

# Girls' Education Challenge **Results 2021**

The Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) is enabling up to 1.52 million<sup>1</sup> girls across 17 countries to access learning opportunities. This is contributing significantly to the achievement of the new, global SDG 4 milestone targets, as endorsed by G7 leaders, of providing education to 40 million more girls and supporting 20 million more to read by the age of 10, by 2026.

This figure includes<sup>2</sup>:

- **179,246 girls** who have never been to school before now have a second chance at an education they would not have otherwise had.
- **151,855<sup>3</sup> girls with disabilities** who previously faced significant barriers to attending school are now in education.
- **64,728 girls** who have been excluded from school because they are mothers are now learning under the GEC.
- **495,093 of the most vulnerable girls** living in fragile and conflict-affected contexts have now been able to obtain an education.

Up to  
**1.52m**  
girls reached

**17**  
countries



<sup>1</sup> Total number = 1,524,995 as of January 2022 (GEC-T actuals + LNGB ambition)

<sup>2</sup> The following figures are cumulative totals as of October 2021 (derived from project evaluations)

<sup>3</sup> This figure includes girls with both visible and non-visible disabilities

## Improving learning

Assessments conducted in 2021 show that two thirds of girls (813,183 girls<sup>4</sup>) have improved their learning as a result of the GEC. For example, at the start of ACTED's project in Pakistan, only 3% of girls were proficient readers. Midway through the project this has increased to 55%.

Girls' improved learning has been the result of essential interventions and activities<sup>5</sup>. These include:

### Training

- **86,915 teachers trained** to become more effective and utilise gender-responsive teaching and learning approaches (38,889 female; 48,026 male).
- **32,329 head teachers and school managers trained** to ensure that school environments are more enabling, effective and safe.

**86,915**  
teachers trained

### Direct support

- **406,375 bursaries provided**, totalling £27,683,256, to address the financial barriers that cause girls to drop out.
- **2,270,673 textbooks distributed** that girls would not otherwise have.
- **Local language materials and dedicated support provided** for the 69% of GEC girls who come to school speaking a different mother tongue than the language of instruction.
- **5,008 assistive devices delivered** to support girls and boys with disabilities and their ability to learn (4,158 for girls; 850 for boys).
- **1,915,038 student kits distributed** including paper, pens and uniforms – basic materials that marginalised girls do not have.
- **867,795 menstrual kits provided** to address period poverty and enable girls to attend up to 60 more days of school a year.
- **2,546 classrooms and learning spaces upgraded**, benefiting all students and teachers involved.

**1.9m**  
student kits  
distributed

### Changing attitudes and improving safeguarding

- **Changing attitudes in communities and households** to support girls' education across 80% of the GEC projects.
- **Facilitating 98% of projects to introduce and uphold sector-leading safeguarding standards.**
- **GEC safeguarding policies and practices are having a multiplier effect.** Implementing partners (such as Mercy Corps, CARE and Save the Children) have adapted their safeguarding policies for use across their global organisations. National stakeholders (such as state-level governments in Nigeria) have adopted codes of conduct for use within local government schools.



<sup>4</sup> As reported in the GEC Annual Report October 2021

<sup>5</sup> The following figures are Management Information (MI) data collected from projects as of November 2021

## Raising self-esteem

The GEC has raised the self-esteem and confidence of girls, improving educational outcomes, and empowering them to become future leaders and decision makers in their communities. For example, the Making Ghanaian Girls Great! project has shown that self-confidence supports literacy, numeracy and attendance outcomes. Interpersonal and leadership skills have also led to positive literacy and transition outcomes.<sup>6</sup>

- **84,110 girls' club mentors** trained to provide leadership, life skills and psychosocial support to girls.
- **Successful GEC girls are supported to become role models** for other marginalised girls. For example, The Girls' Inclusive Education Network in Nepal and Camfed's CAMA Network across Africa create role modelling and mentorship systems that inspire and empower successive girls to believe in their own abilities.

**84,110**  
girls' club mentors  
trained

## Increasing transition

In 2021, the GEC supported 1.03 million girls<sup>7</sup> to successfully transition through formal schooling or into safe employment and, for the most marginalised, on to pathways that are most relevant for their needs.

- **1,002,423 girls** who were the most at risk of dropping out are now successfully staying in school and progressing through each successive grade.
- **31,459 girls** who had dropped out of school are now successfully transitioning into educational, training or employment pathways. For example, in ActionAid Kenya, 48% of girls have moved into apprenticeship, 25% to entrepreneurship, 7% to formal school and 4% to vocational training. Overall, 85% of girls have transitioned successfully.

## Reaching indirect beneficiaries

The GEC has improved the circumstances of 3.8 million indirect beneficiaries<sup>8</sup>, beyond marginalised girls. These include<sup>9</sup>:

- **539,000 boys** who have also benefitted from improved teaching and safer schools.
- **86,915 educators** have improved the quality of their teaching, which will have a multiplier effect for generations of children.
- **38,889 female teachers** who will continue to be positive role models for girls.
- **158,000 parents** who now show stronger support for girls' education.
- **3,036,763 community members** have engaged in providing girls with educational opportunities.
- **4,371 government education staff** whose improved management and safeguarding skills will affect generations of children through safer and more efficient schools.



<sup>6</sup> Making Ghanaian Girls Great! Endline Evaluation, December 2021

<sup>7</sup> Total figure = 1,033,883, as reported in the GEC Annual Report October 2021

<sup>8</sup> Total number = 3,825,049 as of October 2021

<sup>9</sup> The following figures are MI and reach data collected from projects as of November 2021



## Responding to COVID-19

Within the first four months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the GEC reached 81%<sup>10</sup> of girls in order to sustain, and in many cases enhance, their learning.

- 896,314 girls supported through community and home-based learning, particularly girls who did not have access to radios, internet or electricity.
- 389,088 girls supported with distance learning activities, which proved so effective that 'blended' distance and in-person learning has remained post-COVID-19.
- 106,081 bespoke learning packs provided, to supplement or step in for national radio lessons that were deployed during school closures.
- 118,998 girls provided with wellbeing activities, including psychosocial first aid, to alleviate anxiety and develop positive coping mechanisms.
- 1,770,000 community members were reached through community awareness mechanisms, which raised the importance of staying safe during COVID-19, staying in touch and making sure girls continue their education.

**389,088**

girls supported with distance learning activities

## Providing value for money

The GEC is a strong investment for the UK government and represents good value for money because:

- The GEC has a comparative advantage of having a diverse portfolio of 41 projects across 17 countries. Such a portfolio allows for a variety of type, size and context for projects, which generates a breadth of knowledge on what works for girls' education – this can and will form a menu of options for future FCDO programming.
- The GEC is building a huge resource base, which will house 41 evaluation data sets, programme and teaching materials, monitoring and research instruments, technical guidance, and other useful materials. This global public good will be used by HMG and other interested governments, multilaterals, implementing organisations, academics and members of the public.
- The GEC has a comparative advantage of being the largest global education programme that focuses on highly marginalised girls. This focus addresses a blind spot that ministries of education and bilateral programming often have surrounding at-risk and out-of-school girls.
- Preliminary analyses have demonstrated that the annual cost per child<sup>11</sup> for a proportion of GEC projects<sup>12</sup> is on par with cost per child spending in government schools in Africa and Asia, demonstrating good value for money and laying the foundation for ministries to replicate and scale up promising interventions.
- A number of interventions from GEC projects are being adopted and sustained by partner governments. For example, Leonard Cheshire's child-to-child clubs have been institutionalised in government schools by the Kenyan Ministry of Education, and aspects of the distance learning approach of the 'Making Ghanaian Girls Great!' project will be adapted by the government as part of its handover.

<sup>10</sup> As reported in the GEC Annual Report 2020. Within the remaining 19%, some girls were reached after the first four months and some transitioned. A small proportion remained out of touch due to factors such as migration and marriage.

<sup>11</sup> The annual cost per beneficiary figure for the projects is estimated by dividing the expenditure or budget by the total number of beneficiaries covered, and annualised accordingly. The secondary school annual cost benchmarks have been compiled from a variety of sources by FCDO.

<sup>12</sup> Findings included nine projects from this preliminary analysis. A full analysis of the portfolio will be complete in July 2022.

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**Girls' Education Challenge**



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