

Tetra Tech International Development

Independent Evaluation of the Girls' Education Challenge Phase II – Sustaining Changes in Community Attitudes and Norms to Improve Girls' Education Outcomes

Annexes

March 2025



Independent Evaluation of the Girls' Education Challenge Phase II – Sustaining Changes in Community Attitudes and Norms to Improve Girls' Education Outcomes – Final Report

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

Authors: Rose, Pauline¹; Ansari, Amna¹; Aslam, Monazza²; Gupta, Romanshi³; Niaz, Laraib¹; Rawal, Shenila²

Cover image: Jon Pilch/ CAMFED, 2018. A CAMFED Learner Guide sits outside a school in Hurungwe district, Zimbabwe, talking to two students.

March 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)

Simon Griffiths

Programme Director

Signature:



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Acronyms

CAMFED	Campaign for Female Education
DCP	Data Collection Partner
ESWG	Evaluation Studies Working Group
FCAS	Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FDM	Foundation for Development Management
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FM	Fund Manager
GEC	Girls' Education Challenge
GEC II	Girls' Education Challenge Phase II
GEC-T	Girls' Education Challenge – Transition
GESI	Gender, Equity and Social Inclusion
IAG	Independent Advisory Group
IE	Independent Evaluation
IP	Implementing Partner(s)
KII	Key Informant Interview
LNGB	Leave No Girl Behind
PEA	Political Economy Analysis
RQ	Research Question
RRLF	Rapid Research and Learning Fund
SAP	Southern Academic Partner
SPA	Senior Portfolio Adviser
ToR	Terms of Reference
VfM	Value for Money
VSO	Voluntary Services Overseas

Project Acronyms

Acronym	Project name	Implementing Partner	Project location(s)
Discovery	Discovery Project	Impact(Ed) International	Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria
ENGINE	Educating Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises	Mercy Corps	Nigeria
GEARR	GEARR-ing Up for Success After School	PEAS	Uganda
GEF	Girls' Education Finance: Empowerment for Girls' Education	Opportunity International UK	Uganda
IGATE	Improving Girls' Access through Transforming Education	World Vision UK	Zimbabwe
iMlango	iMlango	Avanti Communications Group	Kenya
KEEP	Kenya Equity in Education Project	WUSC	Kenya
MGCubed	Making Ghanaian Girls Great!	Plan International UK	Ghana
REALISE	Réussite et Épanouissement via l'Apprentissage et L'Insertion au Système Éducatif	Save the Children	Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
SCHIP	Building Girls to Live, Learn, Laugh and 'SCHIP' in Strong, Creative, Holistic, Inclusive, Protective, Quality Education	Viva	Uganda
SfSE II	Sisters for Sisters' Education II	VSO	Nepal
SOMGEP	Somali Girls Education Promotion Programme	Care International Somalia	Somalia
STAGES	Steps Towards Afghan Girls' Education Success	Aga Khan Foundation	Afghanistan
STAR-G	Successful Transition and Advancement of Rights for Girls	Save the Children	Mozambique
STEM	Supporting the Education of Marginalised Girls in Kailali	Mercy Corps Europe	Nepal
UVC-GE	Ultimate Virtuous Cycle of Girls' Education	CAMFED	Zimbabwe

Annex A: Study Terms of Reference

Tetra Tech International Development

Independent Evaluation of the Girls' Education Challenge Phase II – Terms of Reference for Evaluation Study 7 – Sustainability

December 2023



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

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Final Version

December 2023

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Simon Griffiths, Programme Director

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Acronyms

ESWG	Evaluation Studies Working Group
FCAS	Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FM	Fund Manager
GEC	Girls' Education Challenge
GEC I	Girls' Education Challenge Phase I
GEC II	Girls' Education Challenge Phase II
GEC-T	Girls' Education Challenge – Transition
GESI	Gender and Social Inclusion
IE	Independent Evaluation
IP	Implementing Partners
LNGB	Leave No Girl Behind
PEA	Political Economy Analysis
RRLF	Rapid Research Learning Fund
SAP	Southern Academic Partner
SCALE	Scaling Access and Learning in Education
SOMGEP-T	Somali Girls' Education Promotion Programme
SPAs	Senior Portfolio Advisors
ToR	Terms of Reference
VfM	Value for Money

1. Background and Purpose

1. The Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) is the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's (FCDO) 12-year, £855 million Global Fund which aims to improve the educational opportunities of the world's most marginalised girls. Phase I (GEC I) of the programme (2012-2016) supported 1.4 million marginalised girls to complete a full cycle of either primary or secondary education through 37 different projects. Phase II (GEC II) is an eight-year (2017-2025) programme operating through two windows – (1) Girls' Education Challenge-Transition (GEC-T) and; (2) Leave No Girl Behind (LNGB) – with a commitment to support marginalised girls' learning in 41 projects across 17 countries. Of the 37 projects which were mapped to have been part of GEC I, 27¹ were renewed under the GEC-T Window as part of GEC II. Within the LNGB Window, 14 projects are being implemented.
2. In 2020, the FCDO commissioned an Independent Evaluation (IE) of the GEC II to generate evidence and learning from projects across the GEC II portfolio to understand what has worked, how, and why, and in different contexts for different groups of girls. So far, a total of five studies have been completed as part of the [Independent Evaluation](#), on access and learning, teachers and teaching, impact on learning/ transition outcomes in GEC-T, educating girls with disabilities, and education pathways for marginalised girls beyond formal schooling. This evaluation study, as part of the broader series of evaluation studies being conducted by the IE team, pertains to the theme of *Sustainability*.
3. To enable the assessment of longer-term sustainability, this study will include the 27 GEC-T projects that have been part of both GEC I and GEC II. We will include these projects as they have been running for at least 8 years. This timescale is important given it takes time to embed and sustain change.^{2,3} Given their shorter time scale, the study will not include projects that have been part of the LNGB Window as these launched in 2019/ 2020 and many continue to be implemented (or will continue until 2024). As such, the timescale for embedding change is too limited.
4. According to a Fund Manager (FM) report, GEC I projects generally showed characteristics of latent or emerging sustainability⁴, and lessons from the GEC endline evaluation⁵ indicated risks that project activities would not continue beyond GEC I without additional funding. The continuation to GEC-T provided the opportunity for change to be embedded and sustained.
5. Sustainability has become more explicit in GEC II, including being one of the expected outcomes in the GEC II programme Logframe.⁶ Sustainability for the GEC-T is referred to as “establishing a foundation for longer-term viability of outcomes for girls”.⁷ “Changing community attitudes and norms”, together with “Empowering girls” through improved girls' self-esteem, self-efficacy and self-confidence, are two of the seven intermediate outcomes (IOs)⁸ that are likely to contribute to the overarching outcome on sustainability. Sustainability, along with the other three outcomes,⁹ is anticipated to contribute to GEC's higher-level impact of achieving a better educated and empowered female population.
6. According to the FM, “sustainability in the GEC is about delivering and enabling long lasting girls' empowerment through education, for current and future generations, by working with girls, families, communities, schools and systems... Sustainability can be built at the individual girl level, and also within the enabling environment for change, including at community, family, school and system levels”.¹⁰
7. Previous IE studies have considered sustainability primarily with respect to outcomes for beneficiary girls themselves. For instance, the longitudinal cohort study of women and girls who participated in the Somali Girls' Education Promotion Programme (SOMGEP-T) under the Rapid Research and Learning Fund (RRLF) has

¹ In one project, there was a change in the lead Implementing Partner (IP) organisation.

² GEC. 2017. Sustainability and the GEC. Available at: <https://girlseducationchallenge.org/media/ijof4enn/lftf-sustainability-and-the-gec-dec-2017.pdf>.

³ Coffey. 2017. Girls' Education Challenge: Lessons from the Strategic Partnerships Window. Available at:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a82c35be5274a2e8ab593a5/Strategic-Partnerships-Window-Endline-Policy-Brief-FINAL-Nov-2017-v4.pdf>.

⁴ GEC. 2018. Learning from the Girls' Education Challenge 2012-2017. Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5b72c9fed915d6cff1aa730/Steps-to-Success.pdf>.

⁵ Coffey. 2018. Lessons from the GEC Endline Evaluation of the Step Change and Innovation Windows. Available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a81fe06ed915d74e340125e/GEC-Endline-Evaluation-Brief-EM-January_2018.pdf.

⁶ GEC Annual Report 2022.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ The other five intermediate outcomes (IOs) include: reducing financial barriers, improved teaching, effective management, safer learning environments, and continued attendance (GEC Annual Report, 2022).

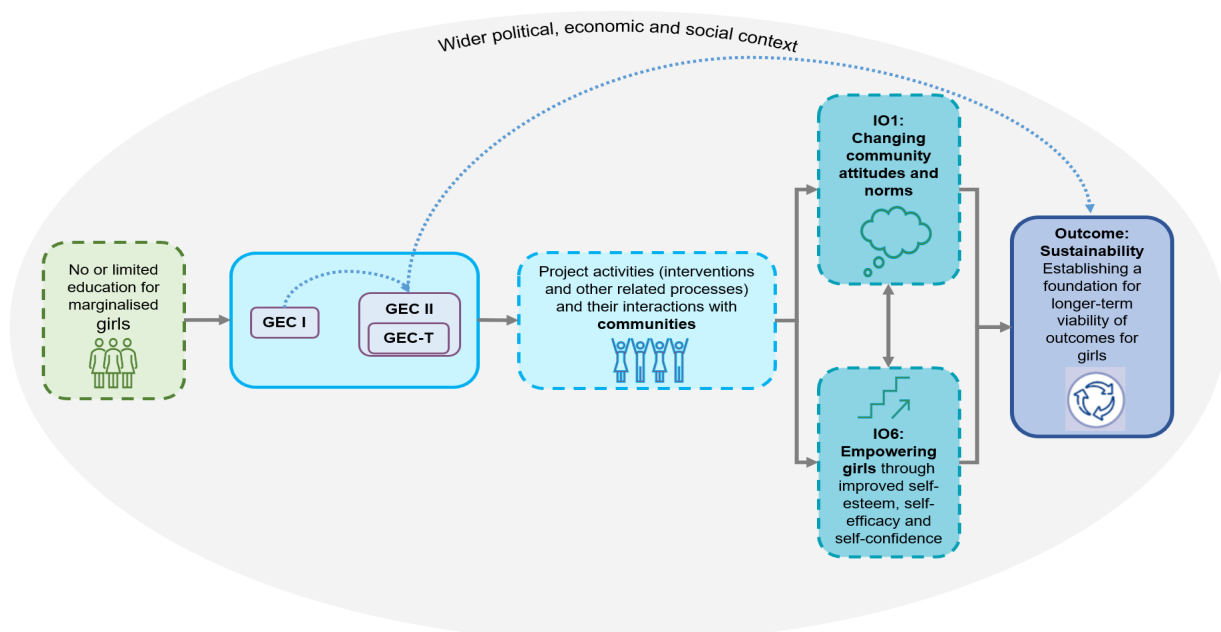
⁹ The other three outcomes are participation, learning and transition.

¹⁰ GEC. 2022. GEC Guidance on Sustainability Planning. In GEC. 2023. Portfolio in Practice – Advancing Sustainability Across a Portfolio: A Deep Dive into the GEC Sustainability Framework. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c1e1e1e1e1e1e1e1e1e1e1e/gec_pip_1_sustainability_final.pdf (girlseducationchallenge.org).

explored the links between their participation in SOMGEP and later-life outcomes. The IE's ongoing Value for Money (VfM) study (6) focuses on LNGB projects and includes a focus on private income and non-income benefits to girls. The upcoming IE portfolio evaluations for GEC-T and LNGB will examine sustainability at the national level (e.g. influence on national education policies and systems). In addition, the FM has completed a replication study and a Learning Brief which discusses sustainability at the national-level (in relation to changes in national-level policies/ plans/ strategies).

8. **Therefore, for the purpose of this study, we will explore sustainability at the community-level, recognising that changing community attitudes and norms¹¹ contributes to establishing a foundation for longer-term viability of outcomes for girls.**
9. Most GEC I projects have included components that aimed to address discriminatory gender norms.¹² A previous FM thematic review of GEC I indicates how projects have included activities relating to community attitudes and behaviour to be more supportive of girls' education and build girls' self-esteem, self-efficacy and self-confidence.^{13,14} Girls with greater self-esteem, self-efficacy and self-confidence are also likely to demonstrate positive behaviours in their communities.¹⁵ This suggests that girls could act as agents of transformative change within their communities. However, the current FM evidence base is weighted towards how changes in norms or behaviour in education programming can encourage girls to enrol in or attend school but is less focused on the pathways through which community attitudes and norms change, including how beneficiary girls/ young women could be change agents themselves.¹⁶
10. In this study, we will explore the influence of projects on changing community attitudes and norms to contribute to establishing a foundation for longer-term viability of outcomes for girls, whether or not project activities themselves have continued. These activities include specific interventions designed by projects as well as other project-related processes (such as their interactions with communities), which may have evolved throughout the project lifecycle and contributed to change. We will explore the pathways through which these changes have occurred, exploring how beneficiary girls – including through improved self-esteem, self-efficacy and self-confidence – have acted as agents of transformative change within their communities. Figure 1 summarises this focus related to the GEC II logframe.

Figure 1: Framework summarising the study's focus on sustainability



¹¹ We will begin with the [ALIGN Platform](#) as a reference to define norm change, but will further flesh out the definition as we continue to engage with broader literature on the subject. The ALIGN definition refers to social norms as the implicit and informal rules that most people accept and follow. They are influenced by our beliefs, economic circumstances and sometimes by the rewards and sanctions we might expect for either adhering to or disobeying them. Norms are embedded in formal and informal institutions and produced and reproduced through our social interactions.

¹² ALIGN. 2019. Learning about norm change in girls' education in low and middle-income contexts: Lessons from the Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) Fund. Available [here](#).

¹³ GEC. 2018. Thematic Review: Community Based Awareness, Attitudes and Behaviour. Available [here](#).

¹⁴ GEC. 2018. Thematic Review: Girls' Self Esteem. Available [here](#).

¹⁵ Ibid. Also see findings in Section 6.3 from the [IE Study on Education Pathways for Marginalised Girls Beyond Formal Schooling](#).

¹⁶ GEC. 2018. Thematic Review: Community Based Awareness, Attitudes and Behaviour. Available [here](#).

11. As with other IE studies, the primary stakeholder audiences for this study are the FCDO, including the GEC II Programme Team, FCDO Education Advisors, the FM and Senior Portfolio Advisers (SPAs), and project implementing partners (IPs). The secondary stakeholder audiences include other international donors, agencies, government representatives and other stakeholders investing and working in girls' education more widely.

2. Scope of Work

12. As mentioned above, this study is on sustainability as defined within the GEC II programme Logframe, namely establishing a foundation for longer-term viability of outcomes for girls. Given gaps in existing evidence, it will focus on the role of changing community attitudes and norms in contributing to this outcome. This will involve how beneficiary girls – including through improved self-esteem, self-efficacy and self-confidence – have acted as agents of transformative change within their communities.
13. The study will primarily focus on *evaluation for learning*, filling this evidence gap. The evidence will help to inform future FCDO programming, such as of Scaling Access and Learning in Education (SCALE) and in-country girls' education programmes aiming to achieve lasting change.
14. To enable the assessment of longer-term change, the evaluation will include the 27 projects that have been part of both GEC I and GEC II as this allows a longer time frame (of at least 8 years) for change to have been embedded and sustained within communities, recognising that this takes time.^{17,18} For this reason, we will not include LNGB projects given the shorter time frame that they have been in operation, and so less opportunity to ascertain whether changes have been embedded and sustained. In addition, the previous three IE studies on disability; alternative pathways to education; and VFM have included in-depth focus on LNGB projects as case studies.
15. As discussed further in the next section, the study's scope will include:
 - a. A portfolio-wide analysis;
 - b. Two case studies of selected projects, which will entail in-depth qualitative research with community-level stakeholders, as well as young women who participated in the projects to identify their role as agents of change. The reason for two case studies is due to time and resource considerations, as well as the possibility that our selection of projects may be limited in number as many have ended, and some will no longer have in-country presence, or are not able to engage with the study.
16. The IE will seek to ensure complementarity and avoid duplication with completed, ongoing and planned work by the IE/ FM/ FCDO, through ongoing consultations.

3. Study Design

3.1. Research Focus

17. As mentioned above, the study's overarching objective is to assess how projects which were part of both GEC I and GEC II have changed community attitudes and norms to contribute to establishing a foundation for longer-term viability of outcomes for girls. As noted, we will explore the influence of projects on changing community attitudes and norms associated with girls' education, whether or not project activities have continued. We will explore the pathways through which these changes have occurred, including how beneficiary girls themselves have acted as agents of transformative change.
18. To address this objective, the study will seek to answer the following indicative **research questions**:
 - a. How and to what extent did projects aim to change community attitudes and norms associated with girls' education?
 - b. To what extent have the project activities (including both interventions and project-related processes) associated with these aims been sustained, including beyond the lifecycle of the projects?

¹⁷ GEC. 2017. Sustainability and the GEC. Available [here](#).

¹⁸ Coffey. 2017. Girls' Education Challenge: Lessons from the Strategic Partnerships Window. Available [here](#).

- c. To what extent, and through which pathways, have these activities changed community attitudes and norms associated with girls' education?

Importantly, across all the research questions, we will seek to understand in what ways beneficiary girls have been change-agents in influencing community attitudes and norms associated with girls' education.

- 19. This study will have a strong focus on Political Economy Analysis (PEA) and Gender & Social Inclusion (GESI), with the aim of focusing on sustainability in communities where more marginalised girls live. The political economy analysis will explore barriers, enablers and key stakeholders and structures with respect to shifting changing community attitudes and norms and is central to the analysis of sustainability, therefore cutting across the entire study. For the two case study projects, it will also identify the wider political, economic and social context which could continue to create barriers for projects to realise their desired change.

3.2. Proposed Data Sources

- 20. The portfolio-wide analysis will entail a comprehensive review of project documentation for the 27 projects that were part of both GEC I and GEC II, looking at projects' lifecycles across both phases. This will include – where available - background reports, monitoring reports, FM knowledge products /reports, project external evaluation reports (baseline, midline and endline), project sustainability plans under GEC II as well as interviews with available IPs who worked in both GEC I and GEC II. The portfolio review will be an iterative process and will help analyse projects' ambition for sustainability, with a focus on changing community attitudes and norms, with consideration of girls as agents of change.
- 21. For the two case studies, we will collect primary qualitative data in the selected country contexts. The team will use the preliminary findings of the portfolio wide analysis to inform the design of the primary qualitative research tools. This will enable the team to relate findings as reported in project documentation with those that emerge from analysis of the primary qualitative data.
- 22. As a first step, this is likely to involve a mapping exercise to identify relevant key community stakeholders and structures (e.g. parent-teacher associations, educators, traditional and faith-based leaders, micro-credit groups). This will include several potential sources such as project documents, GEC evaluation reports, FM knowledge products etc., initial conversations with the case study IPs and interviews and mapping exercises with beneficiary girls and young women themselves.
- 23. As a next step, we will explore with the community groups (identified in the previous step) how project activities have changed community attitudes and norms. In addition, we will identify how beneficiary girls/young women themselves have acted as agents of transformative change within their communities. Qualitative data methods might include participatory exercises, interviews and focus group discussions. These approaches will be detailed in the Research Design Note.
- 24. The indicative research questions, the proposed data sources and the areas of exploration are presented in *Table 1* below. These will be further refined upon submission of the Research Design Note.

Table 1: Research questions and proposed data sources

Research Questions	Proposed Data Source	Purpose/ Rationale
The ways in which beneficiary girls have been agents of change in changing community attitudes and norms associated with girls' education will cut across all research questions.		
How and to what extent did projects aim to change community attitudes and norms associated with girls' education?	Portfolio analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Background/ inception reports FM knowledge products/ reports External evaluation reports (baseline) Sustainability plans for the 27 projects under GEC II IP interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of projects' ambition towards changing community attitudes and norms and how this evolved over time (including between GEC I and GEC II). Review of project design and activities (including specific interventions as well as intended processes) aimed at changing community attitudes and norms associated with girls' education. Review of the approaches projects aimed and/or undertook in this regard, including with respect to beneficiary girls/ young women as change agents (where mentioned). Review of expected changes in relation to changing community attitudes and norms associated with girls' education.
	Case studies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community mapping 	

Research Questions	Proposed Data Source	Purpose/ Rationale
The ways in which beneficiary girls have been agents of change in changing community attitudes and norms associated with girls' education will cut across all research questions.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participatory methods/ interviews with beneficiary girls Interviews/Focus group discussions with community stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of contexts and contextual factors in driving project design and activities, as well as sustainability at the community-level.
To what extent have the project activities associated with these aims been sustained, including beyond the lifecycle of the projects?	<p>Portfolio analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring reports for the 27 projects under GEC I and GEC II (where available) External evaluation reports (midline/ endline) IP interviews <p>Case studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participatory methods/ interviews with beneficiary girls Interviews/ Focus group discussions with community stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding the extent to which project activities sustained, including beyond the lifecycle of projects. Understanding factors enabling or constraining sustainability of project activities, including beyond the lifecycle of projects.
To what extent, and through which pathways, have these activities changed community attitudes and norms associated with girls' education?	<p>Portfolio analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring reports for the 27 projects under GEC I and GEC II (where available) FM knowledge products/ reports External evaluation reports (baseline/midline/endline) IP interviews <p>Case studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participatory qualitative methods (to be developed at the Research Design phase) Interviews with beneficiary girls Interviews/ Focus group discussions with community stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding how project activities have changed community attitudes and norms associated with girls' education. Understanding whether and how girls were involved in project activities, and the role of education in enabling them to become agents of change (even where not explicitly intended by projects) in influencing community attitudes and norms. Understanding whether other factors potentially influenced this change. Exploring whether there have been instances of 'reversals' in attitudes for the 27 projects during GEC I and GEC II, and beyond. Understanding the factors enabling or constraining sustained changes in community attitudes and norms. Tracing processes/ pathways of change through which lasting change in community attitudes and norms may be achieved to contribute to establishing a foundation for longer-term viability of outcomes for girls.

3.3. Study Design Stages

25. The study design will commence following approval of these Terms of Reference (ToR) and culminate in the submission of the Research Design Note. The design stage will be iterative and includes the following phases (some of which may occur in parallel):
- Rapid review of external evidence:** This will entail a rapid review of the themes to be explored in this study, such as community attitudes and norms associated with girls' education that can hold back progress in establishing a foundation for longer-term viability for girls' outcomes, and girls' roles as agents of change themselves.
 - Review of projects' documentation:** This will explore projects' approaches to achieving changes in community attitudes and norms to contribute to establishing a foundation for longer-term viability of outcomes for girls, including consideration of girls as agents of change. The team will use the preliminary findings of this analysis to inform the design of the primary qualitative research tools. This will enable the team to relate

findings as reported in project documentation with those that emerge from analysis of the primary qualitative data.

- c. **Case study selection:** We will develop shortlisting criteria in response to the final research questions to identify the selected projects where we will collect in-depth primary qualitative data. Shortlisting criteria may include any one or more of the following:
- Projects that have been part of GEC I and GEC II to enable a longer-term assessment of sustainability.
 - Projects which have been recognised to have positive short-term outcomes, according to previous IE studies (e.g., learning outcomes as per the Study 3 [GEC-T Impact findings](#) and the external evaluation reports) as these are likely to be projects which have outcomes that are desirable to sustain.
 - Projects in countries where IPs continue to have an in-country presence beyond the timescale of GEC Phase II. This will be important in facilitating qualitative data collection in the selected contexts (see *Section 5 for details on risks*).
 - Projects that are willing and able to engage with the case studies.
 - Other considerations may include representation of geographical countries/ regions; potential sample size, etc. We will consult with the FM colleagues including SPAs to assess whether there are any particular IPs that could be considered for inclusion/ exclusion in the study. Once the selection criteria and shortlist of projects have been developed, we will share these with the FCDO for their approval of the selected projects, prior to contacting the IPs.
- d. **Finalisation of primary data collection methods:** Based on the rapid review of evidence, review of documentation and final project selection, we will finalise the methods to be used for the primary data collection.
- e. **Submission of Research Design Note:** As discussed above, the final deliverable for this phase is the Research Design Note. This will include the development of the research design, any changes from the ToR, the research questions, methods and analysis plan, as well as the upcoming deliverables/ phases of work.

3.4. Fieldwork

26. The primary data collection will include interviews with all the available IPs of projects that were part of GEC I and GEC II, and the in-depth qualitative data in the two case study projects. The qualitative tool design is anticipated to begin during the Research Design stage and continue following the submission of the Research Design Note. These will be finalised after integrating feedback from the case study IPs and the IE's Southern Academic Partners (SAPs).
27. The fieldwork phases in the case study contexts include obtaining research permissions, designing and training the data collection partners, a pilot and the data collection. All transcripts will be translated, cleaned, and processed before being shared with the IE team for analysis. Primary data collection will take place with the support of contracted local data collection partners and managed on a day-to-day basis by the IE's Fieldwork Manager¹⁹. The study team will remotely supervise and liaise with the Fieldwork Manager/ data collection partners throughout the data collection phase.
28. The identification of stakeholders for data collection in the case study contexts will be preceded by a detailed community mapping exercise and will further be informed by consultation with IPs.
29. All primary data collected will adhere to the GEC IE Ethical Research and Safeguarding Framework (further described in Section 4).
30. Upon completion of the fieldwork, a Fieldwork Report will be submitted to the FCDO.

3.5. Analysis

31. This phase will include analysis of the project documentation and the coding and analysis of the primary qualitative data collected for the case studies and IP interviews. The analytical framework used to answer the research questions will be developed in an iterative manner, starting from the research design phase and finalised during the analysis phase.

¹⁹ We will provide details of our Fieldwork Manager in the Research Design Note once they have been confirmed.

3.6. Validation of Emerging Findings

32. This stage will include consultations with key stakeholders such as the IPs and the Evaluation Studies Working Group (ESWG) to validate the findings and ensure they are factually correct.

3.7. Reporting

33. This phase will include the development of the study's key outputs. These include a final report, a webinar to present the findings to the IPs, a policy brief and other possible communication outputs.

4. Research Ethics

34. All activities conducted as part of this study will adhere to the guidelines for ethical research as per the Ethical Research and Safeguarding Framework, which is the overarching ethical framework for the IE.
35. The guidelines in the framework are developed to ensure that all primary research (involving individuals, stakeholders, or other programme stakeholders) is conducted ethically and safely. The study will give precedence to the rights and dignities of its participants in efforts to protect them from harm.
36. The Ethical Research and Safeguarding Framework is fully compliant with the guiding concepts and principles set out in FCDO's Evaluation Policy (2013) and FCDO's Research Ethics Guidance (2019); and the UK Data Protection Act (2018).
37. The research design note will include an ethical research and safeguarding section pertaining specifically to this study. The ethical permissions will be applied for and adhere to the Cambridge Faculty of Education ethics process.
38. The process of obtaining all required government research permissions for primary data collection will commence as soon as the projects are shortlisted, and the countries are selected.

5. Risk Assessment and Mitigation Plan

Table 2: Risk assessment and mitigation plan

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating Action	Impact following mitigation
Obtaining research permissions/ ethical approvals in-country may be delayed.	High	High	We will prioritise project selection early on in the research design phase to begin developing relationships with IPs/ data collection partners and looking into the types of research permissions required for each context. We will also commence developing the fieldwork tools to support in applying for research permissions as early as possible.	Moderate
IPs that initially commit to being a case study are no longer able to engage with the study during the fieldwork preparation phase.	High	High	We will only select case study projects after holding consultation meetings and discussing the expectations around mutual engagement. In addition, we will identify possible phases where they may face challenges and require additional support from the IE team. Where possible, we will endeavour to provide additional support. Should an IP be unable to progress as a case study, we will inform the FM/ FCDO and immediately begin the process of identifying a replacement case study.	Moderate
Since GEC is nearing the end of Phase II and given the focus of the study, undertaking fieldwork in contexts where projects have ended is likely to be a challenge with respect to identifying relevant stakeholders who were associated with GEC I and GEC II.	High	High	During the consultations with shortlisted IPs – including those where projects have ended – we will thoroughly discuss the feasibility of identifying the relevant stakeholders and maintain regular communication with a point of contact from the IP organisation in case we face any challenges during the fieldwork phase.	Moderate
In projects where IPs continue to have an in-country presence, GEC II-associated personnel may have moved to different projects/ organisations, resulting in limited capacity to engage with the IE study.	High	High	We will liaise with the IP, FM and SPAs to first ensure that the relevant GEC II-associated personnel are able to engage with the study despite having moved organisations. We will endeavour to reduce the burden in terms of engagement, as far as possible, recognising their additional responsibilities.	Moderate

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating Action	Impact following mitigation
Key stakeholders (including young women/ community stakeholders) may not be easy to trace, access or may refuse to participate in the primary data collection.	Moderate	Moderate	We will work closely with IPs/ SPAs and our Fieldwork Manager to identify a larger sample of stakeholders in case of refusals to participate. We will contact these stakeholders early on to factor in delays in accessing stakeholders.	Low
Primary data collection in fragile or conflict-affected areas may not be feasible, due to the risks to/ reduced safety of beneficiary girls, other stakeholders, and data collection partners.	Moderate	High	We will continue to monitor the project contexts' FCAS status, through communication with the FCDO and FM, to inform decision making around primary data collection feasibility and safety in those projects.	Moderate
During data collection, stakeholders may not reveal their true opinions or experiences owing to social desirability bias.	Moderate	Moderate	We will take cognisance of the merits and limitations of different research methods and tools in eliciting information on norm change, before deciding on the final methods that most appropriately elicit respondents' honest views. In addition, we will endeavour to further mitigate this bias by looking at responses across stakeholder groups and data sources so that the findings are corroborated from various angles. We will also ensure that the data collection team is provided with, and trained on, the effective use of prompts when administering research tools to collect relevant information.	Low
Data collection may provoke adverse reaction from stakeholders who are wary of or against change.	Low	Low	As noted above, our choice of qualitative research methods and ensuing tools will be guided by considerations of how participants may potentially respond, including any backlash or negative reactions. Additionally, we will make sure that our data collection team is sensitised to and fully trained on conducting research on this topic, including strategies for limiting participant stress as well as dealing with situations where such backlash may arise.	Low
Organisational risks (such as changes in staff in the IE, FM, FCDO; delays in obtaining relevant information etc.) may affect the progress of the study.	Moderate	Moderate	We will use our regular meetings within the IE team and with the FM and FCDO to provide updates as well as keep track of tasks required to meet deliverable deadlines. In the instance of changes in staff, we will ensure there is adequate time for handovers/ transitions.	Low

6. Work Plan and Expected Deliverables

This section describes the work plan, with the time required to meet each deliverable presented in *Figure 2*. The work plan has been designed to incorporate time required for stakeholders to provide their feedback, as well as the subsequent time needed for the IE team to respond to comments and integrate feedback. Additionally, we have accounted for the time required to obtain research permissions, summer holidays in August as a time where colleagues and stakeholders are less likely to be available, as well as holidays in December.

Figure 2: Work plan

	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25
Terms of Reference (TOR) Phase																
Preparation of TOR for submission to FCDO																
Revisions and final submission of TOR																
Research Design Phase																
Portfolio review/ analysis																
Selection of case studies																
Preparation of Design Note																
Submission of Design Note v1																
Submission of Design Note v2																
Fieldwork Phase																
Applying for/ obtaining research permissions																
Developing training/ training/ piloting																
In-depth fieldwork																
Analysis/ Reporting Phase																
Coding/ Analysis																
Drafting report																
Submission of Report v1																
Incorporation of comments from all partners/ ESWG																
Submission of Final Report																

The key deliverables for each phase of the study, along with the dates by which we would receive FCDO approval, are listed in *Table 4*.

Table 3: Table of deliverables

Deliverable	Submission Date	Approved Milestone Date
Terms of Reference	1 December 2023	22 December 2023
Research Design Note	29 February 2024	15 March 2024
Fieldwork Completion Report	15 August 2024	13 September 2024
Draft Report (FCDO, ESWG, IPs, SAPs)	14 November 2024	29 November 2024 (feedback on v1)
Final Report Submission	14 February 2025	28 February 2025

7. Team Composition

39. This study will be led by a core team under the guidance of the Principal Investigator and Lead Author (Pauline Rose), IE Team Leader (Monazza Aslam) and Deputy Team Leader (Shenila Rawal). The study will be led by the Research Lead (Amna Ansari) and Qualitative Analyst (Romanshi Gupta). The study will be managed by the IE

Programme Manager (Louise Cathro) and Programme Coordinator (Robyn Nuttall). Additional support will be brought on as required to assist with data transcription, cleaning, coding, and analysis.

40. Quality assurance processes will be overseen by the Programme Director (Simon Griffiths), Technical Director (Pauline Rose), Team Leader (Monazza Aslam) and Deputy Team Leader (Shenila Rawal).
41. Data collection, including enumerator training, fieldwork management and data quality assurance, will be managed by the IE Fieldwork Manager. Local partners will be contracted to support in-country data collection.
42. The IE Team's SAPs will also be engaged in an advisory capacity throughout the study. Our SAPs will provide their expertise and insights to help inform and contextualise the study design and methods, research tools, and analysis.

8. Stakeholder Engagement

43. The IE team will engage with the following external stakeholders over the duration of the study as needed (where relevant, some of these stakeholders will be consulted through the ESWG):
 - FCDO UK;
 - GEC II Fund Manager;
 - IPs, including their downstream partners;
 - Southern Academic Partners.
44. Ongoing engagement with the IPs to receive their input and integrate their feedback is a critical element of this study. This will ensure we also have identified relevant and up-to-date documentation and data for review, and that our findings are factually accurate. We will engage with IPs as per the *IP Engagement Plan* developed by the IE and refined on an ongoing basis as each of the studies are completed and learnings are identified.
45. A communication strategy will be developed by the IE in collaboration with the FM team to promote the dissemination of the study and key outputs - particularly in-country/ amongst local stakeholders - and continued engagement with wider stakeholders.

Annex B: Research Design and Methodology

This annex includes details on the research framework which outlines the methods and data sources for answering the research questions, followed by the strategies employed for the portfolio-wide review of all 27 GEC-T projects and the in-depth qualitative data collection and analysis for the two selected case study GEC-T projects. For the two case studies, the annex also includes the selection process to identify their inclusion in the study; the sampling strategy for communities for primary qualitative data collection; strategy for identifying respondents and ethical research and safeguarding considerations. The annex also includes details on the process for data collection and analysis, the methodological risks and mitigation strategies employed by the IE team, as well as an overall timeline for the study.

1. Research Questions

1.1. Development of research questions

The research questions for this study were finalised following an iterative and consultative process throughout the development of the ToRs and the Research Design Note phases.

The primary objective of this study is to explore the influence of projects on changing community attitudes and norms to contribute to establishing a foundation for longer-term viability of education outcomes for girls, whether or not project activities themselves have continued. These activities include specific interventions designed by projects as well as other project-related processes (such as their interactions with communities), which may have evolved throughout the project lifecycle and contributed to change.

Following the Research Design Note phase, the team finalised the four research questions as follows:

- **RQ1:** How and to what extent did projects aim to change community attitudes and norms associated with girls' education?
- **RQ2:** To what extent have the project activities (including both interventions and project-related processes) associated with these aims been sustained, including beyond the lifecycle of the projects?
- **RQ3:** To what extent, and through which pathways, have these activities changed community attitudes and norms associated with girls' education?
- **RQ4:** How and in what ways have changes in community attitudes and norms (if any) contributed to establishing a foundation for longer term viability of girls' education outcomes?

Importantly, across all the research questions, we seek to understand in what ways beneficiary young women have been change-agents in influencing community attitudes and norms associated with girls' education.

The study also includes two cross-cutting themes which relate to:

- **PEA:** The political economy analysis explores barriers, enablers and key stakeholders and structures with respect to shifting changing community attitudes and norms and is central to the analysis of sustainability, therefore cutting across the entire study. For the two case study projects, it also identifies the wider political, economic and social context which could enable change or continue to create barriers for projects to realise their desired change.
- **GESI:** The study integrates a GESI lens throughout, with the aim of focusing on sustainability in communities where more marginalised girls live and exploring intersections between socio-demographic characteristics.

1.2. Review of secondary qualitative documentation

1.2.1. Preliminary review of project documentation

An initial review of GEC-T portfolio documentation from the 27 projects that were part of both GEC I and GEC II was conducted to better understand the projects' approaches to achieving changes in community attitudes and norms to contribute to establishing a foundation for longer-term viability of outcomes for girls, including consideration of girls as agents of change themselves. The preliminary findings from this review were used to inform the selection of case studies as well as the design of the research tools.

1.2.2. Rapid review of external evidence

A rapid review of external evidence was undertaken through a purposive search strategy to identify global evidence from the last 10 years on relevant themes under the study such as:

- Defining and assessing sustainability of education programmes;
- The influence of community attitudes and norms on the sustainability of educational interventions;
- The role of individuals and communities in shifting community attitudes and norms and sustaining positive education outcomes; and
- Gaps in existing literature on the pathways through which attitudinal and norm change may contribute to sustained change for girls' education.

Search strategy

The literature was identified through keyword searches in academic journals and databases (such as Google Scholar and the University of Cambridge's academic search engine (iDiscover)); "snowballing" techniques to identify further literature cited in the reference lists of these articles; recent publications from recognised international agencies and organisations such as the United Nations and the World Bank; and purposive document selection as recommended by key stakeholders, such as key staff from IPs representing the Fund Manager. GEC II documentation such as learning briefs and thematic reports were included to ensure the study incorporated key GEC project and portfolio-level lessons. The search also included prevalent attitudes and norms towards girls' education in communities in countries where GEC (and more specifically, GEC-T) projects were implemented.

1.3. Consultations with various stakeholders

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

During the finalisation of the ToRs and Research Design Note, extensive feedback was received from key stakeholders, including the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), the Independent Advisory Group (IAG) and the FM. The Independent Evaluation (IE) study team responded to comments that these stakeholders shared, and provided a rationale for how the feedback was considered and any further action that was required.

The research tools and consent forms were reviewed by the Implementing Partners (IPs) of the two GEC-T projects which had been selected for the study and our Southern Academic Partners – Foundation for Development Management (FDM) in Nepal and Dr Naomi Wekwete (University of Zimbabwe) and Dr Solomon Mombeshora (Women's University in Africa) in Zimbabwe. Feedback from the IPs and SAPs was particularly valuable in ensuring that the tools were relevant, contextually sensitive and accessible with respect to language.

2. Research design and methods

2.1. Research design and methodological approach

The study draws on both secondary project documentation and primary qualitative data.

The secondary data analysis includes a portfolio-wide documentary review for all 27 GEC-T projects – including a more in-depth review for the two case study projects – based on relevant documents and data that are available.

The primary data collection includes key informant interviews (KIIs) with 20 of the 27 GEC-T IPs⁴ and in-depth qualitative data collection within the two selected GEC-T case study projects including informant interviews, stakeholder identification workshops to identify community groups and influential community members and focus group discussions.

Table 1 lists the details of all 27 GEC-T projects, including their start and end dates.

⁴ The team were not able to conduct interviews with seven project IPs. These seven projects include: Jielimishe (Educate Yourself) (Kenya); Expanding Inclusive Education Strategies for Girls with Disabilities (Kenya); Educating Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises (ENGINE) (Nigeria); Excelling Against the Odds (Ethiopia); Rwandan Girls' Education and Advancement Programme 2 (REAP 2) (Rwanda); Girls' Access to Education (Sierra Leone); Relief International (Somalia). No response was obtained from six of the seven IPs who had implemented these projects. For one project, REAP-2 (Rwanda), the relevant staff who had helped implement or had knowledge of the GEC-T project could not be located. Most IPs for these projects may potentially have been unresponsive due to the time elapsed since the close of the project. For example, three of these projects closed in 2020 (March, July and September), and two in 2021 (March and July), i.e. almost 3-4 years ago.

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Table 1: Details of 27 GEC-T projects

Country	IP	Project Name	Project Name (Abbreviation)	Project Start Date	Project End Date
Afghanistan	Aga Khan Foundation	Steps Towards Afghan Girls' Education Success	<i>STAGES</i>	April 2017	October 2023
Afghanistan	BRAC	Community-Based Education for Marginalised Girls	<i>CBEMG</i>	March 2017	June 2022
Democratic Republic of Congo	Save the Children	Réussite et Épanouissement via l'Apprentissage et L'Insertion au Système Éducatif	<i>REALISE</i>	August 2017	October 2021
Ethiopia	ChildHope	Excelling Against the Odds	<i>EAO</i>	April 2017	March 2021
Ethiopia	Link Education International	Support Transition of Adolescent Girls through Enhanced Systems	<i>STAGES</i>	May 2017	August 2024
Ghana	Impact(Ed) International	Discovery Project – Phase II	<i>DP II</i>	April 2017	December 2020
Ghana	Plan International UK	Making Ghanaian Girls Great!	<i>MGCubed!</i>	May 2017	December 2021
Kenya	Avanti Communications	iMlango	<i>iMlango</i>	April 2017	March 2021
Kenya	World University Service of Canada	Kenya Equity in Education Project	<i>KEEP</i>	April 2017	December 2022
Kenya	Leonard Cheshire	Expanding inclusive education strategies for girls with disabilities	<i>EIE-GWD</i>	April 2017	March 2022
Kenya	Education Development Trust	Let our Girls Succeed (Wasichana Wetu Wafaulu)	<i>WWW</i>	May 2017	March 2023
Kenya	I Choose Life	Jielimishe	<i>Jielimishe</i>	April 2017	March 2022
Mozambique	Save the Children	Successful Transition and Advancement of Rights for Girls	<i>STAR-G</i>	April 2017	June 2021
Nepal	Mercy Corps	Supporting the Education of Marginalised Girls in Kailali – Phase II	<i>STEM</i>	April 2017	March 2021
Nepal	Voluntary Services Overseas	Sisters for Sisters' Education – Phase II	<i>SfSE</i>	April 2017	June 2021
Nigeria	Mercy Corps	Educating Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises	<i>ENGINE</i>	April 2017	October 2020
Nigeria	Impact(Ed)	Discovery Project (Fitila)	<i>DP</i>	April 2017	December 2020
Rwanda	Health Poverty Alliance	Rwandan Girls' Education and Advancement Programme 2	<i>REAP 2</i>	April 2017	March 2020
Sierra Leone	Plan International UK	Girls' Access to Education	<i>GATE</i>	April 2017	July 2021
Somalia	CARE	Somali Girls' Education Promotion – Transitions	<i>SOMGEP-T</i>	May 2017	March 2022

Country	IP	Project Name	Project Name (Abbreviation)	Project Start Date	Project End Date
Somalia	Relief International	Educate Girls, End Poverty - Transitions	<i>EGEP-T</i>	May 2017	August 2020
Tanzania	CAMFED International	Girls Learn, Succeed and Lead	<i>GLSL</i>	August 2017	January 2022
Uganda	Cheshire Services Uganda	Empowering Girls with Disabilities in Uganda through Education	<i>EGDUE</i>	April 2017	March 2024
Uganda	Opportunity International	Girls' Education Finance: Empowerment for Girls' Education	<i>GEF</i>	May 2017	August 2020
Uganda	Promoting Equality in African Schools	GEARR'ing up for Success After School	<i>PEAS</i>	April 2017	March 2021
Uganda	Viva CRANE	Building girls to Live, Learn, Laugh and SCHIP in Strong, Creative, Holistic, Inclusive, Protective, Quality Education	<i>SCHIP</i>	March 2017	February 2024
Zambia, Zimbabwe and Tanzania	CAMFED International	Virtuous Cycle of Girls' Education	<i>VCGE</i>	April 2017	January 2022
Zimbabwe	World Vision	Improving Girls' Access through Transforming Education	<i>IGATE</i>	April 2017	January 2022

2.2. Data Sources

To answer the four research questions, the team used the following methods and data sources:

Portfolio-wide:

- Documentary analysis of external evaluation project documentation and project sustainability plans.
- Qualitative key informant interviews (KIIs) with 20 of the 27 GEC-T project IPs.

Two case studies:

- Key informant interviews, focus group discussions and Stakeholder Identification workshop lists.
- In-depth desk review of project documentation.

3. Portfolio review analysis

3.1. Review of GEC-T project documentation

3.1.1. Overview

The main sources of project-level documentation that were included for the analysis in the report were the external evaluation reports, including baseline, midline and endline documentation; project sustainability plans and other GEC documentation (e.g., FM knowledge briefs and GEC annual reports). The documents referenced are listed in [Table 3](#).

3.1.2. Objectives

The purpose of the portfolio-level analysis is to respond to all four research questions, in particular, looking at:

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- Ambitions of all GEC-T projects regarding shifting community attitudes and norms (as applicable), and their evolution over GEC I and GEC II (e.g., through review of project inception, baseline, midline and endline evaluation reports);
- Whether and how girls are involved as agents of change within communities;
- The likely continuation (or otherwise) of project activities at the community-level, including beyond the lifecycle of projects and related enabling or constraining factors (e.g., through review of project sustainability plans);
- The extent to which, and the pathways through which, changes in community attitudes and norms may have been achieved; and
- How and in what ways may these changes be contributing to establishing a foundation for longer term viability of girls' education outcomes.

3.1.3. Process

The FM provided access to external evaluation reports of GEC II projects to the Independent Evaluation team for the purposes of this study (in this case all 27 GEC-T projects) and, where available, project sustainability plans⁵. The FM were not able to provide access to documentation relating to the first phase of the GEC – the point of contact we were in touch with did not have access to these files, and other FM colleagues who we were redirected to did not have access to documents relating to inception or GEC I. The IE team raised this during a meeting with the FM but were unable to obtain this documentation. As such, the team reviewed the available project documentation (as presented in *Table 2*) to capture information for the four research questions.

Table 2: Availability of key project documents for portfolio wide documentary review and analysis

Phase	Type	Source	Status on Receipt
GEC I	Thematic Reviews	FCDO/ FM	Received (Open Access)
	Independent Evaluation	Internal – Tetra Tech	Received (Open Access)
GEC-T	Needs Assessment	FM	Required
	Baseline Evaluation	FM	Received
	Midline Evaluation	FM	Received
	Endline Evaluation	FM	Received
	Sustainability Plans	FM	Received

The full list of project documentation reviewed is in *Table 3* below.

Table 3: Project documentation reviewed for the study

No.	Document	Window	IP/ Author	Project
1	AKF Afghanistan Endline Evaluation Report	GEC - T	AKF	STAGES
2	AKF Afghanistan Midline Report			
3	AKF Afghanistan Sustainability Plan			
4	Avanti Sustainability plan	GEC - T	Avanti	iMlango
5	Avanti iMlango Endline report			
6	BRAC Midline report	GEC - T	BRAC	Community-Based Education for Marginalised Girls in Afghanistan
7	BRAC Endline report			
8	BRAC Sustainability plan			
9	Camfed International Midline Report	GEC - T	Camfed	The Ultimate Virtuous Cycle of Girls' Education
11	Camfed International Sustainability plan			

⁵ Sustainability plans are not available for six GEC-T projects, as these projects had closed prior to the development of the sustainability plans. These six projects include: STAR-G (Mozambique); DP2 (Multi-Country); STEM (Nepal); REAP 2 (Rwanda); EGEP-T (Somalia); GEF-EGE (Uganda).

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No.	Document	Window	IP/ Author	Project
12	Camfed International Endline Report			
13	Camfed Tanzania sustainability plan	GEC - T	Camfed Tanzania	Girls Learn, Succeed and Lead
14	Camfed Tanzania Midline Report			
15	Camfed Tanzania Endline Report			
16	Care SOMGEPT Midline report	GEC - T	CARE International	SOMGEP - T
17	SOMGEP sustainability plan			
18	SOMGEPT Midline Evaluation - round2			
19	CARE Somalia Endline report			
20	CSU Midline Report	GEC - T	CSU	Empowering Girls with Disabilities in Uganda through Education
21	CSU sustainability plan			
22	CSU Uganda Endline End of Project Review Report			
23	Childhope sustainability plan	GEC - T	Childhope	Excelling Against the Odds
24	Childhope Midline Report			
25	Childhope Ethiopia External Evaluator's Endline Report			
26	ImpactEd Midline Report	GEC - T	Impact(Ed) International	Discovery Project
27	ImpactEd Endline Evaluation Report			
28	EDT sustainability plan	GEC - T	EDT	Let our Girls Succeed (Wasichana Wetu Wafaulu)
29	EDT Midline report			
30	EDT Kenya Endline Evaluation Report			
31	HPA Midline report	GEC - T	HPA	REAP II
32	I Choose Life Midline Report	GEC - T	ICL Kenya	Jielimishe (Educate Yourself)
33	I Choose Life Sustainability plan			
34	ICL Kenya Endline Evaluation Report			
35	Leonard Cheshire Midline Report	GEC - T	Leonard Cheshire Disability	Expanding Inclusive Education Strategies for Girls with Disabilities Kenya
36	Leonard Cheshire sustainability plan			
37	Leonard Cheshire Endline Report			
38	LINK Ethiopia midline evaluation	GEC - T	LINK	Supporting Transition of Adolescent Girls through Enhanced Systems (STAGES)
39	LINK Ethiopia endline evaluation			
40	LINK Ethiopia sustainability plan			
41	MC Nepal Midline Report	GEC - T	Mercy Corps Nepal	Supporting the Education of Marginalised Girls in Kailali (STEM)
42	MC Nepal sustainability plan			
43	MC Nepal Endline Evaluation Report			
44	ENGINE II Midline Report	GEC - T	Mercy Corps Nigeria	Educating Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises (ENGINE)
46	Mercy Corps ENGINE II Endline Evaluation Report			
47	OIUK Midline Report	GEC - T	Opportunity	Girls' Education Finance: Empowerment for Girls' Education
48	OIUK EGE Uganda Endline Report			
49	PEAS Midline Evaluation Report	GEC - T	PEAS	GEARR-ing Up for Success After School
50	PEAS sustainability plan			
51	PEAS Uganda Endline Evaluation report			
52	Plan GATE-GEC Midline Report	GEC - T	PLAN International	Girls' Access to Education
53	Plan GATE-sustainability plan			
54	Plan Sierra Leone - GATE-GEC Endline Report			
55	Relief International Midline Report	GEC - T	Relief International	Educate Girls, End Poverty

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No.	Document	Window	IP/ Author	Project
56	Relief International EGEP-T Endline Evaluation			
57	StC REALISE DRC Midline Evaluation Report	GEC - T	STC DRC	Réussite et Épanouissement via l'Apprentissage et L'Insertion au Système Éducatif (REALISE)
58	StC REALISE DRC sustainability plan			
59	StC REALISE DRC Endline Evaluation Report			
60	STC Moz MidlineReport	GEC - T	STC MOZ	Successful Transition and Advancement of Rights for Girls (STAR-G)
61	STC Moz Endline Report			
62	Plan MGCubed Sustainability plan	GEC - T	Varkey Foundation	Making Ghanaian Girls Great!
63	Plan MGCubed Midline Impact Evaluation			
64	Plan MGCubed Endline Report			
65	Viva Crane Midline Report	GEC - T	Viva	Building Girls to Live, Learn, Laugh and 'SCHIP' in Strong, Creative, Holistic, Inclusive, Protective, Quality Education
66	Viva Crane sustainability plan			
67	Viva Crane Endline Evaluation Report			
68	VSO Nepal Midline report	GEC - T	VSO	Sisters for Sisters
69	VSO Nepal sustainability plan			
70	VSO Nepal Endline Evaluation Report			
71	World Vision IGATE-T Midline Report	GEC - T	World Vision	Improving Girls' Access through Transforming Education (IGATE)
72	World Vision IGATE-T - Zimbabwe sustainability plan			
73	WVUK IGATE-T External Evaluator Endline Report			
74	WUSC Midline Report - Volume I	GEC - T	WUSC	Kenya Equity in Education Project (KEEP)
75	WUSC sustainability plan			
76	WUSC Midline Report - Volume II			
77	WUSC Kenya KEEP II Endline Report Volume I			
78	WUSC Kenya KEEP II Endline Report Volume II			

3.2. Key informant interviews with GEC-T IPs

3.2.1. Overview

Key informant interviews with representatives from the lead IPs of the GEC-T projects were held to complement the documentary review and analysis. Interviews took place between May – August 2024 and were conducted in English by the study team.

3.2.2. Objectives

The purpose of these key informant interviews was to deepen our understanding about projects, their ambitions as well as efforts towards sustainability.

This included contextual factors enabling or constraining the design and delivery of project activities relating to changing community attitudes and norms and involvement of beneficiary young women as agents of change in the process; whether and to what extent the desired changes and change pathways materialised; how they relate with girls' education; and in what ways may they be/have been sustained.

In particular, the informant interviews with IPs elicited information about projects' level of engagement within communities and key community stakeholders targeted – including community groups and influential community members – that are pivotal in influencing attitudes and norms.

3.2.3. Process

We contacted all 27 GEC-T IPs in May 2024 to introduce the study and the purpose of the interview upon approval of the Research Design Note. In this interview, we requested to speak with those representatives closely engaged with

the project's design, sustainability planning and exit strategy (including, as far as possible, knowledge of both GEC I and GEC II).

All interviews were conducted by at least one member of the IE study team via an online platform (e.g., Zoom/ Microsoft Teams) between May – August 2024. During this time frame, we were able to successfully complete 20 interviews – although the study team endeavoured to include all IPs and made periodic follow-up requests, seven IPs were excluded due to non-response and/or inability to locate relevant staff.

All interviews were audio recorded with the permission of respondents and transcripts were cleaned and verified by members of the study team in August 2024. Interviews were coded using Dedoose software in September 2024 (see Section 6.1 for more details on the qualitative coding process).

4. Case study analysis

To respond to the research questions, the study also includes two case studies of GEC projects which were involved with both GEC I and GEC II. These case studies adopted an in-depth qualitative approach.

The purpose of collecting qualitative data through these in-depth case studies was to understand:

- Whether projects have influenced attitudes and norms associated with girls' education, and if so, through which pathways;
- The extent to which beneficiary young women are involved as change agents within their communities;
- How the changes in community attitudes and norms relate to girls' education outcomes, and
- Whether and how both the changes in community attitudes and norms as well as their influence on girls' education outcomes are likely to sustain the virtuous cycle of girls' education.

4.1. Case study project selection strategy

The shortlisting and final selection of the two case study projects was based on the following criteria:

- Projects that have been part of GEC I and GEC II to enable a longer-term assessment of sustainability.
- Projects which have been recognised to have positive short-term outcomes according to previous IE studies (e.g., IE Study 3 – GEC-T Impact), as these are likely to be projects which have outcomes that are desirable to sustain.
- Prioritisation of projects that had not been selected as a previous IE case study.
- Prioritisation of projects that have recently closed (i.e., in or after 2021), as these are more likely to have an in-country presence.
- Projects that are not in conflict-affected states.
- Additional considerations:
 - Completion of activities: Based on consultations with the FM, two projects were excluded due to organisational challenges that the respective IPs faced in continuing to implement activities.
 - Engagement with the community: One project was further excluded given relatively lesser engagement with the community.
 - Geographical representation: Representation from the two regions that GEC-T is implemented across (South Asia and Africa) was deemed relevant in the final shortlisting.

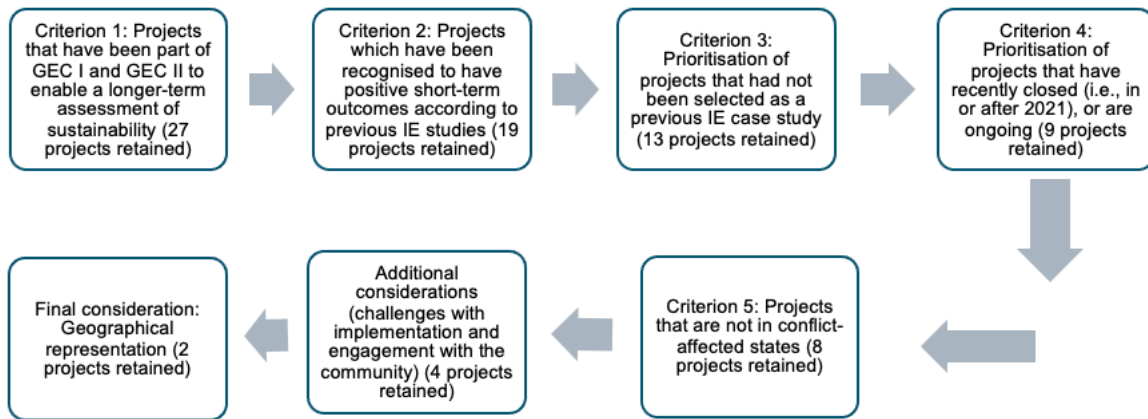
The final, FCDO-approved, case studies are:

- Sisters for Sisters' Education in Nepal, Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), and
- Ultimate Virtuous Cycle of Girls' Education in Zimbabwe,⁶ CAMFED International.

Figure 1 below illustrates the process for selecting the two case study projects.

⁶ Following discussion with CAMFED, Zimbabwe was selected as the case study country, rather than Tanzania or Zambia. The main reason for this is because CAMFED has worked in Zimbabwe for a longer period of time and therefore there is more opportunity for sustainability and also because there has already been significant research activity in Tanzania.

Figure 1: Flow diagram illustrating the process for selection the two case study projects



4.2. Sampling

4.2.1. Sampling of geographical locations

We sampled the geographical sites for data collection through an iterative process in consultation with the individual IPs. The initial approach to sampling was to ensure a focus on the most marginalised districts and communities in line with GESI criteria. In addition, we sought to include districts and communities that enabled a focus on different types of attitudes and norms to understand whether and how project activities shifted these and to what extent they have been sustained.

For each of the two GEC-T projects, the IE team engaged with IPs to select districts based on the following criteria among other considerations:

- Districts where activities have been implemented for the longest duration (including ones where activities were implemented across both GEC I and GEC II).
- Districts with community characteristics indicative of the most marginalised young women (e.g., poverty levels).
- Districts with different sets of prevalent attitudes/ norms. The selection of districts (and consequently, communities) for fieldwork is tailored to each case study project's unique context.

In the case of Sisters for Sisters' Education, the IE team, together with the IP (VSO), identified **two districts** for fieldwork out of the four where project activities were implemented in Nepal. Additional contextual considerations for finalising these districts included districts that are feasible or more accessible for data collection (particularly given the data collection was estimated to occur during the monsoon season, and thus, risks of landslides and flooding), districts with a continued presence of the downstream partner, making it relatively easy to identify the Big Sisters (and Little Sisters). At the same time, both districts would offer different local contexts and variation in the prevalent attitudes and norms relating with girls' education, aiding the objectives of the research. The final two districts the team selected in Nepal were **Parsa** and **Surkhet**. In each of these districts, fieldwork was planned in **three communities** in each district, per the criteria described further below.

In Zimbabwe, given the spread of implementation of the Ultimate Virtuous Cycle for Girls' Education project across 24 districts, the IE team, together with the IP (CAMFED International), identified **three districts** for fieldwork – **Binga, Buhera and Hurungwe**. The fieldwork was planned in **two communities** in each district.

For the selection of communities within the selected districts, the proposed sampling criteria include:

- Communities based in rural locations.
- Communities with characteristics indicative of the most marginalised young women (e.g., poverty levels).
- Communities that are (still) feasible for primary data collection.

The team also identified **back-up communities** within each district which met these criteria and are in close geographic proximity to the initially selected communities, in the instance there are challenges in locating or attaining the target sample or in accessing the location due to weather conditions.

4.2.2. Sampling of stakeholders

Beneficiary young women

We conducted Stakeholder Identification workshops (to identify community groups and influential community members) and KIIs with **up to 10 beneficiary young women per community**.

- The selection of beneficiary young women focuses on those who have graduated from the GEC-T projects and are over the age of 18. We included beneficiary young women who graduated at least four years ago and include women who graduated beyond this period. This was to ensure that the women will have had sufficient time to potentially have an influence within their communities.
- We further sought to ensure that beneficiary young women selected were those who are characterised as marginalised, as identified by the GEC-T IPs.

Community-level stakeholders

Community stakeholders – including community groups and influential community members – were primarily identified through our stakeholder identification workshops with beneficiary young women (see further below).

We aimed to complete up to **eight focus group discussions per community** with community groups (classified based on the stakeholder identification workshop lists). Each focus group comprised a maximum of eight individuals including among other participants, the group chair (e.g., chair of a parent support group or a community development committee) and one male and one female member who have been part of the group the longest, as applicable.

We also complemented the focus groups with follow-up KIIs with selected participants from the group discussions, including the chair and one long-standing member. These numbered approximately 2 per focus group or up to 16 members per community.

Where we were unable to meet our sample for focus group discussions, either due to a lack of community groups *or* due to smaller numbers of respondents, we replaced these with individual key informant interviews to ensure our sample was still met.

District and national-level government officials

We conducted KIIs with district and national-level government officials, with two per district (dependent on availability and willingness to participate) and one national level government official per country.

4.3. Primary data collection tools

The primary data collection tools were developed in line with the four research questions and two cross-cutting themes. The tools were iterated upon following feedback received from the two GEC-T IPs and local DCPs, as well as following the pilot.

As far as possible, we endeavoured to standardise the tools to facilitate comparisons across the countries. All tools were translated from English into the local languages. In Nepal, this meant translation into Nepali and Bhojपुरi, whilst in Zimbabwe, the tools were translated into Shona and Tonga.

4.3.1. Stakeholder Identification workshops

Participatory stakeholder identification workshops were conducted with **beneficiary young women** to identify the community groups and influential community members who these young women have engaged with. In Nepal, we conducted additional stakeholder identification workshops with Adult Champions, Big Brothers and Teacher Champions as they had prominent roles of engagement with wider community stakeholders.

The workshops were designed to provide information⁷ on the community groups and influential community members who play an important role in influencing community attitudes and norms, for example, those who have either supported or inhibited girls' and young women's opportunities in the community.

Facilitators first spoke with the downstream partner in the community to develop a preliminary list of community stakeholders and groups that the respective projects engaged with. These were then taken to the workshops, where

⁷ That is, in addition to the: (i) portfolio-wide documentary review and analysis (ii) key informant interviews with all IPs (including case study project IPs) and (iii) in-depth documentary review of case study projects.

the participants were asked to reflect on their experiences and add, change or remove any names on the list. The facilitators guided the discussion to mark or indicate community groups and influential members who have facilitated or inhibited girls' and young women's opportunities in their community using colour differentiation. In addition, the facilitators asked the participants to discuss the nature and frequency of these interactions, why and in what ways they may or may not be supporting girls' education (for instance, perpetuating or challenging prevalent community attitudes and norms), their degree of influence, and any further details participants wished to share.

In this manner, the workshops were the precursor to identifying relevant community groups and influential community members with whom the IE team then conducted focus group discussions and follow-up or new informant interviews (as elaborated further below).

4.3.2. Focus group discussions

Based on the workshop lists, the IE team reviewed the emergent stakeholders and aggregated them into focus group discussions based on their involvement with an identifiable **community group**, or their **role** in the community. These discussions were intended to include among other participants, the group chair (e.g., chair of a parent support group or a community development committee) and one male and one female member who have been part of the group the longest, as applicable. For instance, in a mothers (only) support group, this would include the chair of the support group and at least one (female) member who has been part of the group the longest.

The groups discussions aimed to elicit participants' views on:

- The attitudes and norms prevalent within their communities that relate with girls' education.
- Whether and through which pathways have project activities shifted these attitudes and norms within their communities.
- Whether and why they believe these changes (and ensuing change pathways) are likely to sustain, and
- Whether and in what ways is their influence on girls' education outcomes likely to sustain.

These group discussions aimed to leverage the breadth of shared experiences of the group members – for example, parents in a Parent Support Group – and the group dynamics that would promote discussion, debate and exchange of ideas.

At the same time, the discussions were complemented with KIIs with selected participants from the group discussions, including the chair and one other member, with a prioritisation of a long-standing member, to ensure deeper insight into their experiences and views. This was intended to probe further into the 'why' and 'how' questions on a sensitive topic as attitudes and norms, since some participants shared their ideas more freely in an interview setting.

4.3.3. Key informant interviews

The KIIs with **beneficiary young women (and in the context of Nepal, the Adult Champions, Teacher Champions and Big Brothers)** were held following the stakeholder identification workshops. These explored their understanding of, and involvement as change agents in, project activities at the community-level; whether these activities and their engagement have continued; whether and how, in their opinion, project activities – including through their own engagements as change agents – have influenced community attitudes and norms; and whether these changes are likely to sustain and contribute to girls' outcomes and opportunities within their communities in the future. This includes whether and how their own education, groups and influential members within their communities, and wider contextual factors at large have supported or inhibited them in their role as agents of change.

For influential community members identified from the stakeholder identification workshops who were either not part of a community group or where the numbers were not enough to constitute a focus group discussion, KIIs provided further information on the extent to which project activities may have influenced attitudes and norms within communities, the extent to which these pathways have continued and the extent to which their influence on girls' education outcomes is likely to sustain.

Interviews with **government stakeholders** including both district-level and federal/national officials were included based on consultations with IPs, due to their engagement with these government bodies through project activities. These provided greater insights into whether and how some of the activities as well as their influences on community attitudes and norms and ultimately girls' education outcomes may have been sustained (e.g., through increased or scaled uptake at other or higher levels of government), as well as an understanding of government perspectives on enablers or inhibitors of change and the continuation of these changes.

4.4. Data collection partners and process

In each country, the IE team identified and contracted a local partner. Working with local partners ensured that the research was contextually sensitive and appropriate, particularly given the nature of conducting qualitative research on attitudes and norms/norm change within communities associated with and girls' education. These local partners prioritised the inclusion of female facilitators.

The local DCPs were:

- Nepal: Rooster Logic;
- Zimbabwe: Q Partnership

In Nepal the fieldwork took place between June-July 2024 and in Zimbabwe, between September-October 2024. Due to the sensitivities of working with young women and the topics being covered, local partners were responsible for recruiting research with experience in qualitative research, particularly the methods utilised for this study as well as prioritising the inclusion of female staff to ensure young women would be interviewed by female facilitators.

4.5. Training

Training for facilitators, supervisors and transcribers was designed in collaboration with the IE team and Southern Academic Partners (SAPs). Face-to-face training was delivered by two members of the IE study team in Nepal, the Research Lead in Zimbabwe and with the support of our SAPs.

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

The approach to training involved a combination of trainers introducing participants to the study, group discussion around topics addressed in the training, the practice of tools, and participant feedback. The training schedule allowed for sufficient time per tool, with both teams given extra time to practice any tools or concepts they needed further time to understand. In addition, the first day of training in each country included a briefing from the country-level IP representatives to provide an overview of the GEC-T project. The following topics were covered during the training:

- The study's overview, objectives, and purpose;
- Research methodology, sampling, and quality control;
- Safeguarding, research ethics, consent, and interview techniques;
- Data protection;
- Research tool review;
- In-depth review of the Stakeholder Identification workshop;
- Interview and focus group discussion techniques;
- Effective moderation, including how to deal with challenges;
- Role playing and mock interviews; and
- Unique ID codes and transcripts.

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

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

They sent daily updates with feedback from the DCPs to the IE team, allowing the IE team to review and adapt the research design as needed.

4.6. Piloting of tools

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

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

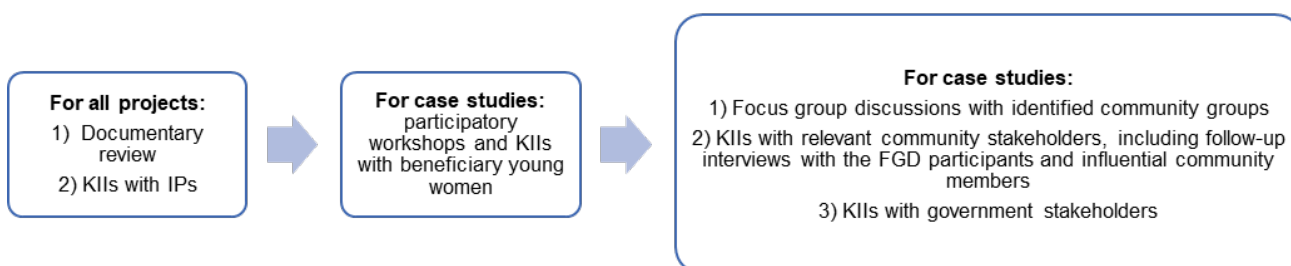
Both data collection partners submitted transcripts and observation narratives from the pilot, which were then reviewed by the IE team.

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

5. Data Collection

The sequence in which the data collection and fieldwork activities for the study took place is summarised in *Figure 2* below:

Figure 2: Sequence of data collection activities for the study



5.1. Fieldwork

Fieldwork in Nepal took place between June-July 2024 and in Zimbabwe between September-October 2024.

The data collection partners upheld rigorous standards to ensure quality control, including:

- Completing all data collection in line with standard research practice and compiled with ethical standards of consent. All staff were transparent with respondents regarding the aim and objectives of the project and fully explained the process prior to commencing interviews.
- Audio recordings of all KIIs and FGDs.
- Holding debrief meetings at the end of each day of fieldwork.
- All interviewers, transcribers and supervisors signed a non-disclosure and confidentiality agreement before engaging in fieldwork.
- Daily calls and check-ins between the Study Team and the local research teams allowed for resolution of issues during fieldwork, as needed.

5.2. Target versus achieved sample

The numbers targeted, and the achieved sample for each type of research, by country, is displayed in [Table 3](#) and [Table 4](#). The IE team selected from each stakeholder identification workshop list the preferred first choice participants and, where numbers allowed, a second choice (or replacement) participant. As far as possible, replacements were selected based on their presence in the community, magnitude of role as an enabler or inhibitor, or identifiable level of engagement with the project.

Table 3: Target and achieved sample, Zimbabwe

Location	Research type	Number		Percentage
		Targeted	Achieved	Targeted vs. Achieved
Binga: Achieved Distribution of Interviews				
Lusulu	Stakeholder identification workshops	1	1	100%
	KIIs (beneficiary young women)	10	5	50%
	Focus group discussions (community groups)	0 ¹	0	
	KIIs (community group members)	21	17	81%
	KIIs (influential community members)	0	0	
Siabuwa	Stakeholder identification workshops	1	1	100%
	KIIs (beneficiary young women)	10	9	90%
	Focus group discussions (community groups)	1	1	100%
	KIIs (community group members)	13	10	77%
	KIIs (influential community members)	2	2	100%
	KII with Local government officials	2	2	100%
Total		61	48	79%
Buhera: Achieved Distribution of Interviews				
Muchuva	Stakeholder identification workshops	1	1	100%
	KIIs (beneficiary young women)	10	10	100%
	Focus group discussions (community groups)	4 ²	2	50%
	KIIs (community group members)	15	14	93%
	KIIs (influential community members)	8	4	50%
Munyira	Stakeholder identification workshops	1	1	100%
	KIIs (beneficiary young women)	10	10	100%
	Focus group discussions (community groups)	4 ³	2	50%
	KIIs (community group members)	15	16 ⁴	106%
	KIIs (influential community members)	8	4	50%
	KII (local government official)	2	1	50%
Total		78	65	83%
Hurungwe: Achieved Distribution of Interviews				
Karozi	Stakeholder identification workshops	1	1	100%
	KIIs (beneficiary young women)	10	10	100%
	Focus group discussions (community groups)	3	2	66%
	KIIs (community group members)	14	14	100%
	KIIs (influential community members)	6	7 ⁵	116%
Karuru	Stakeholder identification workshops	1	1	100%
	KIIs (beneficiary young women)	10	10	100%

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Location	Research type	Number		Percentage
		Targeted	Achieved	Targeted vs. Achieved
	Focus group discussions (community groups)	3	3	100%
	KIIs (community group members)	14	12	86%
	KIIs (influential community members)	6	6	100%
	KII (local government official)	2	1	50%
	National Government official	1	1	100%
Total		71	68	96%

Table 4: Target and achieved sample, Nepal

Location	Research type	Number		Percentage
		Targeted	Achieved	(Achieved/ Targeted)
Parsa: Achieved Distribution of Interviews				
Pakaha Mainpur	Stakeholder identification workshops	3	3	100%
	KIIs (beneficiary young women)	10	8	80%
	KIIs (Adult Champions)	3	3	100%
	Focus group discussions (community groups)	5	2	40%
	KIIs (community group members)	11	5	45%
	KIIs (influential community members)	13	16	123%
Bahuarwabhatta	Stakeholder identification workshops	3	4	133%
	KIIs (beneficiary young women)	10	10	100%
	KIIs (Adult Champions)	3	3	100%
	Focus group discussions (community groups)	6	4	67%
	KIIs (community group members)	12	8	67%
	KIIs (influential community members)	12	15	125%
Badanihar	Stakeholder identification workshops	3	3	100%
	KIIs (beneficiary young women)	10	10	100%
	KIIs (Adult Champions)	3	2	67%
	Focus group discussions (community groups)	7	5	71%
	KIIs (community group members)	14	11	79%
	KIIs (influential community members)	10	8	80%
Parsa	KIIs (local government officials)	2	2	100%
Total		140	122	87%
Surkhet: Achieved Distribution of Interviews				
Birendranagar	Stakeholder identification workshops	3	3	100%
	KIIs (beneficiary young women)	10	7	70%
	KIIs (Adult Champions)	3	3	100%
	Focus group discussions (community groups)	1	1	100%
	KIIs (community group members)	2	2	100%
	KIIs (influential community members)	16	12	75%
Barahataal	Stakeholder identification workshops	3	3	100%

Location	Research type	Number		Percentage
		Targeted	Achieved	(Achieved/ Targeted)
	KIIs (beneficiary young women)	10	8	80%
	KIIs (Adult Champions)	3	3	100%
	Focus group discussions (community groups)	1	0	0%
	KIIs (community group members)	2	0	0%
	KIIs (influential community members)	18	14	78%
Lekbesi	Stakeholder identification workshops	3	3	100%
	KIIs (beneficiary young women)	10	7	70%
	KIIs (Adult Champions)	3	2	67%
	Focus group discussions (community groups)	5	1	20%
	KIIs (community group members)	10	2	20%
	KIIs (influential community members)	14	18	129%
Surkhet	KIIs (local government officials)	2	2	100%
Total		119	91	76%

5.3. Data transcription

The IE team worked with the two DCPs to ensure the delivery of quality data:

- All workshops, qualitative interviews (KIIs) and FGDs were audio recorded with the consent of all research participants. Transcription began as soon as the audio files were received by local partner staff.
- Respondent-identifying information was anonymised during transcription. All audio files and transcripts were assigned unique identifiers to maintain the confidentiality of the study participants.
- Transcribers were fluent in both English and local languages. Members of the transcription team in Nepal attended the qualitative data training to ensure that they understood the context and intent of all research instruments and received a separate briefing. In Zimbabwe, interviews were transcribed by the facilitators who conducted the interview or discussion. Teams were also given the opportunity to practice transcriptions during the pre-pilot exercises.
- Most interviews were completed in local languages – Shona and Tonga in Zimbabwe, and Nepali and Bhojpuri in Nepal. For these interviews, the team translated to English while transcribing. All transcripts were compared line-by-line against the original audio files. In addition, moderators reviewed each transcript to ensure they accurately represented what had been discussed. Transcripts were checked by the team supervisors and team leads to ensure completeness and quality before shared with the IE team.

Transcripts and narratives were delivered to the IE team in batches to ensure anonymity and quality. In instances where the IE team had feedback or clarification queries, the local partner submitted revised transcripts with all issues rectified. Final versions were organised and coded by the IE qualitative analysis team.

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

Prior to coding, all transcripts were reviewed by the IE team, quality checking each deliverable for anonymity, comprehension, defined local terms, and completion of all administrative and background details.

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

The total number of transcripts received for Nepal were **213** and for Zimbabwe were **187**.

6. Data analysis

6.1. Coding and analysis

The primary qualitative data (transcripts) was analysed using computer-assisted, cloud-based qualitative analysis software (Dedoose). As it is a cloud-based software, a team of six coders were able to simultaneously code the transcripts.

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

The codes were reviewed on a weekly basis during meetings within the coding team, as well as based on queries logged by the team, at which point the coding framework was added to or adapted as needed. The coding framework, along with guidance of how to apply the codes, used for the study is provided in [Table 5](#) below.

Table 5: Coding framework for in-depth qualitative data collection

Parent Code	Description
Community-level attitudes and practices	
Early marriage	Code to mention of early or child marriage.
Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)	Code to mention of FGM/C.
Dowry	Code to mention of dowry.
Gender-Based Violence/ Domestic Violence	Code to mention of gender-based or domestic violence.
Restricted movement outside the home	Code to mention of restricted movement or mobility outside the home.
Menstruation stigma/taboo	Code to mention of menstruation or menstrual hygiene management as taboo or stigmatized.
Low value of girls' education	Code to mention of girls' education associated with low value.
Caregiving responsibilities	Code to mention of girls' caregiving responsibilities.
Household chore responsibilities	Code to mention of girls' household or chore responsibilities.
Responsibilities to earn income	Code to mention of girls' responsibilities to earn income.
Project interventions	
Community awareness-raising campaigns	Project conducted community awareness-raising campaigns.
Teacher training/classroom management	Project provided teacher training and/ or training on classroom management practices.
Infrastructure – adaptations/establishment	Project established/ built infrastructure or made adaptations (e.g., inclusive/ disability-friendly).
Safeguarding	Project incorporated a safeguarding mechanism / channel for girls.
Media Campaigns (including radio, TV, SMS)	Projects implemented media campaigns via radio, TV, SMS.

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Parent Code	Description
Mentoring programmes	Projected implemented mentoring programmes between younger girls and young women - including Big Sisters/Learner Guides)
Girls' clubs	Projected facilitated or created Girls' Clubs which involved meetings at school (usually after) with girls to discuss a range of topics.
Child clubs	Project facilitated or created Co-educational Clubs which involved meetings at school (usually after) with girls and boys to discuss a range of topics.
Street dramas or theatre	Project facilitated or implemented 'street dramas'/ theatre performances (usually to convey a message/ raise awareness).
Supporting girls in sports	Project supported girls in sports (including 'non-traditional', male-dominated sports) through kits, uniforms, coaching, games set-up etc.
Formation of Groups or Committees	Project formed parents' groups, Parent-Teacher Associations, School Management Committees, youth clubs, etc.
Menstrual Hygiene Management	Project provided material support and educational support about menstrual hygiene management,
Life skills	Project provided life skills sessions, encompassing self-defence, public speaking, elocution
Computer skills	Project provided digital literacy, computer classes for girls.
Household discussions	Project facilitated discussions at houses within the community to discuss sending girls to school, child marriage etc.
Financial support	Project provided financial support, including in-kind support.
Provision of learning materials	Project provided learning materials.
Engagement of activities with the community	
Direct engagement with communities – lead IPs	Lead IPs were responsible for direct engagement within communities.
Engagement with the community – downstream partners	Downstream partners were responsible for direct engagement within communities.
Changes in project interventions during GEC	
Engagement with community members	Changes in how and why project engaged with community members over the duration of the project.
Continuation of project activities	Are the project activities that occurred during the intervention period continuing (also include mention of activities being continued by other IPs/DSPs)?
Yes	-
No	-
Changes in community attitudes and practices	
Positive	Positive effects of project interventions on community attitudes and practices
Positive – will sustain	Positive effects of project interventions on community attitudes and practices <i>and</i> confident the effects will sustain.

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Parent Code	Description
Positive – may sustain	Positive effects of project interventions on community attitudes and practices <i>and</i> thinks the effects may sustain.
Positive – will not sustain	Positive effects of project interventions on community attitudes and practices <i>and</i> thinks the effects will not sustain.
No changes	No perceived effects of project interventions on community attitudes and practices.
Negative	Perceived negative effects of project interventions on community attitudes and practices.
Changes in girls' education opportunities	
Positive	Positive effects of project interventions on girls' education opportunities (including attendance and learning)
Positive - will sustain	Positive effects of project interventions on girls' education opportunities (including attendance and learning) <i>and</i> confident the effects will sustain.
Positive - may sustain	Positive effects of project interventions on girls' education opportunities (including attendance and learning) <i>and</i> thinks the effects may sustain.
Positive - will not sustain	Positive effects of project interventions on girls' education opportunities (including attendance and learning) <i>and</i> thinks the effects will not sustain.
No changes	No perceived effects of project interventions on girls' education opportunities (including attendance and learning) .
Negative	Perceived negative effects of project interventions on girls' education opportunities (including attendance and learning) .
Changes in girls' work opportunities	
Positive	Positive effects of project interventions on girls' employment opportunities/ outcomes.
Positive - will sustain	Positive effects of project interventions on girls' employment opportunities/ outcomes <i>and</i> confident the effects will sustain.
Positive - may sustain	Positive effects of project interventions on girls' employment opportunities/ outcomes <i>and</i> thinks the effects may sustain.
Positive - will not sustain	Positive effects of project interventions on girls' employment opportunities/ outcomes <i>and</i> thinks the effects will not sustain.
No changes	No perceived effects of project interventions on girls' employment opportunities/ outcomes.
Negative	Perceived negative effects of project interventions on girls' employment opportunities/ outcomes.
Linkages	
Project interventions and changes in skills and confidence	Respondent <i>explicitly</i> links project interventions to changes in girls' skills and confidence.
Project interventions and changes in community attitudes and practices	Respondent <i>explicitly</i> links project interventions to changes in community attitudes and practices.

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Parent Code	Description
More influential project interventions	Specify if any interventions were highlighted as influential.
Key stakeholders and changes in community attitudes and practices	Respondent <i>explicitly</i> links key stakeholders to changes in community attitudes and practices.
Key stakeholders and continuation of interventions / changes	Respondent <i>explicitly</i> links key stakeholders to continuation - include what <i>could</i> be done to keep interventions running (e.g., mentors who are still doing house visits). Double code to stakeholder
Key stakeholders and discontinuation of interventions / changes	Respondent <i>explicitly</i> links key stakeholders to discontinuation – include anyone who tried to prevent activities from taking place or being continued. Double code to stakeholder
Continuation of interventions and continued changes in attitudes and practices	Respondent explicitly links the continued changes in community attitudes towards girls and young women, and community practices to continuation of interventions (include if they <i>should</i> be continued).
Discontinuation of interventions and continued changes in attitudes and practices	Respondent explicitly links the continued changes in community attitudes towards girls and young women, and community practices to discontinuation of interventions (include if they <i>should</i> have been discontinued).
Changed attitudes and practices and changes in girls' outcomes	Respondent explicitly links the changed attitudes and practices to changes in girls' outcomes.
Project interventions & role of young women	Respondent describes role of young women with reference to project interventions (e.g., agents of change)
Changes in attitudes/practices - reversal over time	Respondent describes changes in attitudes/ practices to have reversed over time.
Sustainability	
Initial Planning for sustainability	Respondent provides feedback on improvements relating to initial planning for sustainability.
Changes during project	Respondent provides feedback on improvements relating to changes made during project implementation.
Sustainability beyond project lifecycle	Respondent provides feedback on improvements relating to sustainability beyond the project's lifecycle.
Sustainability – enabling factors	Code to factors noted to have enabled project sustainability.
Relationships with government	Relationships with the government were noted to have enabled project sustainability.
Relationship with community	Relationships within the community were noted to have enabled project sustainability.
Sustainability – hindering factors	Code to factors noted to have hindered project sustainability.
Financial	Financial resources/ constraints were noted to have hindered project sustainability.
Influential Stakeholders	
Beneficiary Girls and Young Women	Including if Little Sisters/ Big Sisters or CAMFED beneficiaries/ Learner Guides are mentioned
Teachers	

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Parent Code	Description
Adult Champions (Nepal only)	Including Teacher Champion, Aunty Champions, Big Brothers
Female Community Health Volunteers or Health Staff	
Village Leaders - Political	Including political leaders e.g., Ward Chairs, Ward members, Village Chief, Mayors, Deputy Mayors, etc.
Parents	
Village Leaders - Religious	Including religious leaders in village - e.g., pastors, pandits, imams, etc.
Community Clubs	
School Management Committees	
Older Brothers	Note: Not to be confused with the Big Brother Champion in Nepal.
Parent Teacher Associations	
Farmers' Groups	
Mothers' Groups	
Fathers' Groups	
Youth Clubs	
IPs	
Community members	
Other organisations (not IP)	
Government officials (district/national)	
Older Sisters	
Mothers	
Fathers	
Grandmothers	
Grandfathers	
Aunties	Note: Separate to 'Auntie Champion' in Nepal
Downstream Partners	Examples: Aasaman/social mobilisers in Nepal
Role - Enabler	Double code to stakeholder type
Role - Barrier or Inhibitor	Double code to stakeholder type
Timeframe	
Timeframe - Project Implementation	
Timeframe - After project ended and continuing into the present	

Parent Code	Description
Timeframe - Future	
Great Quotes	If any enriching/ great quotes can be used for the final report.
Other Info	If there is information that you are not sure is relevant/ fits into the other codes
Discussion summary	For the notes at the end of the transcript under 'describe participant discussion'.

Analysis of the coded data was conducted using two main analytical features of Dedoose:

- **Code Co-Occurrence:** This enabled analysts to see the frequency of applied codes in a matrix form between two codes, which was indicative of most and least commonly discussed associations.
- **Descriptor x Code Grids:** This enabled analysts to disaggregate codes by looking at combinations to do with, for instance, country, district, gender, or type of stakeholder.

6.2. Limitations and mitigation strategies in primary data analysis

Given the restricted timelines available for coding⁸, there was a limited window available to code the transcripts. In addition, some coders recruited for the study were not involved with the conceptualisation of the study and the research tools. Thus, the team implemented the following steps to ensure that coding occurred at a smooth pace:

- The study team undertook a half day of training to describe the research design, tools, coding framework, and expectations from the analysis.
- Coders were assigned a particular stakeholder group or method to ensure they familiarised themselves with the sequence of the transcript and codes.
- A weekly check-in was arranged with all coders to discuss progress, challenges, emerging codes, and suggested priority areas for analysis.
- An excel document was created to allow coders to log issues arising from the coding which was reviewed in real time by the IE team, and which was accessible by all coders so that they may know how to address similar challenges.

7. Ethical research and safeguarding

All research undertaken for this study was conducted in line with the research and safeguarding protocols set out in the Independent Evaluation of the GEC II Ethical Research and Safeguarding Framework. This Framework forms the overarching ethical framework for all research and data collection protocols for the GEC II IE⁹. These guidelines relate to the design, implementation and reporting of all activities conducted as part of the IE. The Ethical Research and Safeguarding Framework is compliant with the guiding concepts and principles set out in the FCDO's Evaluation Policy (2013) and the FCDO's Research Ethics Guidance (2011); the DFID Ethical Guidance for Research, Evaluation and Monitoring Activities (2019); and the UK Data Protection Act (2018).

7.1. Research permissions

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

No formal national or regional permission was required for the work in Nepal. However, at a broader level, the IE team had obtained research ethics approval from the University of Cambridge on 24 May 2024 for conducting fieldwork in Nepal. At the community level, Rooster Logic worked in close collaboration with the local IPs to inform the municipality government of the data collection activities and facilitate the research.

⁸ Time and resources were only available for coding the transcripts from Nepal during end-July to early September, and from Zimbabwe during end-September to mid-November. These windows also included time for training the coders on the study's conceptual and coding frameworks, troubleshooting issues, and resolving queries.

⁹ A universal framework has been prepared to cover all aspects of the IE's work and can be provided separately on request.

In Zimbabwe, conditional approval was required from the Medical Research Council of Zimbabwe before the application could be sent to the Research Council of Zimbabwe. The formal approval from the Research Council of Zimbabwe was obtained on 4th September 2024.

7.2. Rights of research participants

7.2.1. Consent forms

The IE team developed comprehensive consent (for respondents above 18 years of age) forms that were read out to each respondent before beginning any interview or discussion. As a precursor to reading the forms aloud, facilitators reconfirmed participants' age to ensure they were above 18 years of age and could participate in the research. For any participants found to be below 18 years of age, they were invited for refreshments and informal conversations with the team supervisors.

These consent forms allowed for oral consent to cater for varying literacy levels among respondents. The content of these forms included the purpose of the research study, the request for participation, and an option for respondents to revoke consent to participate if at any point they felt uncomfortable during the interview, workshop, or focus group discussion.

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

7.2.2. Safeguarding concerns

The inclusion of specialised training for working with marginalised populations and sensitive subjects was part of the training and embedded in each day's agenda. This training offered specific considerations and protocols, and what they must do in the event of a safeguarding concern.

7.2.3. Data management

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

7.3. Quality assurance protocols

Our quality assurance protocols for data collection included the following:

- All local partners ensured rigorous standards during fieldwork to ensure quality control. These standards included:
- All moderators, observers, quality control officers, and management staff recruited to work on this study signed non-disclosure and confidentiality agreements before they were engaged for fieldwork.
- Local partner staff ensured that all data collection was completed in line with standard research practice and complied with ethical standards of consent. All staff were transparent with respondents regarding the aim and objectives of the project and fully explained the process prior to commencing interviews.
- Research team supervisors accompanied researchers throughout fieldwork and offered feedback on facilitation/ moderation.
- Debrief meetings were held at the end of a fieldwork day.
- All local partners oversaw a systematic and transparent approach to data transcription.

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- Daily calls and check-ins between the IE team and the local teams allowed for the resolution of issues during fieldwork, as needed. Further, the DCPs' supervisors worked closely with IE team to manage the data collection process through updates and weekly calls as needed.
- Our quality assurance protocols for this study also required that each deliverable (including drafts) is reviewed prior to submission to the FCDO for consistency by the Principal Investigator and Lead Author, Deputy Team Leader, Team Leader, Technical Director, and Programme Director.

8. Methodological limitations and mitigation strategy

The methodological limitations during data collection as well as the team's mitigation strategies are outlined in [Table 6](#) below.

Table 6: Methodological limitations and mitigation strategy

Limitation	Mitigation strategy
Availability of project documentation was not consistent across GEC II projects, and inaccessible from GEC I.	The team ensured that the data we intended to collect from the documentation (e.g., relating to changes in approaches to sustainability planning between GEC I and GEC II as well as changes to interventions between GEC I and GEC II) were instead asked during IP interviews, enabling data points for analysis.
Key stakeholders were not always easy to trace, access or schedule participation in the primary data collection due to weather conditions, personal commitments or participants' time constraints.	The DCPs contacted these stakeholders early on to factor in delays in accessing stakeholders and attempted contact multiple times. In addition, DCPs endeavoured to reschedule where possible to accommodate respondents' time, with the support of the local IPs' focal point. The DCP and IE team remained in close communication in the instance of a need for a replacement arose.
During data collection, stakeholders were not always able to recount experiences about how GEC activities (delivered some time ago) changed community attitudes and norms associated with girls' education, nor did they always know the GEC project by its name.	Our data collection team were trained in various means to prompt for relevant information during the fieldwork, and during interviews would apply techniques to connect responses to the GEC project by using various names or terms that respondents may have associated it to.

9. Study Timeline

The overall timeline for the study is outlined in [Table 7](#) below.

Table 7: Study timeline

Key Activities	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25
Finalisation of TOR (including rapid review of evidence)	■	■	■														
Research Design Phase			■	■	■	■											
Documentary review for the GEC-T portfolio (including in-depth review for the two case study project context)		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■						
Interviews with project IPs								■	■	■	■						
Fieldwork in the two case study project contexts									■	■		■	■				
Transcription and coding of data										■	■	■	■	■			
Analysis of data and emergent findings											■	■	■	■	■		
Report writing (including V1 with findings from Nepal and V2 with findings from Nepal and Zimbabwe)												■	■	■	■	■	■

Annex C: Safeguarding and welfare incident reports

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

In cases where members of the DCPs or IE team were led to believe that a participant was at risk of serious harm, action was taken to report this concern to the FCDO, the FM, and the respective IPs. This was done in line with the reporting mechanisms set out in the Ethical Research and Safeguarding Framework. Following the procedures outlined in the Ethical Research and Safeguarding Framework, the Tetra Tech Safeguarding Lead submitted a report on the concern to the FCDO and the FM.