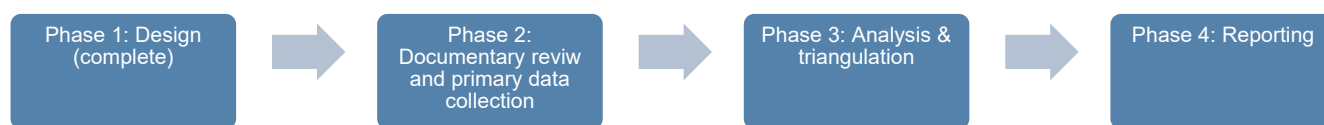
2.3. How did the different approaches taken to evaluation and learning by the IE, FM and IPs over the lifecycle of the programme contribute to stakeholder audiences' understanding of the GEC's performance and impact?

2.4 To what extent was evaluation and learning generated by the IE, FM, and IPs during GEC I and during GEC II used by the FCDO and wider partners and stakeholders to inform decision-making in girls' education programmes and policy?

## 3.2. Study approach

This study will adopt a qualitative approach and will synthesise lessons from both primary and secondary data and documentary sources. The study will use an iterative approach to developing lessons for both KLQ1 and KLQ2 and will be sequenced in four main stages detailed below in [Figure 1](#).

**Figure 1: Phases of the Lessons Learned Study**



The **document review** will include key documents from GEC I and GEC II. A full list of documentation that will be included is provided in [Annex 3](#), and these are mapped against the KLQs and sub-questions in the study framework provided in [Annex 1](#). This will enable us to capture initial findings and trends on the GEC's approaches to: reaching the most marginalised (KLQ1); and evaluation and learning (KLQ2). This phase will inform the study team's understanding of the evolution of the GEC and the critical shifts in design and implementation, as well as identifying key gaps that remain in answering the study questions. The output of this phase will be a series of mapping and timeline products (see more in [Section 3.3 Methods](#), below).

Primary data collection will include key informant interviews and focus group discussions with relevant stakeholders from the FCDO, Fund Manager, Implementing Partners, Southern Academic Partners, projects' External Evaluators and Strategic Partners in the education sector that are most likely to be influenced by, the GEC. As mentioned above, these key informant interviews will seek to add nuance, address evidence gaps, and triangulate findings that emerge from the review of the GEC documentation. Interviews with stakeholders directly involved in the implementation of the GEC, for example from the Fund Manager or FCDO, will not be conducted by members of the study team that were involved in the design of GEC implementation or evaluation and learning. All interviews will include an informed consent procedure, will be anonymous and will include the right to withdraw.

During the **Analysis and Triangulation Phase**, the team will review and compare key findings from the key informant interviews with the findings from the review of GEC documents and organise this by research question. This stage will allow the study team to see where and to what extent primary and secondary data sources are in alignment, and to synthesise findings and lessons from across data sources. During this phase, a targeted second review of documents may be conducted to add further detail and nuance into findings where findings from key informant interviews suggest this is necessary. In addition, the team will review any additional secondary data shared with us during primary data collection.

The final **Reporting Phase** includes the generation of findings. The study team will prepare emerging findings from across both KLQs and will workshop these as a team, through a peer-review process, and will present these to the FCDO and strategic stakeholders in the education sector to facilitate a discussion around them. These workshops will perform a 'critical friend' role to challenge the study team's findings and lessons, and to co-create recommendations for future programmes that are relevant and actionable. The feedback from these workshops will then be incorporated into the draft report.

### 3.3. Methods

This section sets out the key methods to be used during the study.

#### 3.3.1. Desk-based review

During the first phase of the study, the team will identify key themes to collate and categorise information from GEC programme documents and pre-existing portfolio analysis related to KLQ1 and KLQ 2. Indicative themes for both questions are presented in [Table 2](#) below.

**Table 2: Key themes related to KLQ1 and KLQ2**

KLQ 1	KLQ 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Approaches to reaching marginalised girls (SQ1.1).</li><li>• Any discussion or evidence of trade-offs between targeting and or reaching girls facing different dimensions of marginalisation and considerations of these in programme design or adaptation (SQ1.2).</li><li>• Project strategies documented for tackling barriers to marginalised girls' education (SQ1.3).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Key policy and programme shifts and junctures and how this affected evaluation and learning.</li><li>• Shifts in evaluation and learning approaches in response to the demand for evidence.</li><li>• Ways in which different stakeholders (FCDO, IPs, wider global education community) have used the evidence from evaluation and learning.</li><li>• Focus on accountability vs learning across evaluation and learning products and their intended outputs.</li><li>• Outcomes and indicators of success.</li></ul>

During the document review, the study team will review all evaluative and research studies commissioned produced during the “evaluation and learning” contracts across both phases of the GEC, as well as relevant documents produced by the FM, the FCDO and other external bodies, such as the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI). A full list of documentation can be found in [Annex 3](#).

To ensure that the study team have a comprehensive overview, the executive summaries, purpose, scope, objectives and conclusions of each document will be reviewed. The team will use keyword searches relevant for each thematic domain to ensure that all relevant information is extracted from each document. The document review will be structured chronologically and will track changes in each thematic domain over the lifecycle of the GEC.

Emerging findings from each thematic domain will be generated and organised by sub-question. This will be used to produce timelines of the key changes in the GEC’s approach to marginalisation and approach to evaluation and learning, including any critical programme junctures that may have informed these.

#### Structured Web Search Pilot

In addition to reviewing programme documents, the team will also conduct a structured web search pilot. This approach enables the team to explore beyond the published documents in the GEC IE repository, tracking references to the GEC and their related use in documents published by broader education stakeholders. It will gather and compile both academic citations and mentions of the GEC in grey literature. This process includes developing an automated script that uses keywords to search the internet and scrape relevant sources. We will develop an initial version of this script and apply it to relevant themes. If the results are promising, we may consider expanding the use of this tool for our analysis. The team will produce a brief note on the use of the structured web search as part of the methods annex in the draft report. This web search primarily addresses SQ 2.4: *To what extent was evidence and learning generated by the IE, FM, and Implementing Partners during GEC I and during GEC II used by the FCDO and wider partners and stakeholders to inform decision-making in girls educations programmes and policy?*

## Artificial Intelligence Pilot

We plan to pilot the use of an internal Artificial Intelligence (AI) tool to assist with the content analysis. The tool will be trained to identify and extract relevant excerpts from selected documents, allowing us to efficiently locate information related to the themes developed in Phase 1. To conduct the search, we will identify an exhaustive list of terms which relate to themes present in each sub-question. We will input those keywords into the interface, and it will search for excerpts which contain synonyms and words that are semantically similar.

This approach will enable the team to work directly with quotes extracted from the documents, allowing us to perform content analysis across different themes. Initially, we will apply this method to a few documents and manually review the results for accuracy. If the results are promising, we may consider expanding the use of this tool to our entire document repository. The team will produce a brief note on the use of AI for document review as part of the methods annex in the draft report.

### 3.3.2. Primary data collection

#### Key Informant Interviews

The team will carry out semi-structured key informant interviews (KIIs) with relevant stakeholders from FCDO Programme Management and Leadership, the Fund Manager, the IE team's Southern Academic Partners and wider strategic partners in the education sector. [Annex 2](#) provides an indicative list of 48 stakeholders, and the research framework in [Annex 1](#) maps stakeholder groups against the research sub-questions.

The primary focus of the KIIs for KLQ 1 will be on the changes to the approach to reaching the most marginalised girls and the trade offs considered in doing so, and how both of these evolved over time. For KLQ 2, the KIIs will focus on understanding how the stakeholders interviewed used evidence generated by the GEC FM and evaluation and learning contracts (SQ 2.4), as well as triangulating and adding further context to the findings from the document review regarding the evolution of the evaluation and learning needs and approach throughout the programme and the drivers for any key changes in these.

The study team will produce a 'question bank' organised by the key learning sub-questions. The Technical Director, Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader will then assign priority questions from this 'bank' for KLQ 1 to each stakeholder group, and the Programme Director and Evaluation Lead will do so for KLQ 2. This will result in interview guides that are both internally consistent, and tailored to each respondents' involvement in the GEC, and will ensure that the limited duration of each KII – 60 mins – allows the interview to cover the most relevant topics for the study, especially where an individual is a key informant for both KLQs.

#### Focus group discussions

The team will also conduct focus group discussions (FGDs) with a sample of:

- Implementing Partners that were part of a Steering Group for the Fund Manager during Phase 2; and
- External Evaluators of the GEC projects.

Lastly, an FCDO Working Group could mitigate the risk that the learning and dissemination will be curtailed by the end of the IE contract. Thus, it could take up the work on the use and influence of the Lessons Learned. Such a working group could also be beneficial to the interpretation and triangulation of findings.

FGD participants will be selected using a convenience sample given the limited time available for the study and the high likelihood of staff turnover given the 12-year timeframe of GEC. As such, IPs and External Evaluators will be prioritised on the basis of those known to still be involved in or having contact with the GEC programme.

#### GEC II IE study leads reflection workshop (KLQ 1)

In addition to the key informant interviews, the study team will facilitate a workshop with the Principal Investigators and Research Associates from previous GEC II IE studies that focused on marginalisation. The purpose of this workshop is to identify common themes from across these studies and to add nuance and context to the findings gathered from the document review relevant to different dimensions of marginalisation that girls' face and the programme's various strategies for engaging with these girls. In addition, this workshop will allow the team to understand the case study projects included in the various studies in more depth and select the most relevant case study projects to highlight in the learning study.

Reflection workshop – IE team (KLQ 2)

In addition to the key informant interviews, the study team will also facilitate a workshop with members of the IE team that have been involved in both phases of GEC, including the Programme Director, Technical Director, and Evaluation Lead. This will focus primarily on the evaluation and learning contracts' understanding of the changing evidence needs of the FCDO over time and the responses of the Evaluation Manager (Phase I) and Independent Evaluation (Phase II) to these changes. This will allow the study team to understand the perceptions of this evolution from the study team and will be used to triangulate and add further context to the changes identified through document review.

3.3.3. Analysis and triangulation

Excerpts from key informant interview transcripts will be added to the themes developed under Phase 1: document review. The documents and interviews will then be analysed qualitatively to respond to the research questions. Primary data will be added to the organising frames developed in Phase 1 and grouped by actor. Cross-actor analysis and triangulation with document review will then be completed to update the emerging findings from Phase 1. Gaps will be identified and, if needed, further document review or KII follow up undertaken to address these.

3.3.4. Reporting

The study team will then prepare a draft report that will include lessons from KLQ 1 & 2 and recommendations for future education programmes based on these. As part of the review process for the draft report, the team will facilitate an **emerging findings workshop with the FCDO**<sup>3</sup> that presents key lessons from the draft report and will guide a discussion around the recommendations proposed to solicit feedback on these and ensure that they are relevant and feasible. Feedback from the FCDO and the emerging findings workshop will then inform the final report. Alongside the final report, the team will also produce a **learning brief** and recorded summary presentation to disseminate learning from this study to wider audiences beyond FCDO. Due to the timing of this study, the FCDO will be responsible for the dissemination of these learning products to additional stakeholder audiences, as the IE contract closes in March 2025.

4. Limitations, risks and mitigation strategies

Table 3: Key limitations, risks and mitigation plan

Risk	Details	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation strategies
Recall bias from stakeholders	The study will seek to obtain feedback from various stakeholders, including FM staff, IP staff and FCDO staff. Significant time may have elapsed since some stakeholder's involvement in the GEC, and this study specifically focuses on retrospective questioning looking back to GEC Phase 1 (2012-2017).	Medium	Moderate	Potential recall /memory bias will be closely monitored during primary data collection. Prompts will be included in interview tools to let respondents self-assess the quality of their recollection. As much as possible, evidence (including secondary evidence) will be triangulated and cross-checked to mitigate the effect of potential bias on findings. Having multiple members of the IE team also been involved in GEC since the start of phase I also offers the opportunity for triangulation and challenge from the IE team members with institutional memory.

<sup>3</sup> To include the FCDO GEC IE SRO and Evaluation Manager, with the possibility of this being expanded to an FCDO working group, if deemed feasible and relevant by FCDO. This will be confirmed during the study's implementation.

Risk	Details	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation strategies
Overburdening of stakeholders	Some stakeholders included in the key informant interview plan for the Lessons Learned Study have been or are due to be interviewed for other evaluation studies. There is a risk in overburdening these respondents with requests for information and inputs.	Medium	Moderate	The Lessons Learned study team will liaise closely with the Portfolio Evaluation Team to ensure that requests for interviews are managed considerably and timed as such that no single respondent is being asked for multiple interviews within too short a time period.
Unavailability of key informants to support the study	Most of the GEC staff involved in GEC II have already moved to other assignments at the time of writing this ToR. This implies it may be difficult to access information and resolve queries.	Low	Moderate	The IE team will make efforts to engage with (current or former) FM and FCDO staff early, with early engagements made during the study design phase. Gathering up-to-date contact information will be key, and a 'snowballing approach' will be used to reach staff who has already moved on to other assignments or companies. Experience from previous studies suggests that this risk will be mitigated fairly easily by the extensive networks of the GEC IE, donor, and FM teams.
Underreporting of negative perceptions of programming and desirability bias.	Respondents may be hesitant to report negative perceptions of programming.	Medium	Moderate	Given the GEC programme is now ending and will not be retendered there is less pressure for GEC stakeholders to have a positive bias in their reports, as the stakes are lower. In addition, questions about how learning from earlier in the programme was used are more likely to be answered objectively as respondents will be describing past events and how lessons were or were not used, rather than projecting expectations about future use.
Perceived or actual lack of independence	One of the study's key learning questions focuses on evaluation and learning, and considers lessons learned regarding work undertaken by the IE team, who are conducting this study. Respondents may therefore question the independence of the study.	Medium	Medium	Our risk mitigation measures include: (1) ensuring that the Programme Director does not conduct KIIs of stakeholders known to him to ensure that there is no unintentional bias as the result of his presence in the interview (2) Most of the KIIs will be conducted by IE team members who had no involvement in Phase 1 and limited or no involvement in Phase 2 IE - they will be iteratively briefed and debriefed by the Programme Management to ensure internal learning is not lost (3) the involvement of a wider range of stakeholders, including Ips, and finally, (4) through transparent analysis and validation of findings in the emerging findings workshop.

Risk	Details	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation strategies
Limited timeframe to conduct the study	Collection of documents, data and analysis will be mostly conducted during a short window between October and December.	Medium	Moderate	The IE team will make efforts to engage with FM, IE and FCDO staff early to plan the Key Informant Interviews. Moreover, the IE team will be selective in its choice of documents for the desk-based review and prioritize documents according to their relevance to the KLQ.
Limited timeframe to promote study use and influence	Learning reporting is scheduled for early 2025, with final report approval in February 2025. This corresponds with the end of the IE contract. There is therefore limited time to disseminate the lessons learned study.	High	Moderate	The IE Team will take all reasonable efforts to work on deliverables early and to engage with stakeholders throughout the study to share the purpose, scope, and objectives of the study in advance of the dissemination of the report and learning brief. Once the IE contract ends, the FCDO will take on responsibility for the dissemination of findings.

## 5. Ethics

### 5.1. Ethical processes

Study activities will fully comply with the guiding concepts and principles set out in the IE's Safeguarding Framework document, the FCDO (2013) Evaluation Policy, the FCDO (2019) Ethical Guidance for Research, Evaluation and Monitoring Activities, the UK Data Protection Act (2018) and other applicable FCDO frameworks and guidance.

The scope of this report limits data collection to key informant interviews with stakeholders involved in the GEC delivery and other stakeholders in the broader girls' education sector. As such, the study design will not need a specific ethical framework for community-level fieldwork. However, certain groups may face barriers to participation or representation of their views in the study. All study activities will, include informed consent, the right to withdrawal and adaptations to data collection processes where feasible to accommodate the participation of diverse groups, such as accommodations for respondents that have a disability.

### 5.2. Data management and access to information

Clear protocols and data storage measures will be put in place to ensure the confidentiality of the data collected and to preserve the anonymity of the research participant(s). All data collected and processed for this contract will be collected, stored, and processed in line with regulations set out in the UK Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation (2018), and all other applicable legislation.

Any digital research tools (e.g. online survey platforms) used will be under a licensing agreement with Tetra Tech or subcontracted organisations to ensure that IE confidentiality and data protection processes are strictly adhered to. Any digital tools developed by the IE will adhere to the FCDO's Principles for Digital Development where relevant. The FCDO will have unlimited access to the material produced by the study except for personal information within datasets or other measures to protect the privacy of individuals.

## 6. Study team management

### 6.1. Study team

This study will be led by a core study team under the guidance of the Principal Investigator (Simon Griffiths) who will also take responsibility of oversight of KLQ2. The **Technical Director** (Pauline Rose), **Team Leader** (Monazza Aslam) and **Deputy Team Leader** (Shenila Rawal) will take responsibility for oversight of KLQ1. They will be supported by a **Research Associate** (Libby Bligh) and **Lead Qualitative Analysts** (Hannah Allroggen and Pierre Canet).

The **Evaluation Lead** (Paul Atherton) will provide inputs on specific aspects of the design, data collection, analysis and write-up of the report, as well as providing quality assurance across the entire study. As set out in Table 4, below, different members of leadership team will focus on quality assuring KLQ1 and KLQ2, as best align with their areas of expertise and involvement in the GEC.

The study will be managed by **Programme Manager** (Louise Cathro) and supported by **Assistant Programme Manager** (Robyn Nuttall).

The core study team, as well as members of the IE team, in addition to their country affiliation, roles and responsibilities, are described in Table 4, below.

**Table 4: Study team**

Team member	Company affiliation	Role	Responsibility
Simon Griffiths	Tetra Tech International Development Europe	Programme Director, Principal Investigator and Lead Author for KLQ2	To quality assure inputs for consistency and to direct and supervise the overall design and delivery of the study and to lead on KLQ2.
Pauline Rose	Research for Equitable Access and Learning (REAL) Centre	Technical Director and Lead Author for KLQ1	To supervise and quality assure the design and delivery of KLQ 1 and to quality assure the overall report process.
Dr Monazza Aslam	Oxford Partnership of Education Research and Analysis (OPERA)	Team Leader	
Dr Shenila Rawal	OPERA	Deputy Team Leader	
Paul Atherton	Fab Inc	Evaluation Lead	Quality assurance across the study.
Libby Bligh	Tetra Tech International Development Europe	Research Associate	To lead the delivery of the study, managing team inputs and communicating regularly with the study Leadership Team
Hannah Allroggen Pierre Canet	Tetra Tech International Development Europe	Lead Qualitative Analysts	To provide support on the qualitative methods/ analysis for the Study
Louise Cathro	Tetra Tech International Development Europe	Programme Manager	To manage the workplan and resources of the Study

Team member	Company affiliation	Role	Responsibility
Robyn Nuttall	Tetra Tech International Development Europe	Assistant Programme Manager	To support in the management and resources of the study

## 6.2. Quality assurance protocols

Given the sequential and iterative nature of this study, quality assurance is integrated throughout the design. At the end of each phase, the leadership team will review the emerging findings to date and provide feedback and guidance on these as necessary. Further, as outlined above, the leadership team will guide the prioritisation of interview questions to ensure that the most relevant questions are being asked of each stakeholder. They will also review emerging findings during the analysis phase.

The draft report will be reviewed prior to submission to the FCDO for consistency by the Principal Investigator, Deputy Team Leader, Team Leader, Technical Director and Programme Director.

## 6.3. Reporting to FCDO

The study team will liaise with the FCDO through existing channels established between the IE team and the FCDO Evaluation Manager. Regular communication will be via the Programme Manager (Louise Cathro) while oversight is provided by the Technical Director (Pauline Rose) and Programme Director (Simon Griffiths). The Lessons Learned Study Report will be subject to quality checks from the Evaluation Studies Working Group.

## 7. Workplan

### 7.1. Overview

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. The key deliverables for each phase of the study, along with the dates by which we would receive FCDO approval, are listed in Table 5.

**Table 5: Workplan for the Lessons Learned Study**

Deliverable	Due Date	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25
Submission and approval of ToR								
<b>Research Design Phase</b>								
Preparation of the Study Design Note								
Submission of Draft Study Design Note	10/9/2024							
Revise Research Design Note								
Submission of Final Study Design Note	30/9/2024							
<b>Phase 1&amp;2 Document review and data collection</b>								
Portfolio-wide documentary review								
Key Informant Interviews								
Reflection workshops (IE team and Study Leads)								
Focus group discussions								
Secondary document review and KII follow up								
<b>Phase 3&amp;4: Analysis &amp; Reporting</b>								
Analysis								
Report drafting								
Submission of Draft Report (V1)	w/c 13/01/2025							
Emerging Findings Workshop	w/c 13/01/2025							
Incorporation of comments from FCDO								
Submission of Final Report	28/2/2025							
Learning Brief for dissemination to target stakeholder audiences	28/2/2025							

## 7.2. Deliverables

**Table 6: Deliverables**

Deliverable	Milestone date
Study Design Note	September 2024
Emerging findings workshop	January 2025
Draft Report presenting findings, conclusions, and recommendations	January 2025
Final Report	February 2025
Learning Brief and summary presentation for dissemination to target stakeholder audiences	February 2025

## 7.3. Study use and influence plan

The main outputs from this evaluation (final report, annexes and learning brief) will be published and uploaded on the GEC website as well as the GEC webpage on the Tetra Tech website and will be promoted through GEC and Tetra Tech social media channels. As the GEC IE Programme will end in March 2025, the team will also prepare a summary presentation and a learning brief in addition to the final report. These short-form products will be used for wider dissemination to a broad range of education programme and policy stakeholders, which the FCDO can continue to use for dissemination purposes beyond the IE contract.

## Annex 1: Study Framework

Please see Annex 1 submitted separately.

## Annex 2: Stakeholder list

Please see Annex 2 submitted separately.

## Annex 3: Document repository

Please see Annex 3 submitted separately.

# Annex 4: Report structure

## Executive Summary

### Lessons Learned Study

[Insert short background about study here]

### Focus of this study

This study focuses on [insert study focus here].

In this context, the study focuses on [X] key research questions: [insert research questions here].

### Methodology

[Insert short methodology summary here]

### Key lessons: GEC’s approach to reaching the most marginalised

The first learning question looked at [XXX].

#### Key Lessons

### Key lessons: GEC’s approach to evaluation and learning

The first learning question looked at [XXX].

#### Key Lessons

### Recommendations

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Introduction to study

#### 1.1.1. Report Structure

### 1.2. Background (overview of GEC I and GEC II)

### 1.3. Purpose, Scope and Objectives

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## 2. Research Design and Methods

### 2.1. Key Learning Questions

### 2.2. Approach

### 2.3. Methods

### 2.4. Limitations

---

## 3. Key Learning Question 1: Marginalisation

This section will present lessons from across secondary and primary data sources related to GEC's approach to reaching the most marginalised.

### 3.1. Timeline

This section will present an overview of the evolution of the GEC's approaches to reaching the most marginalised girls.

### 3.2. Lessons from GEC's approaches to reaching the most marginalised: trade offs

Findings from document review and KIs.

#### 3.2.1. Fund level

Findings from document review and KIs.

#### 3.2.2. Project level case study if relevant

### 3.3. Lessons from GEC's approaches to reaching the most marginalised: barriers to education

#### 3.3.1. Fund level

Findings from document review and KIs

#### 3.3.2. Project level case study if relevant

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## 4. Key Learning Question 2: Evaluation and Learning

### 4.1. Timeline

This section will present an overview of the evolution of the GEC's approach to evaluation and learning, including evidence needs articulated by FCDO and the GEC's responses to these.

### 4.2. The effect of different approaches to evaluation and learning on stakeholder's understanding of GEC

### 4.3. The uptake and use of evidence and learning over the lifecycle of GEC

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## 5. Discussion

This section will include reflections from the IE team on the lessons collated and found through this study and their implications for future education programmes and policy.

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## 6. Recommendations

This section will present policy-focused and programme-focused recommendations for future education programmes and policy decisions.

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### Annexes:

To include:

- List of stakeholders interviewed
- List of documents reviewed
- Study framework
- Relevant additional documents such as GEC theory of changes, mapping and timelines used in analysis.

## Annex E: Document repository



## Annex F: Structured web search

The study team conducted a structured web search of documents published by broader education stakeholders, in addition to the review of programme documentation. A structured web search is a method of retrieving information from the internet using specific instructions to extract relevant web links. This process provides more control over parameters than a traditional web browser search, which mostly relies on keywords.

### Purpose, scope and objectives

The purpose of this structured web search was to identify sources that demonstrate the use of GEC evidence by wider stakeholders to inform education programmes and policy. This approach enabled the team to explore sources beyond the published documents in the GEC IE repository, helping to map the broad impact of the GEC on educational discourse and practice. This tool was primarily used to address Learning Sub-Question (SLQ) 2.4:

- *To what extent was evidence and learning generated by the IE, FM, and Implementing Partners during GEC I and during GEC II used by the FCDO and wider partners and stakeholders to inform decision-making in girls' education programmes and policy?*

#### The approach had two objectives:

- To identify a list of references beyond the GEC documentation that used the GEC evidence.
- To assess how GEC evidence has influenced the educational policy landscape, discourse and practice, across different institutions.

The approach involved searching documents that were published and accessible on the internet, compiling academic citations, and mentions in grey literature, including: reports and policy documents from NGOs, donors, think tanks and written academic content including peer-reviewed journal articles, working papers, conference proceedings, and research papers, official government documents and policy frameworks related to education, and programme evaluations and impact assessments.

Documents also included blog posts and articles, professional and organisational webpages with substantive content, technical briefs, and news articles from reputable sources.

The scope excluded content housed behind paywalls or requiring institutional subscriptions, and material from private or restricted social media accounts. Interactive web elements and dynamic content that could not be reliably archived or analysed was excluded. Documents produced by the GEC, on the FCDO, GEC and Tetra Tech websites were also removed to avoid repeating the analysis of internal use completed in the document review, or artificially inflating the use figures.

### Methodology

The team conducted a structured web search using Python, which aimed to collect any published links tied to GEC documentation. The key search terms used for the search included "*Girls' Education Challenge*", "*Girls' Education Challenge*", and "*GEC*". The script used replicated each of the three searches, scraped the resulting pages, and compiled the links into an Excel file. Both Google and Google Scholar were used to search for links and the results from both searches were combined. After merging the sets of search results, duplicate links were identified and removed. Bing was also tested, but it produced a much larger and less precise dataset with over 100 pages of results, many of which were not relevant. As such, results from Bing were not used in the final analysis.

Results from the 'gov.uk' domain, the Tetra Tech or the official GEC website were all excluded to avoid examples of internal use. To extract dates of publication, the code retrieved the dates shown in the Google preview snippet rather than those embedded in the main body of the webpage to prevent any irrelevant dates being scraped. For keyword counting, i.e., the number of times "*Girls' Education Challenge*" was mentioned in a page, the process was not case sensitive and accounted for all variations (with or without the apostrophe, as well as the acronym "GEC").

**This step resulted in the collection of a list of 785 unique links published between 2012 and 2025.**

## Document Assessment

The data set includes the title of the document, its URL, each link's publication date and the frequency of GEC-related keyword mentions. To conduct the structured web search, the team followed the steps outlined below to scrape, clean and refine the list of relevant links.

### Step 1: Automated search and scraping

A Python script was used to replicate Google searches based on the three GEC-related keywords, automatically scraping the resulting links.

### Step 2: Consolidation

The scraped links from the three searches were compiled into a single Excel file. After removing duplicates, there was a total of 785 individual links.

### Step 3: Identification of GEC-related keywords

A python programme then checked these 785 links for any mentions of GEC-related keywords and added the number of keywords mentions in each link. It identified 229 links containing at least one keyword, while 556 did not have any mentions.

Irrelevant links were identified because Google's algorithm used for the automated search does not always enforce exact word matching and still identifies results that it deems relevant, prompting the collection of links which are linked to girls' education but have no reference to our keywords and are not relevant to the Girls' Education Challenge.

### Step 4: Manual verification

The 229 links were manually reviewed to confirm they directly linked and were relevant to the GEC. Some links, where the acronym "GEC" did not refer to the Girls' Education Challenge, were removed. This step left a total of 210 verified links that explicitly referenced GEC-related keywords that were included in the analysis.

During this step, the team categorised each link based on the link's publisher's stakeholder type, and collated example use cases that are mentioned in this Annex and the main report.

## Limitations

One limitation of this approach is the potential omission of relevant links. Several factors could cause the scraper to miss GEC references:

- 1) Some PDFs or book excerpts, particularly scanned documents, were illegible to the scraper and as such would not be identified as containing GEC-related terms.
- 2) Many websites implement security measures that prevent automated scraping, requiring explicit permission to access and analyse their content.
- 3) If keywords appear in dynamic elements such as moving slide boxes or in text embedded within images, the scraper cannot detect it.

Some of the 556 links excluded during 'Step 3: Identification of GEC key words' may in fact be relevant but were not identified by the automated process. Without verifying each of the 785 links manually, the study team cannot be certain that some links were not, therefore, missed.

Lastly, the search filtered results that were published by the FCDO or the GEC FM or IE, but it did not filter out links published on any Implementing Partners', or External Evaluators' websites. As such, some of the links may represent the dissemination of GEC findings, rather than use cases by wider stakeholders. As such, the findings present 'mentions' of the GEC rather than assuming a mention indicates an external use case of the GEC evidence or data.

## Findings

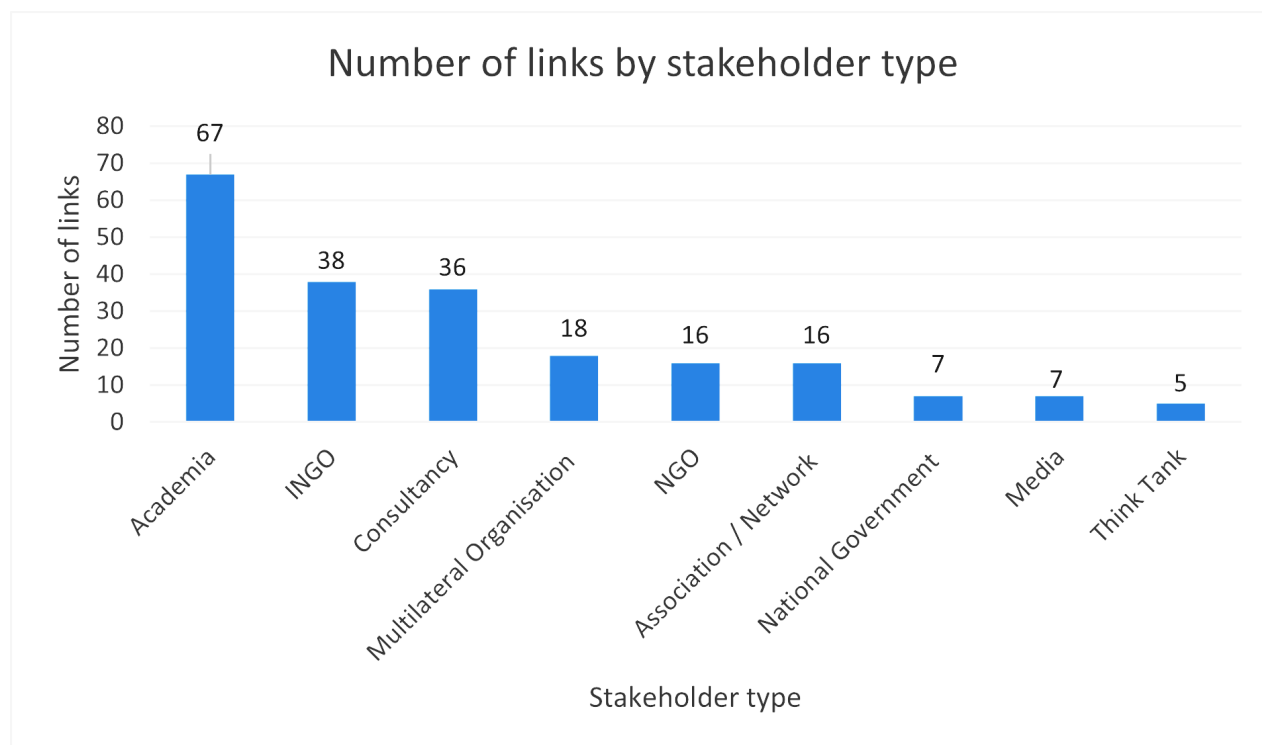
Using the 210 verified links, the team analysed the year of publication, stakeholder type and total number of mentions identified. These are presented below.

### Stakeholder type

The most links retrieved were published by academic institutions, accounting for 67 out of 210 links (32%). The links published by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and private-sector Consultancies were the next most

frequent, with 38 (18%) and 36 (17%) links having been published by NGOs and Consultancy companies, respectively, as shown in [Figure 1](#), below.

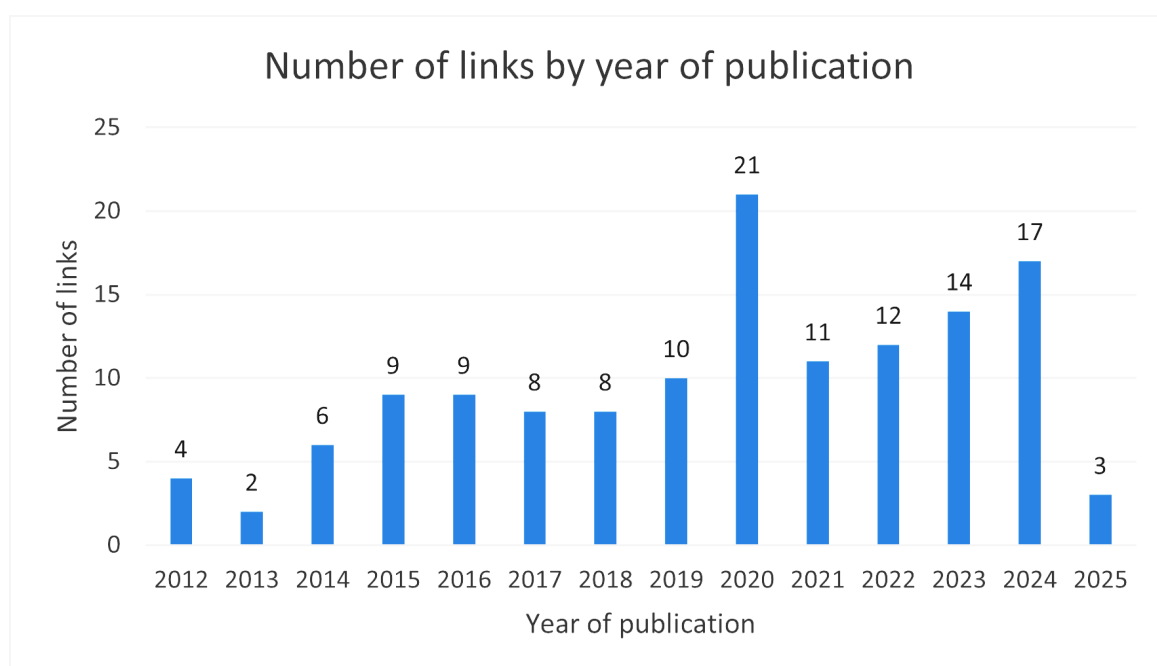
**Figure 1: Number of links grouped by stakeholder type**



### Year of publication

As shown in [Figure 2](#), throughout the life of the GEC, external sources that referenced the GEC steadily increased, with a notable increase from 2020 onwards. This aligns with the study findings that there was a stronger emphasis on external dissemination during Phase II. However, it is also possible that there is some recency bias in this claim as online materials from the 2010s may have been taken down over time.

**Figure 2: Number of links grouped by year of publication**

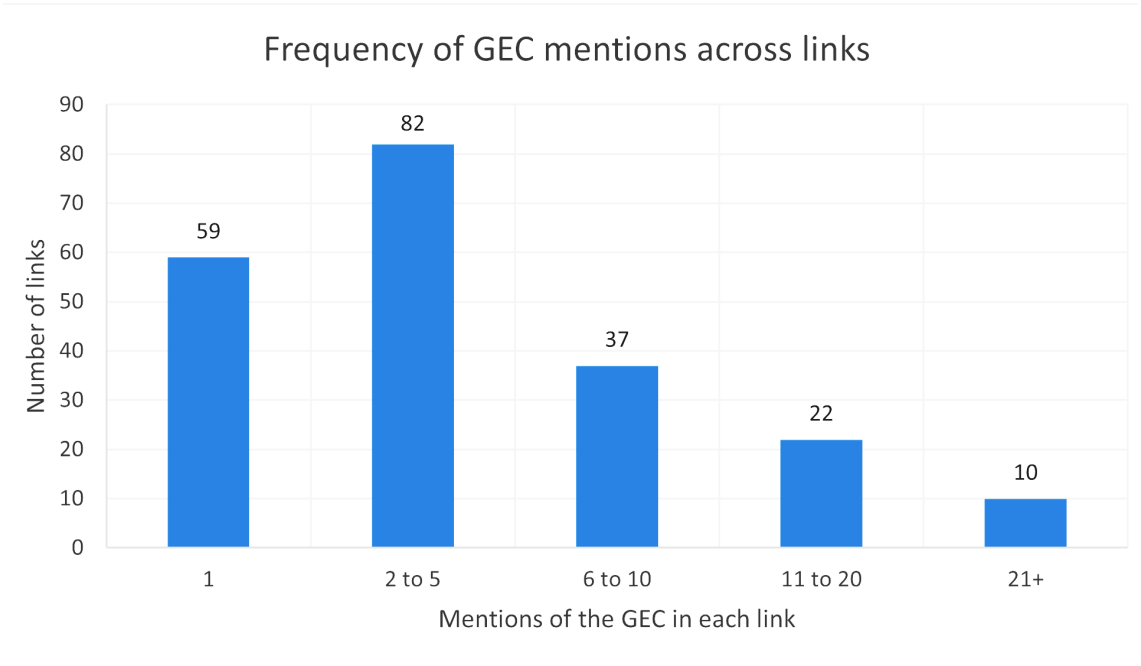


**Note:** there was no publication date for 76 links, as many websites do not display information on publication dates. So, these are not included in Figure 2.

Frequency of GEC mentions

Figure 3 shows how many times the GEC was mentioned in the links that were included. Most of the links mentioned GEC up to five times. This indicates that most links referenced the GEC briefly, often as a passing example of an education programme or as a citation of a GEC resource in a document’s bibliography. However, 69 links had 6 or more mentions. A spot-check review of a sample of these links also showed that there were some examples of evidence from the GEC being used in research on educational interventions in low-resource settings. Examples of these uses are included in the main report.

Figure 3: Frequency of GEC mentions across links



## Annex G: Artificial Intelligence pilot

The study team piloted the use of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) tool to assist with the content analysis during the desk-based review of the Lessons Learned Study. An AI tool is a software application or platform that uses AI techniques to perform specific tasks or solve particular problems. These tools leverage AI algorithms to automate or enhance processes. They can range from simple applications to complex platforms that can support advanced processes such as data analysis.

### Purpose, scope and objectives

The pilot was used to assist the team in scanning a large volume of data and text for information relevant to the document analysis. The purpose of the tool was to complement traditional document analysis, enabling the team to analyse the large volume of data contained in the document repository more efficiently. The tool used in this study was trained to identify and extract relevant excerpts from selected documents, allowing the study team to efficiently locate information related to the key learning questions and related themes. The tool was piloted on 10 documents, including the GEC Business Cases for the two phases and the independent baseline, midline and endline evaluation reports produced by the Evaluation Manager for the three Phase I funding windows.

### Methodology

To conduct the search, we identified an exhaustive list of terms present in each Key Learning Question. We then wrote prompts to input those keywords into the interface, which searched for excerpts containing synonyms and words semantically similar. This methodology was used to extract information relevant to KLQ1 and KLQ2, from a high volume of documents. The tool was also used for a sentiment analysis, to find changes in specific themes and sentiment over the course of the GEC. This enabled the team to efficiently identify changes by comparing the sentiment and themes of extracted information, between documents and time frames. The methodology was initially applied to a few documents and the results were manually reviewed for accuracy, before expanding its use. This approach enabled the team to work directly with quotes extracted from the documents and conduct a content analysis across different themes.

### Compliance

The study team ensured compliance with Tetra Tech policy as the data entered was private and not used for data training purposes.

### Data collection

For the data collection the team used refined and specific prompts to extract excerpts and information about changes in themes over time. The prompts were designed to indicate mentions and the related page numbers of relevant themes. The prompts were refined to prevent the tool completing content analysis or changing information, whilst meeting the objective of extracting relevant information for the team to analyse. This was implemented by using very specific instructions in the prompts. The team also provided key words, and word stems in the prompts to ensure the specificity of the tool's search to the themes.

Examples of the prompts entered to the interface are shown below.

#### Document Analysis, extracting excerpts:

- "I want to better understand how marginalisation was defined in the context of the document. Identify and extract the most relevant sentences where there is information on how marginalisation was defined. I want direct quotes and the page number where the sentence was found. Do not analyse or reformulate information."
- "Potential keywords to look out for include: defin-, inclusi-, characteristic, marginalis-, socio-economic, illiterate, disadvantage, intersectional-, disabled, disabili, Washington, minority, out of school, in school."

#### Sentiment Analysis:

- "I have a collection of monthly reports in PDF format. Can you analyse the sentiment for each report and show me if there has been a change in tone over the last year? *(to tailor to a specific theme/ sentiment)*"

## Findings

The team found the AI pilot to be useful for extracting excerpts for specific themes like approaches to marginalisation and understanding trade-offs or barriers. The tool was found to be less effective for extracting information which was less likely to be explicitly mentioned in the documents, such as approaches to evaluation and learning.

While the AI tool provided relevant excerpts, it failed at collating a comprehensive list of all relevant excerpts in the document, which meant that additional manual review was required.

Overall, the tool was efficient at scanning through large quantities of data and pointing to relevant information. However, it still faced significant limitations as it did not provide an exhaustive content analysis of the document, and it had difficulty identifying relevant information for more complex themes.