

Project Evaluation Report

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Notes:

Some annexes listed in the contents page of this document have not been included because of challenges with capturing them as an A4 PDF document or because they are documents intended for programme purposes only. If you would like access to any of these annexes, please enquire about their availability by emailing uk_girls_education_challenge@pwc.com.



Girls' Access to Education (GATE)

GATE GEC-T Midline Report

July 2020

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Cover sheet

- Project name: Girls' Access to Education, Girls' Education Challenge-Transition (GATE GEC-T)
- Project lead: Plan International UK
- Project partners: Action Aid, FAWE, Humanity and Inclusion, Open University
- Project country: Sierra Leone
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- External Evaluator: Jigsaw Consult (in conjunction with Dalan Consult)
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Acronyms

BECE - Basic Examination Certificate Exam
BL - Baseline
BoG - Board of Governors
CBRV - Community Based Rehab Volunteer
CPD - Continuous Professional Development
CWDs - Children with disabilities
DAC - Development Assistance Committee
DiD - Difference-in-difference
DFID - Department for International Development
EE - External Evaluator
EGMA - Early Grade Mathematics Assessment
EGRA - Early Grade Reading Assessment
ESP - Education Sector Plan
FAWE - Forum for African Women Educationalists
FGD - Focus Group Discussion
FM – Fund Manager
FQSE - Free Quality School Education
GATE - Girls' Access to Education
GEC - Girls' Education Challenge
GESI - Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GPS - Global Positioning System
GWD - Girls with disabilities
HH - Household
HOH - Head of Household
HI - Humanity and Inclusion
HT - Head teacher
IO - Intermediate outcome
JSS - Junior Secondary School
KII - Key Informant Interview
LA - Learning Assistant
LOI - Language of Instruction
LPM – Learning Practice Manual
M&E - Monitoring and Evaluation
MBSSE - Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education
ML - Midline
MSWGCA - Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs
OOSC - Out of School Children
PV - Programme Volunteer
PS - Primary School
SeGMA - Secondary Grade Mathematics Assessment
SeGRA - Secondary Grade Reading Assessment
SMC - School Management Committee
SSS - Senior Secondary School
ST - Student Teacher
TSC - Teaching Services Commission
WPM - Words Per Minute
VfM - Value for Money
VSLA - Village Savings and Loan Association

Executive Summary

Plan International UK's Girls' Access to Education (GATE-GEC) project aims to support approximately 6,500 marginalised girls and children with disabilities to attend school, reach their full learning potential, learn in a safe and inclusive environment, and successfully transition to further education and beyond. The overarching assumption of the theory of change for this project is that economic challenges, poor education quality and societal norms are the main barriers to education for marginalised girls and children with disabilities. Plan International UK works with partners Humanity and Inclusion (HI), ActionAid, the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), and The Open University (OU) to deliver the project across six districts in Sierra Leone. The programme aims to achieve three high-level outcomes, in learning, transition and sustainability.

The midline uses a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data. At midline, there are 62 JSS intervention schools, 40 JSS control schools and 42 primary schools. The students from baseline grades primary 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, and JSS1 and JSS2 were tracked at midline. Students from baseline grades primary 1 and JSS3 were not included at midline. New students were added in JSS1 and JSS2, and students from baseline JSS1 that could not be tracked at midline were replaced with current JSS3 students. The total sample reached in the learning cohort is 997 Junior Secondary School (JSS) students and 155 primary school students. The sample of children with disabilities is lower than the beneficiary population, but comparable to baseline at the JSS level. The approach to analysis at midline is therefore cross-sectional in nature, and any comparisons to baseline should be read with this caveat in mind. Midline to endline will use a cohort approach. However, for progress against learning outcomes at midline a hybrid approach is used, comparing the students tracked from baseline and the replacement students with the female JSS cohort from JSS1 and JSS2 at baseline (Panel 1).

Learning outcomes for JSS show there have not been additional learning achievements in intervention schools compared to control schools. The JSS intervention sample scored an average of 31.22 in literacy (SeGRA) and 39.84 in numeracy (SeGMA). Learning assessment scores in both numeracy and literacy are slightly higher for the control JSS group. Difference-in-difference (DiD) analysis shows that there is a negative arithmetic DiD for the JSS intervention group at midline: -6.52, for a learning achievement of -3.18 in literacy, and -7.82, for a learning achievement of -5.75 in numeracy. Difference-in-difference regression results show -3.906 for literacy and -4.845 for numeracy.

Learning outcomes at the primary level show that there has not been an increase in learning outcomes at midline. The primary girls sample scored an average of 28.15 in literacy (EGRA) and 37.94 in numeracy (EGMA). Using a counterfactual analysis, the arithmetic DiD for literacy is -28.63, and for numeracy is -10.60 at midline for primary girls. Difference-in-difference regression shows -15.395 for EGRA and -4.644 for EGMA. It is important to note, however, that due to the small sample size for the primary cohort, the power achieved at midline is 68 per cent.

Transition rates are high; 95 per cent of students across the whole intervention sample have a successful transition status at midline, and 98 per cent of control school students. In the JSS intervention group, one of the 35 out-of-school children has successfully transitioned at midline. The most common reason for a JSS intervention child to be out-of-school is due to motherhood or pregnancy, followed closely by a lack of money to pay for schooling costs. Contrary to the expected outcome, disability is not a barrier to transition in the evaluation sample (across intervention and control groups).

The sustainability score at midline is 2, demonstrating that overall the project is still in the 'emergent' phase. However, the system level indicators have improved from 'latent' to 'emerging' (score 1 to 2), due

to strong relationships at the district level and improved collaboration at the national level. Most other sustainability indicators have also seen some improvement, moving from the lower end to the upper end of the 'emergent' score bracket. The main barrier to sustainability is the availability of finance at all levels.

Some of the intermediate outcome indicators are new at midline, while others are taken from baseline and therefore comparisons can be made.

- **Attendance:** at midline students' self-reported attendance was captured through student survey. Eighty seven per cent in the intervention group missed five days or fewer of school in the last school year, compared with 78 per cent in the control group. Attendance rates for primary girls are lower than for JSS (70 per cent), and are lowest for girls with disabilities (44 per cent) and girls who are mothers. Health concerns are the main reason for absence from school (which includes female health considerations), with financial constraints the second main cited reason.
- **Teaching quality:** at midline, knowledge of inclusive teaching methods amongst head teachers is present but lacking breadth. Amongst PVs, the average score for gender-sensitive and inclusive teaching practices was 75 per cent. This is up 7 per cent since baseline, but does not meet the target of 7.7 per cent. The majority of students report equal treatment of boys and girls by teachers during class. Very few children with disabilities report that they are treated differently to other children by their teachers. There have been improvements in inclusive education practices, however, corporal punishment is still prevalent, although reported rates have reduced since baseline.
- **Self-esteem and confidence:** scores amongst intervention students are fairly high, but with some room for improvement. Less than half of all students participate in decision-making about their education. For both of these indicators, levels for primary girls with disabilities were lower than average. The majority of CWD at midline reported that they are able to access facilities at school, and inclusion scores are high for the whole intervention sample, including children with disabilities. Perceptions of safety are also high, though they are lower for girls with disabilities.
- **Economic empowerment:** a large proportion of VSLA members (GATE-GEC and non-GATE-GEC VSLAs) learned skills in saving through their VSLA, and reported feeling confident in saving. Most VSLA members had taken a loan from their VSLA, however nearly half reported that they could not meet the repayments. The majority of caregivers report that they met more than 50 per cent of their child's education costs last year, but only a small proportion met all of them.
- **Community attitudes:** attitudes towards girls' education at midline are generally very positive. Community attitudes towards children with disabilities' education are also positive, but to a lesser extent than for girls. The qualitative data indicates a gradual shift in attitudes towards girls' and CWD's education within communities, and towards education more broadly. However, despite this there is an enduring belief amongst a sizable minority of caregivers that it is acceptable for a child to miss school if they need to do paid or domestic work, or if education is too costly.

Overall, the theory of change underpinning the GATE-GEC project is valid, though the midline results do not necessarily support the theory. Project activities are centred around the themes of teaching quality, inclusion of marginalised girls and CWD, and advocacy. Evidence from midline demonstrates that these activities are still appropriate for the beneficiaries. However, the midline suggests that the implementation of activities requires improvements to maximise impact in the final year of the project.

Core recommendations for the final year of the GATE-GEC project in Sierra Leone include: refining project implementation to maximise the impact of activities in the final year, working with key stakeholders at the community and school levels to ensure that mechanisms are in place for the continuation of project activities post-completion, continuing and expanding upon engagement with community members around

issues of spending on education, education for pregnant girls and education for children with disabilities, formalising and strengthening the relationship with the government at the national level, and better monitoring of the impact of score carding and SMCs/BoGs.

1. Background to project

1.1 Project Theory of Change and beneficiaries

The Girls' Access to Education (GATE) project is focused on learning, transition and sustainability outcomes. The three primary outcomes are supported by five intermediate outcomes and four outputs.

Learning outcomes are the improvement in literacy and numeracy scores of both primary and junior secondary school (JSS) students.

There are six successful transition options in this project. Students have transitioned successfully if they: progress from one grade to another in school; transition from primary to JSS; transition from JSS to SSS; repeat a grade; enrol in alternative education programmes; or engage in formal employment (above a certain age).

Sustainability focuses on the embeddedness of project activities and norms at the school, community and system levels. This is important to ensure the impact is maintained beyond the project cycle.

The four project outputs aim to:

1. Support marginalised girls and children with disabilities, and their parents/caregivers, are to attend school, learn and transition. This support includes participation in study groups, assistive devices for CWD, participation in Village Saving and Loan Associations (VLSA), Community Based Rehab Volunteer (CBRV) activities, and actions of School Management Committees (SMC) and Boards of Governors (BoG).
2. Increase the number of skilled Programme Volunteers, Learning Assistants, and Student Teachers.
3. Support marginalised girls and children with disabilities to learn in a safe and inclusive learning environment, through child protection scorecarding and other feedback mechanisms, and subsequent action plans.
4. Share programme evidence and learning with decision makers in the Sierra Leonean education sector, through joint monitoring visits, training and consortium events.

It is expected that fulfilling the outputs will meet the Intermediate Outcomes in the areas of:

1. Attendance
2. Inclusive education
3. Self-esteem and confidence
4. Economic empowerment
5. Community attitudes

1.1.1 Changes since baseline

Since the baseline, the introduction of Free Quality School Education by the government of Sierra Leone in 2018 has led to the removal of the bursary component. The funds have been repurposed into existing project activities to scale them further.

1.1.2 Assumptions of the Theory of Change

The overarching assumption of the theory of change is that economic challenges, poor education quality and societal norms are the main barriers to education for marginalised girls and children with disabilities.

The assumptions that underpin the intermediate outcomes are as follows:

- Attendance: higher rates of attendance at school leads to higher learning outcomes. Absence is due to poverty or a lack of materials.
- Inclusive education: teaching staff and school management lack knowledge of inclusive teaching methods to provide quality education for CWD and marginalised girls. Structured pedagogy has the greatest impact on learning outcomes.
- Self-esteem and confidence: facilitation of marginalised girls and CWD to participate in decision-making and improve their environment will lead to self-esteem and confidence.
- Economic empowerment: poverty is the main barrier to education outcomes for all children in Sierra Leone. Improving the economic welfare of households will result in higher enrolment rates and performance.
- Community attitudes: cultural norms and attitudes towards marginalised girls and CWD, including stigmatisation, early marriage and pregnancy results in lower educational outcomes.

The midline evaluation found that the project activities are appropriately designed to address the barriers that underpin the assumptions contained in the theory of change (see chapter 2 for more details). The validity of all of the assumptions themselves cannot be confirmed through the midline results, although most of the assumptions are grounded in wider research in the sector.

Table 1.: Beneficiaries' grades and ages

Beneficiary grades & ages		
	Baseline	Midline
Grade	Primary 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 JSS 1, 2 and 3	Primary 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 JSS 1, 2 and 3
Age	Range from 6 - 20	Range from 6 - 20

The midline includes primary grades 4 to 6, JSS 1 to 3, and the age range is from 6 to 23. The project is currently directly supporting 1,670 girls in 2019-20 and broadly supporting 57,871 girls. The midline evaluation sample represents one per cent of the total girl beneficiaries of the project (517 JSS, 87 primary). There is a lower incidence of CWD in the sample than reported by the project (see Chapter 2 for more details), but the proportion of students with orphan status is similar in the sample to the beneficiary population.

1.2 Project context

1.2.1 Education outcomes in Sierra Leone

In Sierra Leone, access to education outcomes for girls and boys at the primary level is fairly equal in terms of enrolment and completion. Outcomes for girls then reduce from the Junior Secondary School (JSS) level onwards.

In 2015 Sierra Leone had a total primary net enrolment rate of 95 per cent, and gender parity with 95.5 per cent net enrolment for girls and 94.7 per cent for boys.¹ At the secondary level however the net enrolment rate was 41.8 per cent in 2018 (41.0 per cent girls, 42.5 per cent boys).

The average primary completion rate was 67 per cent in 2013 and was slightly higher for girls than boys, at 68 per cent compared to 65 per cent.² The government of Sierra Leone states that the completion rate was 75 per cent in 2016. The average JSS completion rate was 40 per cent in 2013 with boys completing at a higher rate than girls at 50 per cent compared to 33 per cent, a 17 percentage point difference.³

The transition rate from primary to JSS was 92 per cent in 2013 and similar for girls and boys (91 per cent girls, 94 per cent boys).⁴ This drops to 76 per cent transition from JSS to Senior Secondary School (SSS), with worse transition rates for girls (79 per cent boys, 72 per cent girls).⁵

An average of 21 per cent of children aged 9-12 have never been to school. Twenty-four per cent of children were out of school in 2013, and 25 per cent of adolescents were out of school in 2013.

Children with disabilities (CWD) have less access to education than children without disabilities. Only 37 per cent of people with disabilities in Sierra Leone have ever attended school.⁶ This results in 63 per cent of people with disabilities in Sierra Leone who have never attended school. Females with disabilities are even less likely to have attended school.

1.2.2 Barriers to education in Sierra Leone

The government identifies the main barriers to quality education in its Education Sector Plan (ESP), these include:

- Inadequate school infrastructure. This includes overcrowded classrooms, poor water facilities, lack of ramps for CWD and inadequate toilet facilities. In some districts there are no secondary schools available at all.
- A lack of school materials. Students do not have basic materials, such as notebooks, pens and rulers.
- Corruption. Examination malpractice is present and includes economic and sexual offences ('sex for grades').
- Competency of school staff. Teachers are underqualified.
- Affordability of school.

Characteristics recognised by the government as having an impact on education are: location, disability status, teenage pregnancy, and orphanhood. With regards to disparities by district, the ESP states that the northern region has a 37 per cent enrolment rate, compared to 21 per cent in the eastern region, 22

¹ UNESCO: <http://uis.unesco.org/country/SL>

² UNESCO: https://www.education-inequalities.org/countries/sierra-leone/indicators/comp_prim_v2#?dimension=all&group=all&age_group=|comp_prim_v2&year=|2013

³ UNESCO: https://www.education-inequalities.org/countries/sierra-leone/indicators/comp_lowsec_v2#?dimension=all&group=all&age_group=|comp_lowsec_v2&year=|2013

⁴ UNESCO: https://www.education-inequalities.org/countries/sierra-leone/indicators/trans_prim#?dimension=all&group=all&age_group=|trans_prim&year=|2013

⁵ UNESCO: https://www.education-inequalities.org/countries/sierra-leone/indicators/trans_lowsec#?dimension=all&group=all&age_group=|trans_lowsec&year=|2013

⁶ Sierra Leone 2015 Population and Housing Census, Thematic Report on Disability: <https://sierraleone.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Disability%20Report.pdf>

per cent in the south, and 21 per cent in the west.⁷ The project includes two districts in the northern region (Port Loko and Karene), one district in the south (Moyamba) and three in the east (Kailahun, Kenema and Kono). In addition, infrastructure in schools in the northern region is of a higher quality than the other regions, with only 16 per cent of classrooms being temporary, makeshift structures, compared to 24 per cent in the east.

1.2.3 Education policy in Sierra Leone

The government prioritises education, as reflected in the proportion of government expenditure used for education. In 2017 20 per cent of government expenditure was on education, which increased to 30 per cent in 2018.⁸

Sierra Leone has an Education Sector Plan for 2018-2020. The focus is quality education through interventions across four areas:

1. Access, equity and completion
2. Quality and relevance
3. Systems strengthening
4. Emergency preparedness and response

The ESP specifically addresses CWD and marginalised girls. In addition, an inclusive education policy will shortly be launched in Sierra Leone. The government commissioned extensive national consultations in the development of this policy, to provide an overview of the expectations of service users and providers.⁹

The main change in education policy since baseline is the introduction of Free Quality School Education (FQSE). The policy was implemented as of September 2018 for the 2018-19 school year. It covers school fees, examination fees and basic materials for all levels of education from primary to senior secondary school. The policy applies to government approved schools only. According to the ESP, on average 41 per cent of schools in Sierra Leone are government approved, and the east and north have the lowest rate with only 35 per cent of schools.¹⁰ At midline there are 19 community schools, 16 of which have applied for government status.

The other change in policy context since baseline is the increased role for the Teaching Services Commission (TSC). The TSC was formalised in 2011 but has only become functional in recent years. The TSC aims to ensure all teachers are qualified, and standardise Continuous Professional Development (CPD) through the development of a framework.

Throughout the course of 2020 the MBSSE will be finalising the new ESP for 2021-2025. The project consortium is likely to be consulted for input into this policy.

⁷ Sierra Leone ESP, p15

⁸ UNESCO: <http://uis.unesco.org/country/SL>

⁹ R. Rose, P. Garner and B. Farrow, Developing inclusive education policy in Sierra Leone: A research informed approach, 2019, University of Northampton.

¹⁰ Sierra Leone ESP, p22

1.3 Key evaluation questions & role of the midline

The role of the midline evaluation is to assess the impact of the GATE project on learning outcomes and transitions for its beneficiaries in the two years since baseline. To do this, the evaluation reports on progress against the outcome and intermediate outcome targets set at baseline. As the project enters its final year, the midline evaluation also seeks to inform project delivery through identification of the most effective project components, and to assess progress against plans for project sustainability.

The evaluation uses a longitudinal approach. At midline, there are 62 JSS intervention schools, 40 JSS control schools and 42 primary schools. The students from baseline grades primary 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, and JSS1 and JSS2 were tracked at midline. Students from baseline grades primary 1 and JSS3 were not included at midline. New students were added in JSS1 and JSS2, and students from baseline JSS1 that could not be tracked at midline were replaced with current JSS3 students. The midline is therefore cross-sectional in nature, and midline to endline will be a cohort approach.

However, for progress against learning outcomes at midline a hybrid approach is used, comparing the students tracked from baseline and the replacement students with all the female JSS students in grades JSS1 and JSS2 from baseline.

Table 2.: Grades included for difference-in-difference analysis at midline

Baseline grade	Used for difference-in-difference?	Midline grade	Used for difference-in-difference?
JSS1	Yes	JSS1	No (except for students who were in JSS1 at baseline and are still in JSS1 at midline)
JSS2	Yes	JSS2	No (except for students who were in JSS2 at baseline and are still in JSS2 at midline)
JSS3	No	JSS3	Yes
-	-	Former JSS3	Yes

The midline uses a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data for the midline consists of learning assessments (EGRA/EGMA at the primary level and SeGRA/SeGMA at the secondary level), a student survey, a household survey, and school data sheet. At midline, qualitative data is used to provide context for the survey answers and to explain the changes since baseline. Qualitative data for the midline consists of focus group discussions (FGD) with students, household members, and teachers, interviews with head teachers, partner staff, government officials, and teachers. The qualitative analysis will outline the differences in project impact and barriers to education. In addition, classroom observations provide a combination of qualitative and quantitative data at midline. A detailed explanation of the methodology is provided in Annex 3.

In addition, the midline evaluation will provide information about and recommendations for the logframe, theory of change and project design.

The GEC-T portfolio uses the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria below for evaluating development assistance:

1. Process: Was the project successfully designed and implemented?
2. Impact: What impact did the project have on the learning and transition of marginalised girls, including girls with disabilities? How and why was this impact achieved?
3. Value for money: Did the project demonstrate a good VfM approach?
4. Effectiveness: What worked (and did not work) to increase the learning and transition of marginalised girls as defined by the project?
5. Sustainability: How sustainable were the activities funded by the GEC and was the project successful in leveraging additional interest and investment?

At the project level, the following evaluation questions are designed to contribute to the programme level questions:

1. Meeting needs – to what extent has the project addressed the needs of marginalised girls and children with disabilities?
2. Non-discrimination and inclusion – who is benefiting from the project and who is excluded, and why? How are marginalised/ vulnerable groups included? What is the impact on specific groups of children with disabilities?
3. Gender – to what extent is the project contributing to increased equality and equity between boys and girls, women and men? To what extent is the project gender transformative, in what ways and how could this be strengthened?
4. Child-centredness – to what extent are children involved in the project, how were they selected, what is the impact on boys and girls of their participation in the project and how does the project affect girls and boys, directly or indirectly, positively or negatively? Is there increased usage of feedback boxes in 2018 score-carding target schools? Do children (especially girls, girls with disabilities) feel more confident to voice out safeguarding issues at schools?
5. Community participation – how effectively has the project involved communities, schools and other stakeholders in implementing the project? What difference has this made and how could participation be made more meaningful? How effectively has the project involved communities, schools and other stakeholders in implementing the score-carding feedback / actions? Since the project has been interacting with community stakeholders and services are there more linkages with child protection structures and referral networks in communities where the project works?
6. Access and attendance – what difference has the GATE-GEC made to enabling marginalised girls and children with disabilities to be in school? To what extent has the project been successful at ensuring retention? Where drop-outs have happened, what are the reasons, and how can the project learn from and avoid these in the future? What connections have been made with parents/caregivers – particularly around attendance?
7. VSLAs – what are the contributions of the project’s VSLAs to beneficiaries’ ability to access and transition through education?
8. Teaching quality – to what extent has the project been successful at improving the quality of teaching in targeted schools? Has the project been effective in moving towards more student-centred and active teaching methodology? To what extent have teachers adopted gender-responsive pedagogy techniques? What approaches could be taken to extend teachers’ subject matter and methodological understanding? What are the changes in teachers’ classroom management approaches? Where are examples of good practice within the project that could be utilised to improve teaching quality more widely?

9. Governance – how effective has the project been in strengthening the skills of School Management Committees and Boards of Governors to provide quality school management (including improving attendance, quality of teaching and the school environment)? What are the contributions of targeted School Management Committees and Boards of Governors in improving attendance, quality of teaching and the school environment?
10. Learning Assistants – what is the impact of the project’s training and support for Learning Assistants? How are these cohorts progressing and what are the lessons learnt to support ongoing improvements?
11. School environment – to what extent are there differences in outcomes between schools which are receiving additional support through Learning Assistants, score-carding and Itinerant Teachers? What is the added value of these activities to beneficiaries and the school environment? Has the PV and SMC/BOG training/ awareness in child protection reinforced the effectiveness of score-carding intervention, and ultimately safeguarding in target schools?
12. Indirect impact – what impact has GATE-GEC had on indirect beneficiaries including boys within the schools?
13. Education sector alignment – to what extent has the project been framed within national educational priorities and policies? How successful has the project been at integrating with national, district and school level systems?

1.4 Challenges and limitations of the midline evaluation

All possible steps were taken to ensure that the evaluation was as rigorous as possible. However, as with any real-world evaluation of social phenomena, there are a number of limitations that should be considered when reading and interpreting the results of the midline evaluation. These are discussed in detail in Annex 3.

In summary, the challenges and limitations were:

- The midline External Evaluator did not conduct the baseline and are therefore unable to give assurances regarding the validity and reliability of the baseline data.
- High attrition rates for JSS (45% for intervention and 50% for control). This resulted in an overall sample size for learning assessments of 997 instead of 1,266, and only 399 students in panel 1 instead of 763.¹¹ This was mostly due to former JSS3 students being unavailable for learning assessments as they were on holidays awaiting results from JSS3 to know if they could progress to Senior Secondary School. The power reached by the panel 1 sample for difference-in-difference analysis is only 68 per cent at midline, lower than the FM guidance of 80 per cent. If there is no attrition between midline and endline the power achieved at endline will be 87 per cent. With 30 per cent attrition power achieved will be 82 per cent. It is anticipated that the level of midline attrition will not negatively impact analytical rigour at endline.
- Introduction of new students can change the sample composition and impact comparability. 598 ‘top-up’ students from JSS1 and JSS2 at midline were added, and 95 JSS3 replacement students were added to the sample. However, assessment of the characteristics of the added students show that the new students are similar to the students tracked from baseline.
- The baseline evaluation did not collect data on control (or intervention) schools’ exposure to other, non-GATE-GEC projects, and this data was not collected at midline. As the baseline evaluation notes, nearly every school in Sierra Leone is involved in some form of external

¹¹ 399 consists of 304 students tracked from baseline to midline and 95 replacement students.

intervention outside of GEC which may have an impact on assigning causal effect to project activities.¹² It is recommended to collect this data at endline for use in analysis. This data could be collected via the head teacher survey section in the School Data Sheet.

- Some of the intermediate outcome indicators are not comparable to baseline due to uncertainty on baseline methodology and some indicators have been edited or added at midline. The midline indicators were developed with comparability in mind and the methodology for each is detailed in Chapter 6 and these can be taken through to endline to observe change. Also, control scores for each indicator has been provided as an extra point of comparison to assess progress.

There were also a number of fieldwork challenges, outlined in Annex 3, that have potential implications for the evaluation.

2. Context, Educational Marginalisation and Intersection between Barriers and Characteristics

The key characteristics included at midline are: girls with disabilities, girls affected by early marriage and/or pregnancy, low household income, and orphan status. The key barriers targeted by the project are: poverty, lack of inclusive teaching methods, child safeguarding issues, attitudes towards girls' education, and low self-esteem of girls.

The characteristics included in Table 2 that are not listed above were included due to the high proportion of the sample presenting those characteristics. This includes 97 per cent who report a different language of instruction at school to the students' mother tongue, and 30 per cent of households that have gone without food many or most days in the past year.

2.1 Intersection of barriers and characteristics

Table 3 highlights the intersection between barriers and characteristics for JSS intervention students at midline.

The main findings are as follows:

- Across all characteristics there is a high chore burden. More than 40 per cent of girls with each characteristic listed have a high chore burden, categorised as a quarter day or more. The exception is for girls with a disability at only 20 per cent, but this is from a small sample size of 5 girls.
- CWD feel less safe at school and travelling to/from school than students with other characteristics, with the same caveat as above that this is from a small sample size.
- More than 20 per cent of girls in each category report that boys and girls are treated differently by teachers. Different treatment of boys and girls was not observed in the 34 classroom observations at the JSS level. However, the classroom observations were carried out with Programme Volunteer (PV) teachers only, who receive training from the project.
- Since baseline the proportion of students who feel supported to go to school and do well has increased.

¹² Baseline evaluation section 2.5 Challenges in baseline evaluation collection and limitations of the evaluation design

- A higher proportion of girls with double orphan status lack confidence in English class compared to other characteristics, at 20 per cent of the girls who are double orphans compared to the next highest figure of 12 per cent. This is not reflected in confidence levels in math class.

Table 3.: Barriers to education by characteristic (JSS intervention)

All figures are percentages (%). The table should be read as percentage of children with that characteristic who face that barrier. For example, 10 per cent of single orphans do not feel safe travelling to/from school, and 21 per cent of double orphans do not feel safe travelling to and from school.

The table reflects the entire midline JSS sample.

Characteristic														
Barriers	Single orphans	Double orphans	Living without both parents	Living in female headed household	Married	Mothers	Difficult to afford for girl to go to school	Household unable to meet basic needs	Gone to sleep hungry for many days in past year	LoI different from mother tongue	Girl doesn't speak LoI	HoH has no education	Primary caregiver has no education	CWD
n (from household survey)	124	14	119	182	8	28	412	207	165	542	404	317	196	5
Doesn't feel safe travelling to/from school	10%	21%	13%	7%	0%	18%	12%	14%	13%	11%	13%	15%	15%	20%
Doesn't feel safe at school	1%	7%	2%	2%	13%	0%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	20%
High chore burden: a	52%	50%	46%	47%	63%	79%	48%	44%	58%	50%	48%	54%	57%	20%

quarter of the day or more														
Doesn't get support to stay in school and do well	13%	0%	12%	9%	0%	13%	13%	18%	20%	12%	13%	13%	15%	40%
Attends school half the time	20%	33%	13%	15%	0%	33%	15%	16%	14%	15%	19%	18%	20%	0%
Disagrees teachers make them feel welcome	6%	0%	7%	6%	0%	4%	4%	7%	5%	4%	4%	5%	3%	20%
Agrees teachers treat boys and girls differently in the classroom	29%	40%	30%	25%	0%	40%	30%	23%	26%	29%	31%	28%	28%	20%
Does not feel confident in English class	7%	20%	12%	8%	0%	20%	8%	11%	9%	8%	8%	9%	10%	0%
Does not feel confident in maths class	23%	20%	22%	21%	0%	27%	19%	18%	18%	20%	21%	18%	18%	0%

Table 4 highlights the intersection between barriers and characteristics for primary girls at midline.

The main findings are below. However, due to the small sample sizes the findings are not representative:

- Similar to the JSS level, primary girls have a high chore burden. Girls with double orphan status are the most likely to have a high chore burden than other characteristics, with 60 per cent of primary girls with double orphan status having a high chore burden (though with a small sample size of 5 girls). CWD have the lowest chore burden, that is, a quarter of GWD report spending a quarter day or more on chores compared to 35-50 per cent for most of the other characteristics.
- A high proportion of students agree that teachers treat girls and boys differently. Twenty to 25 per cent of each characteristic agrees, with half of all primary girls with disabilities reporting this.
- Overall, girls with disabilities are more likely to face barriers to education than girls with other characteristics.

Table 4.: Barriers to education by characteristic (Primary girls)

Characteristics														
Barriers:	Single orphans	Double orphans	Living without both parents	Living in female headed household	Married	Mothers	Difficult to afford for girl to go to school	Household unable to meet basic needs	Gone to sleep hungry for many days in past year	Lol different from mother tongue	Girl doesn't speak Lol	HoH has no education	Primary caregiver has no education	CWD
n (from household survey)	19	5	22	29	0	1	60	28	29	76	41	46	27	16
Doesn't feel safe travelling to/from school	11%	20%	9%	10%	-	0%	10%	7%	0%	8%	12%	9%	7%	31%
Doesn't feel safe at school	5%	0%	0%	3%	-	0%	2%	0%	0%	1%	2%	0%	0%	25%
High chore burden: a quarter of the day or more	37%	60%	45%	48%	-	0%	43%	32%	38%	45%	44%	37%	37%	25%
Doesn't get support to stay in school and do well	24%	0%	6%	14%	-	-	13%	14%	9%	15%	14%	19%	14%	38%
Attends school half the time	26%	20%	14%	21%	-	-	20%	15%	7%	18%	17%	16%	24%	38%
Disagrees teachers make them feel welcome	0%	0%	0%	0%	-	0%	2%	4%	0%	3%	5%	2%	4%	6%

Agrees teachers treat boys and girls differently in the classroom	29%	25%	19%	18%	-	-	26%	18%	26%	23%	20%	19%	24%	50%
Does not feel confident in English class	12%	0%	31%	14%	-	-	22%	14%	9%	20%	23%	14%	24%	38%
Does not feel confident in maths class	24%	50%	31%	27%	-	-	30%	18%	13%	27%	29%	22%	24%	38%

2.2 Difference in barriers between intervention and control groups

At midline, the main differences in characteristics and barriers between the JSS intervention and control groups are:

- A higher proportion of control students live without both parents (28 per cent compared to 21 per cent). This has changed since baseline, at which the proportions were similar (22 per cent control and 23 per cent intervention).
- Similarly to baseline, a higher proportion of caregivers of control school students have some education (31 per cent of control school caregivers have no education, compared to 40 per cent of intervention school caregivers).
- Poverty indicators (land ownership, ability to meet basic needs, hunger) are similar for both control and intervention groups, with a small degree of variation (within 3% difference).
- Generally, intervention school students face barriers in the same proportion as control school students, or in higher proportions. For example, 33 per cent of intervention school students do not use drinking water facilities at school compared to 25 per cent of control school students. This is the inverse of the levels reported at baseline (30 per cent intervention, 34 per cent control).
- A higher proportion of intervention students agree that teachers treat boys and girls differently in the classroom (27%) compared with control students (20%).

Overall, the intervention and control groups have similar characteristics at midline despite the change in sample composition through new students added at midline. A full breakdown of characteristics can be found in Annex 4 (Table 125).

2.3 Changes in characteristics and barriers from baseline

Table 126 in Annex 4 shows the characteristics faced by the sample tracked from baseline to midline. Table 128 details the barriers faced by the tracked cohort. Comparison of the characteristics and barriers faced by students tracked from baseline to midline shows that:

- There is an increase in the proportion of double orphans in the sample, and a decrease in single orphans (due to attrition).
- There is a decrease in the proportion of students living in a female headed household. Twenty Nine per cent of intervention students tracked from baseline to midline live in female headed households compared to 42 per cent of the replacement girls. This suggests that girls from baseline living in female headed households have been lost to the sample at a higher rate than girls who live in a male headed household.
- Affordability of school has increased at the JSS level and decreased at the primary level. However, poverty levels have risen across all groups tracked from baseline.
- The proportion of students with caregivers with no education has reduced.
- A higher proportion of caregivers report it is fairly or very unsafe for girls to travel to school.
- The chore burden has reduced for all groups except primary girls.
- Almost all students say they are supported to stay in school and do well.
- There has been an increase in students reporting that teachers treat girls and boys differently in the classroom.

At midline it is not possible to attribute the changes in characteristics and barriers to project interventions, given the findings. It is likely that the changes are due to changes in the sample composition, which reflect that particular barriers have caused drop-out since baseline and therefore the sample lost at midline account for the difference. However, most characteristics and barriers remain comparable between baseline and midline.

The qualitative data highlighted some of the changes to barriers from baseline. The government's Free Quality School Education (FQSE) policy was referred to by a very large number of participants as a key factor that had improved enrolment and attendance in the past year. One Student Teacher did express, however, that despite the introduction of the FQSE Policy, attendance continued to fluctuate in the school she worked in during the past year. The FQSE policy was also mentioned in two of the caregiver FGDs as something which had helped to ease the burden of education costs. One group of JSS boys said that they knew children that had previously dropped out due to the cost of school fees, but that most of them had now returned to school because of the FQSE. Some participants also mentioned NGO assistance, or the GATE-GEC project specifically, as a contributing factor for improved attendance.

The GATE GEC project aims to target children with disabilities (CWD) as beneficiaries. To determine whether a child has a disability, the short list of Washington Group questions is used. Under this definition, there are fewer CWD in the sample than the original beneficiary group under GEC1, as the latter used different criteria for determining whether a child has a disability.¹³ At baseline, 3 per cent of intervention students were CWD, and 10 per cent of primary students, compared to 1 per cent of JSS intervention students and 18 per cent of all primary students at midline (23% of girls, 14% of boys). One per cent of JSS intervention caregivers report that the student in their care has a disability, compared to 25 per cent of primary student caregivers. This indicates that the JSS figure is reliable, whilst the primary sample level of disability may be higher than is self-reported by students. The differences in proportion between baseline and midline may be due to: changes in the sample composition; children identifying as having a disability at midline that did not do so at baseline; children who previously identified as having a disability no longer identifying as having a disability. Project data indicates that 33 per cent of beneficiaries in total identify as having a disability.

Table 125 in Annex 4 shows the characteristics faced by the whole midline sample, and Table 127 shows the barriers. The entire sample shows characteristics and barriers in similar proportions to the sample tracked from baseline. This indicates that the students added at midline are comparable to the original baseline cohort.

2.4 Appropriateness of project activities to key barriers and characteristics

The main activities of the project can be grouped into three categories: teaching quality, inclusion of marginalised girls and CWD, and advocacy. The following assessment demonstrates that these activities are still appropriate for the beneficiaries.

2.4.1 Teaching quality

Activities to improve teaching quality include: training for school management and governance groups to mainstream inclusive pedagogy; training and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for PV teachers on inclusive teaching pedagogy; Learning Assistants/Student Teachers; and score carding to promote the wellbeing of the child. The data at midline shows that these activities are still appropriate for the beneficiaries.

At the level of school management, head teachers demonstrate a basic understanding of inclusive teaching methods, but only 38 per cent state that four or more methods are used in the school they manage. Score carding leads to children's opinions being heard but do not necessarily translate into action plans and substantive changes. It remains an appropriate activity but requires more oversight to ensure effectiveness. This can also be applied to the use of suggestion boxes in schools as 26 per cent of JSS intervention students reported that there is no suggestion box available for use.

The appropriateness of activities is also demonstrated by the high level of physical discipline and punishment. Seventy-seven per cent of JSS intervention students reporting the use of punishment when

¹³ Baseline report, section 3.1 'project beneficiaries'
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a student gets an answer wrong in class. Physical punishment is prevalent, with 67 per cent of JSS intervention students reporting its use by teachers. The project is changing attitudes towards corporal punishment and is promoting positive encouragement as a teaching method. This is still an appropriate activity as changes in cultural attitudes require time to reach a critical mass. Many students still report feeling nervous reading in front of others or doing maths in front of others (see IO3), and the threat of or use of corporal punishment was also mentioned by PV teachers who have received project training as a tool they use.

The project promotes the training and employment of female teachers through the Learning Assistant/Student Teacher component. This is appropriate in the context where, according to the Ministry of Basic and Secondary School Education (MBSSE) representative interviewed, female teachers are nearly “extinct”. The midline findings and research from The Open University indicates that this activity is ‘driving cultural changes that create better experiences of schooling for children’.¹⁴ It therefore remains appropriate at midline, and is an activity which has potential to be adopted by the government.

2.4.2 Inclusion of marginalised girls and CWD

The overall aim of the GATE-GEC project is to include marginalised girls and CWD in education in Sierra Leone and there are many activities at the level of the students and their households which aim to facilitate this. These include: study groups in literacy and numeracy at school to improve learning outcomes and promote enrolment and transition; economic empowerment at the household level through VSLAs; activities run by Humanity and Inclusion (HI) such as assistive devices, adaptation of schools, training of Community Based Rehab Volunteers (CBRVs), training teachers on Inclusive Education, and itinerant teachers to set up and follow Individual Education Plan (IEP). The data at midline shows that these activities are still appropriate for the beneficiaries.

Poverty levels remain high among the beneficiaries. More than a third of JSS student households report that they are unable to meet basic needs without charity (37 per cent), and 30 per cent of households go to sleep hungry on many or most nights. Hunger was reported in the qualitative data as a main barrier to learning for students.

Hunger and lack of food, or parents not being able to provide lunch for children to take to school was mentioned by a number of participants as a barrier to attendance. A participant in one JSS girls FGD in Kono said that hunger was a barrier to attendance in her community, after which another participant explained that sometimes their classmates choose to go and work on the farm instead of coming to school because they can find cassava to eat on the farm. A few of the primary students in the FGDs also specifically mentioned that they did not enjoy their lunch break at school because they did not have any food to eat.

Hunger was a theme discussed by several participants as a barrier to participation in school, and particularly participation in the study groups. In one JSS FGD conducted with boys in an intervention school (who were also attending the study groups), the boys mentioned that one way to improve the study groups would be to change the time. They currently take place after school but this means that they get very hungry. One PV said that the study groups take place for an hour after school, but that the children are hungry at this time, so attendance at the study groups is only average, and for this reason the school management had discussed moving the study groups to Saturdays. Participants in a JSS girls Intervention FGD suggested that lunch should be provided to them so that they can focus during the after-school study groups. When asked about support required, three PVs (KIIs) also suggested that food should be provided to study group participants, and one of these PVs stated that hunger was the biggest

¹⁴ Chamberlain, Liz and Safford, Kimberly (2019). Learning Assistants in Sierra Leone: model, innovation, and impact. In: 9th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning - Innovations for Quality Education and Lifelong Learning (PCF9), 09-13 Sep 2019, Edinburgh.
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challenge affecting successful implementation of the study groups. Hunger was also said to negatively affect the concentration of children in class.

The project has targeted some of the poorest households for inclusion in a VSLA created by the project. In total there will be 200 VSLAs formed.¹⁵ VSLAs in Sierra Leone have been shown to increase food security and reduce poverty amongst certain groups.¹⁶ The last year of the project will also include a livelihoods component to assist some households to generate income. Given the poverty levels within the sample these activities are appropriate to achieve the project aims.

HI has a range of activities to improve access and outcomes for CWD. At the primary level 18 per cent of girls identify as having a disability (though this is not representative), and 1 per cent of JSS intervention students. Nationally, 2.5 per cent of the population has a disability and outcomes for CWD are lower than children without disabilities.¹⁷ One PV (Kono) said that a hearing-impaired child in his class (that he previously thought was “stubborn” because he did not respond to questions) had received a hearing aid, which had “helped him a lot.” Activities to facilitate access to and retention in school for CWD are still required in Sierra Leone.

2.4.3 Advocacy

The project consortium recognises that for the changes to be sustainable and have an impact beyond the beneficiaries, advocacy with government stakeholders at the district and national levels is required. This work has had an impact as reported in the qualitative data through interviews with partners and government officials (see Chapter 5 Sustainability for more information). It is still appropriate at midline as the government has identified inclusion as a priority and has changes to curriculum, CPD and policies in the pipeline which the project can potentially have input into.

2.5 Validity of the Theory of Change

GATE-GEC’s Theory of Change states that if school attendance rates are increased, teaching quality is improved, children have greater self-esteem and confidence, households are economically empowered and there is a high level of information and knowledge sharing, then learning outcomes and transition rates will improve and the change will be sustained.

Validating a Theory of Change involves outlining the assumptions that link each stage of the Theory of Change and testing the assumptions through a range of sources such as existing research and collected evidence. A Theory of Change is invalid when the assumptions underpinning the Theory of Change are incorrect. However, a valid Theory of Change does not guarantee the desired outcomes are attained. It is possible that the assumptions are correct but problems with implementation of the stages of the theory lead to a lack of outcomes.

At midline, the Theory of Change itself is considered to be largely valid but implementation of activities has not resulted in the foreseen outcomes. The assumptions underlying the links between the intermediate outcomes and outcomes are widely accepted in the sector and some are supported by the evidence at midline. The midline assumes that the assumptions that link the activities to outputs and intermediate outcomes have been validated at the stage of project design and therefore the midline

¹⁵ The Action Aid representative stated that there are plans for 150 VSLAs, the GEC Programme Manager stated that there will be 200.

¹⁶ M.P. Ngegba, T.L Kassoh and M. Sesay, Impact of Village Saving and Loan Association on farm productivity in Lower Banta chiefdom, southern Sierra Leone, International Research Journal of Social Science & Humanities (2016), Vol 1, pp.29-32.

¹⁷ From The Disability Data Portal (accessed January 2020): <https://www.disabilitydataportal.com/explore-by-country/country/education/Sierra+Leone/>

suggests that it is implementation of activities that is limiting successful outputs and outcomes. In addition, there can be a time lag between some activities and evidence of impact. For example, score carding activities may not lead to outputs in the short term if schools are unable to implement actions due to budgetary constraints or other limitations.

Intermediate Outcomes - Outcomes

The assumptions underlying the five intermediate outcomes and their relationship with the project outcomes are sound. However, the midline evidence does not always support the assumptions. As stated above, at midline it is suggested that this is due to the implementation of activities rather than the theory that links the activities to outcomes.

Attendance

It is widely accepted in education best practice that attendance is a precursor to success. Discussion of attendance in Chapter 6 shows that a low attendance does not necessarily lead to lower learning outcomes, as JSS intervention students with six or more days absence score higher than the average in both literacy and numeracy, though the difference is small. Lower attendance did result in lower learning outcomes at the primary level.

Inclusive teaching practice

Inclusive education aims to remove barriers to participation to allow all students access to quality education that meets their needs. Fulfilment of this approach can lead to better learning outcomes for marginalised groups, and healthy personal and social development. This is somewhat borne out in the midline evaluation, as primary students who report that teachers treat boys and girls differently in the classroom have lower learning outcomes than the students who report that teachers treat boys and girls equally. However, the same does not apply at the JSS level. In addition, the use of corporal punishment does not appear to negatively affect learning outcomes (as shown in in Chapter 6) but should still be a project focus due to the rights violation it poses.

Self-esteem and confidence

Self-esteem and confidence have been linked to learning outcomes through their impact on factors for success such as motivation and well-being. Self-esteem and confidence are also valuable life skills that impact transitions and sustainability. The midline shows that self-esteem and confidence are generally positively correlated with learning outcomes, as demonstrated in Chapter 6.

Economic empowerment

The impact of poverty on experiences of education is well-documented in the education sector and is not limited to countries in the Global South. The midline evaluation shows that this link is evidenced in Sierra Leone. Chapter 3 demonstrates that students that come from households which are unable to meet basic needs without charity have lower learning outcomes. Chapter 6 shows that students from households that are members of a VSLA, and households that can meet more than half of education costs, score higher in literacy and numeracy than their counterparts.

Community Attitudes

It is commonly accepted that negative community attitudes and behaviours relating to girls' and children with disabilities' education presents a barrier to education for these groups. The Theory of Change thus assumes that changes in attitudes and behaviours which influence the perceived value of educating girls and children with disabilities are necessary to enable girls and children with disabilities to go to, stay in, and succeed in school.

At midline, caregivers report overwhelmingly positive attitudes to girls' education. The proportion of caregivers reporting positive attitudes to children with disabilities' education was also fairly high, but with room for improvement. The validity of the Theory of Change with regards to community attitudes towards GATE-GEC Midline Evaluation Report

girls' education is difficult to assess due to the ceiling effect of this indicator at midline. The validity of the Theory of Change regarding children with disabilities can be tested at endline, however, where it will be possible to compare to midline and track changes in attitudes along with changes in attendance and transition for children with disabilities.

There is also consensus within the sector that higher numbers of educated girls in the community can act as a lever for greater gender equality which has further benefits for girls' access to education. At midline, this latter assumption found particular credence in the qualitative data; a number of participants specifically mentioned that seeing educated girls in the community contributing to their households and providing for their parents, had shifted their thinking towards girls' education.

Activities - Outputs - Intermediate Outcomes

The midline evaluation suggests that fulfilment of the Theory of Change is hindered by issues with implementation of project activities. It assumes that the activities have been founded on sound, contextualised evidence that has been reviewed and validated and therefore does not interrogate the individual assumptions that link each of the activities to the outputs. The 'successes and challenges in implementation' listed below are not exhaustive and focus primarily on factors within the sphere of control of the project. Where contextual factors significantly affect implementation, they are also mentioned.

The list of activities is from the project logframe. There are two activities which do not appear on the logframe: livelihoods (which is included in the Theory of Change diagram), and itinerant teachers (is not included in the diagram). It is recommended to include output level indicators for these activities to facilitate implementation.

Table 5.: Project activities and successes and challenges in implementation

Activities and assumptions	Outputs	Intermediate Outcomes	Successes and challenges in implementation
VSLAs	1	IO1 Attendance, IO4 Economic empowerment	<p>Successes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 100 VSLA groups rolled out. - VSLA members who have taken out a loan have a 100% repayment rate. - There is suggestive evidence that VSLA members will spend loan money on education. <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VSLA members are advised to wait for 6 months before taking out a loan. Therefore, the impact of this component may be seen more at endline as the last 50 VSLA groups are created and more members are actively using loans.
CBRVs	1	IO1 Attendance	<p>Successes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CBRVs are known to the schools and CWD. - Successfully advocate on behalf of CWD. - A total of 138 CBRVs, above the target of 136. <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CBRV role is voluntary with a small stipend, and there have been delays in distribution of the stipend.

Assistive devices	1	IO1 Attendance	<p><i>Successes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 214 children have received an assistive device (from project data) of a target of 600. <p><i>Challenges</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delays in provision related to problems in distributing funds to service providers. Funding checks written to hospitals, but the specific hospital units meant to be receiving the funds not receiving them, or only receiving a proportion.
Study groups	1, 2	IO1 Attendance, IO2 Teaching quality	<p><i>Successes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Study groups are regularly occurring, with high attendance (94% for girls according to project data). <p><i>Challenges</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students are often hungry which affects their ability to effectively learn in study groups. - Inclusive teaching practices are not applied consistently by all PVs.
School governance groups	1, 3	IO1 Attendance, IO2 Teaching quality, IO3 Self-esteem and confidence	<p><i>Successes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eight per cent of caregivers spoken to belong to a BoG. <p><i>Challenges</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Just less than half (49%) of SMCs had a school development plan in 2019 according to project data, and just 48% of BoGs had a school action plan. - Thirty per cent of JSS intervention households that report a BoG or SMC at the school do not receive communication from the group.
PVs	2	IO2 Teaching quality	<p><i>Successes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 99% of PV target met (1,506 PVs in total based on project data). - According to a project survey with a small sample of beneficiaries, 100% of students were happy with support from PVs. - Project data reports that 59% of PVs attended a learning circle in the last 3 months. <p><i>Challenges</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Head teachers often request incentives for mentoring teachers.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PVs only occasionally share learning with other teachers in their schools.
LA/STs	2	IO2 Teaching quality	<p><i>Successes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The LA/STs report increased self-esteem and confidence. - Understaffed rural schools have increased staffing capacity. <p><i>Challenges</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is at the primary level only and would therefore not impact outcomes at the JSS level in the lifecycle of the project. - Results from Teacher Training Colleges are often delayed (as of April 2020 results for cohorts 1 and 2 had still not been published, after an expected publication date of December 2019). - There was a delay in distribution of textbooks for the December 2019 exam for cohort 3.
Score carding	3	IO2 Teaching quality, IO3 Self-esteem and confidence	<p><i>Successes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some schools that are not targeted for score carding report that they have score carding activities. <p><i>Challenges</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 26% of JSS students report that there is not a suggestion box in their school. - The suggestion box is sometimes in inaccessible places, such as the staff room. - A large proportion of students do not use a suggestion box as they do not think the school will take action. - Score carding focuses on feedback, rather than child protection explicitly. If child protection issues are revealed through score-carding, there are limited follow-up mechanisms to successfully address these issues.
Model schools	3	IO3 Self-esteem and confidence	<p><i>Successes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At the time of data collection, three model schools had been completed. There is evidence that one school is being used as an accessible exam centre for a CWD from a nearby school. <p><i>Challenges</i></p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Criteria for school selection is not based on prevalence of CWD in the school. - Implementation has been delayed. Five schools that were due to be finished in September 2019 in the second phase of the activity but were not adapted by the time of data collection in October 2019. - Initial issues with the quality of work done by local building contractors - not to internationally accepted standards - and local council engineers were not monitoring the work. Training had to be conducted with local council engineers on how to effectively monitor the construction, which resulted in delays. - The total number of model schools is small, at only 10.
Ministry training	4	IO5 Community attitudes	<p><i>Successes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fifty-three MBSSE and 4 MSCGWA staff members have attended trainings (according to project data). <p><i>Challenges</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The MBSSE reports a sense of detachment from the reality of the project in the field, hence the joint monitoring visit, below.
Learning events	4	IO5 Community attitudes	<p><i>Successes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - These have started on a regional level and include key stakeholders. <p><i>Challenges</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The midline did not assess if actions have been followed up on since the event. - The learning event is yet to take place nationally.
Joint monitoring visits	4	IO5 Community attitudes	<p><i>Successes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scheduled for February 2020. <p><i>Challenges</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At the time of data collection, the joint monitoring visits had not occurred.

In summary, the midline evaluation posits that the Theory of Change is valid, however, the implementation of activities which would lead to changes at the intermediate outcome and outcome levels is being hindered by factors both internal to the project and the external context. The recommendations in Chapter 7 outline suggestions for implementation. A few are highlighted here as key focus areas:

- Delays to distribution of project stipends or resources should be addressed and monitoring of this distribution enhanced. Distribution issues were reported in the provision of assistive devices, and by the CBRV participant and multiple LA/STs.
- Promotion of learning between PVs and non-PV teaching staff should be encouraged and facilitated.
- The issue of hunger is likely affecting students' ability to learn. The project should work with schools to address the issue more widely.
- Improve the child protection mechanism through score carding.

Box 2: Project's contribution

The project should respond to the External Evaluator's comments on the above questions. In particular the project should respond to the following points:

Whether activities are still appropriate for subgroups and barriers;

Broadly speaking, the GATE GEC project agrees with the EE that the project activities are fit for purpose. There are certain key barriers highlighted by the midline findings that may need to be considered by the project further. Some of which are outside the control and scope of the project and its interventions, for example hunger. However, there are some barriers that the project will be considering in responding to some of the key barriers recognised at midline.

Teaching quality: There are key areas the project recognises need improvements. There needs to be further refinement of Head teachers understanding of inclusive teaching methods, as the EE reports that only 38% of head teachers report that four or more methods inclusive teaching are used, this is compounded by the project monitoring findings that also show the CPD package is not used consistently across the GATE GEC schools. There are plans for additional trainings for HTs on both the CPD package and capturing attendance and enrolment data.

The ST component remains a focus of the project with work ongoing to ensure that the previous cohorts of STs are added onto the government pay roll. The ministry are engaged and recognise the need for more female teachers to be a part of the teaching workforce and payroll.

Hunger: The barrier of hunger is something the project needs to consider, especially as this impacts beneficiaries and their attendance in study groups. The idea of providing food during study groups has previously been discussed but decided against as the project did not want to be incentivizing children to join the study groups – this also does not lend to the sustainability lens. Alternative avenues could be explored, such as building this into SMC/BoGs action plans and utilising community support to address food issues, and the suggestion of changing the time of the study group. This also shows the continued need for the work of VSLAs. Additionally, poverty rising across all groups tracked from baseline points to the continued need for VSLAs and the livelihood component planned to happen this year.

Inclusiveness and feeling safe: The findings that CWDs do not feel safe whilst travelling to school in the primary subgroup points to the continued need to support CWDs in awareness raising and accessing the school environment. Although the CBRV component supports the CWDs, further support is needed in working in the communities to change perceptions and ensure children are continuing to attend school. Successful examples of this have been seen by the project through it's ongoing monitoring, but there is still a continued need for this to be strengthened.

Pregnancy and motherhood was identified as another key barrier during the midline, although there is no comparison at baseline. The most common reason for a JSS intervention child to be out-of-school is due to motherhood or pregnancy. The midline found that the transition reduces with age and likely this is due to the

increased rate of pregnancy and marriage. The qualitative data supports the idea that motherhood or pregnancy is a barrier to transition. In the majority of JSS FGDs, participants said either that pregnancy was one of the main reasons why girls stopped attending school altogether, or (in the JSS girls FGDs) that becoming pregnant is something that could cause them to drop out in the future. Several school staff participants also mentioned teen pregnancy as one of the main issues affecting girls' education in their communities. Our project's girl-led monitoring also noted this as a key finding where school was viewed as a protective measure against pregnancy and without school, this fate was deemed to be inevitable.

Advocacy has continued with work with relevant stakeholders, for example in setting up the national steering committee. Engagement at the district level has continued to progress well, however the project recognises the need for more national engagement and advocacy. Therefore, building on from the recent joint monitoring visit, and ongoing engagements, the project will continue to develop initiatives and engagement with national government through the form of working groups, steering committees and relevant taskforces over the course of the last year of the project, with a focus on sustainability.

External Evaluator analysis of whether barriers have changed for key subgroups;

The EE have highlighted some key changes to barriers from the baseline to midline, specifically noting a higher proportion of double orphans, changes to poverty and affordability, a decrease in the level of chores children are required to do and an increase in the number of children saying they feel supported to remain in school.

Orphans: This number has increased since baseline. Although being orphaned is one of our vulnerability criteria when setting up VSLAs, the project does not programme specifically for this barrier and there may need to be further consideration on how this sub-group could be supported. It is also difficult to determine the reasons and effects of a decrease in children from female headed households and what this means for the project. This could reflect the increase in double orphans, a decrease in single orphans; or the fact that these women are re-marrying.

Affordability and poverty: For some time, the beneficiaries in the project have relied on receiving bursaries however once the new government came into effect in 2017, and the FQSE was implemented, these bursaries ceased. This has had a mixed effect on affordability of school. The expectation is that the FQSE on the whole will make school more affordable as it makes education free for all government schools which is a positive step from the Ministry. However, this may have had complicated effects on affordability as this means that the bursaries had to cease to be in line with Ministry approach. In particular, community schools are not supported by the Ministry and thus for those schools education has become much less affordable. All Community schools that were eligible have applied to be a government school, however this process has been delayed and even once approved, not all schools have received the required financial and tangible support promised by the government.

Chore burden: The chore burden has decreased since baseline for all groups apart from primary girls, which is a positive change and could point to a myriad of things, for example more gender equitable views around chore distribution. However, although this a positive change, chore burden as a whole still remains high thus this is still a barrier.

Supported to remain in school: The decrease in the number of students saying they are not supported to stay in school is a positive change and decrease of this barrier will likely mean more students will transition. This could point to the project raising awareness of the importance of schools, engagement with the school and learning, and the promotion of inclusive education which is a sign of progress for the project. Similarly, the increase of students reporting that teachers treat girls and boys equally is positive and may be a response to positive gender sensitive teaching practices.

Whether contextual changes have an impacted-on barriers or subgroup;

A new government came into place since the baseline study. This has led to considerable changes and priorities around education, with the new government familiarising and advocating for education to be prioritised across the country. One of the initial actions proposed by the new government was to institute the FQSE. This re-alignment of the government's objectives towards education, has allowed for the project to engage with the government in a more cohesive and collaborative manner.

As mentioned in the previous section, the FQSE has also come into effect with the new government. This has had mixed effect on affordability of school and overall poverty. On the whole, this should now make school more affordable as it makes education free for all government schools which is a positive step from the Ministry. However, the practicalities of this is still being rolled out. In particular, community schools were initially not supported by Ministry and thus for those schools, education has become much less affordable. Most Community schools have applied to be government schools, but issues remain as noted above. In addition, a minority of schools don't meet the government's eligibility criteria, and will be unable to receive support until the government widens the support to all schools.

COVID-19 emergency: The current global COVID-19 pandemic is causing a devastating effect on all communities. Vulnerable groups are already being impacted by the mitigation measures. With all schools having closed, as seen during the Ebola crisis, this will inevitably have an adverse impact on the educational attainments and increase exposure to child protection risks such as sexual exploitation, child labour, neglect and physical and emotional abuse that could negatively impact child developmentally. The project is developing a response plan to ensure the needs of project beneficiaries and key stakeholders are maintained during this pandemic. We will also be considering the midline findings and recommendations as part of this response.

Whether the project plans to review their Theory of Change in light of these findings.

Although, some of the midline findings reinforce that the project continues to address key barriers to education through the range of programmatic interventions supporting quality of teaching and learning (the CPD component, teacher training, classroom support via Student Teachers and study groups), inclusive education (adapted and accessible schools, CBRVs component and the use of Itinerant teachers) and progression in the economic support (VSLAs and moving forward, livelihood grants) to families that can facilitate meeting of educational costs in a sustainable manner in order for girls and children with disabilities to transition from PS to JSS and from JSS to a successful transition. The project also recognises the need to review and re-examine the ToC due to low results in learning outcomes. It has been acknowledged that there may be a need for some of the assumptions underpinning the ToC to be re-evaluated and to probe the validity of these assumptions on whether they align with the original outcomes and outputs intended for the project, and whether these outcomes and outputs need to be re-adjusted.

The project will explore this further and any agreed amendments to the project ToC will be reviewed with the wider consortium, taking into consideration the impact, how this aligns with the existing interventions and planned activities, any timelines and/or budget implications. Amendments will be agreed with FM and updated in the relevant project documentation.

3. Key Outcome Findings

This section details the findings of the learning assessments in literacy and numeracy, including disaggregation by subgroups and characteristics and barriers.

3.1 Learning Outcome

At baseline, two versions of each learning assessment were piloted and calibrated. The second version of the learning assessments were used at midline, with the exception of a few subtasks. Full details are available in Annex 3.

All learning assessments were administered orally by the enumerator to the student. In total it took approximately 25 minutes to administer literacy and numeracy at each level. There were laminated prompts for some subtasks, and student worksheets for some SeGRA and SeGMA subtasks.

At midline, after data cleaning there were 155 EGRA/EGMA tests and 997 SeGRA/SeGMA tests, for a total of 1,152 learning assessment sets.

According to the difference-in-difference analysis presented, the targets for improvement from baseline have not been met for any learning assessment.

The midline evaluation is unable to fully explain the negative intervention effect. However, there are a number of factors which may have contributed to the results. The conclusion in section 3.1.5 explains that:

- The External Evaluator changed between baseline and midline. The EE is not able to comment on the validity of the baseline data but differences between baseline and midline data may impact the results.
- There can be a 'downturn' when interventions are first introduced as habits and norms take time to change fully.
- The educational landscape in Sierra Leone has changed since baseline. Free Quality School Education was introduced in 2019, and *Leh Wi Lan* created new lesson plans for maths and literacy.
- Intermediate Outcome analysis suggests that: lower attendance does not have a negative impact on outcomes at the JSS level; unequal treatment of girls and boys by teachers does not negatively impact learning outcomes; increased self-esteem and confidence in literacy and numeracy, and feelings of inclusion are positively related to learning outcomes; students that come from households which are more economically empowered perform better in literacy and numeracy.
- The qualitative data was generally positive about the impact of project activities on learning outcomes.

3.1.1 Calculation of learning outcomes

Each subtask's score is calculated as a percentage of correct answers, with the exception of subtasks that include a reading fluency component, or words per minute (WPM). In these questions, the score for the subtask excludes the WPM calculation and only includes correct answers to the reading comprehension questions.

Words per minute are calculated from 0-100. Scores greater than 100 are set to 100 as per FM guidelines. At midline the WPM is then calculated by the total words read correctly divided by the number of seconds elapsed during the reading, to calculate the words per second. This figure is then multiplied by 60 to provide the words per minute.

Each subtask is weighted equally in the total available score of 100. At midline, it is expected that the proportion of students scoring zero (non-learners) will reduce compared to baseline, and the proportion of students scoring in the upper ranges (emergent to proficient learners) will increase.

The baseline results have been recalculated from baseline data to include only the overlapping subtasks at midline.

3.1.2 Sample composition

The section uses the entire midline sample for most of the calculations. This includes the: students tracked from baseline, JSS3 replacement girls, and ‘top-up’ JSS1 and JSS2 students. The difference-in-difference is calculated using the results of the JSS1 and JSS2 sample of baseline girls compared to the students tracked from baseline to midline and replacements (referred to as ‘panel 1’).¹⁸ This hybrid approach combines a cross-sectional and cohort approach to facilitate comparability to baseline.

In agreement with the Fund Manager, at midline the JSS sample has not been separated into children with disabilities (CWD) and children without disabilities, as the CWD sample is too small. CWD are included in sub-group analysis.

Table 6.: SeGRA and SeGMA subtask description

Task	Description	Marks available
SeGRA		
Invented Word Recognition	Assesses ability to decode words fluently and efficiently.	20
Assessment of Reading Comprehension	Assesses ability to read sentences (words per minute) and understand what was read.	9 (for questions) WPM calculated separately and included as a subtask in the SeGRA aggregate score.
Advanced Reading Comprehension 1	Assesses ability to read sentences (words per minute) and understand what was read.	6 (for questions) WPM calculated separately and not included as a subtask.
Advanced Reading Comprehension 2	Assesses ability to read sentences (words per minute) and understand what was read.	5 (for questions) WPM calculated separately and not included as a subtask.
SeGMA		

¹⁸ Students at baseline that were in JSS1 and JSS2 and are still in those grades at midline are included in DiD.

Addition and subtraction - level 2	Assesses ability to calculate addition and subtraction problems with double digit numbers.	10
Advanced multiplication and division word problems	Assesses application of multiplication and division skills using problems in a story format.	3
Proportions (fractions/ percentages)	Assesses application of percentage and fraction knowledge using a worksheet and word problems.	3
Space and shape (geometry)	Assesses knowledge of names of shapes and types of triangles.	11

Table 7.: EGRA and EGMA subtask description

Task	Description	Marks available
EGRA		
Letter Sound Identification	Assesses pupil's knowledge of the relationship between letter signs and their sounds.	99
Familiar Word Recognition	Assesses pupils' sight word reading vocabulary using 40 common, high-frequency words from English language reading and writing.	40
Invented Word Recognition	Assesses ability to decode words fluently and efficiently.	20
Assessment of Reading Comprehension	Assesses ability to read sentences (words per minute) and understand what was read.	9 (for questions) WPM calculated separately and not included as a subtask.
EGMA		
Number identification	Assesses ability to identify numbers presented in a random order and with increasing difficulty.	20
Quantity discrimination	Assesses the ability to discriminate between two numbers.	10
Missing numbers	Assesses identification of number patterns and sequences.	10
Addition and subtraction - level 1	Assesses ability to calculate addition and subtraction problems with single digit numbers.	20

Addition and subtraction - level 2	Assesses ability to calculate addition and subtraction problems with double digit numbers.	10
Addition and subtraction word problems	Assesses application of addition and subtraction skills using problems in a story format.	6
Basic multiplication and division	Assesses ability to do basic multiplication and division with mostly single digit problems.	10

Table 8.: Overall literacy and numeracy scores (intervention and control, entire sample)

Literacy		Numeracy	
SeGRA		SeGMA	
Intervention (n=537)	Control (n=460)	Intervention (n=537)	Control (n=460)
31.22	33.90	39.84	41.93
EGRA (girls only)		EGMA (girls only)	
Intervention (n=68)	Control	Intervention (n=68)	Control
28.15	N/A	37.94	N/A

Table 9.: Overall literacy and numeracy scores (intervention and control, panel 1)

Literacy		Numeracy	
SeGRA		SeGMA	
Intervention (n=229)	Control (n=170)	Intervention (n=229)	Control (n=170)
35.42	41.84	43.50	47.23

Table 10.: Progress against targets at midline

The progress against targets has been calculated using the JSS1 and JSS2 baseline sample and panel 1 at midline (students tracked from baseline to midline, and replacements from JSS1 and JSS2).

The targets for SeGRA and SeGMA have been recalculated in the outcomes spreadsheet using recalculated baseline scores to exclude the subtasks that are not included at midline and exclude JSS3 baseline students. EGRA and EGMA have not been recalculated. The weighting applied to the evaluation performance is reflected separately in the outcomes spreadsheet (Annex 6).

	SeGRA	SeGMA	EGRA	EGMA
Target (from outcomes spreadsheet) ¹⁹	2.05	1.36	7.38	1.55
Difference-in-difference (arithmetic)	-6.52	-7.82	-28.63	-10.60
Difference-in-difference (regression)	-3.906	-4.845**	-	-
Target achieved?	No	No	No	No
Learning achievement (DiD / target)	-3.18	-5.75	-	-
Progress against target	-190%	-356%	-	-

It could be expected that the high attrition rate in the baseline JSS2 cohort (Former JSS3 at midline) has biased the performance against target. Analysis of the baseline results of JSS2 students disaggregated by students tracked to midline and students not tracked to midline shows that students not tracked score marginally lower than students tracked in SeGMA and marginally higher in SeGMA. However, these differences are not statistically significant and therefore it cannot be concluded that attrition within this cohort has affected performance against targets at midline.²⁰

The grade level table presented below is the same that was used at baseline and shows the grade level achieved for JSS intervention students only. Note that comparability to baseline is limited as the midline figures are calculated based on the entire midline sample, and the baseline results have not been recalculated for the purposes of this table.

Table 11.: Grade level achieved at midline

	Relevant subtasks	Literacy	% of JSS intervention (baseline)
Grade 3 achieved (equivalent to P3 in Sierra Leone)	SeGRA Subtask 2 (3 at BL)	Proficient in comprehension of short fluency paragraph	15% (59%)

¹⁹ The targets in the outcomes spreadsheet from baseline differ from the target presented in the logframe, which is +5.1 for JSS girls.

²⁰ Statistical significance was tested for between intervention tracked and not tracked students and control tracked and not tracked students.

Grade 4 achieved (equivalent to P4 in Sierra Leone)	SeGRA Subtask 2 (3 at BL)	Established in comprehension using simple inferences	43% (57%)
Grade 5 achieved (equivalent to P5 in Sierra Leone)	SeGRA Subtask 2 (3 at BL)	Proficient in comprehension using simple inferences	12% (17%)
Grade 6 achieved (equivalent to P6 in Sierra Leone)	SeGRA Subtasks 3 and 4 (4 and 5 at BL)	Established in comprehension using complex inferences	Subtask 3 18% Subtask 4 1% (31%)
Grade 7 achieved (equivalent to JSS1 in Sierra Leone)	SeGRA Subtasks 3 and 4 (4 and 5 at BL)	Proficient in comprehension using complex inferences	Subtask 3 10% Subtask 4 0% (2%)
	Relevant subtasks	Numeracy	% of Girls
Grade 4 achieved	SeGMA Subtask 2 (4 at BL)	Established in advanced multiplication and division	21% (31%)
Grade 5 achieved	SeGMA Subtask 2 (4 at BL)	Proficient in advanced multiplication and division	30% (23%)

Scores: Non-learner 0%; Emergent learner 1%-40%; Established learner 41%-80%; Proficient learner 81%-100%/81-100 WPM.

The changes in proficiency from baseline to midline demonstrate mixed results, with the number of students attaining proficiency actually decreasing in most categories. Although the sample has changed since baseline, and more of those included are older (JSS3 and former JSS3), this might not necessarily result in higher scores, as would otherwise be expected. One of the challenges is the setting of accurate and locally appropriate benchmarks in the context of interrupted education and a lack of national guidelines on benchmarking proficiency. The high rate of zero scores on SeGRA subtasks 3 and 4 further compounds this difficulty, and underscores the need for clearer alignment between testing, curriculum and teaching.

3.1.3 Literacy

3.1.3.1 Junior Secondary School (JSS)

The entire sample of JSS intervention students scored an average of 31.22 in SeGRA at midline, and 33.90 in the control group. The difference is not statistically significant.

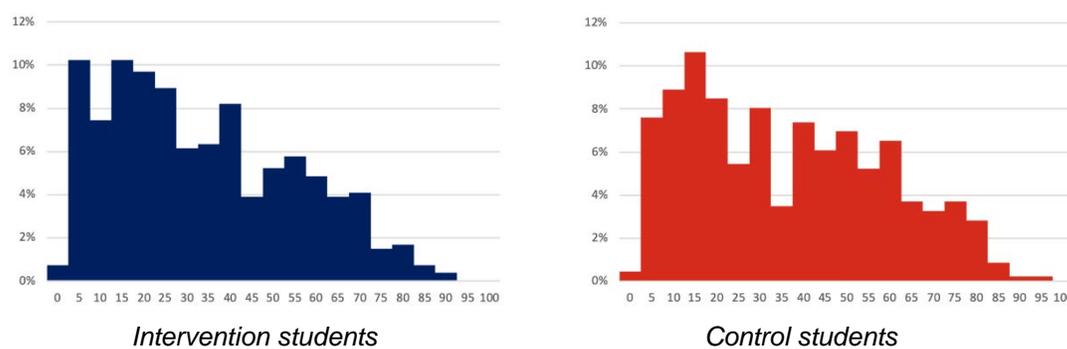
Difference-in-difference analysis of panel 1 compared to JSS1 and JSS2 girls from baseline shows that the target of 2.05 marks above and beyond the control group for SeGRA has not been met at midline. The difference-in-difference is -6.52 marks and the learning achievement is -3.18.

The distribution of aggregate scores is slightly skewed to the right for both intervention and control students, as shown in Figure 1.

Table 12.: SeGRA mean scores and standard deviation (entire sample)

Intervention mean (n=537)	Standard deviation	Control mean (n=460)	Standard deviation
31.22	21.47	33.90	22.56

Figure 1: SeGRA distribution for intervention and control students (entire sample)



Disaggregation of scores by subtask shows that intervention school students score lower than control school students in all subtasks. The differences are not statistically significant.

Table 13.: SeGRA mean scores by subtask (entire sample)

SeGRA	Intervention mean (n=537)	Control mean (n=460)	Standard Deviation in the intervention group
1. Invented Word Recognition	38.77	42.03	26.30
2. Oral reading fluency (WPM)	39.99	42.48	31.88
3. Assessment of Reading Comprehension	44.19	47.63	30.38
4. Advanced Reading Comprehension 1	26.29	28.77	30.32

5. Advanced Reading Comprehension 2	6.85	8.61	11.94
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Disaggregation of results by grade shows that results increase as students progress through grades in both intervention and control schools, as expected. The control group scored slightly higher than the intervention group in all grades. The differences are not statistically significant. The JSS1 intervention group scored higher than the control group at baseline, whereas the JSS1 intervention group at midline scored lower than the control group. Both the baseline JSS2 intervention group and the midline JSS2 group scored lower than the control group, though for the midline group the difference in scores was much smaller, (less than one-point difference between control and intervention).

Table 14.: SeGRA mean scores by grade (entire sample)

The baseline mean has been calculated using only the overlapping subtasks between baseline and midline, that is subtasks 2, 3, 4 and 5 from baseline and WPM for subtask 3. The baseline mean uses results from the entire female cohort in grades JSS1 and JSS2 at baseline, that is, it includes students that were not tracked to midline. Baseline results are not available for midline JSS1 and JSS2 students as they are primarily new students at midline.²¹

Grade at midline	Intervention Group Mean (baseline mean)	Control Group Mean (baseline mean)	Standard Deviation in the intervention group at midline
JSS1	26.00	27.36	17.76
JSS2	30.50	30.89	21.39
JSS3 (JSS1 at baseline)	36.76 (42.54)	40.71 (40.10)	21.85
Former JSS3 (JSS2 at baseline)	33.46 (40.18)	46.81 (46.54)	26.80

It is notable that the results are lower than baseline for the intervention cohort, and only marginally higher for the control cohort. It could be expected that the difference is due to the change in cohort composition at midline. However, analysis of the students tracked from baseline to midline indicates that results are lower than baseline for the tracked intervention cohort. This suggests that the sampling has not skewed the results.

Table 13: Students tracked from baseline to midline

Grade at baseline	Intervention group mean (baseline mean)	Control group mean (baseline mean)
JSS1	37.34 (45.36)	40.65 (41.76)
JSS2	31.53 (36.46)	45.21 (47.06)

Subtask 1: Invented Word Recognition

²¹ With the exception of 43 students from baseline that are in JSS1 or JSS2 at midline due to grade repetition or drop-out and re-enrolment. In total there is 1 intervention student in JSS1 and 34 in JSS2, and 1 control student in JSS1 and 7 in JSS2.

Students were presented with 20 invented English words on a piece of paper and were asked to read them aloud, for a maximum of 20 marks.

The average score was 38.77 per cent correct for intervention students, and 42.03 for control school students, an average of around 8 words each for intervention and control. The difference is not statistically significant. This subtask was not benchmarked against grade level at the baseline, so this is reflected in the midline as well.

Subtask 2: Oral reading fluency (words per minute, WPM)

Students were presented with an English short story of 78 words and were asked to read it aloud and then orally answer two sets of follow-up questions to test for basic comprehension.

The average WPM for intervention was 40 WPM, compared to 42 WPM in the control group. The difference is not statistically significant. These averages fall within the 'emergent reader' category of 6-44 words per minute.

Subtask 3: Assessment of Reading Comprehension

Students were asked to orally answer two sets of follow-up questions on the short passage to test for basic comprehension.

The average score was 44.19 per cent correct for intervention students, and 47.63 for control school students. The difference is not statistically significant.

Fifteen per cent of students achieved grade 3 level in the oral reading fluency component of this subtask (measured by those who achieve proficiency) and 43 per cent have reached grade 3 in reading comprehension (measured by those who are established learners).

Subtask 4: Assessment of Reading Comprehension 1

Students were presented with an English short story of 138 words and were asked to read it aloud and then write answers to six follow-up comprehension questions.

The average WPM for intervention students was 34 WPM, compared to 36 WPM in the control group. This is slightly lower than the WPM scores for subtask 2, which is to be expected as the passage was more difficult and longer than in subtask 2.

The average score was 26.29 per cent correct for intervention students, and 28.77 for control school students. The difference is not statistically significant. The results are much lower than for subtask 2 due to the introduction of written answers which students found difficult.

Eighteen per cent of students have reached a grade 6 level equivalency according to this subtask, and 10 per cent have achieved grade 7.

Subtask 5: Assessment of Reading Comprehension 2

Students were presented with an English short story of 179 words and were asked to read it aloud and then write answers to five follow-up comprehension questions. The questions tested inferential comprehension as well as basic comprehension.

The average WPM for intervention students was 31 WPM, compared to 34 WPM in the control group. This is slightly lower than the WPM scores for subtask 3, which is to be expected as the passage was more difficult and longer than in subtask 3.

The average score was 6.85 per cent correct for intervention students, and 8.61 for control school students. The difference is not statistically significant. Seventy per cent of intervention students and 61 per cent of control students scored 0 in this subtask.

Only one per cent of students have reached a grade 6 level equivalency according to this subtask, and zero students reached grade 7.

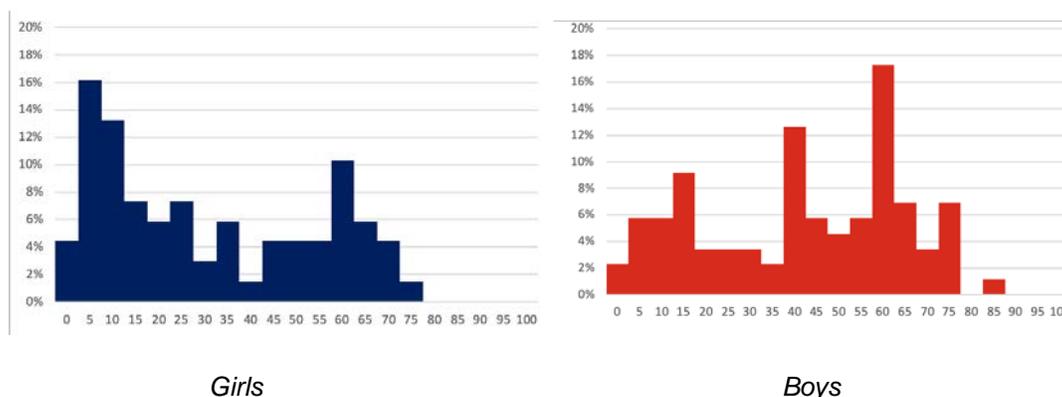
3.1.3.2 Primary

The primary sample included 68 girls and 87 boys. There is no control group at the primary level. Primary girls scored an average of 28.15 in EGRA at midline. Primary boys scored an average of 39.59. This follows the trend from baseline, in which girls scored 43.50 compared to 49.40 for boys. The scores overall are lower than at baseline. EGRA was not amended at midline and no new students were added to the sample. However, the panel is smaller at midline due to the exclusion of 12 baseline primary 1 students from the midline sample, and 23 per cent attrition since baseline which may be skewing the results.

Difference-in-difference analysis was completed using a counterfactual control based on the sample grades and benchmark grades from baseline. It should be noted that the benchmark grades at baseline for JSS1 was calculated using SeGRA rather than EGRA which is not an accurate counterfactual. Based on this, the intervention effect is -28.63 marks for primary girls at midline.

The distribution of the girls' EGRA results is mildly bimodal, whilst the distribution of the boys' results is multimodal, that is, there are various peaks and troughs, demonstrating a lack of a clear trend. This could be due to the small sample sizes at midline, with 68 girls in the sample and 87 boys at midline.

Figure 2: Distribution of EGRA aggregate results



Disaggregation of scores by subtask shows that scores increase from subtask 1 to 2, before decreasing as the subtasks get harder, which is the expected trend. It should be noted that letter sound identification is a problematic subtask in contexts such as Sierra Leone where there are multiple local languages and a lack of agreement about what constitutes an acceptable letter sound. This explains why the results are lower than the harder subsequent subtask, and the large standard deviation. It is recommended that this subtask is removed at endline to avoid adding noise to the learning scores.

Girls score lower than boys in all subtasks. The difference in familiar word identification is statistically significant at the 5 per cent level.

Table 15.: EGRA mean scores by subtask

Differences that are statistically significant are marked with an asterisk (*).

EGRA	Girls' mean (n=68)	Boys' mean (n=87)	Standard Deviation in the girls' group
1. Letter sound identification	32.71	46.34	37.05
2. Familiar word identification	37.21*	50.80*	30.26
3. Invented word recognition	26.91	35.46	28.52
4. Reading Comprehension	15.77	25.78	23.12

Disaggregation of results by grade shows that results decrease from Primary 2 (baseline) to Primary 4 (baseline) as students progress through grades for both girls and boys. The results then increase from Primary 4 to 5, and Primary 5 to 6.

The results are on the whole lower than at baseline, with the exception of Primary 2.

At each grade, boys score higher than girls, reversing the trend in Primary 2 and 3 from baseline, and following the same trend from Primary 4 to 6 at baseline. The differences are not statistically significant.

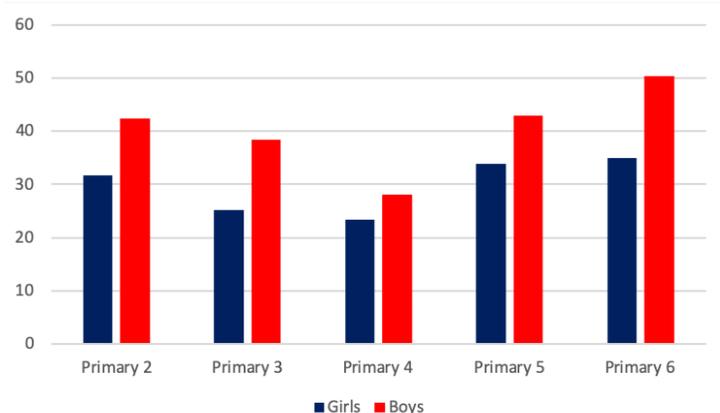
Table 16.: EGRA mean scores by grade

The scores have been calculated using the grade at baseline.

Baseline grade (expected midline grade) ²²	Girls' mean (baseline mean) n=68	Boys' mean (baseline mean) n=87	Standard deviation in the girls' group
Primary 2 (Primary 4)	31.79 (21.38)	42.39 (20.97)	28.97
Primary 3 (Primary 5)	25.22 (42.99)	38.48 (45.33)	24.37
Primary 4 (Primary 6)	23.41 (63.76)	28.01 (48.36)	19.91
Primary 5 (JSS1)	33.80 (58.48)	43.01 (51.12)	21.96
Primary 6 (JSS2)	34.88 (58.10)	50.35 (44.30)	25.40

Figure 3: EGRA results by baseline grade

²² The midline grade is 'expected' as some of the students will be repeating grades and therefore not in the indicated midline grade.



Subtask 1: Letter sound identification

Students were presented with 99 English letters in a random order and with a mixture of uppercase and lowercase letters, and were asked to read them aloud, for a maximum of 99 marks.

The average score was 32.71 per cent correct for girls, and 46.34 per cent for boys. The difference is not statistically significant.

Subtask 2: Familiar word identification

Students were presented with 40 English words and were asked to read them aloud, for a maximum of 40 marks.

The average score was 37.21 per cent for girls, and 50.80 per cent for boys. The difference is statistically significant at the 5 per cent level.

Subtask 3: Invented Word Recognition

Students were presented with 20 invented English words on a piece of paper and were asked to read them aloud, for a maximum of 20 marks. This task was the same as SeGRA subtask 1.

Girls scored an average of 26.91 per cent and boys an average of 35.46 per cent. The difference is not statistically significant.

Subtask 4: Reading comprehension

Students were presented with an English short story of 78 words and were asked to read it aloud and then orally answer two sets of follow-up questions to test for basic comprehension.

The average WPM for girls was 23 WPM, compared to 28 WPM for boys.

The average score was 15.77 per cent for girls, and 25.78 for boys. The difference is not statistically significant.

3.1.3.3 Difference-in-difference literacy analysis

JSS

Difference-in-difference analysis shows that there is a negative arithmetic DiD at midline, of -6.52, for a learning achievement of -3.18.²³ The difference-in-difference was calculated to control for age, grade and demographic factors, resulting in a DiD of -3.906 for literacy. This indicates no improvement in learning outcomes relative to the control group. The target of 2.05 above and beyond the control group has not been met at midline.

Table 17.: Literacy scores from Baseline to Midline (JSS)

The difference-in-difference uses the JSS1 and JSS2 female sample for the baseline results, and at midline uses the students tracked from baseline to midline and the replacement JSS3 girls (panel 1).²⁴ The students tracked from midline are mostly JSS3 and Former JSS3 students at midline, though some students are still in JSS1 and JSS2 at midline due to grade repetition and interruptions to their education. In total there is 1 baseline intervention student in JSS1 at midline and 34 in JSS2, and 1 control student in JSS1 and 7 in JSS2.

The baseline scores have been recalculated to include the overlapping subtasks at midline.

The ‘top-up’ students added at midline are not included in this DiD analysis at midline, but will be included at endline. These are the new JSS1 and JSS2 added at midline.

Cohort	Baseline literacy intervention	Midline literacy intervention	Difference baseline to midline	Baseline literacy control	Midline literacy control	Difference baseline to midline	Difference-in-difference (intervention – control difference)
JSS1 baseline (JSS3 midline)	42.54	37.34	-5.19	40.10	40.65	0.55	-5.74
JSS2 baseline (Former JSS3 midline)	40.18	31.53	-8.65	46.54	45.21	-1.33	-7.31

Table 18.: Difference-in-difference (JSS)

Difference-in-difference	Learning mean	
	Intervention	Control
Baseline	41.36	43.32
Midline	34.44	42.93
Change since baseline	-6.92	-0.39
Difference-in-difference (intervention change since baseline - control change)	-6.52	

²³ The difference-in-difference (also known as the intervention effect or treatment effect) shows the difference-in-difference of intervention minus the difference-in-difference of control. The learning achievement then shows the difference-in-difference divided by the target.

²⁴ Replacement JSS3 girls at midline are assumed to have been in JSS1 at baseline and are therefore included in the JSS1 calculations.

Target (from outcomes spreadsheet)	2.05
Target met?	No
Learning achievement (DiD / target)	-3.18

Table 19.: Literacy results (JSS)

Result	Details	Comments
Literacy Baseline - Midline	Beta = -3.906 p-value = .244 (single-tailed) Target = 2.05 Performance against target = -190%	

Primary

At the primary level there is no control group. The difference-in-difference is calculated using a counterfactual, according to the Fund Manager's instructions 'The GECT Outcomes Spreadsheet for No-Control Group Projects v1.4'.

Analysis using this method shows that the arithmetic difference-in-difference is -28.63 at midline for primary girls. Difference-in-difference regression shows a result of -15.395. This indicates that scores are lower at midline than anticipated.

Table 20.: Literacy scores from Baseline to Midline (Primary girls)

Baseline grade	Sample weight (at ML) %	Baseline aggregate score	Midline aggregate score	Intervention difference midline to baseline (midline - baseline)	Counterfactual difference midline to baseline (baseline grade plus one grade - baseline grade)	Intervention achievement (counterfactual DiD - intervention DiD)
Primary 2	15%	21.38	31.79	10.42	21.61	-11.20
Primary 3	24%	42.99	25.22	-17.77	20.76	-38.53

Primary 4	34%	63.76	23.41	-40.34	-5.28	-35.07
Primary 5	12%	58.48	33.80	-24.67	-0.37	-24.30
Primary 6	16%	58.10	34.88	-23.22	-3.42	-19.80
Weighted average	N/A	51.10	28.15	N/A	N/A	-28.63

JSS1 benchmark used for Primary 6 midline counterfactual = 54.68

3.1.3.4 Literacy proficiency

JSS

Table 21 shows the learning bands for panel 1 at midline. The change in band composition does not follow the expected trend from baseline to midline. Whilst there are fewer non-learners in each subtask than at baseline and higher numbers in the emergent and established categories as would be expected (except for subtasks 4 and 5), the proportion of proficient learners has reduced at midline.

Table 21.: Foundational literacy skills gaps (JSS intervention - panel 1)

The midline figures are percentages of the panel 1 intervention sample. The brackets show the percentage point change from baseline to midline.²⁵ The sample size for midline (n) is 229.

Categories	Subtask 1 Invented Word % (percentage point change from baseline)	Subtask 3 Reading comprehension % (percentage point change from baseline)	Subtask 4 Reading comprehension % 1 (percentage point change from baseline)	Subtask 5 Reading comprehension 2 % (percentage point change from baseline)
Non-learner 0%	5% (-10 percentage points from baseline)	13 (-2)	36 (-4)	66 (-4)
Emergent learner 1%-40%	47 (+8)	26 (+11)	28 (+9)	32 (+17)
Established learner 41%- 80%	41 (+3)	45 (+1)	22 (-2)	2 (-10)
Proficient learner 81%-100%	7 (-2)	16 (-11)	14 (-3)	0 (-2)

Subtask 2, oral reading fluency, uses different proficiency levels than subtasks 1, 3, 4 and 5. The change from baseline is presented in Table 22, below. It shows that there has been a decrease in reading fluency, with a 25 percentage point decrease in proficiency and 12 percentage point decrease in the proportion of established learners.

²⁵ Due to the change in composition of panel 1, the change from baseline does not refer to the exact same students as the midline figure. However, as demonstrated in Table XX, the new students do not skew the results downwards from baseline and as such the baseline and midline figures can be used to indicate a downward trend.

Table 22.: Foundational literacy skills gaps – oral reading fluency (JSS intervention - panel 1)

The oral reading fluency score for baseline was recalculated to include only grades JSS1 and JSS2 from baseline and uses the overlapping subtask with midline. The midline score refers to panel 1.

Categories	Subtask 2 Oral reading fluency (words per minute) % (percentage point change from baseline)
Non-reader 0-5 WPM	9% (-1 percentage points from baseline)
Emergent reader 6-44 WPM	45 (+38)
Established learner 45-80 WPM	26 (-12)
Proficient learner 81-100 WPM	21 (-24)

For comparison from midline to endline, Table 23 presents the literacy skills gaps for the entire midline intervention and control sample. It shows that students in control schools have higher levels of proficiency across all subtasks than intervention students, with the exception of subtask 5.

Table 23.: Foundational literacy skills gaps (JSS intervention - entire sample)

Categories	Subtask 1 Invented Word		Subtask 3 Reading comprehension		Subtask 4 Reading comprehension 1		Subtask 5 Reading comprehension 2	
	Intervention (n=537)	Control (n=460)	Intervention	Control	Intervention	Control	Intervention	Control
Non-learner 0%	6%	4%	15%	9%	43%	40%	70%	61%
Emergent learner 1%-40%	50%	47%	29%	34%	28%	29%	29%	38%
Established learner 41%-80%	38%	40%	43%	42%	18%	20%	1%	1%

Proficient learner 81%-100%	6%	8%	12%	15%	10%	12%	0%	0%
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At midline, it would be expected that the proportion of students reading proficiently would decrease from subtask 2 to 3 to 4, as the passages become longer and more difficult. This pattern is largely borne out at midline, with the exception of proficiency in WPM in subtask 4 which is slightly lower than in subtask 5. The oral reading fluency levels are similar for intervention and control students at midline. This indicates that the intervention students are on a par with the control group in foundational reading skills, and it is in comprehension of reading that the intervention group performs slightly lower. The consistent presence of this foundational literacy skills gap across intervention and control groups raises the question of the suitability of the tools of measurement to the pedagogical approach to literacy. This is clear within the primary school context and EGRA tests, which focus on pre-literacy skills that are not matched to the pedagogical and linguistic context. The secondary literacy skills build upon the foundational literacy and pre-literacy skills and when these are not addressed, the gap remains unaddressed.

Table 24.: Oral reading fluency - Words Per Minute (JSS intervention and control - entire sample)

Categories	Subtask 2 (WPM for passage used in subtask 3)		WPM for subtask 4		WPM for subtask 5	
	Intervention (n=537)	Control (n=460)	Intervention	Control	Intervention	Control
Non-reader 0-5 WPM %	10%	7%	23%	21%	24%	19%
Emergent reader 6-44 WPM %	51%	49%	43%	42%	50%	49%
Established reader 45-80 WPM %	24%	28%	25%	26%	16%	21%
Proficient reader 81-100 WPM %	15%	15%	9%	11%	11%	12%

Primary

Table 25 shows the learning bands for primary girls and boys at midline. The figures generally follow the expected trend, that as subtasks get harder the proportion of non-learners and emergent learners increases and the proportion of established and proficient learners decreases. The exception is subtask 1, letter sounds, which was discussed above as this subtask is problematic. Girls demonstrate a lower level of proficiency than boys, reflecting the higher scores as discussed above. This also reflects a global trend in which females are more likely to be illiterate than males.²⁶ Literacy skills gaps at the primary level were not explored at baseline and therefore comparison is not possible. It is recommended to compare proficiency levels at endline to assess changes over time between the genders.

Table 25.: Foundational literacy skills gaps (Primary - entire sample)

²⁶ See: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/education/literacy/>

Categories	Subtask 1 Letter sound identification		Subtask 2 Familiar word recognition		Subtask 3 Invented word identification		Subtask 4 Reading comprehension	
	Girls (n=68)	Boys (n=87)	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Non-learner 0%	26%	11%	10%	5%	26%	14%	54%	39%
Emergent learner 1%-40%	37%	36%	49%	32%	44%	39%	31%	29%
Established learner 41%-80%	16%	28%	38%	54%	24%	41%	13%	30%
Proficient learner 81%-100%	21%	25%	3%	9%	6%	6%	1%	2%

Primary girls also show a lower level of oral reading fluency than boys at midline, with the exception of the proficient reader category, in which girls perform slightly better.

Table 26.: Oral reading fluency - Words Per Minute (Primary - entire sample)

Categories	Subtask 4	
	Girls (n=68)	Boys (n=87)
Non-reader 0-5 WPM %	44%	32%
Emergent reader 6-44 WPM %	32%	39%
Established reader 45-80 WPM %	13%	20%
Proficient reader 81-100 WPM %	10%	8%

3.1.4 Numeracy

3.1.4.1 JSS

The entire sample of JSS intervention students scored an average of 39.84 per cent at midline, and 41.93 in the control group. The difference is not statistically significant.

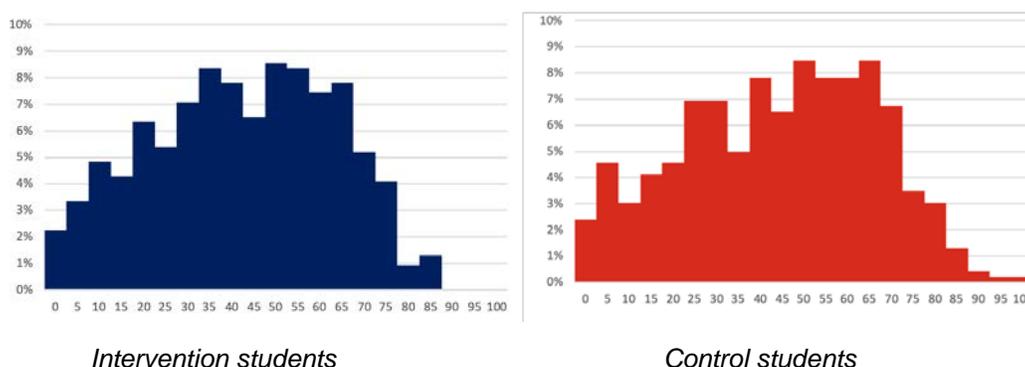
Difference-in-difference analysis of panel 1 compared to JSS1 and JSS2 girls at baseline shows that the target of 1.36 marks above and beyond the control group for SeGMA has not been met at midline. The arithmetic difference-in-difference is -7.82 marks and the learning achievement is -5.75. The difference-in-difference was calculated to control for age, grade and demographic factors, resulting in a DiD of -4.845 for numeracy. This indicates no improvement in learning outcomes relative to the control group.

The distribution of aggregate scores is normal for both intervention and control students, as shown in Figure 4.

Table 27.: SeGMA mean scores and standard deviation (entire sample)

Intervention mean (n=537)	Standard deviation	Control mean (n=460)	Standard deviation
39.84	20.68	41.93	21.70

Figure 4: SeGMA distribution for intervention and control students (entire sample)



Disaggregation of scores by subtask shows that intervention school students score lower than control school students in all subtasks except for advanced multiplication and division, in which they score one percentage point higher. The difference for the percentages and fractions subtask is statistically significant.

Table 28.: SeGMA mean scores by subtask (entire sample)

Differences that are statistically significant are marked with an asterisk (*).

SeGMA	Intervention mean (n=537)	Control mean (n=460)	Standard Deviation in the intervention group
1. Addition and subtraction level 2	62.33	64.15	30.37
2. Advanced multiplication/division	50.96	49.93	39.40
3. Percentages and fractions	29.56*	35.43*	26.27
4. Spaces and shapes	16.49	18.22	15.33

Disaggregation of results by grade shows that results increase as students progress through grades in both intervention and control schools, as expected. The control group scored slightly higher than the intervention group in all grades. The differences are not statistically significant.

Unlike SeGRA, the results at midline are higher than the results at baseline, in line with expectations.

Table 29.: SeGMA mean scores by grade (entire sample)

The baseline mean has been calculated using only the overlapping subtasks between baseline and midline, that is subtasks 2, 4, 5 and 6 from baseline. The baseline mean uses results from the entire female cohort at baseline. Baseline results are not available for JSS1 and JSS2 at midline as they are new students at midline.

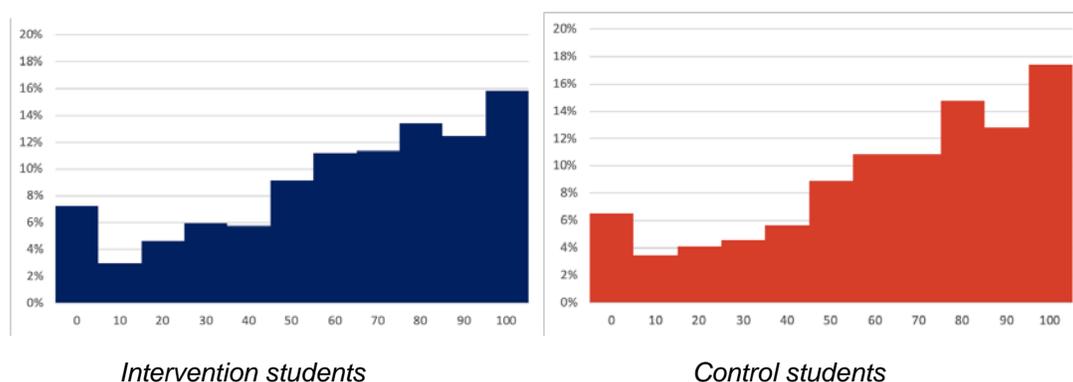
Grade at midline	Intervention Group Mean (baseline mean)	Control Group Mean (baseline mean)	Standard Deviation in the intervention group
JSS1	34.65	36.41	20.64
JSS2	39.62	40.63	20.90
JSS3 (JSS1 at baseline)	43.69 (30.51)	46.34 (26.00)	19.09
Former JSS3 (JSS2 at baseline)	45.08 (31.27)	51.72 (30.42)	21.28

Subtask 1: Addition and subtraction level 2

In this subtask, students were presented with 5 addition and 5 subtraction problems with double digit numbers, for a maximum score of 10.

This was the SeGMA subtask with the highest scores, which is expected as it is the easiest one. There is a slight ceiling effect in the score at midline as shown in Figure 5, with 28 per cent of intervention students and 30 per cent of control students scoring between 80 and 100 per cent. However, the majority of students scored under 80 per cent so it is recommended to keep the subtask at endline. Intervention school students scored an average of 62.33, and control school students scored 64.15. The difference is not statistically significant.

Figure 5: SeGMA subtask 1 score distribution (entire sample)



Subtask 2: Advanced multiplication and division

In this subtask, students were presented with 3 multiplication and division word problems, for a maximum of 3 marks.

Intervention school students scored an average of 50.96, and control school students scored 49.93. The difference is not statistically significant.

At midline, 21 per cent of students reached grade level 4 in this subtask and 30 per cent achieved grade level 5.

Subtask 3: Percentages and fractions

In this subtask, students were presented with 2 word problems and a worksheet-based fraction question, for a maximum of 3 marks.

Intervention school students scored an average of 29.56, and control school students scored 35.43. This difference is significant at the 5 per cent level.

Subtask 4: Spaces and shapes

In this subtask, students were presented with a worksheet to test their knowledge of shape names, and types of triangles, for a maximum of 11 marks.

Intervention school students scored an average of 16.49, and control school students scored 18.22. This difference is not statistically significant.

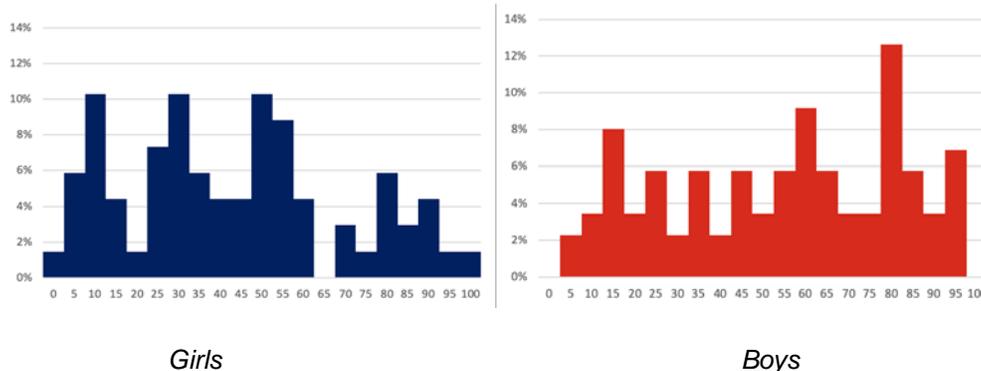
3.1.4.2 Primary

Primary girls scored an average of 37.94 in EGMA at midline. Primary boys scored an average of 49.40. This follows the pattern from baseline, in which girls scored 42.60 compared to 48.50 for boys.

Difference-in-difference analysis was completed using a counterfactual control based on the sample grades and benchmark grades from baseline. It should be noted that the benchmark grades at baseline for JSS1 was calculated using SeGMA rather than EGMA which is not an accurate counterfactual. Based on this, the intervention effect is -10.60 marks for primary girls at midline.

The girls' and boys' aggregate results are not normally distributed. As with the EGRA results, this could be due to the small sample sizes, with 68 girls and 87 boys at midline.

Figure 6: Distribution of EGMA aggregate results



Disaggregation of scores by subtask shows does not move in the expected direction. It would be expected that the average score reduces subtask to subtask as they get progressively more difficult. The scores highlight that missing numbers, subtask 3, is more difficult than some of the subtasks that come later.

Girls score lower than boys in all subtasks. The difference in basic multiplication and division (subtask 7) is statistically significant at the 5 per cent level.

Overall, girls score lower than boys in all EGRA and EGMA subtasks. However, the qualitative data shows a more mixed picture of boys' and girls' relative performance in literacy and numeracy. Some of the qualitative data appears consistent with the quantitative data which shows girls scoring lower than boys across EGRA and EGMA. For example, in a PV FGD at a primary school in Kailahun, the PVs

explained that they had seen some progress amongst girls in terms of literacy and numeracy, but that boys continue to pass exams at higher rates than girls at their schools. However, other qualitative data appears to contradict the learning assessment results. For example, in an ST FGD in Moyamba, teachers felt that girls and boys performance in literacy and numeracy was equal, or '50/50.' And in an ST KII in Port Loko, and a PV FGD in Kailahun, participants explained that the performance of the girls at their school in national exams was now better than the boys.

Table 30.: EGMA mean scores by subtask

Differences that are statistically significant are marked with an asterisk (*). Disaggregation by subtask is not available in the baseline report.

EGMA	Girls' mean (n=68)	Boys' mean (n=87)	Standard Deviation in the girls' group
1. Number identification	59.93	73.33	35.96
2. Quantity discrimination	58.53	70.00	29.84
3. Missing numbers	23.53	33.22	21.49
4. Addition and subtraction - level 1	41.54	58.05	36.69
5. Addition and subtraction - level 2	31.03	43.33	34.04
6. Addition and subtraction word problems	35.29	40.42	32.26
7. Basic multiplication and division	15.74*	27.47*	20.47

Disaggregation of results by grade shows that results increase as students progress through grades, as expected. The boys score slightly higher than the girls in all grades. The differences are not statistically significant.

For the majority of grades, the average score is higher at midline than at baseline. However for some groups the baseline score is higher than the midline score. This is true for: Primary 2 girls; Primary 3 girls; Primary 4 girls and boys; and Primary 5 girls.

Table 31.: EGMA mean scores by grade

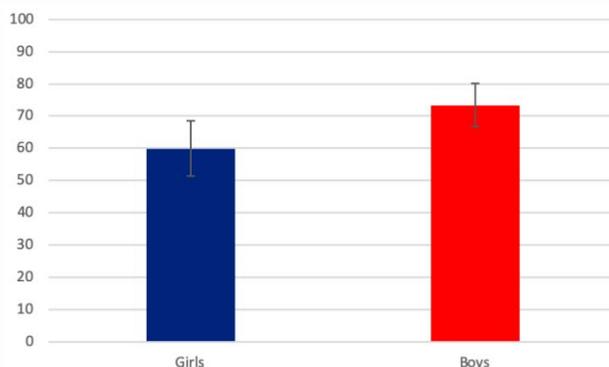
Grade at baseline (expected grade at midline)	Girls' mean (baseline mean)	Boys' mean (baseline mean)	Standard Deviation in the intervention group
Primary 2 (Primary 4)	30.05 (31.50)	33.44 (24.80)	31.84
Primary 3 (Primary 5)	30.09 (38.70)	39.68 (39.10)	25.17
Primary 4 (Primary 6)	40.77 (47.50)	48.60 (59.60)	25.17
Primary 5 (JSS1)	51.43 (54.00)	62.63 (59.30)	22.41
Primary 6 (JSS2)	57.19 (49.50)	72.92 (59.20)	22.09

Subtask 1: Number identification

Students were presented with 20 numbers and asked to identify them, for a maximum of 20 marks.

Girls scored an average of 59.93 per cent in this subtask, compared to 73.33 per cent for boys. The difference is large but is not statistically significant as demonstrated in Figure 7 as the confidence intervals are large.²⁷

Figure 7: Confidence intervals for EGMA subtask 1 (number identification)



Subtask 2: Quantity discrimination

For this subtask, students had ten pairs of numbers and were asked to determine which was the bigger number in each pair, for a total score out of 10.

Girls scored an average of 58.53 per cent in this subtask, compared to 70.00 per cent for boys. The difference is not statistically significant.

Subtask 3: Missing numbers

The missing numbers subtask presents students with ten sequences of numbers with one blank in each sequence and asks them to identify the missing number in the sequence, for a maximum of 10 marks.

In this task, girls scored an average of 23.53 per cent, compared to 33.22 per cent for boys. The difference is not statistically significant.

Subtask 4: Addition and subtraction - level 1

This subtask required students to perform ten single-digit addition exercises, and ten single-digit subtraction exercises, for a maximum of 20 marks.

As with the previous subtasks, girls scored lower than boys, with an average of 41.54 per cent compared to 58.05 per cent. The difference is not statistically significant.

Subtask 5: Addition and subtraction - level 2

In this subtask, students were presented with 5 addition and 5 subtraction problems with double digit numbers, for a maximum score of 10. This subtask is the same as SeGMA subtask 1.

Primary girls scored an average of 31.03 per cent, compared to 43.33 per cent for boys. The difference is not statistically significant.

Subtask 6: Addition and subtraction word problems

This subtask contains six word problems to test addition and subtraction skills.

Girls scored an average of 35.29 compared to 40.42 for boys. The difference is not statistically significant.

²⁷ i.e. there is not certainty to the 95% level that the means do not overlap.

Subtask 7: Basic multiplication and division

In the final EGMA subtask, students were asked ten single digit multiplication and division questions.

As with the other subtasks, girls scored lower than boys, with 15.74 compared to 27.47. This difference is statistically significant.

3.1.4.3 Difference-in-difference numeracy analysis

JSS

Difference-in-difference analysis shows that there is a negative arithmetic DiD at midline, of -7.82, for a learning achievement of -5.75. The target of 1.36 marks above and beyond the control group has not been met at midline.

Table 32.: Numeracy scores from Baseline to Midline (JSS)

The difference-in-difference uses the entire female sample for the baseline results, and at midline uses the students tracked from baseline to midline and the replacement girls (panel 1).

The ‘top-up’ students added at midline are not included in this DiD analysis at midline, but will be included at endline.

Cohort	Baseline numeracy intervention	Midline numeracy intervention	Difference baseline to midline	Baseline numeracy control	Midline numeracy control	Difference baseline to midline	Difference -in- difference (intervention – control difference)
JSS1 baseline	30.51	42.86	12.35	26.00	45.67	19.66	-7.32
JSS2 baseline	31.27	44.25	12.98	30.42	51.72	21.31	-8.33

Table 33.: Difference-in-difference (JSS)

Difference-in-difference	Learning mean	
	Intervention	Control
Baseline	30.89	28.21
Midline	43.56	48.69
Change since baseline	12.66	20.49

Difference-in-difference (intervention change since baseline - control change)	-7.82
Target (from outcomes spreadsheet)	1.36
Target met?	No
Learning achievement (DiD / target)	-5.75

Table 34.: Numeracy results (JSS)

Result	Details	Comments
Numeracy Baseline - Midline	Beta =-4.845 p-value =.033 Target = 1.36 Performance against target = -356%	

Primary

As with EGRA, for EGMA there is no control group. The difference-in-difference is calculated using a counterfactual, according to the Fund Manager's instructions 'The GECT Outcomes Spreadsheet for No-Control Group Projects v1.4'.

Analysis using this method shows that the arithmetic difference-in-difference is -7.95 at midline for primary girls. The DiD regression shows a result of -4.644. This indicates that scores are lower at midline than anticipated.

Table 35.: Numeracy scores from Baseline to Midline (Primary girls)

Baseline grade	Sample weight (at ML) %	Baseline aggregate score	Midline aggregate score	Intervention difference midline to baseline (midline - baseline)	Counterfactual difference midline to baseline (baseline grade plus one grade - baseline grade)	Intervention achievement (counterfactual DiD - intervention DiD)
Primary 2	15%	31.50	26.90	-4.60	7.20	-11.80
Primary 3	24%	38.70	27.32	-11.38	8.80	-20.18
Primary 4	34%	47.50	38.28	-9.22	6.50	-15.72
Primary 5	12%	54.00	48.93	-5.07	-4.50	-0.57
Primary 6	16%	49.50	54.72	5.22	-2.62	7.83

Weighted average	-	44.16	37.94	-	-	-10.60
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JSS1 benchmark used for Primary 6 midline counterfactual = 46.88

3.1.4.4 Numeracy proficiency

JSS

Table 36 shows the learning bands for panel 1 at midline. The change in band composition from baseline to midline mostly follows the expected trend for all subtasks 1, 2 and 4, that is, a decrease in non-learners and an increase in numeracy skills at the emergent, established and/or proficient learner level.

Table 36.: Foundational numeracy skills gaps (JSS intervention - panel 1)

The midline figures are percentages of the panel 1 intervention sample. The sample size for midline (n) is 229. The baseline figures used to calculate the percentage point change from baseline are taken from JSS1 and JSS2 grades at baseline and are therefore comparable.

Categories	Subtask 1 Addition and subtraction level 2 midline (percentage point change from baseline)	Subtask 2 Advanced multiplication/division midline (percentage point change from baseline)	Subtask 3 Percentages and fractions midline (percentage point change from baseline)	Subtask 4 Spaces and shapes midline (percentage point change from baseline)
Non-learner 0%	5% (-1 percentage point change from baseline)	23 (+2)	33 (-35)	22 (-53)
Emergent learner 1%-40%	14 (-5)	21 (-6)	19 (+3)	69 (+49)
Established learner 41%-80%	46 (-4)	22 (-25)	46 (+31)	8 (+4)
Proficient learner 81%-100%	35 (+10)	34 (+29)	2 (+1)	0 (-1)

For comparison from midline to endline, Table 37 presents the numeracy skills gaps for the entire midline intervention and control sample. Proficiency levels are similar for both intervention and control school students. This is not reflected in the SeGMA aggregate scores. The difference could be due to the large ranges used for proficiency levels which do not capture the difference in averages depending on whether a student is at the low end of a range or the high end of a range.

Table 37.: Foundational numeracy skills gaps (JSS intervention - entire sample)

Categories	Subtask 1 Addition and subtraction level 2	Subtask 2 Advanced multiplication/division	Subtask 3 Percentages and fractions	Subtask 4 Spaces and shapes
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	Intervention (n=537)	Control (n=460)	Intervention	Control	Intervention	Control	Intervention	Control
Non-learner 0%	7%	7%	28%	30%	37%	28%	28%	26%
Emergent learner 1%-40%	19%	18%	22%	18%	17%	18%	66%	65%
Established learner 41%-80%	45%	45%	21%	24%	44%	49%	6%	8%
Proficient learner 81%-100%	28%	30%	30%	28%	1%	4%	0%	1%

Primary

Table 38 shows the learning bands for primary girls and boys at midline. The figures generally follow the expected trend, that as subtasks get harder the proportion of non-learners and emergent learners increases and the proportion of established and proficient learners decreases. Girls generally demonstrate a lower level of proficiency than boys, reflecting the higher scores as discussed above. The numeracy skills gaps indicate ongoing challenges for attaining expected levels of proficiency. The nature of foundational numeracy skills is that they build upon one another, meaning inability to attain a certain level of proficiency precludes attainment in skills which build upon that proficiency.

Table 38.: Foundational numeracy skills gaps (Primary - entire sample)

Categories	Subtask 1 Number identification		Subtask 2 Quantity discrimination		Subtask 3 Missing number		Subtask 4 Addition and subtraction level 1		Subtask 5 Addition and subtraction level 2		Subtask 6 Word problems		Subtask 7 Basic multiplication/division	
	Girls (n=68)	Boys (n=87)	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Non-learner 0%	7%	3%	6%	8%	28%	20%	16%	10%	43%	22%	29%	25%	46%	31%

Emergent learner 1%-40%	26%	15%	21%	13%	51%	47%	40%	29%	26%	31%	34%	24%	43%	39%
Established learner 41%-80%	32%	25%	57%	39%	21%	33%	21%	17%	22%	30%	21%	34%	12%	29%
Proficient learner 81%-100%	34%	56%	16%	40%	0%	0%	24%	44%	9%	17%	16%	16%	0%	1%

3.1.5 Conclusion

The targets as set by the outcomes spreadsheets (see Annex 6) have not been met at midline; the intervention effect has been negative across all learning assessments. Analysis of the results of students tracked from baseline to midline at the JSS level does not correct this, and actually worsens the intervention effect.

The learning assessments used at midline were the second version of learning assessments piloted and calibrated at baseline. This is therefore not likely to be an explanation for the negative intervention effect. However, the baseline External Evaluator is different from the midline External Evaluator and therefore the midline EE cannot comment on the validity of the baseline data.

However, it is important to note that learning outcomes measurements may not show improvements - even when learning environments are visibly improving - for instance when: teaching continues to follow a narrow didactic model, the curriculum is meaningless or new, or the measurements of learning outcomes don't reflect what is taught and learnt and the measurements are decontextualized. Another possible reason for the seemingly negative intervention effect is that when interventions are implemented, there can be sometimes a 'downturn' in results as everyone adjusts to new ways of doing things.

In Sierra Leone there have been contextual changes since baseline which may have impacted the project's outcomes. The introduction of Free Quality School Education by the government and the subsequent removal of bursaries as a project activity is likely to have caused a hit to economic empowerment of households as community schools are not eligible for FQSE. Secondly, in 2018 the national *Leh Wi Lan* project published and distributed new lesson plans for maths and literacy at the secondary level, and trained teachers in how to use them.²⁸ This change may have caused a 'downturn' as stated above. It is unknown at midline how many GATE GEC schools have received this intervention, it is recommended to explore this more at endline.

A summary of the learning outcomes based on the Intermediate Outcomes is presented in the table below. The data is explored more in Chapter 6. The midline is unable to fully explain all of the trends outlined, however, the midline findings suggest that:

²⁸ <https://www.camb-ed.com/intdev/article/510/education-at-the-heart-of-sierra-leones-post-recovery-and-march-to-growth>

- Attendance does not have a negative impact on learning outcomes at the JSS level, but it does at the primary level.
- Unequal treatment of girls and boys by teachers does not negatively impact learning outcomes.
- Increased self-esteem and confidence in literacy and numeracy, and feelings of inclusion are positively related to learning outcomes.
- Students that come from households which are more economically empowered perform better in literacy and numeracy.

Community attitudes towards girls' education are nearly entirely positive and therefore learning outcome results were not analysed with this disaggregation.

Table 39.: Intermediate Outcomes and learning outcomes for female intervention students

Intermediate Outcome	Literacy	Numeracy
JSS		
Attendance	Minimal reduction in score with more than 6 days absence.	Increase in outcome with more than 6 days of absence.
Teaching quality	Students who report that their teachers treat boys and girls differently score slightly higher than students who report that their teachers treat boys and girls equally.	Students who report that their teachers treat boys and girls differently score slightly higher than students who report that their teachers treat boys and girls equally.
Self esteem	Outcomes increase with an increased participation and learning score, though plateau at the highest end, between 5 and 6. Outcomes increase with inclusion scores up to a score of 5, but then drops slightly at the highest score of 6.	Outcomes increase with an increased participation and learning score, though plateau slightly at the highest end, between 5 and 6. Outcomes increase with higher inclusion score.
Economic empowerment	Outcomes for students whose caregivers are VSLA members and can afford to pay 50% or more of education costs score higher than those whose caregivers cannot.	Outcomes for students whose caregivers are VSLA members and can afford to pay 50% or more of education costs score higher than those whose caregivers cannot.
Community attitudes	Learning outcomes were not analysed by community attitudes as these were nearly 100% positive.	Learning outcomes were not analysed by community attitudes as these were nearly 100% positive.
Primary		
Attendance	The results are substantially lower for girls that missed 6 days or more in the last school year.	The results are substantially lower for girls that missed 6 days or more in the last school year.
Teaching quality	Students who report that their teachers treat boys and girls differently score lower than students who report that their teachers treat boys and girls equally.	Students who report that their teachers treat boys and girls differently score lower than students who report that their teachers treat boys and girls equally.
Self esteem	Outcomes increase with an increased participation and learning score, though decrease slightly at the highest end, between 5 and 6.	Outcomes increase with an increased participation and learning score, though plateau slightly at the highest end, between 5 and 6.

	Outcomes increase with inclusion scores up to a score of 5, but then drops slightly at the highest score of 6.	Outcomes increase with higher inclusion score.
Economic empowerment	Outcomes for students whose caregivers are VSLA members and can afford to pay 50% or more of education costs score higher than those whose caregivers cannot.	Outcomes for students whose caregivers are VSLA members and can afford to pay 50% or more of education costs score higher than those whose caregivers cannot.
Community attitudes	Learning outcomes were not analysed by community attitudes as these were nearly 100% positive.	Learning outcomes were not analysed by community attitudes as these were nearly 100% positive.

In addition, these results run somewhat counter to the qualitative data collected relating to learning outcomes. Of those school staff and stakeholders that discussed learning outcomes, most pointed to positive improvements in learning outcomes as a result of the project intervention. Several staff, and one DEO (Port Loko) said that there had been improvements in performances of students in national exams, which they particularly attributed to the Study Group component of the project. Whilst some teachers were more cautious about the contribution of the project to improving learning outcomes, overall responses were positive in this regard. Related to this, members of a study group do score slightly higher than the average in student self-reported perceptions of learning in both numeracy and literacy (See Chapter 6, Section 6.2.2). Perceptions of learning is a new metric at midline, but can be compared at endline and triangulated with data on learning outcomes to achieve a more nuanced picture.

3.2 Subgroup analysis of the Learning Outcome

3.2.1 District

JSS

The district with the highest average score is Moyamba, for both intervention and control school students. In Kailahun, Kenema and Moyamba intervention school students scored higher than control school students, as shown in Figure 8. The lowest scores are in Kenema.

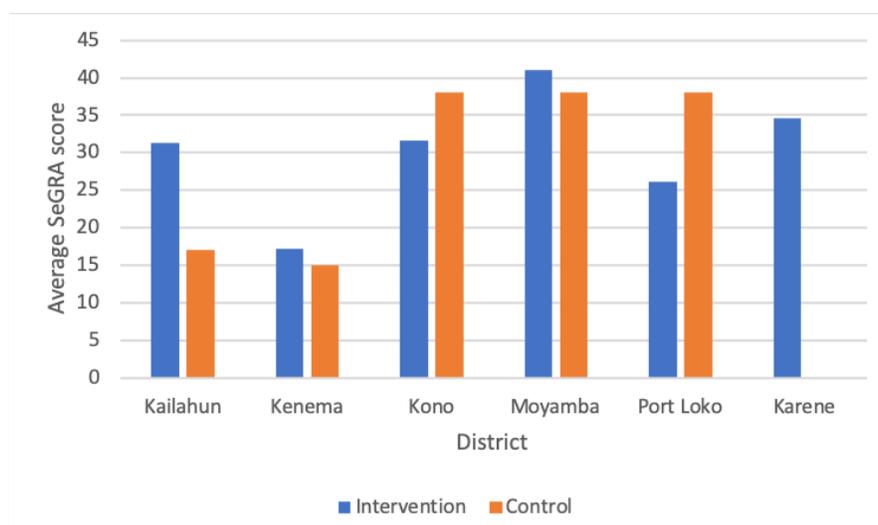
The differences between intervention and control school results are statistically significant at the 5 per cent level in Kailahun and Port Loko. Regression analysis does not result in any notable correlations between district and learning or transition outcomes.

Table 40.: Literacy scores by district (JSS - entire sample)

	Intervention midline	Control midline	SD intervention midline	n intervention midline	n control midline
Kailahun	31.35*	17.04*	20.53	82	24
Kenema	17.27	14.96	17.66	68	60
Kono	31.63	37.99	18.63	49	71
Moyamba	40.96	38.05	20.60	158	106
Port Loko	26.06*	37.99*	23.12	144	199

Karene	34.58	-	24.64	36	0
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Figure 8: Literacy scores by district (JSS - entire sample)



The numeracy scores disaggregated by district do not follow the same trend as literacy in all districts. In Kailahun and Kenema intervention school students scored higher than the control school students, but control school students scored higher than intervention in Moyamba. The differences between intervention and control school results are not statistically significant at the 5 per cent level in any district.

As with literacy, the lowest scores are in Kenema.

Table 41.: Numeracy scores by district (JSS - entire sample)

	Intervention midline	Control midline	SD intervention midline	n intervention midline	n control midline
Kailahun	43.39	36.94	19.80	82	24
Kenema	29.56	28.31	18.36	68	60
Kono	43.49	49.37	19.06	49	71
Moyamba	46.66	52.25	20.45	158	106
Port Loko	34.24	38.49	20.00	144	199
Karene	38.59	-	19.75	36	0

As discussed in Chapter 2, there are regional disparities in education provision which may affect the learning outcomes. For both primary and JSS district disaggregations it is also potentially important to note that, according to the baseline report, the Ebola crisis particularly affected three GEC 1/GATE-GEC operational districts (Kenema, Kailahun, Port Loko).²⁹ This could be also relevant when exploring reasons why there are variations in learning outcomes between districts.

The IO attendance findings do not explain the district trend in learning outcomes. They show that 19 per cent of intervention students sampled in Port Loko missed 6 days or more of school last year, which could

²⁹ Baseline report, p. 18

contribute to the comparatively low scores in that district. However, in Kenema only 7% of students missed 6 days or more which does not explain the lowest results overall for that district in both literacy and numeracy. Moyamba has the highest score for intervention across the districts but 11% of students missed 6 days or more of school in one year. It is notable that Kenema is the only district in which the difference between intervention and control schools is not statistically significant for both subject areas. This indicates that the conditions which lead to low learning outcomes in Kenema are experienced by the majority of students.

There is little variation between districts on perceptions of inclusive teaching practices nor participation and learning scores.

The differences in levels of agency between districts do not correlate with the learning outcome results. Kono has the lowest proportion of students that participate in decision-making, and Moyamba has the highest, but both districts have comparatively high learning outcomes.

At midline, most students are aged 12 or over and as such the results have not been disaggregated by age group.

Children with disabilities score lower in all learning assessments at a 5 per cent level of statistical significance (16.72 SeGRA, 16.31 SeGMA). The table below breaks down the learning outcomes by type of disability. The table suggests that children with difficulties to remember or concentrate, vision, communication and walking have the lowest learning outcomes, whilst hearing difficulties impact learning outcomes the least. It should be noted that the sample sizes are small which affects interpretation of the results. Regression shows a moderate correlation between disability status and numeracy outcomes, but not literacy outcomes.

Table 42.: Learning outcomes by disability type (JSS)

Disability type	Intervention literacy	Intervention numeracy	n intervention	Control literacy	Control numeracy	n control
Remembering/concentration	19.67	14.58	2	3.20	6.25	1
Vision	8.60	19.32	1	11.00	29.55	1
Hearing	17.12	26.97	2	12.23	30.54	3
Walking	-	-	0	7.10	17.90	2
Communication	29.50	19.58	1	1.20	15.00	1
Self-care	-	-	0	-	-	0

Other characteristics which result in lower outcomes for intervention students at a statistically significant level are household poverty and serious illness, both for literacy only.

Safety and sanitary WASH facilities are the two main barriers to intervention student learning outcomes in both literacy and numeracy. Students who do not use a toilet score lower in at a statistically significant level, and those who do not use drinking water at school score lower in literacy at a statistically significant level. Lack of access to separate, safe and sanitary toilet facilities is recognised in the sector as a barrier

to girls' education in particular.³⁰ This is borne out in the attendance data as fifty-nine per cent of the intervention students who do not use a toilet at school missed school in the previous school year, compared to the average of 41 per cent.

Unsafe travel to and from school and feelings of safety at school also have a statistically significant impact on learning outcomes. Feelings of safety at school impacts numeracy results more than literacy results, and students of caregivers that state it is 'fairly' or 'very' unsafe for girls and boys to travel to school score lower in literacy. There are fewer secondary schools and therefore travel takes longer than to primary school. Sixty-three per cent of JSS intervention students live in households up to 30 minutes walk from the nearest JSS. A further 20 per cent live 30 minutes to an hour walk from the nearest JSS.

Barriers of having a LOI different to a student's mother tongue, having a head of household with no education, or a high chore burden do not strongly correlate with learning or transition outcomes. This is also the case at the primary level.

Primary

At the primary level, boys performed better than girls in all districts for both literacy and numeracy, except for literacy in Kailahun. Primary girls scored lowest in literacy in Kenema, and lowest in numeracy in Port Loko. Notably, Moyamba sees the highest numeracy scores, which reflects the JSS scores, but for literacy the girls in Moyamba do not perform as strongly.

Table 43.: Literacy scores by district (Primary)

	Girls midline	Boys midline	SD girls midline	n girls midline	n boys midline
Kailahun	46.45	39.34	20.79	11	14
Kenema	14.95	28.72	18.68	12	9
Kono	42.96	53.67	11.92	8	14
Moyamba	23.50	38.20	22.73	15	15
Port Loko	23.99	37.46	23.93	22	35
Karene	-	-	-	-	-

Table 44.: Numeracy scores by district (Primary)

	Girls midline	Boys midline	SD girls midline	n girls midline	n boys midline
Kailahun	38.83	50.19	24.90	11	14
Kenema	37.90	48.39	26.87	12	9
Kono	45.92	57.72	28.97	8	14
Moyamba	52.51	67.54	24.97	15	15

³⁰ <https://www.actionaid.org.uk/blog/news/2015/11/19/what-have-toilets-got-to-do-with-girls-education>
<https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/no-girl-left-behind-education-africa>

Port Loko	24.69	38.25	23.45	22	35
Karene	-	-	-	-	-

Older female primary students score more highly than younger female primary students, with students in the 0-11 age range scoring an average of 29.29 compared to 42.37 for the students who are 12 and older. This would be expected given the cognitive development of the older students compared to the younger students.

Unlike SeGRA and SeGMA, children with disabilities at the primary level do not have statistically significant lower than average learning assessment results. Overall, CWD scored 32.47 in EGRA and 31.11 in EGMA. Boys with disabilities scored higher than girls with disabilities (38.75 compared to 27.76 in EGRA, and 40.00 compared to 24.43 in EGMA).

Indications from learning outcomes broken down by disability type show an uneven impact of disability on learning outcomes. For example, remembering/concentration has an apparent large impact on numeracy outcomes but not literacy outcomes for girls. The sample sizes are small and the primary sample is not representative and therefore the results should be interpreted with this caveat.

Table 45.: Learning outcomes by disability type (Primary)

Disability type	Primary girls literacy	Primary girls numeracy	n Primary girls	Primary boys literacy	Primary boys numeracy	n Primary boys
Remembering/concentration	45.71	5.36	4	30.72	1.79	2
Vision	16.42	34.08	7	46.25	47.65	7
Hearing	18.94	25.89	4	26.61	47.62	3
Walking	32.55	38.33	6	41.26	40.69	9
Communication	-	-	0	35.35	18.21	2
Self-care	34.44	27.68	4	61.44	3.57	1

There are no characteristics at the primary level which have an impact on learning outcomes that are statistically significant. From the list of barriers, girls who do not use a toilet at school score lower than the average in literacy at a statistically significant level. This is similar to JSS. This is borne out in the attendance data as 90 per cent of the primary girls who do not use a toilet at school missed school in the previous school year, compared to the average of 54 per cent. This does not apply to numeracy outcomes at midline.

Disaggregation of learning assessments scores by district shows clear regional variation. Interestingly, these regional variations are not mirrored in the qualitative data. Teachers across regions reported overall improvements in learning outcomes of students in their schools, including in lower performing regions. For example, as may be expected, a teacher from an FGD in Moyamba described a marked improvement in the exam results of girls at his school, saying “Yes, there is a change in the performance of girls in

literacy because there is a great improvement in the national exams. In fact a girl came first in this year's BECCE exams in the school.” However, a student teacher from one of the lower performing regions, Port Loko, made a very similar observation, saying, “Yes, there is a great change in the performance of girls compared to the boys. This change must have been caused by the support the girls are receiving from different NGOs.” Conversely, it was two teachers in an FGDs in Kailahun and Kono, (both relatively highly performing regions), who were probably least enthusiastic about the progress made. The teacher from Kailahun described a ‘slight change in the literacy and numeracy levels’ at his school, and the teacher from Kono describe exam results as ‘average’, but explained that girls’ attendance had improved and girls were now making ‘gradual progress.’ This may reflect different relative starting points for learners in the respective regions i.e. even if scores are comparatively lower in Port Loko, there may still have been an improvement in exams results from the previous year. However, the overall positive perceptions of learning improvements amongst teachers across regions sits in contradiction to the negative DiD scores and apparent lack of improvement observed in the aggregate learning assessment results.

3.2.2 LA/ST presence (primary only)

At midline there are 15 girls in the sample in schools with LA/STs, and 28 boys. Primary girls in schools with LA/STs had an aggregate EGMA score of 33.13, and primary boys had an aggregate score of 44.01. These scores are both lower than the aggregate EGMA scores for each gender, but the differences are not statistically significant.

Primary girls in schools with LA/STs had an aggregate EGRA score of 29.04, and primary boys had an aggregate score of 39.28. These scores are both lower than the aggregate EGRA scores for each gender, but the differences are not statistically significant.

3.2.3 Characteristics

The midline scores by characteristic are presented for the entire midline sample. As such, they are not compared to baseline. The highlighted scores are lower than the average for the entire sample by group.

JSS

At the JSS intervention level, all characteristics listed result in lower than average learning outcomes for literacy, except for married students. In numeracy, eight of the thirteen characteristics led to lower learning outcomes. Regression analysis did not show notable correlation in marriage status, motherhood, double orphan status and learning and transition outcomes. However, there is a moderate correlation between single orphan status and numeracy outcomes, though this correlation cannot be elaborated on at midline. This analysis also applies to the primary level.

Lower learning outcomes for CWD is statistically significant at the 5 per cent level, although the sample size is small with only six intervention students identifying as a CWD, and five control students.

Table 46.: Learning scores of key subgroups and characteristics (JSS)

	JSS intervention average literacy score (aggregate)	JSS control average literacy score	JSS intervention average numeracy score	JSS control average numeracy score
Characteristics				
All girls	31.22	33.90	39.84	41.93
Single orphan	29.56	31.00	42.77	39.19

Double orphan	26.83	35.06	42.48	45.18
Living without both parents	29.78	34.18	40.97	43.23
Living in female headed household	30.65	34.12	40.45	42.74
Mother tongue different to LOI	29.09	32.05	39.69	41.98
CWD	17.13*	8.73*	18.57*	23.74*
Serious illness	26.53*	31.08	38.76	40.42
Head of Household no education	28.09	29.23	39.83	39.80
Carer no education	28.06	29.03	37.34	40.36
Household unable to meet basic needs	24.25*	29.32	35.50	37.72
Gone to sleep hungry for many days in past year	27.68	30.63	38.73	41.43
Married	37.49	26.03	26.84	40.43
Mother / pregnant	28.49	15.77*	38.20	38.76

Primary

The learning outcomes of the listed characteristics do not all have an impact on learning outcomes, in contrast to the JSS level. The characteristics which have the most impact on boys and girls for both subjects are disability status and household poverty levels.

Table 47.: Learning scores of key subgroups and characteristics (Primary)

	Primary girls average literacy score (aggregate)	Primary boys average literacy score	Primary girls average numeracy score	Primary boys average numeracy score
Characteristics				
All students	28.15	39.59	37.94	49.40
Single orphan	27.49	50.99	40.76	61.37
Double orphan	19.94	37.92	35.06	66.27
Living without both parents	28.15	42.33	36.21	60.04
Living in female headed household	26.67	41.75	33.89	54.47
Mother tongue different to LOI	30.04	41.96	39.62	53.20
CWD	26.92	39.27	28.49	44.17
Serious illness	23.95	35.92	36.18	51.19
Head of Household no education	28.27	40.35	41.05	48.05
Carer no education	28.10	41.54	46.03	51.93

Household unable to meet basic needs	26.00	35.60	36.21	47.61
Gone to sleep hungry for many days in past year	28.70	30.37	42.66	40.44
Married (for primary boys, this 1 individual is also a father)	-	75.11	-	5.00
Mother / pregnant	-	-	-	-

3.2.4 Barriers

JSS

Table 48.: Learning scores of key barriers (JSS)

	JSS intervention average literacy score (aggregate)	JSS control average literacy score	JSS intervention average numeracy score	JSS control average numeracy score
Barriers				
All girls	31.22	33.90	39.84	41.93
Difficult to move around school	31.42	23.86	36.46	28.37*
Doesn't use drinking water facilities	25.48*	31.36	38.75	38.14
Doesn't use toilet at school	20.32*	29.12	27.68*	37.50
Doesn't use areas where children play/socialise	28.44	28.91	42.34	36.97
Doesn't feel safe at school	28.02	34.85	40.14*	47.90
Doesn't feel safe travelling to/from school	28.68	23.04	30.41	42.42
Disagrees teachers make them feel welcome	25.67	24.89	32.85	30.97*
Agrees teachers treat boys and girls differently in the classroom	29.58	28.78	39.99	38.78
Agrees teachers often absent from class	33.05	27.35*	42.32	38.32
Caregiver states it is fairly or very unsafe for girls to travel to schools in the area	23.79*	30.82	35.20	39.14
Caregiver states it is fairly or very unsafe for boys to travel to schools in the area	23.34*	29.39	34.20	37.86
Sufficient time to study: High chore burden (quarter day or more)	30.82	31.79	40.98	43.27
Does not get the support they need to stay in school and do well	26.08	32.66	37.79	46.37

Primary

Table 49.: Learning scores of key barriers (Primary)

	Primary girls average literacy score (aggregate)	Primary boys average literacy score	Primary girls average numeracy score	Primary boys average numeracy score
Barriers				
All students	28.15	39.59	37.94	49.40
Difficult to move around school	15.71	31.08	31.57	33.21
Doesn't use drinking water facilities	18.75	47.45	34.29	49.87
Doesn't use toilet at school	14.18*	20.41	48.94	29.21
Doesn't use areas where children play/ socialise	25.35	54.54*	26.67	38.93
Doesn't feel safe at school	34.56	30.79	41.93	58.73
Doesn't feel safe travelling to/from school	12.01	59.03	36.67	56.67
Disagrees teachers make them feel welcome	35.22	33.90	42.22	41.93
Agrees teachers treat boys and girls differently in the classroom	25.48	31.09	26.38	43.20
Agrees teachers often absent from class	29.28	37.76	47.51	46.23
Caregiver states it is fairly or very unsafe for girls to travel to schools in the area	29.72	28.95	37.53	35.22
Caregiver states it is fairly or very unsafe for boys to travel to schools in the area	21.34	31.34	46.51	35.35
Sufficient time to study: High chore burden (quarter day or more)	35.71	46.02	40.05	56.75
Does not get the support they need to stay in school and do well	15.22	32.89	33.02	41.05

4. Transition Outcome

The transition outcome tracks the rate of successful transition at the midline stage. Transition rates at JSS level are calculated using the whole JSS sample at midline. Transition rates at the primary level are calculated using the whole primary sample (including students who are now in JSS but who were in primary school at baseline).

This section will first present an overview of the rates of successful and unsuccessful transition in learners of different age brackets, and the different types of transition. Sub-group analysis of the transitions then provides insight into factors that may contribute to successful transition. Qualitative data is used throughout to explain the findings. This section ends with target setting for the endline.

The transition rate target for JSS intervention students at midline is 2.6 percentage points above the control school students. Analysis of the entire midline sample shows that 95 per cent of Intervention school students have a successful transition status at midline, and 98 per cent of control school students. The target has not been met at midline, but this is explained by the high overall transition rate, which results in a ceiling effect. The performance against target is -115 per cent.

The tables in this chapter show figures for the entire midline sample rather than separated by panel, to facilitate comparison from midline to endline.

Table 45 shows potential transition pathways by age bracket and classifies them as 'successful' or 'unsuccessful' pathways.

Table 50.: Transition pathways

Group tracked for transition	Successful Transition	Unsuccessful Transition
Ages 6-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-school progression • Alternative learning programme • Repeats grade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drops out of school • Any employment in lieu of school
Ages 13-17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-school progression • Alternative learning programme • Repeats grade • Gainful Employment after completing JSS (or equivalent alternative) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drops out of school • Gainful Employment but incomplete JSS • Any other employment in lieu of school
Ages 18+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-school progression • Alternative learning programme • Repeats grade • Gainful employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drops out of school • Any other employment status
OOS ³¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-enrol in appropriate grade level • Alternative learning programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remains out of school

³¹ Students that were in JSS2 at baseline are former JSS3 at midline, or more accurately, JSS3 awaiting results. This means they were technically still enrolled in school at the time of data collection as they awaited exam results to see whether they would qualify for transition to Senior Secondary School (SSS). In 99 of the 111 former JSS3 students for whom we have data, caregivers have reported that the student is enrolled in school. In the remaining 12 cases the caregivers have reported that the student is not enrolled in school. From the data collected it cannot be said whether GATE-GEC Midline Evaluation Report

JSS

The target set at baseline for intervention school students was for a difference of 2.6 percentage points higher than control school students. Analysis of the entire midline sample shows that 95 per cent of intervention school students have a successful transition status at midline, and 98 per cent of control school students.

At midline, the 2.6 percentage point target has not been met and control school students have a slightly higher successful transition rate than intervention school students. However, both intervention and control school students have a very high transition rate. The performance against target is -115 per cent.

Table 47 and Figure 9 shows that for ages 7-11 there is a 100 per cent successful transition rate at the JSS level, and this reduces as age increases. This is likely due to the increased rate of pregnancy and marriage as girls age, which is a main reason for unsuccessful transition at midline (see Table 50). One of the 35 out-of-school children has successfully transitioned at midline.

Table 51.: Transition pathways at midline (JSS)

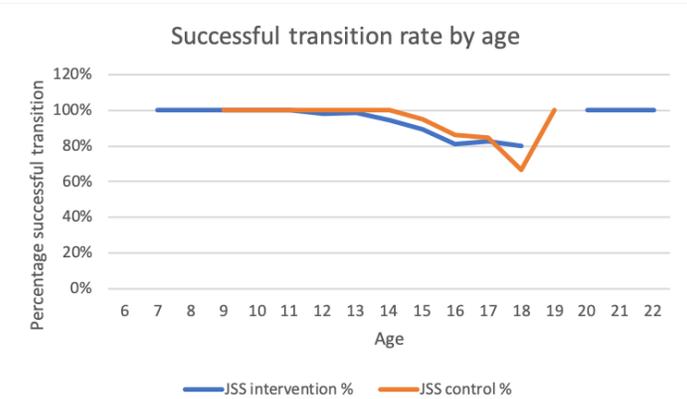
Sample: all JSS midline students ie. students tracked from baseline, replacements (JSS3) and top-up (JSS1 and JSS2).

Baseline age	JSS intervention n	JSS intervention successful transition	JSS intervention %	JSS control n	JSS control	JSS control %
OOS	35	1	3%	9	0	0%
7	1	1	100%	0	0	-
8	1	1	100%	0	0	-
9	14	14	100%	7	7	100%
10	32	32	100%	24	24	100%
11	52	52	100%	55	55	100%
12	95	94	99%	110	110	100%
13	125	123	98%	107	107	100%
14	114	108	95%	90	90	100%
15	93	83	89%	60	57	95%
16	37	30	81%	22	19	86%

this is because the student will not transition to SSS or because of the limbo status of the students. The enrolment status reported by the caregiver has been used in this analysis.

17	23	19	83%	13	11	85%
18	10	8	80%	3	2	67%
19	0	0	-	1	1	100%
20	1	1	100%	0	0	-
21	1	1	100%	0	0	-
22	1	1	100%	0	0	-

Figure 9: Successful transition rate by age



For the majority of individuals, a successful transition means in-school progression. However, it is possible that they have repeated a grade between baseline and midline, given the two-year interval. Repetition rates are higher among intervention school students than control school students. Further sub-group analysis is included in section 4.1

Table 52.: Transition pathways of JSS intervention students

The data for this table comes from the household survey. Blank cells may be in contradiction to the number presented in Table 47 where household surveys are not available.

JSS intervention						
Baseline age	Vocational training	Non-formal education	Employment	Repeating a year	In-school progression	n
OOS	50%	0%	50%	0%	0%	2
7	-	-	-	-	-	0
8	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	1
9	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	13
10	0%	0%	0%	4%	96%	28
11	0%	0%	0%	4%	96%	48

12	1%	0%	0%	10%	89%	89
13	0%	0%	0%	22%	78%	108
14	0%	0%	0%	16%	84%	99
15	0%	0%	1%	19%	80%	79
16	0%	0%	0%	27%	73%	30
17	0%	0%	0%	18%	82%	17
18	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	8
19	-	-	-	-	-	0
20	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	1
21	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	1
22	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	1

Table 53.: Transition pathways of JSS control students

The data for this table comes from the household survey. Blank cells may be in contradiction to the number presented in Table 47 where household surveys are not available.

JSS control						
Baseline age	Vocational training	Non-formal education	Employment	Repeating a year	In-school progression	n
OOS	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	2
7	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	-	-	-	-	-	-
9	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	6
10	0%	0%	0%	9%	91%	22
11	0%	0%	0%	2%	98%	52
12	0%	0%	0%	7%	93%	100
13	0%	0%	0%	7%	93%	99
14	0%	0%	0%	9%	91%	85
15	0%	0%	2%	9%	89%	56
16	0%	0%	0%	5%	95%	19
17	0%	0%	8%	0%	92%	12
18	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	2

19	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	1
20	-	-	-	-	-	-
21	-	-	-	-	-	-
22	-	-	-	-	-	-

The high transition rate can partly be explained by the classification of grade repetition as a successful transition. As the baseline report noted, repetition is systemic in the Sierra Leonean education system and it is therefore appropriate to classify it as a successful transition, but this prevents being able to assess which students are repeating due to poor performance versus systemic barriers to transition. The learning outcomes suggest that poor performance may be a reason for repetition in the sample, as the learning outcomes for the students repeating a grade are slightly lower than the average aggregates, with the exception of literacy scores for primary girls.

Table 54.: Learning outcomes for students repeating a grade at midline

	JSS intervention	JSS control	Primary girls	Primary boys
Literacy				
Whole sample	31.13	34.00	28.57	39.59
Students repeating a grade	27.25	27.12	33.96	35.00
Numeracy				
Whole sample	39.77	42.00	41.10	52.95
Students repeating a grade	37.92	37.05	24.80	37.93

Six per cent of all intervention students at midline are out-of-school (OOS), compared to two per cent of control school students. Data is not available for the current activities of all of the OOS children. The survey contained three response options for the current activities of OOS children: vocational education, non-formal education and employment. There are very few OOS children reported to be involved in each of those activities. It can be inferred that the children are involved in activities that are not listed as response options. There are no students enrolled in non-formal education, there is one intervention student in vocational training and no control students in vocational training. There is one intervention school student in employment and two control school students. However, this employment is informal and therefore not counted as a successful transition.

A selection of the reasons for children to be OOS is in Table 50. The most common reason for a JSS intervention child to be out-of-school is due to motherhood or pregnancy (9), followed closely by a lack of money to pay for schooling costs (8). The reasons not presented in the table (but present as options in the tools) scored zero per cent.

The qualitative data supports the idea that motherhood or pregnancy is a barrier to transition. In the majority of JSS FGDs, participants said either that pregnancy was one of the main reasons why girls stopped attending school altogether, or (in the JSS girls FGDs) that becoming pregnant is something that could cause them to drop out in the future. Several school staff participants also mentioned teen pregnancy as one of the main issues affecting girls' education in their communities.

With regard to affordability of school, in the two years since baseline, the introduction of Free Quality School Education (FQSE) is likely to have had an impact on the transition rate.³² Under the policy, schooling and basic materials are paid for by the government, but crucially, the policy does not apply to community schools, of which there are 19 in the sample (6 JSS intervention, 11 JSS control, 2 primary schools). The FQSE policy started in September 2018 and is likely to take a few years to be fully implemented. The GATE-GEC project stopped distribution of bursary items at the government's request when FQSE was introduced. The uneven distribution of FQSE and the removal of bursary items may partly explain the lack of affordability of school as a factor in children not being enrolled.

These findings are also supported by the qualitative data. The government's Free Quality School Education policy was referred to by a very large number of participants as a key factor that had improved enrolment and attendance in the past year. After the introduction of the FQSE policy, attendance has remained inconsistent, according to one Student Teacher. In two FGDs, caregivers mentioned that the FQSE helped to ease the burden of education costs. One group of JSS boys said that they knew children that had previously dropped out due to the cost of school fees, but that most of them had now returned to school because of the FQSE.

JSS students in a number of FGDs across different districts mentioned financial constraints as a barrier to transition. Parents not being able to afford uniforms or school materials was expressed as a reason that children in their community struggle to attend school, and lack of resources was seen by some as a reason that would cause them to drop out of school in the future. Poverty or lack of resources was also mentioned in several caregivers FGDs as either a barrier that prevents children from attending school, or as a challenge they face in sending their own children to school.

Given this, it can be expected that by endline there may be a reduction in the number of caregivers that cite financial resources as a major barrier to transition. Sixteen of the 19 community schools at midline have applied for government status and therefore may start to benefit from FQSE by endline. All students in both Primary and JSS FGDs said that they wished to continue to JSS or SSS after they finished in their current school. Most participants said that it was either likely or very likely that they could achieve this, however in one JSS girls FGD at a GATE-GEC school (Kailahun), most participants said that it was not likely that they would continue to SSS because they lacked the resources to do so.

Table 55.: Reasons that children are out-of-school

Reason	JSS intervention (number of caregivers of OOS children)	JSS control (number of caregivers of OOS children)	Question code (Household Survey)
There isn't enough money to pay the costs of child's schooling	8	3	PCG_notenr3
Child needs to work, earn money or help out at home	1	1	PCG_notenr4
It is unsafe for child to travel to/from school	3	0	PCG_notenr5
School is too far away	3	1	PCG_notenr7

³² There have been some reports of overcrowding in schools as a result of the FQSE. See for example, Their World (2018) 'Free education starts in Sierra Leone - but lack of space is a problem at some schools'. Available from: <https://theirworld.org/news/free-education-starts-in-sierra-leone-but-no-room-in-some-classes>
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No one available to travel with child to/from school	1	1	PCG_notenr8
Transport services are inadequate	2	1	PCG_notenr9
Child was refused entry into the school	1	0	PCG_notenr14
The school does not have a program that meets child's learning needs	4	1	PCG_notenr17
Child has a health condition that prevents (him/her) from going to school	1	0	PCG_notenr18
Child is married or about to get married	3	0	PCG_notenr22
Child has a child or is about to have a child	9	3	PCG_notenr23
Child is not interested in going to school	3	1	PCG_notenr24
School does not help child in finding a good job	1	0	PCG_notenr26

Of the out-of-school children, 73 per cent of intervention school children said that school is important to them, and 71 agree that it is important for children to go to school. This supports the idea that generally it is not a lack of motivation preventing enrolment at school.

There are no CWD in the total of the 4 JSS intervention students and 1 JSS control student that does not attend school because the school does not have a program that meets the child's learning needs.

Table 56.: Out-of-school children and attitudes towards education

OOSC	JSS intervention n	JSS intervention %	JSS control n	JSS control %
Is going to school important for what you want to do when you grow up?	22	73%	7	86%
Do you think that it is important for children to go to school?	21	71%	7	100%
Do you think girls have a right to go to school?	21	76%	7	100%
Do you think boys have a right to go to school?	21	76%	7	100%
Do you think children with disabilities have a right to go to school?	21	71%	7	86%

Despite the barriers to transition, 91 per cent of JSS intervention students would like to keep studying in the next school year, and 94 of those this it is 'very likely' that they will be able to do this.

For endline it is recommended to add domestic activity and an 'other' option to the questions on current activities of children that are OOS to capture complete data. It is also recommended to include poor attainment as a reason for children being out-of-school.

Primary

Transition rates at the primary level largely reflect those at the JSS level. Ninety-seven per cent of girls and ninety-eight per cent of boys have successfully transitioned at midline.

Transition rates by age bracket also show a decrease in successful transition as age increases, and no OOS children have had a successful transition. It should be noted that the sample sizes are smaller at the primary level which affects the percentage outcomes.

Table 57.: Transition pathways at midline by age (primary)

Sample: all primary students tracked from baseline to midline.

Baseline age	PS girls n	PS girls successful transition	PS girls successful transition %	PS boys n	PS boys successful transition	PS boys successful transition %
OOS	3	0	0%	2	0	0%
6	1	1	100%	1	1	100%
7	7	7	100%	1	1	100%
8	8	8	100%	7	7	100%
9	13	13	100%	15	15	100%
10	15	15	100%	10	10	100%
11	12	12	100%	17	17	100%
12	7	7	100%	16	16	100%
13	10	9	90%	11	10	91%
14	9	8	89%	13	13	100%
15	2	2	100%	1	1	100%
16	1	1	100%	2	1	50%
17	-	-	-	2	2	100%
18	-	-	-	1	1	100%
19	1	1	100%	-	-	-

Table 58.: Transition pathways of primary girls

The data for this table comes from the household survey. Blank cells may be in contradiction to the number presented in Table 52 where household surveys are not available.

Primary girls						
Baseline age	Vocational training	Non-formal education	Employment	Repeating a year	In-school progression	n
OOS	-	-	-	-	-	0
6	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	1

7	0%	0%	0%	29%	71%	7
8	0%	0%	0%	25%	75%	8
9	0%	0%	0%	27%	73%	11
10	0%	0%	0%	7%	93%	15
11	0%	0%	0%	25%	75%	8
12	0%	0%	0%	67%	33%	6
13	0%	0%	0%	25%	75%	8
14	0%	0%	0%	14%	86%	7
15	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%	2
16	-	-	-	-	-	-
17	-	-	-	-	-	-
18	-	-	-	-	-	-
19	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	1

Table 59.: Transition pathways of primary boys

The data for this table comes from the household survey. Blank cells may be in contradiction to the number presented in Table 52 where household surveys are not available.

Primary boys						
Baseline age	Vocational training	Non-formal education	Employment	Repeating a year	In-school progression	n
OOS	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0
6	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	1
7	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	1
8	0%	0%	0%	29%	71%	7
9	0%	0%	0%	42%	58%	12
10	0%	0%	0%	44%	56%	9
11	0%	0%	0%	25%	75%	16
12	0%	7%	0%	13%	80%	15
13	0%	0%	0%	30%	70%	10
14	0%	0%	0%	25%	75%	12
15	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	1
16	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	1

17	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%	2
18	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	1
19	-	-	-	-	-	-

Seventy-seven per cent of both primary girls and boys report that they would like to keep studying in the next school year. Eighty-one per cent of girls think it is 'very likely' they will be able to do this, compared to 84 per cent of boys.

Table 60.: Transition pathways

Group name	Intervention transition rate (Baseline)	Control transition rate (Baseline)	Intervention transition rate (Midline)	Control transition rate (Midline)	Target	% of target achieved
Age 6	100%	100%	-	-	+2.6 percentage points over and above control group	N/A
Age 7	100%	100%	100%	-	+2.6	N/A
Age 8	100%	100%	100%	-	+2.6	N/A
Age 9	100%	100%	100%	100%	+2.6	0%
Age 10	100%	100%	100%	100%	+2.6	0%
Age 11	100%	100%	100%	100%	+2.6	0%
Age 12	100%	100%	99%	100%	+2.6	-40%
Age 13	100%	100%	98%	100%	+2.6	-77%

Age 14	100%	100%	95%	100%	+2.6	-192%
Age 15	100%	100%	89%	95%	+2.6	-231%
Age 16	100%	100%	81%	86%	+2.6	-192%
Age 17	100%	100%	83%	85%	+2.6	-77%
Age 18	100%	100%	80%	67%	+2.6	+500%
Age 19	100%	100%	-	100%	+2.6	N/A
Age 20	100%	100%	100%	-	+2.6	N/A
Age 21	100%	100%	100%	-	+2.6	N/A
Age 22	100%	100%	100%	-	+2.6	N/A

4.1 Sub-group analysis of the transition outcome

The table below presents an overview of successful transition rates according to sub-group analysis. The rest of this section explores these figures in more detail.

Table 61.: Overview of transition rates of sub-groups

Sub-group	JSS intervention	Primary girls
District		
Kailahun	90%	92%
Kenema	100%	92%
Kono	95%	100%
Moyamba	98%	100%
Port Loko	90%	97%

Karene	95%	-
CWD	83%	96%
Parenthood	64%	0%
Marriage	37%	-
Membership of a study group	97%	100%

4.1.1 District

Table 56 shows transition rates by district for the entire JSS sample. Transition rates are high across all districts, at 90 per cent and above. The transition rate does not reflect the relative performance in JSS learning outcomes. Kenema has the lowest learning outcomes but the highest successful transition rate amongst the districts. This is not linked to high repetition rates, as 9 per cent of the students that successfully transitioned in Kenema did so through grade repetition, which is the lowest rate of repetition along with Kailahun, compared to the highest of 17 per cent in Moyamba. This goes against the finding above which suggests that repetition may be linked to poor learning outcomes and suggests that on the aggregate this is the case but at the district level the connection is less linear.

Table 57 shows transition rates by district at the primary level. Primary girls in Kenema and Kailahun have the lowest successful transition rate, at 92 per cent.

The qualitative data provides a possible explanation for the lower transition rate in Port Loko. Loss of a parent was mentioned as a barrier to staying in school by JSS students in Port Loko. Participants in a HH members FGD in Port Loko also said that single mothers find it the most difficult to send their children to school. Orphans living with relatives that do not adequately care for them were mentioned by the JSS students in Port Loko, as well as by household members in Kenema, as a category of children who would find it difficult to attend school. The percentage of JSS intervention students who are single or double orphans is slightly higher than average in Port Loko and Kailahun (25%, compared with 23% across the JSS intervention sample as a whole). This is also possibly related to the fact that the Ebola crisis particularly affected the districts of Port Loko, Kenema and Kailahun.

JSS Student (Port Loko): *“My father is not well, he is in treatment in Waterloo. That is why I am the only one [in my family] going to school.”*

Double orphans at the JSS intervention level have a slightly lower successful transition rate than single orphans and students that are not orphans, at 86 per cent compared to 94 per cent for the other statuses.

One head teacher of a primary school in Kono said that around 50% of the students successfully transitioned to JSS after finishing at the school, and another head teacher of a JSS in Port Loko said that around 65% of students at his school go on to attend SSS.

Table 62.: Successful transition rate by district (JSS)

The entire midline sample has been used for this table.

District	JSS intervention n	JSS intervention successful transition	JSS intervention %	JSS control n	JSS control successful transition	JSS control %
Kailahun	91	82	90%	25	24	96%

Kenema	76	76	100%	67	67	100%
Kono	58	55	95%	77	76	99%
Moyamba	171	168	98%	114	114	100%
Port Loko	172	154	90%	219	212	97%
Karene	38	36	95%	0	0	-

This is not reflected at the primary level, where 97 per cent of the girls in Port Loko successfully transitioned.

Table 63.: Successful transition rate by district (Primary)

District	PS girls n	PS girls successful transition	PS girls successful transition %	PS boys n	PS boys successful transition	PS boys successful transition %
Kailahun	12	11	92%	14	14	100%
Kenema	13	12	92%	9	9	100%
Kono	9	9	100%	19	19	100%
Moyamba	17	17	100%	17	17	100%
Port Loko	36	35	97%	43	41	95%

4.1.2 Disability

Disability is not a major barrier to successful transition in the evaluation sample, which is contrary to the expected outcome. Five of the six JSS intervention girls with a disability successfully transitioned, and all of the eight girls in JSS control schools transitioned.

At the primary level, 96 per cent of girls (22 of 23) transitioned, and all the boys (13).

4.1.3 Parenthood

Girls who have children or are pregnant have lower transition rates than the sample average. The rate is lower for girls in JSS intervention schools than in JSS control schools. Eighteen of the 28 girls with children/expecting children in intervention schools have successfully transitioned at midline, compared with 14 of the 17 control school girls.

There is one girl at the primary level with a child/expecting a child, who did not successfully transition. There is one father at the primary level, who also successfully transitioned.

Pregnancy was also a theme that came up in the qualitative data as a barrier to transition for girls. In the majority of JSS FGDs, participants said either that pregnancy was one of the main reasons why girls stopped attending school altogether, or (in the JSS girls FGDs) that becoming pregnant is something that could cause them to drop out in the future. Several school staff participants also mentioned teen pregnancy as one of the main issues affecting girls' education in their communities.

4.1.4 Married children

Marriage is a barrier to transition for girls in JSS intervention schools rather than JSS control schools. Only three of the eight married girls in intervention schools have successfully transitioned at midline, compared to all of the six married control school girls.

There is one married boy at the primary level, who has successfully transitioned at midline.

In the qualitative data, child or “early” marriage was a barrier to transition that was referred to by students and school staff alike, and was seen as an issue that particularly affected girls. JSS Students from both control and intervention schools said that they knew classmates in their school that had dropped out of school as a result of early marriage. When discussing barriers to attending school, a JSS girl in Kenema said the following: “Boys are doing business while girls go to early marriages.” Head teachers, student teachers, PVs and teachers across different districts referred to early marriage as a barrier to transition for girls, however, some participants did suggest that there had been a reduction in early marriage in their communities in more recent years.

4.1.5 Study group membership

Membership of a study group does not have a discernible impact on successful transition rates. Ninety-seven per cent of JSS intervention school students who are part of a study group successfully transitioned at midline, compared to 100% of those who are not members of a study group.

5. Sustainability Outcome

Sustainability is a key outcome at midline to inform recommendations for project implementation to endline. At midline, the target for sustainability was to move from ‘emerging’ to ‘becoming established’.

The findings in this section come primarily from qualitative data collection, the school data sheet, project data, and the household and student surveys where applicable. The qualitative data collection included interviews with:

- The GATE point of contact within the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE)
- District Education Officers (DEOs)
- The Humanity and Inclusion Project Manager (Sierra Leone)
- The Action Aid Education Project Manager (Sierra Leone)
- The FAWE Project Manager (Sierra Leone)
- The Plan Hub Senior M&E Manager (Sierra Leone)
- The Plan Hub Team Leader (Sierra Leone)
- The Plan Child Protection and Accountability Adviser (Sierra Leone)
- The Director of the International Development Office at the Open University
- The Plan GATE Programme Manager
- The Plan Education Technical Specialist
- Head teachers
- Students
- Student Teachers (STs)
- Household heads
- Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) members
- Community Based Rehab Volunteer (CBRV)

Sustainability is split into three sections: community, school and system. Each of the three sections is weighted differently. Community and school contribute 40 per cent each to the overall sustainability score,

whilst the system component contributes 20 per cent towards the score. This reflects an emphasis on the influence the project may have in the short-term, and acknowledgement that system level changes are only likely to be seen in the medium to long-term. The External Evaluation team decided the scores for midline, using the FM scorecard guidelines and a draft version of a scorecard adapted to the project.

The target has not been met at midline. Overall the project is still in the ‘emergent’ phase rather than ‘becoming established’. However, the system level indicators have improved from ‘latent’ to ‘emerging’ (score 1 to 2), due to strong relationships at the district level and improved collaboration at the national level.

Recommendations for improvement are included at the end of each indicator. The main barrier to sustainability is the availability of finance at all levels.

Unless otherwise noted, the statistics in this section refer to the entire JSS intervention cohort.

Table 64.: Sustainability indicators

	Community (weighting 40%) (Score at midline)	School (weighting 40%) (Score at midline)	System (weighting 20%) (Score at midline)
Indicator 1	Parents, caregivers and community members allocating financial resource, to progress girls’ and children with disabilities’ educational rights (2)	School staff (headteachers) in GATE GEC schools planning to continue providing project activities after end of project (2)	Level of engagement with district and national government stakeholders (MBSSE and MSWGCA) to support education provision to girls and children with disabilities education nationally (specifically on the Free Quality Education Programme) (2)
Indicator 2	GATE GEC parents, caregivers reporting beneficiaries are actively involved in making decisions around their education (2)	School staff share the skills, knowledge and materials on inclusive education with non-GATE schools (2)	District and national government stakeholders (MBSSE and MSWGCA) developing education plans based on project activities (Inclusive Education, training to PVs, LA/ST component) to continue in existing GATE GEC schools, and cascade successful models to non GATE GEC schools (2)
Indicator 3	N/A	Number of Student Teachers (Cohorts 1 and 2) enrolled in the government payroll and appointed to schools in rural areas across Sierra Leone (2)	N/A

Indicator 4	N/A	Functional SMCs, BOGs in GATE GEC schools. Demonstrating holding school staff accountable for decisions made on school governance and management decisions (2)	N/A
Baseline Sustainability Score (0-4)	2	2	1
Overall Sustainability Score (0-4, average of the three level scores)	2		
Midline sustainability Target (0-4)	3	3	2
Midline score (0-4)	2 Target not met	2 Target not met	2 Target met
Overall sustainability Score (0-4, average of the three level scores)	2		

5.1 Community

In summary, this outcome aims to improve attitudes and perceptions of households and communities, to invest in children's education and include children in decision making. To this end, the project runs awareness-raising and inclusive education and gender training sessions with school and community members. In addition, other components such as the VSLAs, STs and score-carding aim to change perceptions and attitudes.

Overall, the score is 2 ('emerging') for sustainability at the community level.

5.1.1 Indicator 1: Parents, caregivers and community members allocating financial resource to progress girls' and children with disabilities' educational rights

Intermediate Outcome 5 indicator 1 refers to caregivers who report positive perceptions around girls and children with disabilities accessing education.³³ At midline it is evident that caregivers prioritise education. This indicator for sustainability is concerned with actions taken by caregivers to allocate financial resources to education for girls and CWD, and financial security of households to be able to finance education. The main sources for this indicator are the household survey and qualitative data collection with household and VSLA members and project staff.³⁴ At midline the score for this indicator is 2, 'emerging'.

³³ 'Parents' are the same as caregivers in this indicator.

³⁴ It is worth noting that the two VSLA FGDs were carried out with members of VSLAs that had only been functioning for four months. Therefore no loans had been given out through the VSLA at the time of the FGD - Participants

Seventy-four per cent of JSS intervention households state it is difficult to afford education. Only 15 per cent of households state they can cover all of a child's education costs and 25 per cent can meet less than half of the associated costs. In these circumstances, caregivers still prioritise education spending (see IO5).

Eighty per cent of caregivers of JSS intervention children with disabilities put money aside for the child's education, and 79 per cent of caregivers of primary girls CWD. This is in comparison to only 57 per cent of caregivers of control school CWD.

As well as encouraging changes in norms around education, the project aims to facilitate economic empowerment. One of the activities for this is the creation of VSLAs. Please note that the project does not keep data on the schools targeted for VSLA membership and the data could therefore not be disaggregated between GATE-GEC and other VSLAs. Data presented relates to all VSLA members.

Twenty-six per cent of caregivers (136 caregivers) of JSS intervention students belong to a VSLA and 76 per cent of those VSLA members (102 out of 136) have taken out a loan. There is some early evidence that VSLA membership facilitates education spending. Sixty per cent of the JSS intervention caregivers who have taken out a loan from a VSLA have spent the loan on education.³⁵ The next most common use for a VSLA loan is business costs (19 per cent) and then food (15 per cent).³⁶ However, 44 per cent of those have not been able to fulfil the repayment schedule. Plan's Senior M&E Manager says that for VSLAs created by the project repayment is 100 per cent.

The quantitative data suggests that education is prioritised by households and can be facilitated by VSLAs. This was also reflected in the qualitative data. Participants in one of the household FGD said that they were also part of a VSLA (though it is not known whether this is a project VSLA or not). One participant in particular said that the VSLA members had taken out loans, and that these loans had greatly helped them to "take care of [their] children's educational needs". Conversely, in a household FGD where none of the participants were members of a VSLA or had received training in finances, participants expressed that they felt unable to save money, because they simply did not have enough money to make saving an option.

Currently the project does not have any VSLAs which are self-sustaining. The first 'graduation ceremony' for a VSLA is due at the time of writing, and the next round is scheduled for quarter 13 of the project (April-June 2020). After this 'graduation', the VSLAs are expected to be self-sustaining, with the help of project trained, community-based 'Village Agents' to support them. There is anecdotal evidence that the VSLAs are having an impact and the project has streamlined monitoring tools to more effectively assess the impact and sustainability in the final year.

In the final year of the project, a livelihoods activity will be introduced. According to the Action Aid Education Project Manager, the first stage is a livelihood survey to establish what works in the area of livelihoods. The activity will then be designed based on viable activities in different areas of Sierra Leone. Grants may be in effect by mid-2020.

There are positive indications that caregivers prioritise spending on education, even when funds are limited. However, this cannot be said to have reached a critical mass to achieve a score of 3, as the financial resources of households is limited and there is not enough evidence that all households are allocating funds (nor are schools, as in 5.1.2 below). Furthermore, though prioritising education is an indicator of positive progress, it should be noted that, when funds are limited, circumstances may arise where prioritising spending on education could divert funds from other essential necessities, such as

explained that they were advised to wait at least six months before starting to distribute loans. As such the groups could not speak to the issue of loans, loan spending, or loan repayments.

³⁵ This is 60 per cent of the 102 VSLA members who have taken out a loan.

³⁶ Plan report that from their monitoring they have found consistently across quarters the three most common uses for VSLA loans to be education, food and medicine.

food. It has been shown that a large proportion of the sample cannot meet basic needs without charity, and hunger has been constantly referred to as a barrier to performance in schools, supported by lower learning outcomes as shown in Chapter 3.

Recommendations:

- Encourage spending on education alongside generation of sustainable income. Advance the roll-out of the livelihoods component if possible to promote its establishment before the end of the project.
- Establish a system of support for Village Agents. The project will train voluntary Village Agents to support VSLAs after the end of project support. To ensure Village Agents have access to a support system for problem solving and knowledge sharing, the project could establish a network of Village Agents for exchange of information, and/or work with district officials to provide support from the government.
- VSLAs are a popular model worldwide for economic empowerment, including in Sierra Leone. It is recommended that Plan conduct a literature review of conditions that lead to success of VSLAs in Sierra Leone and similar contexts, and consider engaging a consultant to test the program design in the specific project context (similar to the livelihoods scoping exercise).
- At endline, evaluate whether the groups that have 'graduated' from the VSLAs have continued, and include Village Agents in data collection.

5.1.2 Indicator 2: GATE GEC parents, caregivers reporting beneficiaries are actively involved in making decisions around their education

At midline, caregivers, students and out-of-school children were asked about the role of children in making decisions about their education. The results are presented by age band, 0-11 and 12 and older as the life skills questions for children are grouped by age. The score at midline is 2, 'emerging'.

Seventy-six per cent of caregivers of in-school JSS intervention children aged 12 or older state that they listen to the views of the child when making decisions about their education. This is compared to 78 per cent of caregivers of JSS control school students and 89 per cent of caregivers of out-of-school former JSS intervention children aged 12 or older. However, the sample size is smaller in the latter group with just 27 respondents.

Only 60 per cent (or 3 of 5) caregivers of JSS intervention CWD aged 12 or older state that they listen to the child.

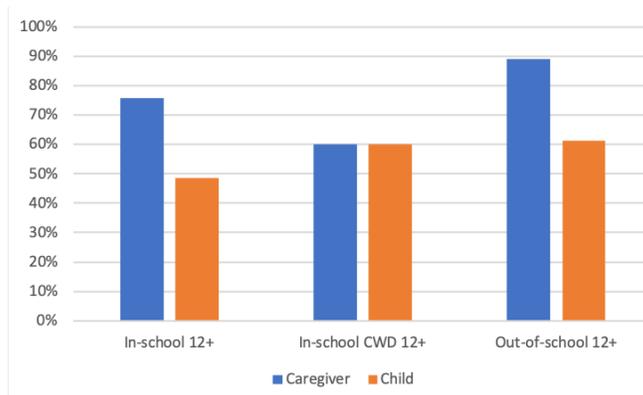
At the primary level, contribution to decision-making is lower. Sixty-five per cent of caregivers of in-school primary girls across both age bands state that they listen to the girl in decision-making about her education. For primary boys age 0-11, 81 per cent of caregivers say they listen to the child in decision-making, and 66 per cent of boys aged 12 and older.

This figure is low for primary girls with a disability, at 43 per cent of caregivers in the 0-11 age range, and 58 per cent for girls 12 or older. This indicates that children with disabilities are not allowed to participate in decision-making as much as their peers without disabilities.

Triangulation with data from the children's surveys show that children report that their participation in decision-making is generally lower than that reported by the caregivers, as shown in Figure 11, with the exception of in-school children with disabilities. The biggest difference is between out-of-school children and their caregivers, with a 28 percentage point difference (caregivers 89 per cent, OOSC 61 per cent). This disparity could be due to a social desirability bias affecting the caregivers, or due to the slight differences in the questions asked leading to different interpretations.³⁷

³⁷ The question asked to caregivers was: *Do you listen to the views of [CHILD] when you make decisions about his/her education or are these decisions made by adult members of the family only?* The question asked to the children was: *Who decides whether or not you will go to school.*

Figure 10: Caregivers and children reporting that children participate in decision-making about education (JSS intervention)



For CWD, the CBRV participant expressed that it is the child’s father who makes decisions about the child’s education, unless the father is deceased in which case the mother makes the decisions. The participant made no suggestion that the child would be involved in the decision-making process. In one boys’ JSS FGD, a participant mentioned a child with a disability in his community who does not attend school. When he asked the child why he didn’t attend school, he told the participant that his parents made the decision not to send him.

There are positive indications that around half of the beneficiary children are able to participate in decision-making for their education, including children with disabilities. However, there is scope for improvement, both in terms of the proportion and the definition of what constitutes participation, as households and children appear to use different metrics. The score at midline is 2, ‘emerging’.

Recommendations:

- In community awareness raising sessions with caregivers, include explicit discussion of what it looks like to include children in decision-making with regards to education. This could cover both the types of decisions (to attend, to continue from one year to the next, until what age, what to study), and the form of inclusion (open communication).
- Continue to raise awareness of the rights of children with disabilities.
- At endline, triangulate this indicator with the opinion of the children in decision-making, to ensure the child-centred approach is maintained. Ask both children and caregivers the same questions for more effective triangulation.

5.2 School

At the school level, sustainability will be achieved when teaching quality has improved through improved school management and commitment to practices which benefit the students’ self-esteem and safety. To facilitate this, the project has various activities aimed at all school stakeholders. For the school management (including committees) and teachers there is training in inclusive education, and governance. Some schools have been selected to be physically adapted for accessibility (known as ‘model schools’), and assistive devices have been distributed.

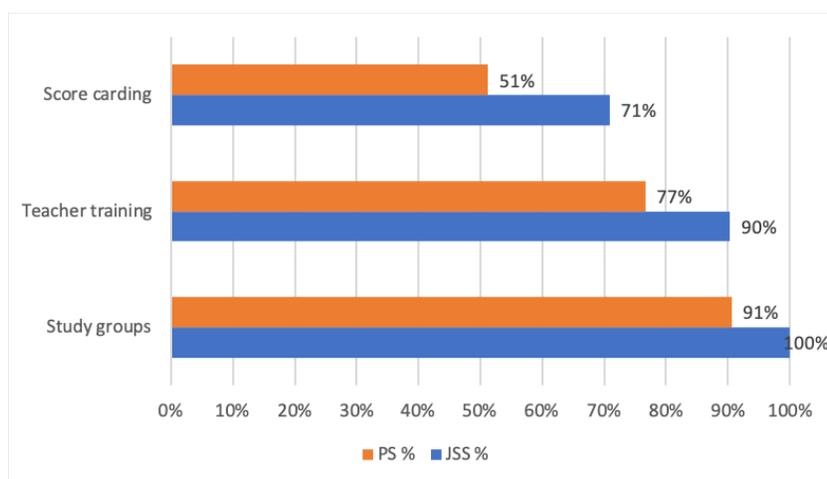
Overall, the score is 2 (‘emerging’) for sustainability at the school level.

5.2.1 Indicator 1: School staff (headteachers) in GATE GEC schools planning to continue providing project activities after end of project

A key component of sustainability is continuation of project activities at the school level without project support. This includes continuation of score carding, teacher training through the LA/ST component, and study groups. At midline, this indicator scores 2, 'emerging'.

Head teachers in all intervention schools were asked about their intentions to continue with the three project activities above. Of the three, study groups were the activity with the most commitment from head teachers, with all JSS head teachers expressing a desire for this activity to continue. This commitment from the school level is echoed by other stakeholders. The MBSSE representative said “schools are committed. All of us are committed, what they [Plan] are doing is helping the educational system, so we are committed.”

Figure 11: Commitment to continue project activities



A major barrier to continuation of project activities in schools is the cost associated with them. The project currently pays stipends for: Programme Volunteer teachers to run study groups; Practice Study Mentors to assist STs; STs; and CBRVs. Many participants in the data collection expressed a desire for the stipend to be increased to cover additional costs eg. transportation home after study groups for PVs. Both beneficiaries and programme staff discussed operational challenges in distribution of the stipends, which have led to major delays. Head teachers have also been requesting stipends for their work to mentor teachers.

Financial resources were discussed by one of the head teachers and many of the PVs in the qualitative data collection. One head teacher reported that money is the main barrier to continuation of project activities. He said that “the PVs are getting a stipend from Plan, so we will struggle with the money aspect”. All of the PVs interviewed after study groups expressed their intention to continue running study groups after the project ends, but many have concerns about feasibility due to cost. The PVs will work with school management and parents to facilitate the running of the groups, though Plan’s Senior M&E Manager reported that SMC/BoGs are being encouraged to sustain study groups without asking parents for money. There may still be an incomplete understanding of the rationale of the incentives structure at the school level, and the desirability for self-sustaining groups.

With regards to other project activities, the HI Project Officer reported that in one of the model schools that the project had adapted, the school had more recently constructed another building and made sure that this building was accessible for children with disabilities. The stakeholder said that this was evidence of sustainability in this component, because the school had independently replicated the methods of the project.

At midline, there is a lot of enthusiasm from head teachers and teachers to continue project activities, but there is little evidence of these activities being budgeted for at the school level. Given this, the score assigned is 2, for 'emerging'.

Recommendations:

- Increase monitoring of score carding activities to facilitate assessment of impact and reach.
- Work with SMCs/BoGs and school management to generate ideas for sustainable funding sources to continue provision of project activities.
- At endline, assess how many schools have incorporated project activities into their budgets, and increase the number of project activities included in the assessment, such as learning circles.

5.2.2 Indicator 2: School staff share the skills, knowledge and materials on inclusive education with non-GATE schools

The GATE GEC project is limited to schools in which there are beneficiary girls, through the ‘follow the girl’ model used. Head teachers and teachers are encouraged to share their training from the project with non-project schools, and internally with staff members that do not participate in the training directly. The project does not have any formal activities in place to facilitate sharing between GATE GEC and non-GATE GEC schools, nor for sharing of information and training internally in project schools. At midline this indicator scores 2 ‘emerging’. It is recommended that this indicator be removed for endline.

Sixty-one per cent of JSS head teachers and 51 per cent of primary school head teachers said they share information with non-project schools, usually in an informal manner at head teacher meetings or community meetings. One head teacher interviewed explained that the head teachers in the area are all members of a WhatsApp group through which they share information. However, there is little evidence on what is shared such that it cannot be said whether it is skills, knowledge and materials on inclusive education in particular that is cascaded. In addition, Intermediate Outcome 2 highlights that the majority of head teachers do not have extensive knowledge of inclusive teaching methods, which suggests that this is not currently an effective method of disseminating inclusive education practices.

Learning circles are a new activity promoted by the project to encourage peer learning and sharing. School staff are being encouraged during training to organise them. However, as noted by Plan’s Education Technical Specialist, the circles are likely to require some input from the project to set up. There is some evidence that learning circles are taking place. One PV reported that “we share experiences during the learning circle - a program conducted in the school for knowledge sharing”. There is not a project monitoring tool focused on learning circles, although PVs are asked about their attendance.

PVs generally do not share information with teachers from other schools. However, both PVs and STs share information internally to other teachers in their schools, occasionally in structured time allocated by the school management for this purpose. One ST commented “I interact with other teachers through sharing teaching best practices and discuss further on how to solve problems in school especially in dealing with children with disability and the girl child”.

The ‘follow the girl’ model can lead to project schools becoming non-project schools once the project beneficiary students have left. This removes the school’s access to training. The GEC Programme Manager reported that, in the interest of sustainability, those schools will be invited to continue in project activities such as training for head teachers and teachers. Whilst this is not evidence of schools cascading the model themselves, it could be a platform to encourage knowledge-sharing and normalise the practice.

It is recommended that this indicator be removed for endline, or explicitly added as a project output. Knowledge sharing is not a formal project activity at this stage. The project partners emphasised the project’s work on Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for teachers and it is recommended that an indicator be added to the system level to reflect this. The Teaching Services Commission (TSC) in Sierra Leone wants to professionalise the teaching profession. As part of this the TSC is currently finalising the CPD framework, which will likely specify that teachers should have a portfolio of the training they have completed, including training from NGOs. All training provided to teachers would need to be

approved by the TSC. At midline, Plan is working with the TSC to gain certification for the PV training materials, and aims to influence the CPD policy to include inclusive education.

Recommendations:

- Remove this indicator for endline and add an indicator at the system level on inclusive education practices in national CPD policy.
- At endline, check attendance rates at training from non-project schools that were once project schools. Attendance from these schools can be seen as a proxy indicator of interest from the wider school community in the skills taught by the project.

5.2.3 Indicator 3: Number of Student Teachers (cohort 1,2) enrolled in the government payroll and appointed to schools in rural areas across SLE

This indicator has been included to take through to endline and is not for scoring at midline.

Cohorts 1 and 2 are not under the GATE GEC but are supported by another of Plan's donors. The Student Teachers (ST) in Cohort 3 are under GATE GEC and are currently in Teacher Training College. The enrolment of the Student Teachers on the government payroll from Cohorts 1 and 2 may provide an indication of the willingness of the government, as well as capacity at both a centralised and local level, to engage with this project activity, and serve as a predictor for the likelihood of the Cohort 3 STs qualifying as teachers.

At the time of writing (January 2020), the results of the final NCTVA exam for Cohorts 1 and 2 have still not been published. They were due to be released by the end of 2019. The Director of the International Development Office at Open University said that the exam results have been high throughout and that pass rates are expected to be 80 per cent or higher.

It should be noted that this activity is strongly supported by the MBSSE, and is the first priority for the ministry in terms of sustainability of project activities (the second priority for the MBSSE is inclusive education). The MBSSE representative said that they "will push the TSC to prioritise to get them [the STs] recruited and become full time teachers" once qualified. This is because there is "nearly an extinction on female teachers. It is not an attractive profession. People are graduating from Teacher Training Colleges and are not immediately employed, they are not paid, so they start leaving". The Open University has shown that the ST model is driving cultural change, and is replicable and scalable.³⁸ Furthermore, the OU has had several meetings with the TSC to explain the LA/ST model and how it aligns well with the current distance training provision of the three teacher colleges involved in the programme. However, as the GEC Programme Manager notes, the model is costly, which may impact sustainability and adoption by the government. The MBSSE support for enrolment should be revisited at endline, and the work of the semi-autonomous Teaching Services Commission to enrol STs should be assessed.

Recommendations:

- Collaborate with the TSC and MBSSE to ensure quick enrolment to government payroll following publication of results.
- Where possible, facilitate extension of the stipend for Cohort 3 to cover the transition period between exams and results publication.
- Use the results of Cohorts 1 and 2 to advocate for adoption of the model by the government.

³⁸ Chamberlain, Liz and Safford, Kimberly (2019). Learning Assistants in Sierra Leone: model, innovation, and impact. In: 9th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning - Innovations for Quality Education and Lifelong Learning (PCF9), 09-13 Sep 2019, Edinburgh.

Crisp, Martin; Safford, Kimberly and Wolfenden, Freda (2017). It takes a village to raise a teacher: the Learning Assistant programme in Sierra Leone. The Open University and Plan International.

- At endline, include a representative of the TSC in the qualitative data collection to assess the government’s opinion of the results of Cohorts 1 and 2 and plans for incorporation into the government list of teachers.
- At endline, if available, compare the results of Cohort 3 to Cohorts 1 and 2.

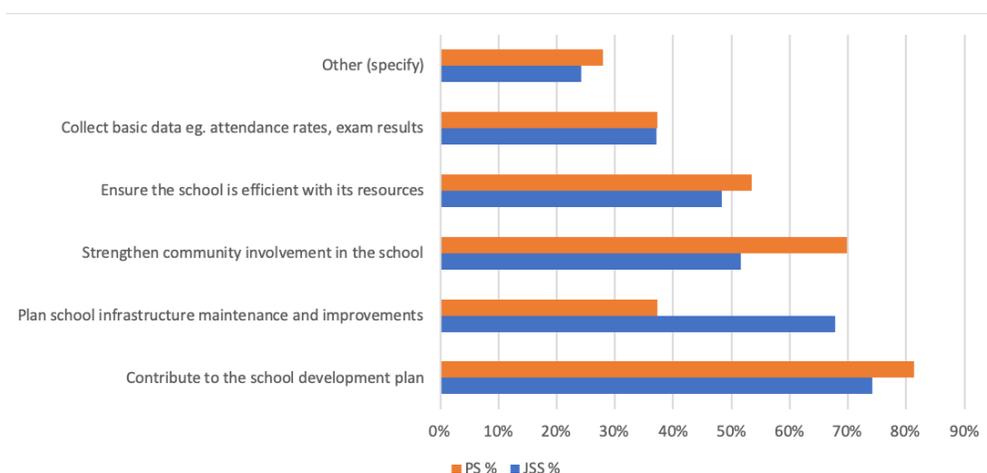
5.2.4 Indicator 4: Functional SMCs, BOGs in GATE GEC schools. Demonstrating holding school staff accountable for decisions made on school governance and management decisions (from the action and school development plans).

School Management Committees (SMC) at the primary level and Boards of Governors (BoG) at the JSS level are legal requirements for schools in Sierra Leone. They consist of up to 20 community members with an interest in the school, including parents of children. They exist to hold school management to account and provide checks and balances. To be ‘functional’, it is expected that they undertake a range of responsibilities in addition to meeting regularly and having an action plan. At midline, this indicator is scored 2, ‘emerging’.

According to Plan’s Education Technical Specialist, all GATE GEC schools have a SMC/BoG, which is supported by the information provided through the School Data Sheet. Forty per cent of BoGs were established in the last five years, since 2015, and 44 per cent of SMCs. The majority of SMCs/BoGs meet once or twice a term (66 per cent JSS, 81 per cent primary). However, the existence of SMCs/BoGs is not well communicated with households; only 62 per cent of the JSS intervention caregivers asked reported that the school has a BoG, and 51 per cent of primary student caregivers reported a SMC. Of those who answered affirmatively, 38 per cent are members at the JSS level, and 34 per cent at the primary level.³⁹

The most common responsibility of the SMC/BoG is contribution to the school development plan, followed by planning school maintenance and improvements for BoGs, and strengthening community involvement for SMCs, as shown in Figure 12. The SMCs/BoGs hold school management to account mostly through monitoring activities (26 per cent in primary and JSS), and secondly through regular meetings (18 per cent JSS, 30 per cent primary). In some JSS, the BoGs also have the authority to hire and terminate staff, and perform auditing functions. Anecdotal evidence from the project supports the idea of increased accountability of school management from SMCs/BoGs and increased attention to retention rates and student performance. However, this cannot entirely be attributed to the project but also due to government efforts. For example, none of the three head teachers interviewed at midline said they receive project support for the SMC/BoGs.

Figure 12: Responsibilities of SMCs/BoGs



³⁹ The sample size for JSS intervention caregivers for this question is 200, and 122 for primary level.

The Education Technical Specialist reports that he was involved in adapting the government handbook and training for SMCs/BoGs to make it more holistic in its approach, including elements of child protection and attendance monitoring to expand the remit of the SMCs/BoGs. The DEOs included in the midline data collection were unaware of the project's involvement with SMCs/BoGs.

Ninety-four per cent of JSS head teachers and 79 per cent of primary school head teachers report that SMCs/BoGs have received training, usually from the project itself, the government or another NGO. The training covered roles and responsibilities first and foremost, and then monitoring, child protection and school development plans to a lesser extent.

Ninety per-cent of JSS head teachers state that the BoG has had a 'positive impact' or 'large positive impact' on learning outcomes for students. In some cases, this impact is because the members look at the results of students and provide advice to students and teachers, and due to improved retention and attendance through awareness-raising.

Plan's Education Technical Specialist explained that "our primary focus is to make sure they [the SMCs/BoGs] are functioning, and they are. The next step is to make sure they are effective". At midline, from head teacher feedback it seems to be the case that the SMCs and BoGs are indeed functioning, and anecdotally are having a positive impact on school management and therefore student outcomes. However, there is a lack of project and midline evaluation data to currently determine this impact. Between midline and endline, the project will focus on impact of SMC/BoG activities, and encourage continuation without project involvement but with more government input. This will be constrained by the government's lack of resources to effectively monitor and support SMCs/BoGs in all districts, though the project will advocate for this engagement. This indicator is scored 2 at midline, 'emerging', given that the SMCs/BoGs are functional but there is only anecdotal evidence for the SMCs/BoGs holding school management to account. If 'emerging' were a score range, the score would be at the upper range at midline.

Recommendations:

- Strengthen measurement of impact of SMC/BoG impact. For example, specify that the community member included in project monitoring through the 'community leader' tool be a member of a SMC/BoG, or add this as an extra tool.
- At endline, include qualitative data collection School Management Committees and Boards of Governors. This could be in the form of focus group discussions and/or interviews with the Chairs of the committee.

5.3 System

The system level outcome intends to improve the quality of teaching through better governance and support for inclusive education from government officials. The project aims to do this through learning events with government stakeholders and joint committees.

Overall, the score is 2 ('emerging') for sustainability at the system level, and meets the target set for midline.

5.3.1 Level of engagement with district and national government stakeholders (MBSSE and MSWGCA) to support education provision to girls and children with disabilities education nationally (specifically on the Free Quality Education Programme)

The project intends to complement the Free Quality School Education (FQSE) policy of the new government. To do this, close collaboration with the relevant government stakeholders at the both the district and national levels is required. At midline, the score is 2, 'emerging'.

The relationship with the new government (since 2018) is stronger than with the previous government, although progress is slow. The GEC Programme Manager reported the project was suspended for

approximately four months in early 2018 by the previous education ministry, due to requirements the project could not meet eg. a car to facilitate joint monitoring visits. The project was restarted with the new government. The introduction of FQSE has led to closer collaboration between the project and the government. For example, with the elimination of the bursary component of the project, the partners have been collaborating with the MBSSE to distribute the surplus items.

The project works with national government partners primarily through a steering committee, which was established with the new government and meetings take place at least once a quarter. The steering committee also includes the Leh Wi Lan project. The Hub Team Leader's role has a large emphasis on managing relationships with the government.

From the MBSSE's perspective, the involvement of the ministry is still somewhat limited to receiving updates from the consortium on project activities and that "the updates are brilliant but up until now we have not been able to verify or ascertain what is done [in the field]." There are plans for joint monitoring visits but at the time of writing these have not yet started. The project has allocated funds for four joint monitoring visits. The monitoring team will consist of: 3 staff from MBSSE, 2 from TSC, 1 from MSWGCA and 1 from DFID.

At the district level there is more direct involvement from the government. Some of the DEOs interviewed were involved in the design of the project, and they are all involved in the implementation of project activities through monthly meetings with consortium staff and monitoring. One DEO credited the project with mainstreaming CWD in the government's agenda: "I would say that the project was an eye opener for policy makers because Sierra Leone initially had the school for the blind and the physically challenged and no access in to the facilities like provision of ramps. We are now sensitized on making sure that those facilities are part of our learning institutions and that no CWDs should be left behind".

In August to September 2019 there was a district learning event in each of the five districts⁴⁰ to share best practice and highlight similarities and differences in implementation. Opportunities for collaboration were discussed for each of the activities. There were approximately 40 participants per district, including DEOs. The project would like to hold a national learning event in the upcoming year. The relationship with the government on a district level is regarded by the project as mutually beneficial; the Education Technical Specialist explained that "if we can show effectiveness of the programme under their [the DEOs'] support, they can then report that at the national level in terms of that their district is able to achieve, which looks good for them as well. That's where the project is most effective, we struggle a bit at the national level but at the district level, it is universally supported."

Despite the limited involvement with the project, the MBSSE values the input of the consortium members into government policy. The MBSSE reportedly welcomed the support of the project to improve their training materials for SMCs and adapt them to BoGs. MBSSE would also like the partners' input in the forthcoming teacher training curriculum review process, and the project is likely to contribute to the review of the Education Sector Plan. In addition, HI provided input into the government's inclusive education policy, for children with disabilities. Other NGOs such as Sightsavers were also central to this policy. However, this involvement was independent of the GATE GEC. According to the Hub Team Leader, the consortium received feedback on HI's activities in this area but were not directly involved. The level of involvement of the partners is determined by the government and can vary based on political priorities.

The relationship with the government has improved since baseline, with the new government since 2018. The level of engagement at the district level is high, with consistent, in-depth collaboration. The level of engagement at the national level is more superficial, though this is likely to change in the final year of the

⁴⁰ A combined event was held for Port Loko and Karene.

project with joint monitoring visits. Considering these changes, and remaining barriers at the national level, this indicator is in the emergent stage at midline.

Recommendations:

- Follow-up on agreed-upon actions from the district learning events.
- Ensure the planned national learning event is held, and results in agreed actions with clear timelines, responsibility and measurable outcomes.
- Ensure the planned monitoring visits occur as scheduled. The monitoring visits should have clear and measurable objectives to maximise their impact on sustainability. For example, the project and relevant ministries could identify the specific project activities that the visits will cover, such as the LA/ST component which is of particular interest to the MBSSE.
- At endline, include qualitative data collection with MSWGCA and the TSC at the national level, and local MBSSE officials.
- At endline, assess the impact of joint monitoring visits and learning events.

5.3.2 District and national government stakeholders (MBSSE and MSWGCA) developing education plans based on project activities (Inclusive Education, training to PVs, LA/ST component) to continue in existing GATE GEC schools, and cascade successful models to non-GATE schools

Government adoption of project activities would be a major marker of sustainability. It is also one of the hardest aims to achieve. The project aims to influence policy-making and education priorities through joint committees with government representatives, monitoring visits, and learning events at the district level. At midline, a representative from the MBSSE was included in the data collection, but the MSWGCA and TSC were not included in data collection. This indicator scores 2 at midline, 'emerging'.

The MBSSE does not currently plan to scale the GATE model to other schools. However, if they were to adopt a project activity, the first priority would be the LA/ST component. The MBSSE representative commented that "the government is designing their own activities and programs, for now. But this could change, especially in regards to the female teachers. We want to encourage more female teachers to be given scholarships and want to see how the [LA/ST] model could work in the government system". The Director of the International Development Office at the OU stated: "we don't have an indication that there is a true commitment to continue this [LA/ST component] yet". The DEOs also stated that the government does not currently have any plans to scale the activities.

The main barrier to continuation reported by the MBSSE is a lack of funding. The MBSSE representative stated that "for now it is not feasible to roll out the project under the government, the government does not have enough resources to do it all. Going forwards if DfID could say 'we want the government to contribute a percentage and we will put forward the rest' then I'm sure we could work something out". The MBSSE is therefore receptive to the possibility of external funding. The MBSSE representative also appealed to donors to continue funding GATE GEC activities to the end of the education cycle for the current beneficiaries, because "if we leave it here there will be no sustainable continuity, it will amount to doing nothing".

In the short-term there is little scope for the LA/ST component to be adopted by the government due to funding challenges, but these may be addressed in the medium to long-term through external funding.

Recommendations:

- Facilitate joint monitoring visits between consortium members and national government representatives.
- At endline, include representatives from the MSWGCA and TSC in the qualitative data collection.

5.4 Value for money

The project does not keep detailed information on the cost per beneficiary (the calculation provided in the project proposal is out-of-date). The GEC Programme Manager explained that due to the ‘follow-the-girl’ approach used by the project, costs can increase as beneficiaries move schools and the number of schools covered by the project therefore increases, expanding the reach to indirect beneficiaries. The cost per direct beneficiary therefore has risen over the life cycle of the project – although the number of indirect beneficiaries is greater, which mitigates this increased cost. The project is in discussion with the donor to assess how cost per beneficiary is calculated to reflect a whole-school approach.

The project considered value for money (VfM) in its project design, such as through the use of existing office space. The midline did not evaluate the VfM design.

However, there are a few activities which project partners regard as good value for money. The Action Aid Education Project Manager regards the VSLA component to be good VfM. They explained that the cost for the project is for the training component but the savings come from the participants’ own funds. Another activity which is reported to be good VfM is capacity building at the school level for school management and teachers. The Child Protection and Accountability Adviser explained that training is done in clusters, and there is some training of trainers occurring, which helps to cascade the training without direct cost to the project.

The project is currently in discussions with the FM regarding the definition of a project beneficiary, which will affect the value for money calculations. This should be revisited at endline with the updated approach. The project should also define what value for money looks like for each of its activities, and estimate costs for individual activities to be led by schools and communities after project closure to facilitate budget preparations and therefore adoption by beneficiaries.

Project response

Table 65.: Changes needed for sustainability

	Community	School	System
Change: what change should happen by the end of the implementation period?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue VSLA groups without support of project Set-up new VSLA groups where appropriate Implementation of livelihoods component Earlier VSLA groups graduate so they are more self-sustaining? Community and district stakeholders are committed to support schools in addressing child protection issues in and around schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased awareness and adoption of teaching methods and practices in the GATE GEC schools including continuing with the use of the CPD package. Study groups or a similar activity continuing without support of the project Score-carding activity is embedded into school ways of working Increased engagement by the HTs to support the needs of PVs, teachers in the school using the CPD package. Each PV is attending at least one of the key teaching support activities? School development plans and action plans to identify mechanisms to incorporate and continue project activities. Suggestion boxes in visible and accessible areas Continue engagement in schools, throughout SMCs/BoGs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreement on funding and plans to support schools to continue these activities. (dist and national level) Adoption of the project CPD package by Ministry Continuation of learning events GATE-GEC input into Ministry’s teacher training curriculum Another joint monitoring visit The Teaching Service Commission and MBSSE ensure the formal enrolment of Cohort 1 and 2 STs within the teaching force

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Community Based Rehabilitation Volunteers continue to play a key role at community level to ensure all children have access to school and regularly attend classes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed target of model schools adapted met School Leaders and teachers continue to apply inclusive pedagogy methodologies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TSC/MBSSE plan for the enrolment of cohort 3 into the teaching workforce
Activities: What activities are aimed at this change?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formation of VSLA groups and graduation ceremonies Training of village agents Livelihoods activity Score-carding activities and development of clearer pathways to be developed with community members highlighting the important roles and responsibilities key school officials have, including SMCs and BoGs, in ensuring schools are safe and secure for children. The Community Based Rehabilitation Volunteers continue sensitization activities on inclusive education without support of project Community and district engineers maintaining and supporting model schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revision of PV manual and CPD component Trainings on updated PV manual and CPD component (including other teachers) Continuing with Score-carding activities (including developing new monitoring tools to capture adaptations) Increase of replication of score-carding activities in other schools Continued implementation of School action plans Movement of suggestion boxes where appropriate/required SMC/BOG engagement and training Adaption of model schools As per the EE's suggestion, the project will encourage the SMCs/BOGs and HTs to actively aid in generation of sustainable funding ideas. School Leaders and teachers continue to develop the Individualize Educational Plans (IEP) for children with learning difficulties and involve parents and SMCs/BoGs members in the process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy and meeting with Ministry National steering committee meetings Meeting in working groups with ministry other education stakeholders Planning and implementation of learning events Review of teacher training curriculum Continued advocacy and campaigning activities with Ministry get STs on government payroll
Stakeholders: Who are the relevant stakeholders?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community leaders Select community members part of VSLA groups Village agents Parents and caregivers Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District MOBSSE, Headteachers, SMCs, BOGs (including country reps) STs and PVs and other teachers in GATE GEC schools and beyond. Itinerant teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOBSSE MOSWGCA (national and district) TSC TTC GLADI Leh Wi learn IRC's GEC LNGB Other NGOs working in the educational sector

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Based Rehabilitation Volunteers 		
<p>Factors: what factors are hindering or helping achieve changes? Think of people, systems, social norms etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hindering: high levels of poverty in the community with families often struggling to afford basic amenities, pervasive beliefs that children should not be included in decisions around education, social norms around gender, unequal power dynamics, low levels of educational attainment Helping: commitment and effective management of VSLAs by the community and enthusiasm around this component; large number of women in VSLAs and in VSLA leadership roles; student teachers engagement in PSs, community commitment to child protection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hindering: lack of funds in schools to implement changes in schools and to budget for continued activities; delays in government around STs added to payroll, delays in exam results for ST; large male teaching workforce with cultural beliefs related to education; SMC/BoGs lack proportionate representation of women and people with disabilities Helping: enthusiasm of ministry around STs, enthusiasm around study groups in schools by staff; increased engagement with CPD modules and application; schools note the value and importance of STs influence in PSs; IT expertise in inclusive education and IEPs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hinder: Other ministries priorities, difficulty to maintain momentum sustainable activities; corruption, changes Ministry staff and agendas Help: Ministries engagement thus formed National Steering Committee and Joint Monitoring activity; utilising Plan support and expertise on education advice; Ministry supports PI engagement in Education Sector PI. In addition, in the current COVID-19 crisis, the ministry has looked to Plan and to project as a go to support the relevant Educational working group and task force

At the community level, financial constraints, lack of affordability and poverty come across in most sections of analysis and remain a key barrier – establishing self-sustaining sources of income and capital for the communities remains important. Qualitative and quantitative findings recognise that families face major challenges in their abilities to pay direct education expenses. Findings clearly indicate the prevalence of poverty in decisions to attend or not attend school, or in the capacity to engage in study after school. This underscores the relevance of financial support through sustainable mechanisms such as VSLAs to help families meet basic costs of attending school, as well as change perceptions and attitudes to education. Supporting the continuation of VSLAs and/or other IGA will further support economic empowerment initiatives, build the financial capacity of even more marginalised families and enable families to support ancillary educational costs.

If households have greater economic capacity, and improved financial planning and management, they will have increased ability to support their children. This will in turn have an impact on children being able

to access, learn and transition throughout PS and JSS to post JSS and other successful transition points. In addition, this will also demonstrate the parents/caregivers' support to sending these girls and children with disabilities to schools, and how important education is amongst other outgoings in the household.

In addition to support the economic capacity of disadvantage households it's equally important to improve attitudes and perceptions of households and communities to invest in children's education and include children in decision making. The community awareness activities rolled out by community-based rehabilitation volunteers are strengthening caregivers understanding of the importance of education for all children and are helping girls and children with disabilities in regularly attending schools.

At the school level, the midline findings recognised there is a clear need for further work to be done around teaching quality and practices due to the negative learning outcomes compared to the control group. It is not worthwhile talking about sustainability without considering that changes will have to be done to the project to ensure it is effective, specifically with teachers, Head Teachers and SMC/BoGs.

Considering the role of Head Teachers, evidence has demonstrated that effective management of schools and the teacher environment directly impacts on learning outcomes, yet our data indicated gaps in GATE-GEC HT's understanding around the environment, inclusive pedagogy and management. The importance of CPD and capacity building among Heads raises the performance and skills of teachers; which in turn will increase education quality and classroom performance among teachers, leading to increases in learning outcomes among with beneficiaries. If there is additional support to Head Teachers to provide them with experience in mentoring, supporting, and developing their staff, as well as more support in inclusive education and gender-responsive pedagogies, this has the potential to support sustainable change in schools.

We know that increased governance and community engagement within schools leads to greater attendance rates among teachers and students, increased levels of monitoring and increased levels of accountability; all of which lead to improved learning outcomes among beneficiaries. SMCs and BoGs play a key role in retention strategy activities and school authorities have primary responsibility for retention within schools. Capacity building, further support and increased monitoring of SMCs and BoGs in the development of strategies to support teachers and students, is critical to sustainability. School management and governance initiatives are very powerful and sustainable in that they support capacity-building, and lead to much higher levels of transparency and accountability in school governance.

Furthermore, at the system level, the FQSE only supporting those government funded schools, means that community-based schools are likely to have lower outcomes in learning and transition, particularly if they are unable to afford accessing schools. Although continued engagement is taking place to expedite full support to all schools in SL, there is not a guarantee that this will happen by the end of the project, especially as the FQSE initiative is to ensure all children can attend school for free by 2023.

6. Key Intermediate Outcome Findings

6.1 Attendance

Intermediate Outcome 1 aims to improve attendance of the GATE GEC cohort in schools throughout the life of the project. The key indicators relating to this outcome are:

- Attendance of the GATE GEC cohort in schools

- Reduction in barriers to attendance: economic, school environment, teaching inclusivity, self-esteem/confidence, family/community support. Measured as % of GATE GEC cohort that state the above as a reason for absence.

The data source for IO1.1 has changed for midline, and therefore cannot be compared to baseline. IO1.2 is new at midline as per baseline recommendations.

6.1.1 High-level findings

Table 66.: Intermediate outcome indicators as per the logframe

IO	IO indicator	BL	ML Target	ML	Target achieved? (Y/N)	Target for next evaluation point	Will IO indicator be used for next evaluation point? (Y/N)
Improved attendance of the GATE GEC cohort in schools throughout the life of the project	IO 1.1: Attendance of the GATE GEC cohort in schools	Changed at ML	Changed at ML	IO 1.1 JSS: 87% PS: 70% PS GWD 44%	N/A	IO 1.1 JSS Level +2 percentage points Primary Level + 5 percentage points	Yes
	IO 1.2: Reduction in barriers to attendance: economic, school environment, teaching inclusivity, self-esteem/confidence, family/community support. Measured as % of GATE GEC cohort that state the above as a reason for absence.	New at ML	New at ML	IO 1.2 JSS Economic 4.8% Assisting at home 1.1% Not motivated to attend 1.1% All other logframe categories <1% PS girls Economic 12.9% All other logframe	N/A	IO1.2 -1 percentage points for Economic barriers	Yes for selected barriers (see recommendations)

				categories 0% PS GWD Economic 18.8% All other logframe categories 0%			
Main qualitative findings							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Household and school staff FGDs and KIIs agreed that Free Quality School Education (FQSE) policy was a key factor that had improved enrolment and attendance in the past year. There was no strong consensus around barriers to attendance that emerged from the qualitative data, however there were a number of themes that cut across several FGDs and KIIs. These were: sickness, financial constraints, hunger and lack of food, distance to travel to school, and “secret society” initiations. These barriers were generally seen to affect girls and boys equally. One key method used by school staff to monitor and reduce absence was for teachers to call or visit a child’s home if they are absent to find out why or to encourage them to attend. 							

6.1.2 Indicators at midline

Indicator 1: Attendance of the GATE GEC cohort in schools

The baseline report used attendance rates as reported by head teachers as their main unit of analysis for this intermediate outcome indicator. However, unlike at baseline, the main data source for this outcome at midline is self-reported attendance by students from the student survey.

The original intention was to triangulate this data with data on attendance reported by head teachers (from the school data sheets), as well as with attendance data from the household survey and classroom observations. It was also expected that the data on attendance reported by head teachers could be compared with the baseline data from this same source. However, the data collected at midline on attendance from the school data sheets were ultimately discarded because of very high levels of inconsistency amongst the data, as well as high levels of missing or incomplete data which made extrapolating averages based on this data extremely difficult. For example, almost one third of head teachers did not know, or could/would not give data on attendance rates at both the JSS and Primary levels. This is potentially indicative of poor record-keeping by schools regarding attendance rates, and is discussed further in the recommendations. Because of this, comparisons to the baseline data on attendance from this source cannot be made. The source used at midline is therefore the percentage of students that missed five days or fewer in the last school year.

Table 67.: IO1.1 Attendance according to students⁴¹

	JSS intervention midline n=537	JSS control midline n=460	All primary girls midline n=70	CWD primary girls midline n=16
Did you miss any days of school in the last school year? (% No)	59%	54%	46%	25%
Of those students who answered 'Yes' to the above question	41% total	46% total	54% total	75% total
% of students that missed between 1 and 5 days of school in the last school year	28%	24%	24%	19%
% of students that missed 6 to 20 days of school in the last school year	10%	15%	16%	25%
% of students that missed more than 20 days of school in the last school year	2%	5%	7%	13%
% don't know	1%	2%	7%	19%

The percentage of JSS intervention students that missed five days or fewer is 87 per cent (59 per cent that did not miss any school, plus 28 per cent that missed five days or fewer). For primary girls the rate is 70 per cent, and 44 per cent for primary GWD. The attendance rates of JSS intervention girls compare favourably to the JSS control group, of whom 78 per cent missed five days or fewer in the year prior to the midline.

Regression shows a statistically significant impact of absence of more than 6 days a year on literacy and numeracy results, with p-values of 0.32 and 0.35, respectively.

Table 68.: IO1.1 Attendance according to students by district

	% of girls that missed 5 days or fewer in the last year	
	JSS intervention (% that answered 'don't know')	Primary (% that answered 'don't know')
Kailahun	88% (1% 'don't know')	73% (0% 'don't know')
Kenema	93% (0%)	91% (0%)
Kono	94% (0%)	85% (14%)
Moyamba	89% (0%)	94% (0%)

⁴¹ 1 per cent of JSS intervention students and 7 per cent of primary girls answered 'don't know' to the question on attendance.
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Port Loko	79% (2%)	40% (16%)
Karene	88% (3%)	N/A ⁴²

There was some variation in attendance levels across districts; the attendance rate of girls varied from 79 per cent in Port Loko to 94 per cent in Kono, at the JSS intervention level. At the primary level, the variation across districts was more pronounced, from 40 per cent in Port Loko compared to 94 per cent in Moyamba. However, this greater degree of variation is possibly due to the small sample size for this group, and a high proportion of students in Kono and Port Loko that answered 'don't know' to the number of days they had been absent. The data does suggest, however, that Port Loko has lower attendance levels than the other districts across Primary and JSS levels.

There was little difference in attendance levels between age groups at the primary and JSS levels.

Of those JSS intervention girls who said they had a serious illness in the past year, 75 per cent missed less than a week of school. At the primary girl level this is 51 per cent.

Marginalisation characteristics

'Marginalised girls' for the purpose of this discussion comprise girls with disabilities, girls who are married and girls who are mothers. Girls with disabilities missed more days of school than average at the primary level. In addition, primary boys with disabilities miss less school than primary girls with disabilities, with 88 per cent missing five days or fewer. Only three girls in the intervention cohort that are in school are married. Two out of the three married girls did not miss any days of school in the last year, and the other missed just two days. However, amongst the JSS intervention girls who are mothers (n=9), only 53 per cent had missed fewer than five days of school in the last year. Forty per cent of mothers missed 6 or more days of school last year, and of that figure, 27 per cent missed more than 20 days. This is broadly consistent with the data from the household survey; 33 per cent of mothers' caregivers (n=6) said that the girl in their care had not attended school on most days that the school was open (compared with an average of 16 per cent across the JSS intervention cohort). Pregnancy and/or motherhood was commonly referred to in the qualitative data as a reason for drop-out amongst girls, and the quantitative data demonstrates that it may also have an impact on attendance for those girls who do stay in school.

Table 69.: IO1.1 Attendance according to caregivers

	JSS intervention midline	Primary girls midline	CWD primary girls midline
	n=522	n=73	n=19
Since the start of the most recent school year, has [GIRL] attended her (main) school on most days that the school was open? (% No)	16%	18%	21%
Of those that said 'no' (% out of total households)			
Has she attended...more than half the time (%)	10%	12%	11%
...half the time (%)	1%	3%	5%

⁴² No sample for this region at the Primary level.
GATE-GEC Midline Evaluation Report

...less than half the time (%)	2%	1%	5%
Don't know	3%	1%	0%

The capacity for triangulation is somewhat limited across the different data sources because: (i) question asked to caregivers relates to absences in the current school year, whereas the question asked to students relates to absences in the previous school year, and (ii) the phrasing of the question is different in each of the surveys, and what constitutes “most days” as per the household survey is left undefined and thus open to individual interpretation by caregivers. Nevertheless, we can see broadly consistent data across the two sources. 87 per cent of JSS intervention girls missed less than 6 days of school in the last school year according to the student survey, and 84 per cent of JSS intervention girls attended school on most days since the beginning of the school year according to caregivers. 70 per cent of primary girls self-reported missing less than 6 days of school last year, and 82 per cent of primary girls attended school most days this year according to caregivers.

It is recommended for endline that the same questions and timeframe are used for both the student survey and household survey to allow for more rigorous triangulation.

Table 70.: IO1.1 Attendance according to classroom observations

	JSS intervention midline n=34 (where n=the total number of classroom observations)	Primary Level midline n=10
Girls’ attendance rate for classes observed during classroom observations (%)	84%	89%

The table above indicates intervention school classroom attendance rates i.e. students present in class during classroom observations compared with the number of students on the register. Attendance rates were the same for boys and girls at the Primary level, however at the JSS level, average attendance rates for boys was 79 per cent, compared with 84 per cent for girls.

N.B. in one school, there were more students in attendance than were on the register (53 students present compared with 50 students on the register).

The attendance rates according to the classroom observation data are as expected at the JSS level given the self-reported data, and higher than expected at the primary level. This could be due to the small sample size at the primary level and the inclusion of all students in the rate (boys and girls) which may skew the result.

Changes in attendance

Although the quantitative data cannot speak to changes in attendance levels since the baseline, the qualitative data demonstrates a level of consensus amongst participants that there have been improvements in attendance over the last year. The Sierra Leonean government’s Free Quality School Education (FQSE) policy was referred to by a large number of participants as *the* key factor that had improved enrolment and attendance in the past year. However, in dissent, one student teacher did express that despite the introduction of the FQSE Policy, attendance continued to fluctuate in the school she worked in. The FQSE policy was also mentioned by household members as something which had helped to ease the burden of education costs. Some participants did mention NGO assistance, or the GATE GEC project specifically, as a contributing factor for improved attendance, but this view was less commonly observed in the data.

Table 71.: IO1.1 attendance and learning outcomes

	JSS intervention	n	Primary girls	n
Literacy				
No days absent	31.91	315	34.07	32
1 to 5 days absent	29.14	151	14.13	17
6 or more days absent	31.46	66	27.13	16
Between 6 and 20 days	33.51	55	30.49	11
More than 20 days	21.58	11	17.88	5
Numeracy				
No days absent	39.81	315	46.84	32
1 to 5 days absent	38.46	151	44.71	17
6 or more days absent	42.35	66	33.89	16
Between 6 and 20 days	43.16	55	34.07	11
More than 20 days	38.41	11	33.39	5

Comparing learning outcomes by attendance exposes some unusual trends in the data. It would normally be expected that students with lower attendance rates have lower performance. This is the case for primary girls' EGMA (numeracy) scores, which decrease as the number of days absent increases. However, primary girls' EGRA (literacy) scores steeply decrease for those who were absent between one and five days, but then increase again for girls who were absent for six or more days. Both of these scores, however, remain lower than for the primary girls who were not absent at all in the last school year. Whereas for the JSS intervention girls, while the SEGRA (literacy) and SEGMA (numeracy) scores are lower for girls who were absent between one and five days, they are actually higher in numeracy for girls who were absent for six or more days than for girls who were not absent at all, and nearly as high in literacy. When disaggregated further, the data shows that JSS girls who were absent between six and 20 days had higher scores for literacy and numeracy, whereas girls who were absent more than 20 days had lower scores than the average.

Indicator 2: Reduction in barriers to attendance: economic, school environment, teaching inclusivity, self-esteem/confidence, family/community support. Measured as % of GATE GEC cohort that state the above as a reason for absence.

No quantitative data was collected on barriers to attendance at baseline, however baseline consultants recommended capturing data on this at midline/endline. Data was captured via the student survey and provides the basis for comparison at endline.

Table 72.: IO1.2 Barriers to attendance (for logframe)

Reasons for missing school ⁴³	JSS intervention midline	JSS control midline	Primary girls midline	CWD primary girls midline
	n=537	n=460	n=70	n=16
Economic (includes financial and lack of uniform)	4.8%	8.7%	12.9%	18.8%
Helping at home	1.1%	7.2%	0%	0%
Paid work	0.7%	1.1%	0%	0%
Discouragement/community barriers	0.4%	0%	0%	0%
Not motivated to attend	1.1%	3.7%	0%	0%
Inadequate facilities at school	0%	0.4%	0%	0%
Fear of school	0%	0%	0%	0%

Lack of uniform was not one of the options listed in the survey, but was the most common response amongst primary girls who gave “other reasons” for absence (4.3 per cent of the whole primary girls sample). This was combined with the percentage of girls who chose “financial” as a reason for non-attendance to create a total percentage for economic reasons for absence. Whereas economic reasons for absence were stated by only 4.8 per cent (all financial) of JSS intervention girls, economic reasons were stated by 8.7 per cent (8.0 per cent financial, 0.7 per cent no uniform) of JSS control girls. Notably, 7.2 per cent of JSS control girls stated assisting at home as a reason for absence, compared with 1.1 per cent of JSS intervention girls, and 3.7 per cent stated that they were not motivated to attend, compared with 1.1 per cent of the intervention group at JSS level.

There was some variation across districts relating to financial reasons for absence at the JSS intervention level. Financial reasons for absence were stated by around 4-5 per cent of respondents for most districts. However, in Kenema no respondents stated financial reasons for absence, compared with 14 per cent of respondents from Karene. At the primary level, the girls who missed school for financial reasons were entirely concentrated in the districts of Kailahun and Port Loko (20 per cent and 24 per cent respectively), whereas the girls who mentioned lack of uniform as a reason for absence were all located in either Kono or Port Loko (14 per cent and 8 per cent respectively).⁴⁴

There was a very small difference between age groups at the JSS intervention level in the percentages of girls who gave economic reasons for absence (4 per cent for girls under 12, and 5 per cent for girls over 12). The difference was somewhat more pronounced at the primary level; 19 per cent of girls under 12 said that they missed school for economic reasons, compared with 23 per cent of girls 12 and over.

There was consensus particularly in the student and household FGDs that financial constraints are a key barrier to attendance in communities. Caregivers being unable to afford school uniforms or other school materials was also a theme that cut across a number of the student FGDs, which reinforces the quantitative data. Hunger and lack of food, or parents not being able to provide lunch for children to take

⁴³ Respondents were asked to choose all that apply.

⁴⁴ There are no primary girl respondents from the district of Karene.

to school was another theme related to economic reasons that emerged from the FGDs. A Participant in one JSS girls FGD in Kono said that hunger was a barrier to attendance in her community, after which another participant explained that sometimes their classmates choose to go and work on the farm instead of coming to school because they can find cassava to eat on the farm. A few of the Primary students in the FGDs also specifically mentioned that they did not enjoy their lunch break at school because they did not have any food to eat.

Only very small numbers of respondents (<1.1 per cent in all cases, and 0 per cent across the primary level) stated reasons for absence that related to the logframe indicator (i.e. reasons related to school environment, teaching inclusivity, self-esteem, community/family support). This is discussed further in the recommendations.

Table 73.: IO1.2 Barriers to attendance (other)

Reasons for missing school	JSS intervention midline	JSS control midline	Primary girls midline	CWD primary girls midline
	n=537	n=460	n=70	n=16
Health	34.6%	36.7%	45.7%	68.8%
Natural Factors (inc. e.g. heavy rains)	3.2%	5.7%	2.9%	0%
Cultural activities	1.1%	0.9%	0%	0%
Distance from school	0.6%	1.1%	0%	0%

Table 74.: IO1.2 Help to get to school

Girl requires help to get to school	JSS intervention midline	Primary girls midline	CWD primary girls midline
	n=522	n=73	n=19
Yes	15%	26%	42%
Reason why (% of those who answered Yes to the above. Enumerators were asked to mark all that apply):			
	n=77	n=19	n=8
Too young to go alone	35%	11%	0%
Too far to go alone	56%	5%	13%
Unsafe to go alone	49%	0%	0%

Child has a disability which makes it difficult to go unassisted	4%	47%	75%
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Health is by far the most common reason for absence amongst respondents. The number of girls who were absent due to health reasons was fairly consistent across intervention and control groups at the JSS level (34.6 per cent and 36.7 per cent respectively). However, the proportion of primary girls who were absent due to health reasons was higher at 45.7 per cent. However, this figure is potentially skewed by the relatively larger proportion of girls with disabilities in this sample, of whom 68.8 per cent were absent due to health reasons in the last year.

This is somewhat supported in the qualitative data. Sickness was a theme that emerged from a few student FGDs as a reason they would not attend school, though its frequency in the qualitative data does not match its prevalence in the quantitative data. Distance was another theme that came up in several interviews and FGDs; living far from school was seen by participants to be a prevalent barrier to attendance and/or transition. This is not, however, supported in the quantitative data on attendance, as only 0.6 per cent of JSS intervention and no primary girls stated distance as a reason for absence. The qualitative data does find support, however, in the quantitative data on JSS intervention girls who require help to get to school. Half of the caregivers who reported that their child needs help getting to school said that this was because the school was too far away and/or because it is unsafe for them to travel to school alone.⁴⁵ The proportion of primary girls for whom this is the case is much lower, possibly due to the higher number of primary schools within communities, which are therefore likely to be closer to students' homes.

Secret society initiations⁴⁶ were a further theme that was raised in one of the DEO KIIs, and in two FGDs as a barrier to attendance which is not well reflected in the quantitative data. A senior staff member in the local research organisation who conducted the data collection offered more information on the impact of "secret societies" on school attendance. He said that initiations usually take place annually between November and January, and can last between one and three months, during which time a child may be expected to move away from the community and therefore not attend school. Initiations take place in all communities, and sometimes when initiations take place schools shut down altogether for a period of time. Given the seemingly widespread prevalence of these initiations, it is perhaps surprising that the proportion of girls who state cultural activities as a reason for absence is so low (1.1 per cent for JSS intervention, and 0 per cent for Primary girls). It is possible that, if schools close during initiation periods, this would not be considered as an "absence" by respondents. This is discussed further in recommendations.

⁴⁵ Enumerators were asked to mark all options that apply for this question (WG_SE4B). It is also important to note that a high number of respondents misunderstood this question, "Does (name) need help to get to school". A high number of the respondents who answered, "Yes" to WG_SE4A, chose the "other" option for WG_SE4B, and gave reasons related to barriers to attendance more broadly. Suggest rewording this question for endline (see recommendations)

⁴⁶ The Bondo secret society is a cultural norm for girls and women in Sierra Leone. Those who do not undergo initiation are treated as outcasts. A central pillar of initiation into the Bondo society is FGM. For more information see <https://www.forwarduk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Forward-Bondo-Report-2017-Updated-Branding-WEB.pdf>. However, it is also important to note that a ban on secret society initiations was announced by Minister of Local Government and Rural Development Anthony Brewah in a letter to regional ministers in January 2019. For more information see Batha & Peyton (2019) 'Sierra Leone bans FGM in clampdown on secret societies.' Available from: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-leone-women-fgm/sierra-leone-bans-fgm-in-clampdown-on-secret-societies-idUSKCN1PJ1WH>

Another issue that arose in the qualitative data that is not reflected in the self-reported barriers to attendance relates to children with disabilities. In a KII with a community based rehab volunteer (CBRV), the participant stated that the parents of children with disabilities stop them from attending school because they are worried that they will be made fun of by other children, or because they do not believe that they will receive adequate care at school. This is not consistent with the quantitative data on barriers to attendance as self-reported by students, but is to some extent supported by the data on community attitudes from the household survey. For example, 30 per cent of caregivers of primary girls with disabilities believe that it is acceptable for a child to not attend school if they may be physically harmed or teased at school or on the way to/from school, compared with an average of 18 per cent for the primary girls cohort as a whole. However, the proportion of caregivers who believe it is acceptable for a child to not attend school if he/she has physical or learning needs that the school cannot meet was almost the same for those caring for girls with disabilities as for the primary girls cohort as a whole (~30 per cent).

6.1.3 Recommendations for endline

Indicator 1

If attendance data from head teachers via the school data sheet is to be retained, training for head teachers should be done by GATE GEC on attendance record-keeping. Otherwise, it is recommended to use this tool only for the head teacher interview and not for attendance and transition data.

The same questions and timeframe should be used to measure attendance in both the student survey and household survey to allow for more rigorous triangulation.

Indicator 2

Retain economic reasons and measure reduction of economic reasons at endline (also potentially assisting at home and not motivated to attend). Disregard other reasons for absence as all scores are <1 per cent so no meaningful comparison to endline or targets for reduction can be made. Add a specific question on secret society initiations and school closure/absence from school

Reword WG_SE4A: "Does (name) need help to get to school". A high number of the respondents misinterpreted this question to mean help to attend school more broadly, rather than assistance to travel to school as was intended. Suggest changing to, "Does (name) need help travelling to school?" for endline.

6.2 Inclusive teaching

Intermediate outcome 2 aims to 'improve knowledge and demonstration of inclusive education and gender sensitive learning centred teaching in literacy and numeracy'. The key IO indicators measured that relate to IO2 are:

- Head teachers' knowledge of inclusive teaching methods
- PVs demonstrating gender inclusive practices
- Improved students' perceptions of learning in literacy and numeracy

At midline the target has not been met for IO2.2. The other indicators are new at midline and therefore have no targets and cannot be compared to baseline.

6.2.1 High level findings

Table 75.: Intermediate outcome indicators as per the logframe

IO	IO indicator	BL	ML Target	ML	Target achieved? (Y/N)	Target for next evaluation point	Will IO indicator be used for next evaluation point? (Y/N)
Improved knowledge and demonstration of inclusive education and gender sensitive learning centred teaching in literacy and numeracy	Percentage of head teachers with increased knowledge of inclusive education teaching methodologies	-	-	JSS 38% PS 38%	-	+10 percentage points	Y
	Percentage of PVs demonstrating gender sensitive learning centred teaching practices	JSS 68% PS 78%	+7.7 percentage points	JSS 75% PS 76%	N	+5 percentage points	Y
	Increase in gender inclusive practice of teachers in GATE GEC schools	-	-	TQ_1s JSS 81% PS 63% TQ_2s JSS 79% PS 67% CS_1s JSS 71% PS 69%	-	-	N
	Percentage of the GATE GEC cohort reporting improved perceptions of learning in	-	-	Literacy JSS 4.11 PS 3.59 Numeracy JSS 3.63 PS 3.33	-	+1 point	Y

	literacy and numeracy						
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Main qualitative findings

- All three head teachers who were interviewed said that they encouraged “child-centred” teaching at their school.
- More than 50 per cent of primary school head teachers mentioned classroom arrangement as an inclusive teaching method used. The least common inclusive teaching methods at midline are the use of real life examples and student participation in classroom rule setting (19 per cent each).
- The classroom observations show that on average JSS PV teachers use around 75 per cent of inclusive teaching methods expected of them. The main areas for improvement are: speaking to children at their level and making eye contact; use of appropriate examples; use of local materials; and the use of gender appropriate language. This is supported by feedback from students.
- Students are generally positive about the study groups, though other stakeholders report only a small improvement in learning outcomes. One of the main issues is attendance.

6.2.2 Indicators at midline

Indicator 1: Percentage of head teachers with increased knowledge of inclusive education teaching methodologies

This is a new indicator at midline. Head teachers of all schools were asked about inclusive teaching methods in use at their school, through the School Data Sheet. The inclusive teaching methods listed were taken from the HI handbook ‘Tools and Resources for Inclusive Education: teacher training toolkit’. The gender of head teachers was not recorded in the School Data Sheet at midline, so it is not possible to disaggregate the data by gender for this indicator.

Amongst head teachers of JSS intervention schools, 38 per cent of head teachers mentioned four or more inclusive teaching methods that are used in the school. The most frequently mentioned inclusive teaching method is a variety of activities based on different learning styles (46 per cent). The least used method is real life examples to contextualise learning (18 per cent). Twenty-nine per cent of control school head teachers mentioned four or more inclusive teaching methods used in the school they manage.

Figure 14: Number of inclusive teaching methods used (JSS intervention)

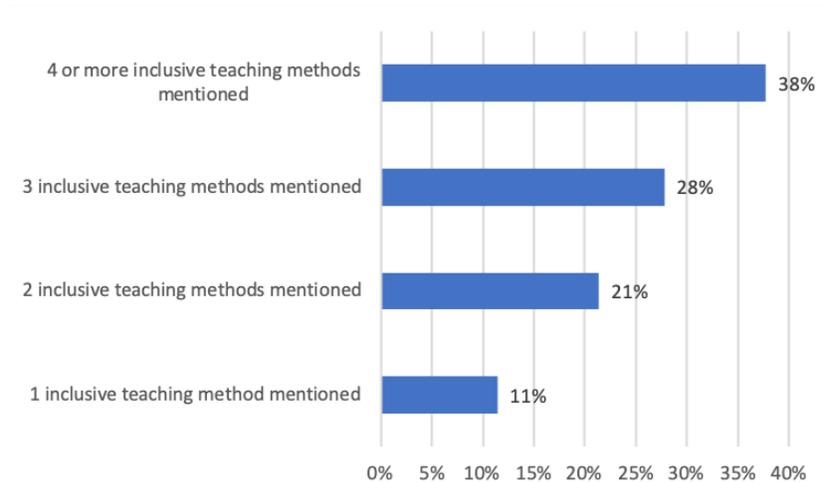
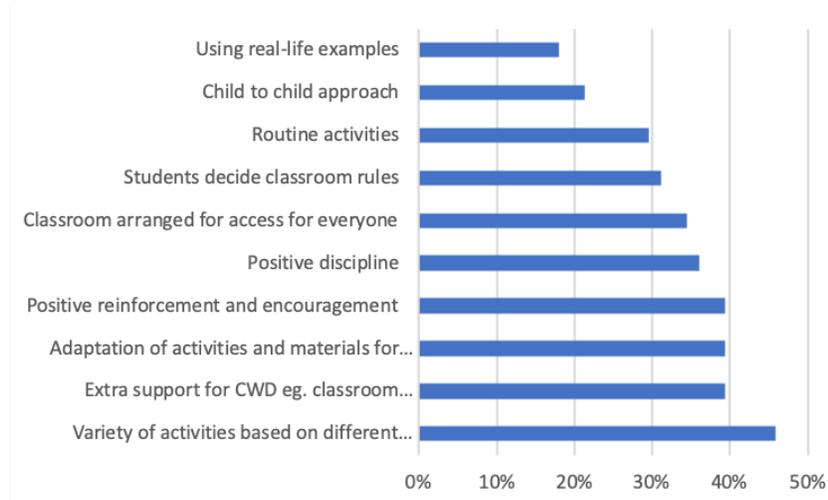


Figure 15: Inclusive teaching methods used (JSS intervention)



Similar to JSS, 38 per cent of head teachers at the primary level mentioned four or more inclusive teaching methods that are used in the school.

More than 50 per cent of primary school head teachers mentioned classroom arrangement as an inclusive teaching method used. The least common inclusive teaching methods at midline are the use of real life examples and student participation in classroom rule setting (19 per cent each).

Figure 16: Number of inclusive teaching methods used (Primary)

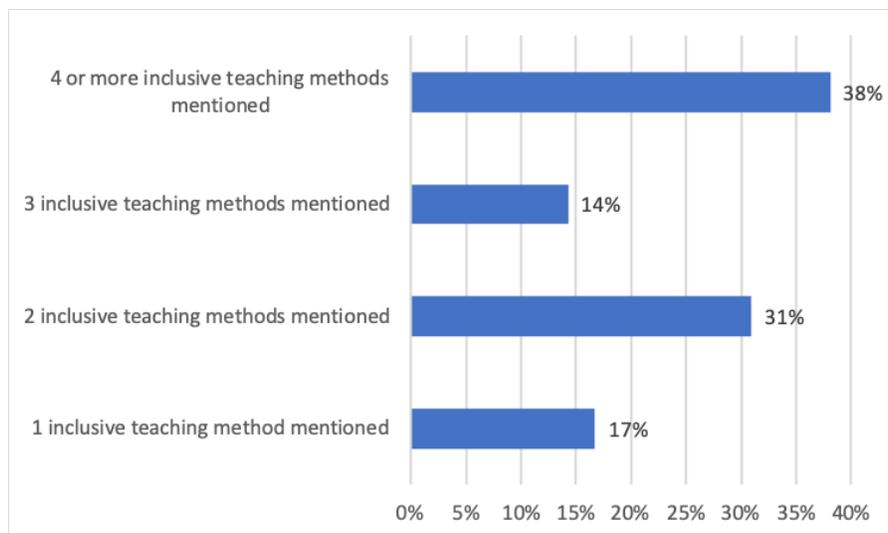
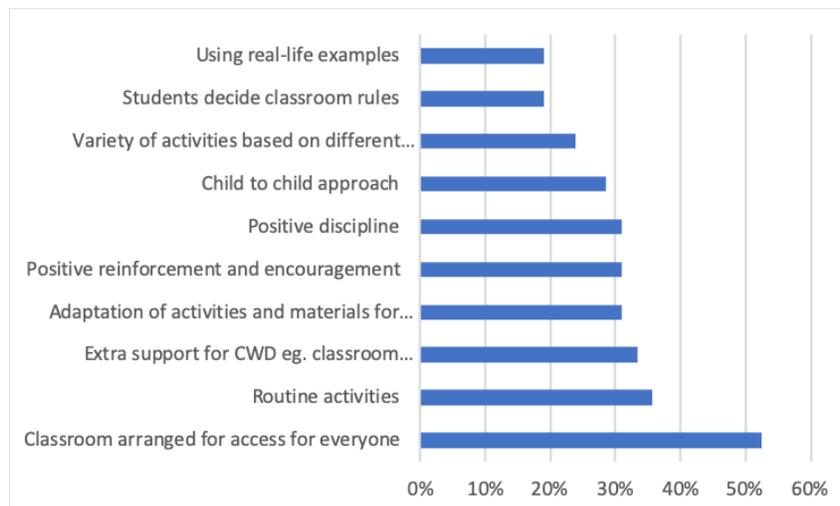


Figure 17: Inclusive teaching methods used (Primary)



All three head teachers who were interviewed said that they encouraged “child-centred” teaching at their school. One of the head teachers specifically mentioned inclusive teaching, which he understood to mean that everyone is included and encouraged to learn, child-centred with interactive activities and group work.

At midline, knowledge of inclusive teaching methods is present but lacking breadth. The recommended endline target is +10 percentage points in head teacher’s reporting use of four or more inclusive education techniques in their school.

Indicator 2: Percentage of PVs demonstrating gender sensitive learning centred teaching practices

The main source for this indicator at midline is classroom observation data. The midline score was calculated using the same method as baseline: the percentage of the checklist items were met during the observation of a one-period lesson. At midline, 34 PV JSS classes were observed, and 10 PV primary school classes. The maximum score at midline is 21. At baseline the maximum score was 28. The tool was revised to remove questions that could not be answered through observation alone, and

observations were added on gender-sensitivity. The target is +7.7 percentage points at midline, which has been met for JSS PVs but not for primary PVs.

Ninety-four per cent of the JSS PVs observed scored ten points or higher. The average score was 15.8, or 75 per cent. At baseline the score was 68 per cent. This is an increase of 7 percentage points at midline, which does not meet the target of an increase of 7.7 percentage points. All of the PV classes observed in primary schools scored ten or more points. The average score was 16, or 76 per cent. At baseline the score was 78 per cent, this is a reduction of 2 percentage points and does not meet the midline target.

Table 78 shows a selection of high and low scores related to inclusivity. The main areas for improvement are:

- Speaking to children at their level and making eye contact
- Use of examples
- Use of local materials
- Use of gender appropriate language

The comments highlight that teachers are generally inclusive of all students. The main barrier is the size of the class. The average JSS class size observed was 43 students, and 45 in primary school. Class size ranged from 4 pupils to 86 pupils. Speaking to children at their level and making eye contact clearly is more difficult when class sizes are very large and there is no space for the teacher to move around the classroom. Large classroom sizes also prevent a child-to-child approach being adopted, which is one of the least-mentioned inclusive teaching practices from the head teacher data, above. Use of gender stereotypes or a lack of gender appropriate language is tied to deeply engrained societal norms and linguistic habits. Change to this requires a more substantial shift that may take longer to achieve, and which may explain the low scores at midline. Use of real life examples scored low both in the head teacher and classroom observation data. Unfortunately, there is no other data that helps to explain why this is the case at midline. Positive discipline is mentioned by just over 30% of head teachers as a teaching method used in their schools. The relatively low levels of adherence with this method of inclusive teaching is consistent with the data on methods of punishment from the student survey, where 67% of JSS intervention students reported that their teacher uses physical punishment to punish students. In one FGD with boys at a JSS intervention school in Kailahun, the boys explained that their teachers no longer beat them, but that the head teacher does. In an intervention school in Port Loko, researchers observed a head teacher threatening to beat students.⁴⁷ It is possible that the lack of positive discipline, and enduring use of physical punishment, is related to a lack of support from school management on this issue. This cannot be confirmed at midline, but may be worth exploring further at endline.

Table 76.: Selected classroom observation scores

	JSS PVs	Primary PVs	Selected comments
The teacher acts in a friendly manner and speaks pleasantly (to both boys and girls, and CWD) (CO_9)	100%	100%	He speaks the local language to explain the problem. No group was excluded. They all presented their work and the teacher encourage each and everyone of them by

⁴⁷ This was reported to the Plan Child Protection Officer.
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			speaking in a polite manner even though when some of the group don't get their work right
The teacher listens carefully to the students (both both boys and girls, and CWD) (CO_10)	97%	100%	Yes the teacher listens to them carefully especially when they want to ask questions he will tell the others to be quiet and listen to the questions the other pupils want to ask.
Does the teacher bend to speak to the child at their level and make eye contact (with both boys and girls, and CWD)? (CO_11)	47%	50%	This happen for only few students in the front because she cannot access the back due to overcrowding She speaks in a friendly manner but only bend down to look in their books to see what a they wrote when copying from the board
The teacher treats all children with respect and equality (including boys and girls) (CO_15)	97%	90%	He usually called them Mr / Miss then include the name of the child He treats the children with respect and quality by appreciating their views even when some of them answered a question wrongly.
The teacher includes all students in the learning activities (CO_19)	82%	90%	He included all the children in the lesson. He ask different kids questions from the back to the front Because the classroom was large not all students were included in the teaching. Those at the back were not having much attention.
The teacher asks questions to individual students (both boys and girls, and CWD) and varies the student they ask (CO_22)	85%	100%	Yes he did ask to both except for one girl who can't hear. She ask [sic] questions to boys and girls. She will call a child by the name and ask him or her to solve problem on the board.if they don't know she will ask other children to help
The teacher encourages students to ask questions and gives time for this (CO_23)	85%	90%	Yes when he asked a girl to respond to a question, he said the class should give her a big hand for answering the questions correctly.

			<p>He calls on anyone and ask a question and if the student got it wrong he say please try and he illustrates and example to help the student understand better</p> <p>She ask "do you understand" "Can you do this problem" But the children do not ask any questions</p>
The teacher uses examples based on the daily experience of the children (CO_27)	68%	80%	<p>She will refer to the children when solving sums. For example she will say" Joseph if you have 500 and then Mabinty gives you 200. How much do you have in all?"</p> <p>The teacher only uses the examples that are available in the textbook.</p>
The teacher uses local materials to facilitate understanding of the lesson (CO_28)	21%	10%	He only used the textbook he had.
The teacher uses gender sensitive and appropriate language (including language free of gender stereotypes and derogatory names or comments) (CO_34)	38%	30%	He flog [sic] the girl and said that it's the girl's family benefit whether she learns or not.

Qualitative data collection with the PVs highlighted that inclusive teaching methods are promoted not only by the project, but are also central to the new teaching materials used in classrooms (as of late 2018).⁴⁸

Several of the school staff participants said that the Learning Practice Manual (LPM) was the main method of teaching that they used for literacy and numeracy. Two teachers in an FGD (Kono) said that the LPM had brought about big changes in their approach to teaching, because they “now focus on the children and the learning process.” Another teacher in this FGD also referred specifically to child-centred methodologies to “make room for participation of pupils during learning sessions.” Mainly teachers and student teachers referred to the LPMs, but one PV (Kailahun) also said that the LPM informed his teaching methods, although another PV in the same FGD said that in the last training they had learned about “shared learning” and group work, which he said had helped to improve the learning of some of the less attentive students in his class.

Other PVs referred to inclusivity, child-centred teaching and student participation, and group work as aspects of their PV training that they implement in their jobs, and some also said that they perform a counselling role for students. However, in some cases, while PVs referred to progressive teaching methods, they also retained attitudes that are not in-keeping with these approaches. For example, one PV (Moyamba), said the following:

⁴⁸ The lesson plans are available here: http://www.education.gov.sl/LeWeLearn_Page/LeWeLearn_LessonPlan.aspx

“I use some of the training, like the inclusive education part to bring all the children together, so that the brave girls can teach the others . . . But teaching is not easy. Some girls are stubborn and don’t want to learn. You have to threaten them to get them to come to the Study Group.”

A stakeholder from Plan UK explained that, coming into the project, over 50 per cent of PVs were unqualified and untrained. Though the results show some progress in teaching quality amongst PVs, it is possible that because so many PVs had no received no training on pedagogy prior to the project intervention, training needs to be sustained over a longer period to see more significant improvements.

The main teaching methods or actions undertaken by teachers to encourage participation of CWDs are: make sure that hearing or sight impaired children are sat at the front (most common response), pay special attention to CWDs and ask them questions to make sure they understand, encourage group work with other children, and protect CWDs from provocation or chastise children if they provoke CWDs in class. Several PVs in particular said that they identify and pay special attention to children with learning difficulties. Change is occurring, though slowly. As one PV highlighted: “change does not come like rain, it takes time. But we are making gradual progress, especially on the new idea of inclusive education.” And another PV stated that the project has helped promote inclusive education: “Our ideas on CWD education are also gradually changing because of the project. Because prior to this time we thought that [CWD] should be separated from their peers, but now the project has created a space for both CWD and girls in the learning environment.”

The project has had an impact on inclusive teaching methods and gender sensitive approaches, though the impact of this is difficult to separate from the move towards inclusivity more generally in the education context. Moreover, some approaches are used more frequently than others.

The recommended target at endline is +5 percentage points. It is also recommended to reformulate the indicator at endline (see below for more details).

Indicator 3(a): Increase in gender inclusive practice of teachers in GATE GEC schools

This indicator uses the opinion of students on gender inclusive practices of their teachers. It does this through three questions/statements:

1. Does your teacher(s) ask more questions to boys or girls?
2. Does your teacher(s) ask harder questions to boys or girls?
3. My teachers treat boys and girls differently in the classroom

At baseline, 79.97 per cent of all girls (both PS and JSS, control and intervention) said that their teacher asks an equal amount of questions to boys and girls, compared with 82.54 per cent of all girls at midline. At baseline, 81.45 per cent of all girls said that their teacher ask harder questions⁴⁹ to both girls and boys equally, compared with 81.07 per cent at midline. The data in baseline report for this indicator does not disaggregate between primary and secondary, or control and intervention, however, and these figures therefore have limited relevance. Table 79 details the disaggregated midline results.

Table 77.: Student perceptions on inclusive practice of teachers

⁴⁹ Taken from Table 50 in the Baseline Report. However please note that there is an error in Table 50 of the Baseline Report. Question TQ_1s: “Does your teacher(s) ask more questions to boys or girls?” is repeated twice with different figures. It is assumed this is a typographical error, and that the second set of percentages in the table corresponds to TQ_2s: Does your teacher(s) ask harder questions to boys or girls? in line with their order in the survey.
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	JSS intervention	JSS control	Primary girls	Primary girls with a disability	Primary boys with a disability
n	537	460	70	16	12
Does your teacher(s) ask more questions to boys or girls? TQ_1s (% both equally)	81%	85%	63%	69%	92%
Does your teacher(s) ask harder questions to boys or girls? TQ_2s (% both equally)	79%	85%	67%	63%	75%
My teachers treat boys and girls differently in the classroom CS_1s (% disagree)	71%	77%	69%	50%	50%

The results generally support the results presented in indicator 2, that there is some difference in the treatment of girls and boys, but the majority of students report gender equality, with the exception of children with disabilities. There is no notable difference between age groups at the JSS intervention level. However, at the Primary level, girls who are under 12 are more likely to report that the teacher asks questions equally to boys and girls (with 69 per cent reporting that their teacher asks an equal amount of questions to boys and girls, compared with 50 per cent of over 12s).

There is also some degree of variation across districts. JSS intervention students in Moyamba and Kailahun reported the lowest levels of gender equality in the classroom, with students in Kenema and Kono reporting the highest. Notably, in Moyamba, JSS control students reported much higher levels of gender equality in the classroom, with results over 80 per cent for all three questions. Scores were fairly even between JSS control and intervention across other districts, except for Kenema where only 77 per cent of control students reported that their teacher asks an equal amount of questions to boys and girls (compared with 93 per cent of intervention students), and 79 per cent reported that their teacher asks equally difficult questions to boys and girls (compared with 93 per cent of intervention students). At the Primary level there was also some degree of variation across districts, though since the sample size is small any disaggregation of this sample should be read with caution. Primary girls in Port Loko reported lower levels of gender equality than their JSS counterparts (48 per cent of primary girls said that their teacher treats boys and girls the same, compared with 77 per cent of JSS intervention girls). Conversely, in Kailahun and Moyamba, a higher percentage of primary girls reported that their teachers do not treat boys and girls differently than JSS girls in these regions (91 per cent in Kailahun and 80 per cent in Moyamba, compared with 67 per cent and 59 per cent respectively for JSS girls). However, despite 80 per cent of primary girls in Moyamba reporting that teachers do not treat boys and girls differently, only 40 per cent agreed that their teacher asks an equal amount of questions to boys and girls.

At the primary level, learning outcomes for students who report that teachers treat girls and boys differently in the classroom are lower than those who say that teachers treat girls and boys equally. At the JSS level students who report that teachers treat boys and girls differently do marginally better than students who say that teachers treat them equally.

Table 78.: Learning outcomes for students who report teachers treat boys and girls differently

	JSS intervention	Primary girls	Primary girls with a disability	Primary boys with a disability
	n=524	n=65	n=16	n=12
Literacy				
Students report teachers do treat boys and girls differently	31.33	24.79	22.62	27.17
Students report teachers do not treat boys and girls differently	31.01	29.36	30.53	50.34
Numeracy				
Students report teachers do treat boys and girls differently	39.99	26.38	18.07	26.98
Students report teachers do not treat boys and girls differently	39.67	46.50	40.41	61.35

The impact of treatment of boys and girls by teachers on learning outcomes is not statistically significant at midline.

Very few children with disabilities report that they are treated differently to other children by their teachers. Four per cent of primary girls with a disability report that they are treated differently by teachers to other children in their class, and five per cent of primary boys. Only 1 per cent of JSS intervention students with a disability report that they are treated differently.

Triangulation with the household survey shows that caregivers of enrolled students agree in similar proportions that teachers treat all children equally (78 per cent JSS intervention, 64 per cent primary girls). Eight-seven per cent of caregivers of JSS intervention students report that the quality of teaching has improved in the last 12 months, and 73 per cent of caregivers of primary girls agree.

Table 79.: Household survey teaching quality perception

	JSS intervention	Primary girls
Have you been informed about [programme beneficiary's] progress at school in the last 12 months? (Yes)	84%	84%
How often do you speak to a teacher from [name]'s school? (Once a week)	34%	39%
Are you aware of any changes to teaching practices that have been made at [programme beneficiary's] school? (Yes)	46%	24%
Do you think the teachers at [name]'s school treat all children equally?	78%	64%

How would you describe the quality of teaching that [programme beneficiary] receives? (Very good)	36%	27%
In the last 12 months, how do you think the quality of teaching that [programme beneficiary] receives has changed? (Improved)	87%	73%
Does [name] enjoy school?	99%	97%

The qualitative data with students highlights practices used by the teachers to help all students learn. In response to the question, 'what does your favourite teacher do in class to help you learn?', JSS students across control and intervention Schools said that their favourite teachers encourage them, help them with their assignments or when they don't understand something, encourage them to ask questions. In addition, some JSS students in intervention schools also said that their favourite teachers give them group work, rephrase the question if a student answers incorrectly, and ask the other students to give them a round of applause when they answer a question correctly.

There have been improvements in inclusive education practices. However, corporal punishment is still prevalent. Seventy-seven per cent of JSS intervention students reported that teachers use discipline or punishment when students get an answer wrong in class, 71 per cent of primary girls agree. This is a reduction from baseline, but is still a high proportion of the sample.

Table 80.: Physical punishment used by teachers

	JSS intervention (baseline)	Primary girls (baseline)
Do your teachers discipline or punish students who get things wrong in a lesson? % Yes	77%	71%
The teacher uses physical punishment to punish students (% of whole sample)	67% (95%)	64% (100%)
In the past week did you see a teacher use physical punishment on other students? (Every day or once or twice. % of those who reported that the teachers use physical punishment)	50%	50%

Learning outcomes for children who report discipline and punishment is used by teachers are generally higher than for children who state their teachers do not use punishment, with the exception of EGRA. This is the opposite of the baseline results, with the exception of SeGRA which follows the same pattern.

Table 81.: Punishment and learning outcomes

Do your teachers discipline or punish students who get things wrong in a lesson? (TQ_6s)

	JSS intervention (baseline)	Primary girls (baseline)
Literacy		
Yes	32.13 (54)	24.76 (47)
No	28.72 (49)	34.50 (49)

Numeracy		
Yes	40.60 (47)	46.03 (46)
No	37.40 (49)	33.15 (49)

The qualitative data does not support the survey data. In response to a question asking what teachers do if a student gets a question wrong in class, JSS students in intervention schools said that their teachers are encouraging when they get a question wrong; they correct them and encourage them to fix the mistake, rephrase the question, ask another student for the correct answer or ask the whole class to answer the question as an assignment, or encourage the student to study at home. Participants in one JSS girls Intervention FGD (Moyamba) said that most teachers encourage the student to try again to solve the problem by giving out other examples to help them understand, however some teachers don't encourage them or give them a second chance. One participant from a school in Kailahun said that if they get a question wrong in class, the teacher asks them to lead an energiser activity.

The disparity between the quantitative and qualitative data could be due to a reluctance to discuss a sensitive topic in a group situation, and could also be indicative of the change since baseline.

There was a small amount of discussion in the qualitative data to suggest that there had been some reduction in the use of corporal punishment, at least in some schools. One participant from a boys' JSS FGD at a project school (Kailahun) said that the teachers used to beat them when they got an answer wrong in class, but that now things had improved and the teachers no longer beat them. However, the participant said that the headteacher still beats children for bad behaviour, and the boys agreed that they were afraid to go to the head teacher's office because of this. One stakeholder said that she heard anecdotal evidence of reductions in corporal punishment from some districts, but that there was no data available that measured this. Other evidence from the qualitative data suggests that in certain schools physical punishment intended to inflict pain may have reduced, but it has been replaced by other methods of physical punishment. For example, one teacher during an FGD (Moyamba) said that the school had abolished the use of caning as a method of discipline, and that different methods of punishment were now used, including "productive" punishment such as raking the grass and moving pebbles in the school grounds. Other school staff also mentioned physical punishments, such as sweeping, cleaning, and kneeling, as methods of discipline used in their school.

At endline, it is recommended that this indicator is merged with indicator 2.

Indicator 3(b): Percentage of the GATE GEC cohort reporting improved perceptions of learning in literacy and numeracy

These perception scores are new at midline. The baseline report does give a set of percentage scores for "perceptions of learning"⁵⁰, however, adequate information is not given regarding how these percentages were calculated. It is therefore not possible to compare the baseline and midline data for this indicator. They consist of six questions each for literacy and numeracy to assess confidence and access to resources required for those subjects. Each question has a five-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree which were assigned a score from 0 to 1. Each student has a score out of a maximum score of six.⁵¹

2.3b (i) Literacy

⁵⁰ See Table 49 of the Baseline Report

⁵¹ Strongly disagree = 0, disagree = 0.25, neither agree nor disagree = 0.5, agree = 0.75 and strongly agree = 1

The average literacy perception score for JSS intervention students is 4.11, and for primary girls it is 3.59. The component which scored the lowest for both groups was whether students have resources at home to read and write in English, with a score of 0.56 among JSS students and 0.47 among primary students. For the other components there was mild agreement. The full results are presented in Table 84.

A students' literacy perception score has a statistically significant impact on literacy outcomes but not numeracy outcomes.

Table 82.: Literacy perception scores

	JSS intervention score	% strongly agree	JSS control score	% strongly agree	Primary girls score	% strongly agree
My reading and writing in English has improved in the last year	0.70	21%	0.72	24%	0.65	14%
I have the resources I need at school to learn to read and write in English	0.73	27%	0.70	24%	0.58	11%
I have the resources I need at home to read and write in English	0.56	9%	0.53	10%	0.47	4%
I feel confident in English class	0.73	18%	0.73	19%	0.64	11%
I find English easy	0.64	13%	0.63	12%	0.56	10%
I enjoy English class	0.76	20%	0.76	22%	0.69	17%
Average literacy perception score	4.11	-	4.06	-	3.59	-

Table 83.: Sub-group analysis of literacy perception score

	JSS intervention score	Primary girls score
CWD	4.85	3.09
Mother/pregnant	3.93	-
Member of a study group	4.31	3.73
Kailahun	4.01	3.77
Kenema	4.02	4.00
Kono	4.14	3.75
Moyamba	4.38	3.78
Port Loko	3.91	3.14

Karene	4.15	N/A ⁵²
Age (baseline) 0-11	4.24	3.59
Age (baseline) 12+	4.08	3.57

Primary girls with disabilities score 0.5 points below the average for primary girls in perceptions of literacy. The score for primary boys with a disability is 3.58.

Literacy perception scores were lowest at both JSS and primary levels in Port Loko. Literacy perception scores were highest in Moyamba at the JSS level, and Kenema at the primary level. There were only minor differences in scores between age groups at both primary and JSS levels.

Members of a study group score slightly higher than the average. In several JSS student FGDs, participants said that the study groups helped improve their understanding of what was taught in class, and that they understand better than before. A girl from a JSS intervention FGD (Kono) said “the teachers put us into groups to work in teams, and that helps us gain more from the lessons. We share ideas and we are given extra work to do during the study group session. As a result we have made progress in learning.”

Several school staff praised the study groups for improving the girls’ results in the national exams. Participants in a Teachers FGD in Moyamba said that a girl came first in the school in the BECCE exam for literacy in their school. One DEO (Port Loko) said that they had seen an improvement in the results of the national exams in the last two years, which he attributed to the project’s study groups. In another teachers’ FGD (Kono), participants said that the study groups had improved class performance and enhanced the learning ability of the students who attend.

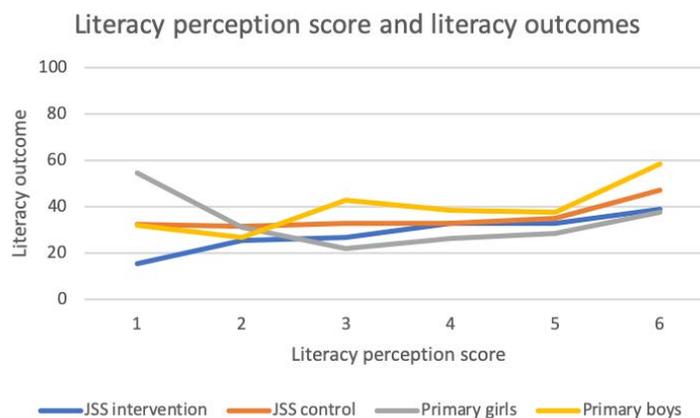
However, some stakeholders were more cautious about the contribution of study groups. One teacher in this FGD said that girls are making gradual progress as a result of the project, but that performance in exams remains average for both boys and girls, and a boy got the top score in the national exams in their school. In a PV FGD (Kailahun), participants said that they had only observed a “slight” improvement in numeracy and literacy amongst boys, girls and CWD, and that they need more cooperation from the wider community to make sure children attend school and stay for the study groups.

In a primary girls FGD, all participants said that sometimes they did not like the teaching methods used in their English classes. However, later in the discussion the same participants said that generally they feel happy to be in class.

The literacy perception index appears to be marginally connected to literacy outcomes for JSS students, that is, the higher the perception score, the higher the learning outcome. The exception is at the primary level which does not show a linear correlation.

Figure 18: Literacy outcomes and literacy perception

⁵² No Primary girls sampled from this region
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It is recommended that the target for endline is +1 for the average perception score.

2.3b (ii) Numeracy

The average numeracy perception score for JSS intervention students is 3.63, and for primary girls it is 3.33. The component with the lowest score at JSS was 0.50 for 'I find maths easy', and for the primary group was in reference to having resources at home to study maths, with 0.46. For the other components there was mild agreement, though it is notable that the results are lower than for literacy. The full results are presented in Table 86.

A students' numeracy perception score has a statistically significant impact on learning outcomes in both numeracy and literacy.

Table 84.: Numeracy perception scores

	JSS intervention score	% strongly agree	JSS control score	% strongly agree	Primary girls score	% strongly agree
My maths ability has improved in the last year	0.61	13%	0.61	12%	0.57	10%
I have the resources I need at school to learn maths	0.70	20%	0.64	15%	0.58	7%
I have the resources I need at home to study maths	0.53	9%	0.51	7%	0.46	3%
I feel confident in maths class	0.65	13%	0.63	8%	0.59	6%
I find maths easy	0.50	15%	0.47	13%	0.51	10%
I enjoy maths class	0.65	15%	0.61	13%	0.63	10%
Numeracy perception score	3.63	-	3.47		3.33	-

Table 85.: Sub-group analysis of numeracy perception score

	JSS intervention score	Primary girls score
CWD	4.30	2.75
Mother/pregnant	3.35	N/A
Member of a study group	3.85	3.40
Kailahun	3.75	3.68
Kenema	4.00	3.44
Kono	3.78	3.75
Moyamba	3.85	3.77
Port Loko	3.17	2.74
Karene	3.39	N/A
Age (baseline) 0-11	3.68	3.36
Age (baseline) 12+	3.62	3.25

Primary boys with a disability score 2.90.

As with literacy, members of a study group score marginally higher than the average. As with literacy, students in Port Loko score lowest in numeracy perception at both JSS and primary levels. Numeracy perception scores were highest in Kenema at the JSS level, and Moyamba at the primary level. There were only very minor differences between age groups at both JSS and primary levels.

The lower numeracy perception score is partly explained by the qualitative data.

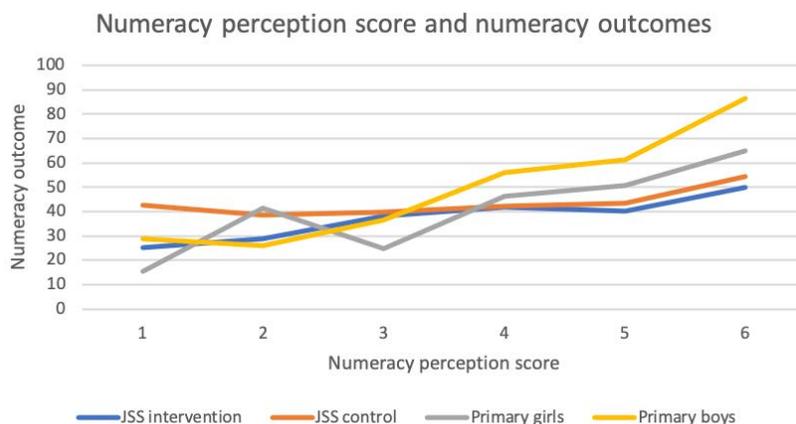
In one of the two girls' FGDs, two participants said that their favourite subject was maths, and in another FGD, one participant said that they were best at maths. Two Primary girls also said that Varber Aptitude was their favourite subject, which is a maths-based class taught at primary school level in Sierra Leone. The rest of the participants chose other subjects, such as Religious and Moral Education and Social Studies.

Most of the children in the Primary FGDs (both boys and girls) expressed feeling confident with addition, but less confident with division and multiplication because these were more "difficult." In one primary girls FGD (Port Loko), three participants said that they liked maths, two were undecided, and one participant said she did not like maths. When probed, one of the undecided girls said that sometimes she understands and sometimes she doesn't, and the other said that she finds subtraction difficult, but that sometimes the teacher comes and helps her.

Two PVs in an FGD (Kailahun) agreed that boys still dominated in class discussions, particularly during maths classes. However, one of them said that in the past year girls have been "trying harder" than in previous years.

The numeracy perception index appears to be connected to numeracy outcomes for most groups, that is, the higher the perception score, the higher the learning outcome. The exception is for primary girls, for whom a higher perception score does not always correlate with higher learning outcomes.

Figure 19: Numeracy outcomes and numeracy perception



It is recommended that the target for endline is +1 for the average perception score.

6.2.3 Recommendations for endline

Indicator 1

It is recommended that the target for the proportion of head teachers that mention four or more inclusive teaching methods is set at +5 percentage points.

Indicator 2

It is recommended to expand the indicator to read ‘percentage of PVs demonstrating **inclusive and gender sensitive learning centred teaching practices**’. This would expand the focus on inclusive education practices in a holistic manner rather than emphasising gender sensitive practices over others. The measurement used at baseline (and midline) refers to inclusive education as a whole, and this change would ensure the indicator accurately reflects the measurement.

The recommended target is +5 percentage points.

Indicator 3

At endline it is recommended that this indicator is merged with indicator 2, as this is a method of triangulation for indicator 2.

Indicator 4

It is recommended that the target for endline is +1 for the average perception score for both literacy and numeracy.

6.3 Self-esteem and confidence

Intermediate outcome 3 aims to ‘improve sense of self-esteem, confidence and agency amongst marginalised girls and children with disabilities in relation to their education (including feeling safe and secure)’. The key IO indicators measured that relate to IO3 are:

- Self-esteem and agency to participate in decision-making
- Self-esteem and confidence to participate in learning
- Perceptions and feelings of safety and security in the learning environment
- Actions taken by school management to facilitate a safe and secure learning environment

At midline the target has not been met for IO3.1, but it has been met for IO3.2. IO3.3 and IO3.4 are new at midline.

The full life skills index can be found in Annex 19.

6.3.1 High level findings

Table 86.: Intermediate outcome indicators as per the logframe

IO	IO indicator	BL	ML Target	ML	Target achieved ? (Y/N)	Target for next evaluation point	Will IO indicator be used for next evaluation point? (Y/N)
Improved sense of self-esteem, confidence and agency amongst marginalised girls and children with disabilities in relation to their education (including feeling safe and secure)	IO3.1: % of girls and children with disabilities reporting positive self-esteem to participate and learn in school	JSS 74	+6%	BL to ML - JSS intervention girls 72% PS girls 81% PS GWD 100%	N	IO3.1a +5 percentage points IO3.1b +1 percentage point	Yes (1a and 1b)
	IO3.2: % of marginalised girls and children with disabilities in the GATE GEC cohort reporting feeling safe, secure and included in the learning environment	JSS 92%	+1%	IO3.2a JSS 93% PS girls 91% PS GWD 78% IO3.2c JSS 4.64 PS girls 4.72 PS GWD 4.72	Y	IO3.2b +5/+10 percentage points for selected questions IO3.2c +5 percentage points for selected questions	IO3.2a Remove for endline IO3.2b Yes IO3.2c Yes

	IO3.3: % of marginalised children with disabilities in the GATE GEC cohort reporting school facilities are accessible post-school adaptation (model schools)	N/A Activities not running at baseline	-	JSS CWD 100% PS GWD 81%	-	-	Remove for endline
	IO3.4: % (and type) of follow-up actions carried out by school management (HTs and BoGs) in targeted JSS schools (based on feedback raised by children through feedback boxes - scorecarding)	N/A Activities not running at baseline	-	All JSS schools 66%	-	-	Reformulate for endline

Main qualitative findings

- Many students in the FGDs report that toilet facilities are inadequate. Toilets were said to smell, be dirty or not well kept and many children mentioned the toilets as a place that they did not like to go to when at school.
- Corporal punishment is prevalent in all schools, including intervention schools. It is used by PV teachers and teachers who have not been directly trained by the project.
- Children with disabilities are more at risk of abuse and do not always receive adequate care, which leads to caregivers keeping CWD out of school.
- Score carding is having an anecdotal impact in some schools, and suggestion boxes are becoming more common and are used by students.

6.3.2 Indicators at midline

Indicator 1: percentage of girls and children with disabilities reporting positive self-esteem to participate and learn in school

At baseline, this indicator consisted of an average of the five-point scale in how strongly beneficiaries agree that they do not have a voice in decisions about their enrolment in school.⁵³ At midline, the target of a six percentage point decrease has not been met. From baseline, the average has reduced by three percentage points, from 74 to 71.

Table 87.: Beneficiaries reporting agency on school enrolment

I cannot choose whether to attend or stay in school. I just have to accept what happens. (HHG_6)	JSS intervention midline (baseline) n=537	All primary girls midline n=70	CWD primary girls midline n=16	CWD primary boys midline n=12
Average of five-point scale	71 (74)	80	92	82
% of students that agree or strongly agree with the statement	72%	81%	100%	83%

Kailahun had the most positive score for JSS intervention students, with only 60 per cent of JSS intervention children agreeing or strongly agreeing that they cannot decide what happens to them, compared to the lowest score in Kenema, where 88 per cent of JSS intervention students said that they cannot decide what happens to them. Of JSS intervention students, girls aged 12 and over had a more positive score than girls under 12 (71 per cent and 77 per cent respectively). However, at the primary level, the inverse was observed, with 86 per cent of girls 12 and over agreeing or strongly agreeing that they cannot decide what happens to them, compared with 79 per cent of girls under 12.

The scope of the indicator has been expanded at midline to provide extra considerations. There are two separate components at midline that contribute to this indicator. The first is for decision-making and considers the proportion of students that participate in deciding whether or not they will go to school and whether or not they will continue in school the next year. The second component consists of participation and learning. It is an index with six statements to gauge opinions on confidence and self-esteem in learning. It is recommended that the figures presented above in Table 90 are not taken through to endline as it is not clear it is capturing and reflecting the agency, and changes in agency in a consistent manner.

IO3.1a Decision-making

Students were asked who decides whether or not they will go to school, and who decides whether or not they will continue in school past this year. The results are presented by the percentage of students that decide for themselves or jointly with their family for at least one statement, and for both statements.

Table 88.: IO3.1a Decision making

	JSS intervention midline	All primary girls midline	CWD primary girls midline	CWD primary boys midline

⁵³ The five-point scale is calculated the same as baseline: 1=Strongly agree; 0.75=agree; 0.5=neither disagree or agree; 0.25=disagree; 0.0=strongly disagree

Age 12+	517	43	9	11
Decide for themselves or jointly with family for at least one indicator (%)	55%	40%	22%	18%
Decide for themselves or jointly with family for both indicators (%)	48%	28%	11%	9%
Age 0-11	16	26	7	1
Decide for themselves or jointly with family for at least one statement (%)	56%	35%	14%	100%
Decide for themselves or jointly with family for both statements (%)	44%	35%	14%	100%

Table 89.: IO3.1a Decision making – JSS intervention girls by district

District	Decide for themselves or jointly with family for at least one indicator (%)	Decide for themselves or jointly with family for both indicators (%)
Kailahun	63%	12%
Kenema	38%	25%
Kono	5%	2%
Moyamba	50%	33%
Port Loko	35%	12%
Karene	58%	16%

Less than half of all students participate in decision-making about whether or not they go to school and will continue in the next academic year. Primary girls with disabilities have the lowest level of participation, with only 14 per cent reporting that they participate in decision-making. Forty-eight per cent of JSS students aged 12 or older contribute to decision-making in both spheres, compared to 44 per cent of JSS students aged 0-11. However, at the primary level a higher proportion of the younger students participate in decision-making.

Of the different districts, JSS intervention students in Kono report the lowest levels of decision making. Only 2 per cent of students participate in decision-making for both indicators. Conversely, in Moyamba 33 per cent of JSS intervention students participate in decision-making for both indicators. Primary girls are less likely than JSS intervention girls to participate in decision-making in all districts except for Kono, where 11 per cent of primary girls reported that they decide for themselves or jointly with family for both indicators (though this equates to one girl out of a sample of nine).

Table 92 shows the disaggregation of results by each response option. For students aged 12 and older, more than 50 per cent of them do not participate in decision-making. There is no qualitative data that speaks to this.

Table 90.: IO3.1a Decision making disaggregation of results

	JSS intervention midline (baseline)	Primary girls midline	CWD primary girls midline	CWD primary boys
Age 12+	517	43	9	11
Whether or not they will go to school (LSCO_s20)				
Decides for themselves %	22%	5%	0%	0%
Decides jointly with family %	27%	19%	0%	18%
Family decides for them %	51%	77%	100%	82%
Whether or not they will continue in school past this school year (LSCO_s21)				
Decides for themselves %	21%	9%	11%	0%
Decides jointly with family %	27%	26%	11%	9%
Family decides for them %	52%	65%	78%	91%
Age 0-11	16	26	7	1
Whether or not they will go to school (LSCU_s13)				
Decides for themselves %	19%	12%	14%	100%
Decides jointly with family %	38%	19%	0%	0%
Family decides for them %	44%	69%	86%	0%
Whether or not they will continue in school past this school year (LSCU_s14)				
Decides for themselves %	13%	8%	14%	0%

Decides jointly with family %	25%	27%	0%	100%
Family decides for them %	63%	65%	86%	0%

IO3.1b Participation and learning

The index to measure perception of participation and learning consists of an average of level of agreement with six statements. The score for each individual statement ranges from 0-1. The higher the score, the more positive the response. The average total score is out of 6.⁵⁴

The highest average score for intervention students at midline is among JSS students, at 3.74 (out of 6). This reduces to 3.63 for primary school students, and 2.98 for primary CWD. The statements with the lowest scores were for nervousness levels when having to read and do maths in front of others. This could be due to the use of corporal punishment used when students get an answer wrong in class (77 per cent JSS intervention students report this and 71 per cent of primary school girls). JSS control students score highest out of the whole sample, at 3.89.

Corporal punishment was listed by one key informant amongst the problems raised through the scorecarding activity. This was also an issue that came up during the school visits from the qualitative research, and was mentioned by some participants as a method of discipline used in their school, including project schools. One of the participants in a project school Primary FGD said that she felt unhappy whilst in class, because some of the teachers beat them. A JSS participant from a project school also mentioned an activity called “hot mental” - which is an exercise where children are asked to recall information they learned the previous day, but if they give the wrong answer they are beaten. One of the PVs, during the short interview that followed the study group observation, said that the teachers would use corporal punishment as a method of discipline when children did not attend the study groups.

Caregivers were asked to rate the confidence level of the child in their care. 57 per cent of caregivers of JSS intervention students reported that they are ‘very confident’, and 39 per cent of caregivers of primary girls said the same.

Table 91.: Participation and learning

Age groups are combined for this index.

	JSS intervention midline	Primary girls midline	CWD primary girls midline	CWD primary boys midline
	n=537	n=70	n=16	n=12
I can read as well as my friends (LSCO_s1a + LSCU_s1a)	0.70	0.63	0.50	0.60
I am as good at maths as my friends (LSCO_s1b + LSCU_s1b)	0.60	0.60	0.45	0.44

⁵⁴ A numerical value was assigned, where (for LSCO_s1a, LSCO_s1b, LSCO_s5 and LSCO_s16) strongly disagree = 0, disagree = 0.25, neither agree nor disagree = 0.5, agree = 0.75 and strongly agree = 1. For LSCO_s3 and LSCO_s4 the score was reversed. Each individual has a ‘score’ out of a maximum of 6.

I get nervous when I have to read in front of others (LSCO_s3 + LSCU_s3)	0.45	0.48	0.31	0.52
I get nervous when I have to do maths in front of others (LSCO_s4 + LSCU_s4)	0.45	0.46	0.33	0.52
I feel confident answering questions in class (LSCO_s5 + LSCU_s5)	0.70	0.68	0.63	0.63
I ask the teacher if I don't understand something (LSCO_s16 + LSCU_s10)	0.83	0.80	0.77	0.81
Average score	3.74	3.63	2.98	3.52

There is a small degree of variation by district. At the JSS intervention level, students in Port Loko scored lowest in perceptions of participation and learning (3.57), and students in Kailahun scored highest (3.98). This is more or less mirrored at the primary level; primary girls scored lowest in Port Loko (3.37), and highest in and Kailahun and Kenema (3.95 and 3.96 respectively). There is only a very small difference between age groups, with girls 12 and over scoring slightly lower than girls under 12 at both JSS intervention and primary levels (≤ 0.1 difference for both JSS and primary).

The participation and learning score is positively correlated with learning outcomes for primary girls, but not for JSS students at the top range of the score.

Figure 20: Literacy outcomes and participation and learning score (intervention)

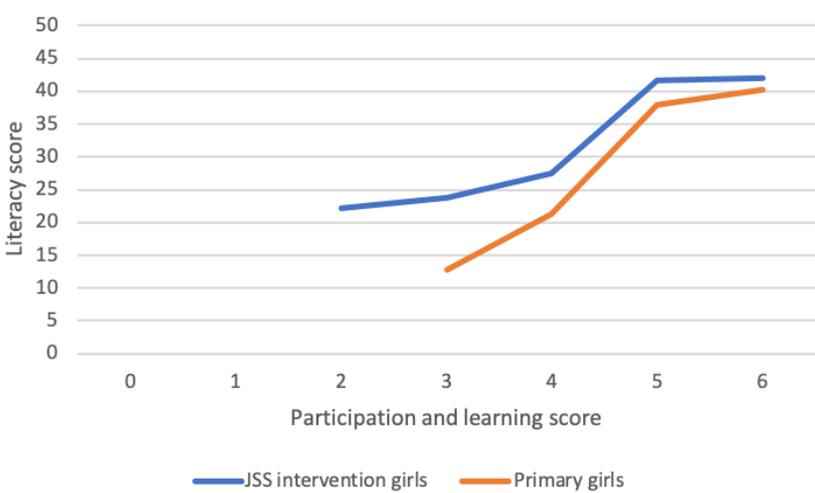
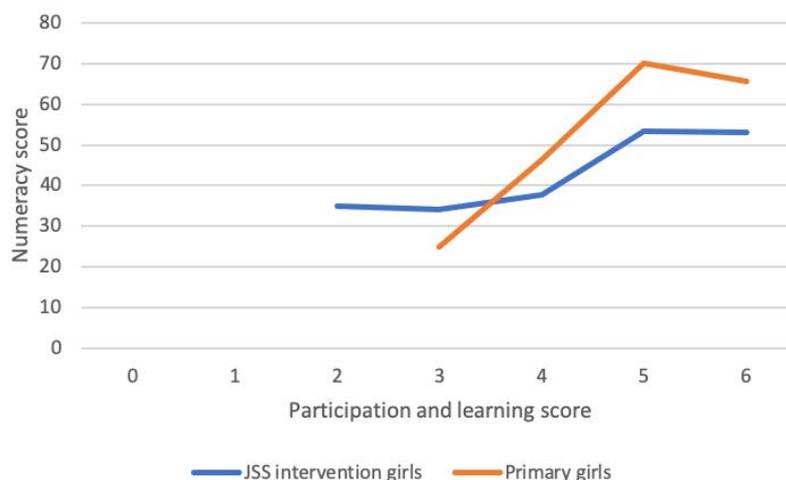


Figure 21: Numeracy outcomes and participation and learning score (intervention)



Indicator 2: Percentage of marginalised girls and children with disabilities in the GATE GEC cohort reporting feeling safe, secure and included in the learning environment

IO3.2a Safety at school and travelling to school

At baseline, this indicator was calculated using an average of two questions, whether the beneficiary feels safe at school, and whether the student feels safe traveling to and from school. Each beneficiary received a score of 0 if neither were true, 0.5 if one of the two questions was true, and 1 if both were true. Using the same methodology as baseline, Table 94 presents the results at midline.

Eighty-one per cent of both primary girls and JSS intervention students take up to an hour to get to school. Twelve per cent of JSS students take 1-2 hours, and 10 per cent of primary students. Distance was also mentioned as a reason for attendance in some of the qualitative data collection, but did not feature as a main reason in the survey data. The majority of students live in households up to 15 minutes walking distance from a primary school (62 per cent of primary girls, 64 per cent of primary boys). The distance to the nearest JSS is slightly longer, with 63 per cent of JSS intervention students living in households up to 30 minutes walk from the nearest JSS. A further 20 per cent live 30 minutes to an hour walk from the nearest JSS.

Regression shows no correlation between feeling safe at school and literacy and numeracy outcomes.

The target for midline has been met, of 1 percentage point. It is recommended to remove this sub-indicator at endline because of the small sample size of CWD, and the diversity within the sample, reducing the comparability.

Table 92.: Perceptions of safety baseline to midline

Calculated as the percentage of students who scored 1 i.e. answered positively that they feel safe travelling to and from school and at school.

JSS intervention midline (baseline)	Primary girls midline	CWD primary girls midline
n=536	n=70	n=16
93% (92%)	91%	78%

All (12) primary boys with a disability said they feel safe travelling to and from school and at school. Karene had the lowest proportion of JSS intervention students that feel safe travelling to and from school and at school, with 82 per cent agreeing to both statements. Kailahun had the highest

proportion, at 99 per cent. In all other districts 90 per cent or over agreed to both statements. There was little variation by age group for this indicator at both JSS and primary levels. Younger girls (under 12) scored slightly lower at the primary level (90 per cent compared with 95 per cent for 12 and over). The inverse was observed at the JSS interventional level, with girls 12 and over scoring slightly lower (93 per cent, compared with 95 per cent for under 12).

IO3.2b Perceptions of safety

As with indicator 1, 2b expands on the calculation used at baseline. It uses the same questions on safety at school and travelling to and from school, and adds questions about corporal punishment and feelings of safety with classmates and peers.

JSS and primary girls report high levels of safety travelling to school and with their classmates, with more than 90 per cent of students feeling safe. Less than 90 per cent of children with disabilities report feeling safe travelling to and from school and with their classmates. This coincides with the reported levels of bullying, with 56 per cent of CWD reporting that students are bullied or teased in their school.

All students reported that corporal punishment is high.

Table 93.: Perceptions of safety midline

	JSS intervention midline	JSS control midline	Primary girls midline	CWD primary girls midline
Do you feel safe at school? (CS_W14s) % yes	87%	92%	87%	69%
Do you feel safe travelling to and from school? (CS_W13s) % yes	99%	97%	97%	88%
Do you feel safe at school with your classmates? (CS_W15s) % yes	99%	98%	91%	81%
Are any students in this school bullied or teased by other students? (CS_W16s) % no	73%	75%	46%	44%
Do your teachers discipline or punish students who get things wrong in a lesson? (TQ_6s) % no	22%	19%	26%	31%

All (12) primary boys with a disability feel safe at school, travelling to and from school, and with their classmates. Half disagree that there is any bullying in school, and 17 per cent state that there is no discipline or punishment. This is the lowest of any of the groups.

Table 94.: Perceptions of safety JSS intervention by district

District	Do you feel safe at school? (CS_W14s) % yes	Are any students in this school bullied or teased by other students? (CS_W16s) % no	Do your teachers discipline or punish students who get things wrong in a lesson? (TQ_6s) % no

Kailahun	99%	86%	19%
Kenema	84%	70%	24%
Kono	94%	84%	2%
Moyamba	86%	61%	13%
Port Loko	86%	75%	36%
Karene	67%	81%	31%

Some perceptions of safety were consistent across districts, but for others there was a degree of variation. Rates of JSS intervention students reporting feeling safe travelling to and from school, and feeling safe at school with their classmates, were consistently high amongst all districts (≥ 97 per cent across all districts). Questions on perceptions of safety where there was a higher degree of variation between districts are presented in Table 96. JSS intervention students in Karene feel the least safe at school, with only 67 per cent agreeing that they feel safe. The other safety indicators are comparable to the overall averages. Unfortunately there was only a small proportion of qualitative data conducted in Karene at midline (one FGD and one KII), and none of the data collected sheds light on why JSS intervention students in Karene feel less safe at school than their peers. In Kono, only 2 per cent of JSS intervention students state that their teachers do not use discipline or punishment when a student gets an answer wrong which suggests that corporal punishment is most widespread in Kono. Again, there was very little difference between age groups observed for this indicator.

The CBRV participant highlighted that parents with children with disabilities do not want to send them to school because they are worried that they will be made fun of or ‘provoked’ by other children, or because they do not believe that they will receive adequate care at school. In two student teachers’ FGDs, participants mentioned ‘provocation’ as a potential negative consequence of education for children with disabilities. One stakeholder said that of the safeguarding issues that had been reported through the project, 50 per cent related to children with disabilities, who were more vulnerable to abuse. She also noted that some parents of children with disabilities don’t allow them to go to school because they are afraid to do so, and said:

“For example, for a child with epilepsy, I might not trust that the school has facilities for this child. We might pick them out of the home, but are they actually safe in the school? This is a huge barrier [to safeguarding].” (Male CBRV, Kailahun)

IO3.2c Inclusion in learning environment

The index to measure the level of inclusion in the learning environment consists of an average of level of agreement with six statements. The score for each individual statement ranges from 0-1. The higher the score, the more positive the response. The maximum score is 6.

The inclusion scores are high overall, at 4.64 for JSS intervention students and 4.72 at the primary level. There is more than 80 per cent agreement for three of the six questions. Only 52 per cent of JSS students report that a teacher will use a different language when they do not understand something, though this 69 per cent of primary girls with a disability report the same. This indicates that teachers are becoming more inclusive in their teaching style.

Table 95.: Inclusion score

	JSS intervention midline	JSS control midline	Primary girls midline	CWD primary girls midline
My teachers make me feel welcome in the classroom (CS_WA)	92%	92%	84%	84%
If you don't understand something, does your teacher(s) use a different language to help you understand? (TQ_3s)	52%	48%	57%	69%
Does your teacher(s) encourage students to participate during lessons, for example by answering questions? (TQ_4s)	67%	66%	73%	69%
Do you use drinking water facilities at school? (CS_W7s)	67%	75%	77%	69%
Do you use a toilet at school? (CS_W9s)	92%	86%	86%	94%
Do you use areas at the school where children play and socialise? (CS_W11s)	95%	94%	96%	88%
Average score (out of 6)	4.64	4.60	4.72	4.72

Regression shows a statistically significant impact between students that use drinking water facilities and literacy results (p-value = 0.032). There is no statistical significance with numeracy results.

Primary boys with a disability score 5.23. The district with the highest inclusion score for JSS intervention students is Kono, with 5.48. The district with the lowest score is Port Loko, with 4.19. At the JSS intervention level, girls in the higher age group (12 and over) reported slightly lower levels of inclusion than their younger counterparts (4.58 compared with 4.89 for under 12). At the primary level, scores between age groups were very similar, with girls under 12 scoring only slightly lower than girls 12 and over (4.67 compared with 4.83).

A higher inclusion score correlates with higher literacy and numeracy outcomes for primary girls, and for primary girls with disabilities for literacy. For JSS students, literacy and numeracy scores increase with inclusion scores up to a score of 5, but then drops slightly at the highest score.

Figure 22: Literacy outcomes and inclusion scores (intervention)

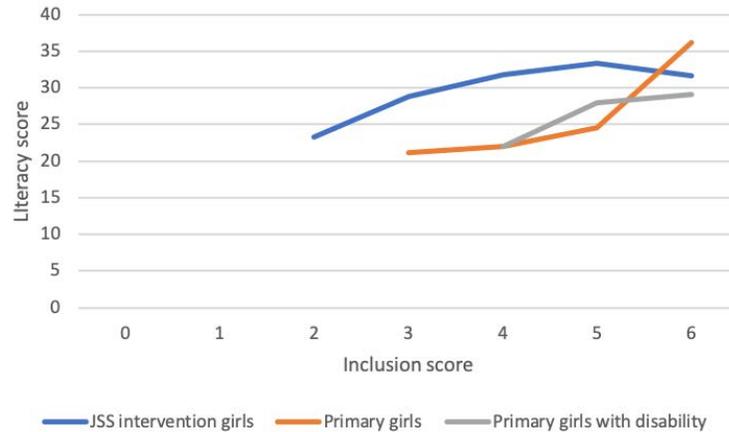
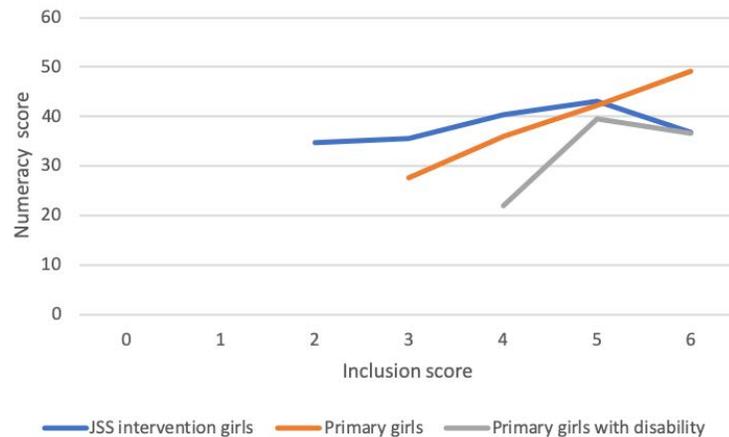


Figure 23: Numeracy outcomes and inclusion scores (intervention)



Indicator 3: Percentage of marginalised children with disabilities in the GATE GEC cohort reporting school facilities are accessible post-school adaptation (model schools)

This is a new indicator at midline. IO3.3 aims to measure the accessibility of model schools post-adaptation. There are two model schools in the sample (of three that have been adapted at time of writing).⁵⁵ However, there are no CWD in the sample from these schools, nor are there any CWD in the schools that will be adapted by endline. It is recommended to replace it with a qualitative indicator based on a targeted FGD with children with disabilities in one of the model schools. However, this will require specific planning to gather details on how many CWD are in the model schools (potentially through the project reverification data).

For midline, the results below speak to ‘percentage of children with disabilities in the GATE GEC cohort reporting school facilities are accessible’

The majority of CWD at midline reported that they are able to access facilities at school. The two reasons reported for not using water facilities, toilets and play/social areas are lack of availability and not being

⁵⁵ At the time of writing, schools **J10820**, **J50208** and J21221 have been adapted. The schools in bold are in the midline sample. A further five schools had been scheduled for adaptation by September 2019 but this was delayed. The five schools are: J20813, J60205, **J40413**, **J41029** and **J30303**. A further two schools were scheduled for adaptation by December 2019: **J60101**, J10511.

acceptable for use. None of the CWD reported that they do not use the facilities due issues with access. Many of the students in the FGDs, both Primary and JSS (and boys and girls), brought up the issue of inadequate toilet facilities in their school. Toilets were said to smell, be dirty or not well kept and children in almost all the student FGDs mentioned the toilets as a place that they did not like to go to when at school.

Table 96.: Accessibility of school for CWD

	JSS intervention CWD % yes	JSS control CWD % yes	Primary girls CWD % yes	Primary boys CWD % yes
n	5	6	16	12
Are you able to move around the school easily? (CS_W6s)	100%	100%	81%	92%
Do you use drinking water facilities at school? (CS_W7s)	40%	83%	69%	83%
Do you use a toilet at school? (CS_W9s)	80%	67%	94%	83%
Do you use areas at the school where children play and socialise? (CS_W11s)	60%	100%	88%	83%

The sample size is too small to meaningfully disaggregate by district or age.

Indicator 4: Percentage and type of follow-up actions carried out by school management in targeted JSS schools (based on score carding)

There are 57 JSS schools targeted for score carding activities, only three of which are in the sample at midline. The response has therefore been expanded to include all intervention schools. However, it is important to note that most of the schools in the sample who reported score carding activities have not been specifically targeted by the project for score carding.

Forty-one JSS intervention schools reported having score carding activities (66 per cent). Although these schools are not targeted for score carding, this could be evidence of knowledge sharing between schools. All of the schools state that the score carding process includes students. Of those that have score carding activities, 76 per cent report that they have developed an action plan (32 schools), but only eight schools had them available for the enumerators to see on the day of data collection. Enumerators photographed the action plans they were shown. Seven JSS control schools also reported that they conduct score carding activities (17.5 per cent).

Only six of the eight action plans photographed were action plans. The follow-up actions covered six categories:

1. Discipline and punishment
2. Corruption and abuse
3. Infrastructure
4. Morale
5. Parents
6. Safety

Infrastructure had the highest number of actions, including construction of water facilities, play areas and computer facilities.

Score carding was not mentioned by any of the beneficiaries (however only 1 JSS Boys FGD and 2 JSS Girls FGD were done in score carding schools and no specific questions were asked about score carding). Two head teachers and one PV mentioned that they had suggestion boxes in their schools, and all three said that the children do use this feedback mechanism and that school management takes action based on the feedback given. However, in one of the schools the qualitative specialist observed that the suggestion box was located in the staff room. The Plan Child Protection and Accountability Adviser explained that a previous project by UNICEF had established feedback boxes in some schools.

The Plan Child Protection and Accountability Adviser said that some monitoring of the score carding component was taking place, and that from this *“fragmented monitoring”*, positive results had been observed. She said that schools were not waiting for the project to tell them to take action based on the feedback but were implementing changes themselves without needing to be prompted. The examples of actions that she gave included constructing toilets, clearing the bush around the school and adding fences. However, she did say that issues raised from score carding that relate to societal attitudes are still not being resolved.

The Plan Child Protection and Accountability Adviser also said that during a learning event that took place in August 2019, she was pleasantly surprised at how highly head teachers regarded the score carding component and said that head teachers spoke of commitments to safeguarding during the event. She asserted that these positive attitudes towards safeguarding are a *“proxy advantage”* of the training on “do no harm” that school staff receive as part of the score carding component. For her, *“score carding has been a main contributor to feedback in this project”*. The Plan Sierra Leone Senior M&E officer also said that from their monitoring of the score carding component (which includes reviewing school action plans), it is *“evident that because of score carding that changes are being made”*. The Plan GEC Programme Manager also reiterated the value of the score carding component, and said that it was *“an exceptional activity and has led to some really important changes taking place.”*

The sample size is too small to disaggregate by district.

In addition to score carding, schools are encouraged to maintain a suggestion box where students can put anonymous suggestions. Seventy per cent of JSS intervention students reported that there is a suggestion box in their school, and 26 per cent commented that there is not a suggestion box. Of the 77 per cent who are aware of a suggestion box, 41 per cent have used it and in 83 per cent of the cases the school acted on the suggestion. This indicates that a large majority of schools who have suggestion boxes are taking action based on feedback from students, which is a positive sign of accountability and indicates that this feedback mechanism is working effectively. Fifty-six per cent of students reported that they had not used the suggestion box, the majority of whom because they do not have a suggestion (49 per cent), although 13 per cent reported that they do not use it as they do not believe the school would take action.

6.3.3 Recommendations for endline

Indicator 1

For endline it is recommended to maintain the split between decision making and participation and learning for indicator one.

It is recommended to remove the question used at baseline of how strongly beneficiaries agree that they have a voice in decisions about their enrolment in school for endline. Instead, this should be replaced by IO3.1a.

For IO3.1a It is recommended that the target for endline be set at a 5 percentage point increase in respondents who participate in decision-making for both areas, across all categories. The targets are presented in Table 99.

Table 97.: Target for IO3.1a decision-making

	JSS intervention midline	Endline target	All primary girls midline	Endline target
Age 12+				
Decide for themselves or jointly with family for both indicators (%)	48%	53%	28%	33%
Age 0-11				
Decide for themselves or jointly with family for both indicators (%)	44%	49%	35%	40%

For IO3.1b it is recommended that the target be set at +1 percentage point for the average score.

Table 98.: Target for IO3.1b

	JSS intervention midline	Endline target	Primary girls midline	Endline target	CWD primary girls midline	Endline target
Average score at midline	3.74	4.74	3.63	4.63	2.98	3.98

Indicator 2

It is recommended to remove IO3.2a at endline and replace it with IO3.2b

For IO3.2b it is recommended to remove two of the five components due to high achievement rates, and focus on the components with the lowest scores. It is recommended that the first two components listed below are increased by 5 percentage points, whilst the third is increased by 10 percentage points due to the low starting point:

- Do you feel safe at school? (CS_W14s) % yes (+5 percentage points)
- Are any students in this school bullied or teased by other students? (CS_W16s) % no (+5 percentage points)
- Do your teachers discipline or punish students who get things wrong in a lesson? (TQ_6s) % no (+10 percentage points)

Due to the high score for IO3.2c, it is recommended to remove half of the statements and set a target of a 5 percentage point increase for the questions with lower reported numbers:

- If you don't understand something, does your teacher(s) use a different language to help you understand? (TQ_3s)
- Does your teacher(s) encourage students to participate during lessons, for example by answering questions? (TQ_4s)
- Do you use drinking water facilities at school? (CS_W7s)

Indicator 3

Due to the small sample size of CWD, it is recommended to remove this indicator at endline and replace it with a qualitative indicator based on a targeted FGD with children with disabilities in one of the model schools. However, this will require specific planning to gather details on how many CWD are in the model schools (potentially through the project re-verification data).

Indicator 4

It is recommended to expand this indicator at endline to assess actions taken against action plans by all schools. This is due to the small sample size of schools targeted for score carding at midline.

6.4 Economic empowerment

Intermediate Outcome 4 aims to improve economic empowerment at the household level to cover educational costs. The key indicators relating to this outcome are:

- Percentage of the GATE GEC cohort (of targeted households) reporting confidence and skills in financial planning and management
- Percentage of parents/caregivers in targeted households who contribute to their child's educational costs (those not already covered by Free Quality School Education)

IO4.1 has changed at midline. The target has been met for 104.2 for intervention girls, but has not been met for children with disabilities.

Background

The average household size in the sample ranges from 9.2 adults and children aged 8-17 for JSS intervention students, to 12.7 for primary boys' households. This does not capture the children aged 0-7 and the total is therefore likely to be higher. Data from Annex 4 on Characteristics and Barriers is indicative of the economic conditions of intervention households in the cohort. Overall, amongst the intervention cohort, 74 per cent of JSS and 77 per cent of primary girls caregivers' reported that they find it difficult to afford for their child to go to school. It should be noted that affordability of school using this metric is not correlated with learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy, nor transition outcomes. 37 per cent of JSS and 36 per cent of primary girls' caregivers reported that their household struggles to afford basic needs, and 30 per cent of JSS and 37 per cent of caregivers reported that their child has gone to sleep hungry for many days over the past year. These figures are broadly the same across VSLA members and non-members according to the survey data, except that a higher proportion of non-VSLA members report not being able to meet basic needs (40 per cent) than VSLA members (29 per cent).

Twenty-six per cent of JSS intervention girls' caregivers, and 11 per cent of primary girls' caregivers are members of a VSLA. However, it is important to note that the consortium was unable to provide details on which schools were targeted for the GATE GEC VSLA activities, so there is no way to disaggregate the data between GATE GEC VSLA members and members of other non-GATE GEC VSLAs. As such, data specific to "targeted households" i.e. those households who are members of GATE GEC VSLAs, cannot be provided at midline. The data discussed throughout this section is therefore disaggregated by membership or non-membership of any VSLA. This is discussed further in the recommendations.

VSLA membership for the GATE GEC project, according to Plan's GEC Programme Manager, is based around the following criteria: cannot afford daily meals, not in employment, do not own land or livestock, are disabled themselves, or members of the family are disabled (this includes parents/caregivers of beneficiaries with disabilities), not part of another VSLA, and/or unable to save money over the past 6

months (for year 2 only). The VSLAs have been set up, according to the Programme Manager, to target the most economically marginalised households.⁵⁶

6.4.1 High-level findings

Table 99.: Intermediate outcome indicators as per the logframe

IO	IO indicator	BL	ML Target	ML	Target achieved? (Y/N)	Target for next evaluation point	Will IO indicator be used for next evaluation point? (Y/N)
Improved economic empowerment at the household level to cover educational costs	IO 4.1: % of the GATE GEC cohort (of targeted households) reporting confidence and skills in financial planning and management	Changed at ML	Changed at ML	<p>JSS VSLA members: Budgeting 41% Saving 89% Book-keeping 16% Minute-taking 1% Numeracy 21%</p> <p>PS VSLA members: Budgeting 75% Saving 63% Book-keeping 25% Minute-taking 0% Numeracy 13%</p>	N/A	+5 percentage points for skills learned	Y

⁵⁶ The Action Aid Education Project Manager reports that the criteria states that members should be able to save on a weekly basis, approximately 1000 Leones depending on the area.

	IO 4.2: % of parents/caregivers in targeted households who contribute to their child's educational costs (those not already covered by Free Quality School Education)	Girls 68.72%	+4%	Girls 73.32%	Yes for girls, no for CWD	+4 percentage points	Y (see recommendations)
		CWD 66.67%		CWD 57.14%			

Main qualitative findings

- VSLA members reported increased confidence and perceptions of improved skills in financial management and saving money,
- No VSLA members in the FGDs had taken a loan yet from the VSLA (both VSLAs were <4 months old).
- VSLA members' main household spending was on food and education.
- Household members (VSLA and HH FGDs) mainly raised money for their childrens' education through farming and petty trading, and both household members and students agreed that the main educational costs they covered were school materials and uniforms, and to a lesser extent food.

Indicator 1: Percentage of the GATE GEC cohort (of targeted households) reporting confidence and skills in financial planning and management

The data source for this indicator has changed since baseline. At baseline, the indicator was measured using per cent of household heads engaged in one or more savings activities. At midline, the indicator is measured based on the percentage of VSLA members who report skills in financial planning and management learned through the VSLA, as well as the confidence levels of those who have learned these skills. This data is triangulated with qualitative data from two FGDs with VSLA members.

Table 100.: IO4.1 VSLA members' skills and confidence in financial planning and management

	JSS Intervention	Primary Girls
	n=136	n=8
Budgeting		

% of VSLA members who learned budgeting skills through the VSLA	41%	75%
% Confident or very confident in budgeting	89%	83%
Saving		
% of VSLA members who learned saving skills through the VSLA	89%	63%
% Confident or very confident in saving	89%	100%
Book-keeping		
% of VSLA members who learned book-keeping skills through the VSLA	16%	25%
% Confident or very confident in book-keeping	95%	100%
Minute-taking		
% of VSLA members who learned minute-taking skills through the VSLA	1%	0%
% Confident or very confident in minute-taking	100%	-
Numeracy		
% of VSLA members who learned numeracy skills through the VSLA	21%	13%
% Confident or very confident in numeracy	100%	100%

As mentioned in the introduction to this section, the data in the table above, and throughout this discussion, refers to all VSLA members, not just GATE GEC VSLA members. Indeed, 57 per cent of VSLA members in the JSS intervention cohort had been a member of a VSLA for over a year, suggesting a high proportion of VSLA members could be from non-GATE GEC VSLA groups. Of the districts, Kenema had a highest proportion of VSLA membership in the JSS intervention cohort (34%) and Port Loko had the lowest (15 per cent). No primary girls' caregivers surveyed in Moyamba or Port Loko were members of a VSLA.

The most commonly learnt skill across districts was saving. The percentage of JSS intervention VSLA members that had learned this skill ranged from 63 per cent in Karene to 100 per cent in Kenema. The percentage of VSLA members who had learned skills in budgeting and bookkeeping was also lowest in Karene (13 per cent and 0 per cent respectively). Percentages were highest for these skills in Kailahun (77 per cent and 36 per cent respectively). JSS intervention VSLA members in Moyamba were least likely to report skills learnt in numeracy (2 per cent, compared with 50 per cent in Kailahun and 38 per cent in Kenema). Only two VSLA members at the JSS intervention level, and two at the primary level were caregivers of girls with disabilities. It is therefore not feasible to disaggregate by this variable for this indicator. Caregivers of JSS intervention students who were under 12 had learned bookkeeping and

numeracy skills in higher proportions than caregivers of students 12 and over (44 per cent for both skills, compared to 13 per cent and 18 per cent respectively for caregivers of students 12 and over).

There was significant consensus around VSLA FGD participants' increased sense of confidence and perceptions of improved skills in financial management and saving money, which participants' attributed to the VSLAs. Saving, in particular was referred to as a skill attained through the VSLA, which reinforces the quantitative data that reports that almost 90 per cent of VSLA members learned saving skills through their VSLA. Several participants expressed that their behaviour had changed since joining the VSLA in terms of how they manage resources at home.

One VSLA FGD participant from Kono: *"Since I joined the scheme I now have the courage to save my finances compared to the time when I was not part of the scheme."*

Another VSLA FGD participant from Kono: *"I can now sit and talk freely with other people and discuss monetary issues and plan for the development of our community."*

The two VSLA FGDs were carried out with members of VSLAs that had only been functioning for four months. Therefore, no loans had been given out through the VSLA at the time of the FGD - Participants explained that they were advised to wait at least six months before starting to distribute loans. As such the groups could not speak to the issue of loans, loan spending, or loan repayments.

Participants agreed that the husband generally manages household finances, and it would only be the responsibility of another household member in cases where the husband was not present. However, one female participant did later say that her husband was happy with how she was managing the finances now, suggesting a level of responsibility on her part.

Participants in one of the Household FGD said that they were also part of a VSLA (though it is not known whether this is a project VSLA or not). One participant in particular said that the VSLA members had taken out loans, and that these loans had greatly helped them to *"take care of [their] children's educational needs"*. Conversely, in a Household FGD where none of the participants were members of a VSLA or had received training in finances, participants expressed that they felt unable to save money, because they simply did not have enough money to make saving an option.

75 per cent of intervention girls' caregivers have taken a loan from their VSLA. It is important to note, however, that 44 per cent of them have not met the repayments for their loans.

Indicator 2: Percentage of parents/caregivers in targeted households who contribute to their child's educational costs (those not already covered by Free Quality School Education)

This indicator was used at baseline, and baseline results therefore provide the basis for comparison at midline. At baseline, data was disaggregated by beneficiary (intervention) girls (PS and JSS), and beneficiary (intervention) children with disabilities. The same method of disaggregation has been used in Table 103, below, to allow for comparability.

Table 101.: Education costs met by household for logframe⁵⁷

Proportion of education costs paid last year (EE_4o)	All intervention girls (PS and JSS) midline (BL)	All intervention children with disabilities midline (BL)
	n=596	n=35
>50% of them	73.32% (68.72%)	57.14% (66.67%)

⁵⁷ Baseline data was collected from heads of household, at midline this data was collected from primary caregivers

The target for midline for both groups (intervention girls and children with disabilities) was +4 percentage points. This target was met for the intervention girls' group; 4.6 per cent more caregivers for this group reported that they paid more than 50 per cent of education costs than at baseline. However, according to the data, 9.53 per cent less caregivers of children with disabilities were able to meet more than 50 per cent of education costs. The sample size for this group is much smaller, however, which brings a greater risk of skewed results.

Caregivers reported that 7 per cent of intervention girls, and 6 per cent of children with disabilities have received financial support for their education, compared with 21 per cent and 15 per cent respectively at baseline. This may be because of the withdrawal of bursaries by the GATE GEC project following the introduction of the government's FQSE policy, or because the government is now less likely to provide money for education directly to households since the introduction of the FQSE.

As detailed in Intermediate Outcome 1: Attendance, household and student FGDs agreed that financial constraints were a key barrier to attendance, and, after health, financial barriers were the next most common reason for absence amongst intervention girls. This corresponds with the fact that over a quarter of households are still not able to meet over half of their child's education costs.

Table 102.: Education costs met by household - disaggregated⁵⁸

Proportion of education costs paid last year (EE_4o)	JSS intervention girls - VSLA members	JSS intervention girls - non-VSLA members	Primary girls - VSLA members	Primary girls - non-VSLA members	Primary GWD
	n=136	n=387	n=8	n=65	n=19
100% of them	11.03%	16.02%	25%	16.92%	15.79%
>50%/not all, but more than half	64.71%	56.85%	75%	50.77%	52.63%
<50%/Half or less	23.53%	25.84%	0%	24.62%	31.58%
None	0.74%	1.29%	0%	7.69%	0%

There is a disparity between education costs met for girls with disabilities and boys with disabilities in the data that cannot be seen from the aggregate data for children with disabilities. Whereas 68.42 per cent of caregivers reported paying more than 50 per cent of primary girls with disabilities' education costs (of which 15.79 per cent said 100 per cent, and 52.63 per cent said more than 50 per cent), no caregivers of primary boys with disabilities (n=11) said that they paid 100 per cent of education costs, and only 27.27 per cent said they paid over 50 per cent. 63.64 per cent said they paid less than 50 per cent and 9 per cent said they paid none. However, it is also important to note that the sample sizes for these groups are small (n=11 for boys and n=19 for girls).

Figure 24: IO4.2 VSLA membership and percentage of education costs met

⁵⁸ Sample size for caregivers of GWD who were members of a VSLA is too small to allow for disaggregation

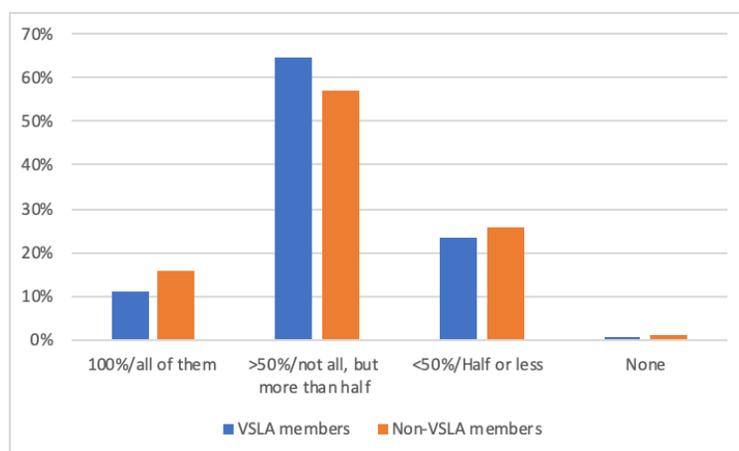


Figure 24 demonstrates some small differences between the economic empowerment of VSLA members and non-members. More non-members were able to meet all of their child's education costs in the last year than VSLA members (16.02 per cent, compared with 11.03 per cent). However, more VSLA members than non-members met more than 50 per cent but not all costs (64.71 per cent versus 56.85 per cent). Overall, the proportions who met more than 50 per cent of costs were somewhat higher for VSLA members (75.74 per cent), than non-members (72.87 per cent).

Table 103.: Education costs met by targeted households – sub-group analysis

	% of targeted households who met >50% of education costs last year
Kailahun	86%
Kenema	92%
Kono	100%
Moyamba	54%
Port Loko	73%
Karene	88%
Age of student (baseline) 0-11	88%
Age of student (baseline) 12+	74%

Amongst the targeted households, there was some degree of variation across districts and age groups at the JSS intervention level. In particular, the results show that almost half of targeted households in Moyamba were not able to meet more than half of their child's education costs last year, and only 2 per cent were able to meet 100 per cent of the costs. However, in Kono, all targeted households met more than half of their child's education costs (and 21 per cent met 100 per cent of costs). There was also some degree of difference between age groups at the JSS intervention level, as demonstrated in Table 106. 100 per cent of targeted primary girls' households met more than half of education costs last year. The sample size for targeted households at the primary level is too small to allow for further disaggregation.

Table 104.: Type of education costs covered by household⁵⁹

	JSS intervention girls - VSLA members	JSS intervention girls - non-VSLA members	Primary girls - VSLA members	Primary girls - non-VSLA members	Primary GWD
	n=136	n=387	n=8	n=65	n=19
Stationery	91%	89%	100%	78%	84%
Exercise books	92%	92%	100%	83%	84%
Uniform	91%	91%	100%	85%	95%
Shoes	96%	89%	88%	86%	95%
Food	64%	66%	50%	74%	68%
Transport	20%	19%	13%	8%	0%
Other	21%	11%	25%	12%	11%

High proportions of caregivers reported that households covered the costs last year of school materials like stationery, exercise books and uniforms. This is reinforced in the qualitative data. All household member participants who responded to questions about financing education said that they paid for school uniforms and other school materials such as books, pens and pencils for their children. Many of the students across the FGDs (both boys and girls, control and intervention) also said that their parents provide them with uniforms, school materials, and/or provide lunch or money for lunch to help them attend school every day. The relatively lower proportion of caregivers who reported covering lunch costs for their children (compared with school materials) also corresponds to the qualitative data on attendance. FGDs and KIs showed that hunger, or lack of food, was an important barrier to attendance and participation in both regular classes and in the GATE GEC study groups.

The government's Free Quality School Education policy was mentioned in two of the household FGDs as something which had helped to ease the burden of education costs. Participants in one household members FGD in Kenema said that they were part of a VSLA, though it is not known whether this is a

⁵⁹ Two sets of questions, EE_40a and PCGEW_1, captured data on type of education costs covered by household. PCGEW_1 was taken from baseline, and EE_40a was new at midline and was adapted from the GATE GEC VSLA survey. Results from both questions were broadly consistent, except for one anomaly. The % of respondents who said that they paid for "School materials and supplies" in PCGEW_1 was lower than the % of respondents who reported paying for "stationery", "exercise books" and "uniform" (i.e. items commonly understood to be school materials) in EE_40a. This anomaly is possibly caused by the lack of specificity in the term, "School materials and supplies", which allows for misunderstanding, whereas EE_40a provides specific examples for respondents. As such, and due to the fact that the options for EE_40a were taken from the GATE GEC VSLA survey, the results for EE_40a have been used for the discussion of education costs.

project VSLA or not. Nevertheless, they said that the loans that they had taken from the VSLA helped them take care of their children's educational needs.

Of the VSLA members, 51 per cent of primary girls' caregivers and 60 per cent of JSS intervention girls' caregivers said that the main item they spent their loan on was education. In the qualitative data, two main things that VSLA FGD participants said that they spent money on were food and education (though they had not yet taken out loans).

This also corresponds with the data on community attitudes (see Intermediate Outcome 5), which demonstrates very high levels of agreement across caregivers that even when funds are limited, it is worth investing in their child's education.

Table 105.: IO4.2 economic characteristics and learning outcomes

	JSS intervention	Primary Girls
Literacy		
Caregiver is a VSLA member	33.96	33.13
Caregiver is not a VSLA member	29.54	29.04
Household meets >50% of education costs	31.61	31.65
Household meets <50% of education costs	28.16	22.20
Numeracy		
Caregiver is a VSLA member	40.30	44.73
Caregiver is not a VSLA member	39.56	38.75
Household meets >50% of education costs	40.51	42.02
Household meets <50% of education costs	37.70	30.75

The table above shows overall lower levels of educational attainment at both the JSS intervention and primary levels for girls' whose caregivers are not part of a VSLA, and whose households cannot meet half or more of their education costs. The difference is most pronounced in literacy scores (EGRA) for primary girls; girls whose households met over 50 per cent of education costs scored 31.65 on average, whilst girls whose households could not meet more than half of costs scored just 22.20.

At midline, a caregivers' membership of a VSLA does not have a statistically significant impact on learning outcomes, nor does the ability to pay education costs.

6.4.3 Recommendations for endline

Indicator 1

It is recommended that the GATE GEC project collect data on which schools have been targeted for the project's VSLA programme so that data can be disaggregated for analysis at endline. Ask caregivers in the household survey that are VSLA members if the VSLA was set up by Action Aid (and therefore is a project VSLA). This can be cross-referenced with the list of VSLA targeted communities that the project

holds. This will enable distinction to be made between caregivers that are part of a VSLA specifically set up by the project and those that are part of a VSLA supported by another organisation or self-organised.

Indicator 2

It is recommended to use disaggregated data for boys and girls with disabilities (where absolute numbers are sufficient) for comparison at endline due to disparities between these two groups.

6.5 Community attitudes

Intermediate Outcome 5 aims to improve attitudes and perceptions of communities and government officials around girls access and inclusive education.

The key indicators relating to this outcome are:

- % of caregivers who report positive perceptions around girls and children with disabilities accessing education
- # of government officials (MBSSE, MSWGCA) at district level who are aware of inclusive education teaching practices and report positive attitudes towards it.

IO5.1 and IO5.2 are both new at midline. IO5.2 was not calculable at midline, and it is suggested to remove this indicator at endline.

6.5.1 High-level findings

Table 106.: Intermediate outcome indicators as per the logframe

IO	IO indicator	BL	ML Target	ML	Target achieved? (Y/N)	Target for next evaluation point	Will IO indicator be used for next evaluation point? (Y/N)
Improved attitudes and perceptions of communities and government officials around girls access and inclusive education	IO 5.1: % of caregivers who report positive perceptions around girls and children with disabilities accessing education	New at ML	New at ML	Girls: JSS 96% PS girls 94% PS GWD 85% SMC 88% BoG 100% CWD: JSS 83%	New at ML	CWD: +2 percentage points	Yes for attitudes towards CWD

				PS girls 83% PS GWD 87%			
				SMC 88% BoG 89%			
	IO 5.2.: # of government officials (MBSSE, MSWGCA) at district level who are aware of inclusive education teaching practices and report positive attitudes towards it	New at ML	New at ML	Not tested at ML	Not tested at ML	N/A	No - not possible to quantify. See Chapter 5 - Sustainability for qualitative evidence related to this indicator

Main qualitative findings

- There was a significant degree of consensus around the positive benefits of education for children throughout all KIIs and FGDs. These benefits were overwhelmingly considered to be equally applicable to both boys and girls, and thus reinforce the quantitative findings. There was also consensus around the fact that community attitudes around girls' education had shifted in recent years; previously girls' education was not valued in the way that it is now.
- There was also a significant degree of consensus amongst caregivers and school staff across the KIIs and FGDs that one of the main benefits of education for both boys and girls was the potential for educated children to support their families and help develop their communities.
- Nevertheless, amongst students there were mixed responses regarding whether boys' or girls' education would be prioritised in situations where funds are limited. Also, the small number of participants that did identify negative consequences of education mainly referred to negative consequences for girls or children with disabilities.
- There was some indication of improved perceptions of education for children with disabilities from the KIIs and FGDs.

6.5.2 Indicators at midline

Indicator 1: % of caregivers who report positive perceptions around girls and children with disabilities accessing education

This indicator is new at midline. There is therefore little comparable data from baseline, and the data presented here forms the basis for comparison at endline. The main data source for this indicator is the household survey, with triangulation from the student survey and qualitative tools. One of the questions for this indicator - "To what extent do you agree that even when funds are limited it is worth investing in [GIRL]'s education" - was asked to caregivers at both baseline and midline, so a comparison can be made in this instance. At baseline, 60 per cent of intervention (PS and JSS) girls without disabilities' caregivers strongly agreed with the statement, and 36 per cent agreed (96 per cent in total). At midline, 52 per cent strongly agreed, and 46 per cent agreed (98 per cent in total). At baseline, 55 per cent of intervention (PS and JSS) girls with disabilities' caregivers strongly agreed with the statement, and 35 per cent agreed (90 per cent in total). At midline these figures are 52 per cent and 44 per cent respectively (96 per cent in total, where n=25). Disaggregated results for this question consistent with the approach to disaggregation taken at midline are also presented in Table 109.

Questions on or to gauge community attitudes was one of the key components of the qualitative tools, which is demonstrated by the richness of detail drawn from the qualitative data and detailed below.

Table 107.: IO5.1 Caregiver attitudes on girls' and children with disabilities' education

To what extent do you agree that (% Agree or Strongly agree)	JSS intervention midline (all)	JSS control midline	Primary girls midline	CWD primary girls midline	BoG Members (JSS intervention)	SMC Members (PS)
	n=557	n=464	n=77	n=20	n=47	n=8
A girl is just as likely to use her education as a boy	96%	96%	94%	85%	100%	88%
Girls with disabilities should be allowed to make their own decisions about their lives the same as girls without disabilities	86%	92%	84%	90%	91%	100%
Boys with disabilities should be allowed to make their own decisions about their lives the same as boys without disabilities	85%	91%	83%	90%	91%	88%
There are occasions or circumstances when it is alright to treat people with disabilities more favourably than others	79%	80%	82%	80%	83%	75%
Even when funds are limited it is worth investing in [GIRL]'s education	99%	99%	94%	95%	98%	100%

Table 108.: IO5.1 Student attitudes on girls' and children with disabilities' education

	JSS intervention midline (In School)	Primary girls midline (In School)	CWD primary girls midline (In School)	Out-of-school intervention girls midline
	n=536	n=70	n=16	n=21
Do you think that it is important for children to go to school?	100%	99%	100%	71%
Do you think girls have a right to go to school?	100%	99%	100%	76%
Do you think boys have a right to go to school?	99%	99%	100%	76%
Do you think children with disabilities have a right to go to school?	93%	89%	94%	71%

Community attitudes towards girls' education

Caregivers from the JSS control group demonstrated the same level of agreement regarding whether a girl is as likely to use her education as a boy (also 96 per cent). The figures were also consistent across male and female caregivers, and caregivers who did not complete any years of school themselves. There was a small degree of variation across districts regarding whether respondents agreed that a girl is just as likely to use her education as a boy (from 93 per cent in Kenema to 100 per cent in Kailahun). A slightly smaller proportion of JSS intervention caregivers of out-of-school girls agreed that girls were as likely to use their education as boys, though the level of agreement was still high (91 per cent compared with 96 per cent across all respondents).

Caregivers also demonstrate very high levels of agreement that it is worth investing in the education of the girl under their care (99 per cent at the JSS level and 94 per cent at the PS level). This is discussed further in Intermediate Outcome 4, but is also indicative of positive community perceptions towards education for girls.

In relation to school management, Board of Governors (BoG - JSS Level) members had the highest level of agreement that girls' are as likely to use their education as boys. One hundred per cent agreed that a girl is as likely to use her education as a boy. This was consistent across all districts however it is worth noting that no BoG members were sampled from Karene. There were also very high levels of agreement that even when funds are limited it is worth investing in their child's education amongst BoG members, with Moyamba demonstrating slightly lower rates of agreement than other districts (93 per cent in Moyamba compared with 100 per cent for all other districts). Again, there was almost no difference between the responses of male and female BoG members for these two questions.

School Management Committee members (SMC - PS level) had a lower level of agreement than Primary level caregivers as a whole. However, the sample size for this group was very small (n=8) and results

could therefore easily be skewed. It is also not possible to further disaggregate SMC members by district or gender for this reason.

These results, which demonstrate high rates of positive community attitudes around girls' education, find significant support in the qualitative data. In the qualitative data, most caregivers expressed that education was equally valuable for girls and boys. There was also a very strong degree of consensus amongst participants across the FGDs and KIIs around the benefits of education and participants generally considered education to be of considerable benefit to both boys and girls. Caregivers stated that community development, specifically the ability of children who are educated and who find jobs outside the community to support and invest back into the community, was a key benefit of education. Other benefits mentioned by caregivers in the FGDs include children being able to support their families. Most participants agreed that these benefits were the same for both boys and girls. However, one female participant in a household member FGD expressed that it was more beneficial for girls to have an education because they were more likely to look after their families. A girl in one JSS FGD echoed this opinion that girls will support their families if they are educated, whereas boys will get married and support their wife, not their parents.

School staff expressed similar views regarding the benefits of education, variously stating that it turns children into "responsible citizens in society", and makes them "respected in society", and that "educated children develop communities and support their parents", and "alleviate the poverty of their parents". More generally, the increased value placed on education by communities was largely seen by school staff as a result of parents witnessing the positive effects experienced by families with educated children. As one PV put it: "Elders who have seen the benefits of education are greatly contributing to the education of the younger ones".

However, JSS boys in two FGDs still thought that, if parents in their communities had limited resources and could only choose one child to attend school they would choose a boy rather than a girl, though one group said that parents should choose the girl. The JSS girls' responses were more mixed: some girls thought that parents would choose the girl "because of the project" whereas others still thought that parents would choose the boy rather than the girl, because parents "think school is for boys". All girls that responded thought parents should choose to send the girl, rather than the boy, if resources are limited. Participants of one VSLA FGD (Moyamba) said that if their finances prevented them from sending all of their children to school, they would prioritise the girls' education. This is mirrored in one of the JSS girls FGDs (Port Loko) - two of the girls said that they were the only one amongst their siblings who attended school and both of these girls had brothers who were currently out of school because their parents couldn't afford to send them.

Results from the student survey showed very high rates of agreement across the intervention cohort relating to girls' right to education (≥ 99 per cent). This was mirrored in the JSS control group, of whom 100 per cent agreed that girls' have the right to go to school. Primary boys showed a slightly lower level of agreement, though the percentage was still very high (95 per cent agreed, compared with 97 per cent who agreed that boys have a right to go to school). A lower proportion out-of-school girls agreed that education was important (79 per cent compared with ≥ 99 per cent), and that girls have a right to education (82 per cent, compared with ≥ 99 per cent), than their in-school counterparts. It is also worth noting that a relatively high number of out-of-school intervention girls answered "don't know" or refused to answer this set of questions (24 per cent, or 7 out of 21 of respondents).

A small proportion of children with disabilities report that they are treated differently in their communities to other children.⁶⁰ The highest proportion of students that agree that they are treated differently are

⁶⁰ Measured by question: CS_D10s

primary girls, 11 per cent of whom report different treatment, compared to 7 per cent of primary boys. Only 1 per cent of JSS intervention children with disabilities report this.

Changes in attitudes

Some participants in the caregiver and student FGDs said that traditionally communities did not value girls' education and saw it as a "waste of time" because it was expected that they would fall pregnant and drop-out, or that they should be "given to marriage". But many participants agreed that there had been gradual changes in community attitudes towards girls' education, and some participants expressed that girls and boys now have equal opportunities for education. One household member said that these changes had taken place over the past few years, and that five to ten years ago communities thought that girls' were not meant to go to school but should be "raised for the bride price".

One male PV said that in their part of the country (Kailahun), the idea that men are favoured in education is untrue, and that there is equal opportunity for girls and boys. Participants from two Household FGDs felt that boys were now at a disadvantage because they had not received support from the project, and a different male PV said that the project focused so much on girls and CWD that it could be described as "discriminatory". One female student teacher expressed a similar opinion, arguing that "girls are now encouraged to go to school more than boys."

There was not a great deal of discussion in the qualitative data as to why community attitudes towards girls' education had changed. However, the small number of participants that did propose reasons attributed the changes to the sensitisation efforts of NGOs, as well as the increasing presence of educated women who act as role models in their communities and society.

Many participants across the KIIs and FGDs said that there were no negative consequences of education and that this was the same for girls, boys and children with disabilities. This was particularly the case amongst school staff. However, the few participants that did identify negative consequences mainly referred to negative consequences for girls or children with disabilities.

For example, one theme that emerged through the caregiver FGDs was the concern that some parents had around sending girls' to school. Exposure to family planning (in particular the use of contraceptives by girls that were perceived to have negative health effects) and "early sex", as well as pregnancy and rape, were understood by some participants to be amongst the negative impacts of girls' education. Other participants felt that one of the negative impacts of education was that it encouraged a lack of respect for parents; one VSLA FGD participant said that this was mainly a problem with girls, who no longer respected their parents or traditions. Two PVs in an FGD also expressed negative opinions of girls' education, saying that girls who attend school think they are mature, and dress differently to other girls and dress in a way that will attract the attention of men, or use mobile phones which facilitates "early sex". However, in a Teachers FGD (Moyamba), one participant said that one of the benefits of education was that teenage pregnancy had "drastically reduced".

Community attitudes towards education for children with disabilities.

The average of the percentages for the three statements about children with disabilities was used for the logframe indicator (JSS 83 per cent, PS girls 83 per cent and PS GWD 87 per cent, BoG Members 89 per cent, SMC members 88 per cent). However, it is interesting to note that generally respondents were less likely to agree that it is acceptable to treat people with disabilities more favourably than others, than they were to agree that children with disabilities should be allowed to make decisions about their lives. There was very little difference in the average of the three statements between male and female caregivers at the JSS intervention level. However, unlike their female counterparts, male caregivers were more likely to agree that it is acceptable to treat people with disabilities more favourably than others (87 per cent compared with 77 per cent of female caregivers), and less likely to agree that children with disabilities should be allowed to make decisions about their lives,

Overall, BoG members showed the strongest level of agreement both with regards to children with disabilities' decision-making, and treating girls and boys with disabilities favourably in certain circumstances. Amongst BoG members, men were more likely than women to demonstrate positive attitudes towards these issues; the average of the percentages for the three statements on children with disabilities for male BoG members was 98 per cent, compared with 85 per cent of female BoG members.

One of the districts, Kenema, demonstrated observably lower levels of agreement with the statements on children with disabilities (69 per cent and 68 per cent agreement for girls and boys with disabilities' decision-making at JSS intervention level, and only 49 per cent agreement with favourable treatment for children with disabilities at the same level).

The relatively lower levels of positive attitudes towards children with disabilities' inclusion and education is reinforced by the data from the student survey.

There was less discussion overall on education for children with disabilities in the FGDs and KIs. One household member in Port Loko said that the barriers to attending school are greater for CWD because parents believe that there is no point in educating a child with disabilities. The male CBRV participant, as well as teachers in one of the FGDs, said that the parents of children with disabilities do not want to send their children to school because they are worried that they will be made fun of or 'provoked' by other children, or because they do not believe that they will receive adequate care at school.

However, the CBRV participant said that this mentality has begun to change as a result of the project, but there are still some parents who are afraid to let their children interact with other children, particularly those children with epilepsy. The view that the efforts of the project had contributed to a change in community opinions on education for CWD was shared by two stakeholders, who thought that this was the element of the project that had seen the most progress. Both stakeholders attributed these changes in community attitudes to the dialogue and awareness-raising sessions that CBRVs are conducting within communities. One stakeholder said that this change in attitude was demonstrated in the project's monitoring and evaluation data collected during awareness-raising sessions.

This is reinforced by the fact that several caregivers and school staff members specifically mentioned a shift in their own attitudes towards education for CWD, and attributed this shift to the efforts of the project. As one household member who participated in an FGD put it:

"For those with disabilities, our eyes have now opened and seen what the NGOs have done to include them in the learning process".

To which another participant added: "The program has made us believe that disability is not inability to be educated and live like other children."

Nearly all JSS Students agreed that children with disabilities have the right to go to school.

A caregivers' attitude towards CWD does not have a statistically significant impact on literacy or numeracy outcomes at midline.

Community attitudes towards attendance

Table 109.: IO5.1 Caregiver attitudes on school attendance

Under which of the following conditions do you think it is acceptable for a child to not attend school? (% Not acceptable to not attend)	JSS intervention midline (In School)	Primary girls midline (In School)	CWD primary girls midline (In School)
	n=555	n=76	n=20

The child may be physically harmed or teased at school or on the way to/from school	71%	82%	70%
The child may physically harm or tease other children at school	79%	86%	75%
The child needs to work	62%	83%	75%
The child needs to help at home	51%	71%	75%
The child is married/is getting married	85%	70%	60%
The child is too old	84%	80%	70%
The child has physical or learning needs that the school cannot meet	65%	71%	70%
The child is unable to learn	80%	73%	45%
Education is too costly	50%	64%	70%
The child is a mother	82%	74%	65%

Despite the significant consensus around the positive benefits of education that emerged from the qualitative data, quantitative data on caregivers' attitudes towards school attendance shows a more mixed picture of the value placed on education by respondents. In particular, at the JSS intervention level, only 51 per cent of respondents said that it was not acceptable for a child to not attend school because they need to help at home, and 62 per cent said that it was not acceptable for a child to miss school in order to work. Half of respondents at this level also said it was acceptable for a child to not attend school if education is too costly. These reasons were less acceptable to primary girls' caregivers; possibly due to the fact that there is a greater expectation for girls/children to contribute to domestic work and household income as they get older. There were extremely high levels of variation between districts for these questions. In Moyamba only 4 per cent of respondents at the JSS intervention level said it was unacceptable for a child to miss school to help at home, and 24 per cent said it was not acceptable to not attend in order to work. Conversely, in Kailahun these figures were as high as 94 per cent and 97 per cent respectively. Furthermore, in Moyamba only 25 per cent of respondents said that it was unacceptable for a child to miss school if education is too costly, compared with 77 per cent in Kailahun.

This disparity between views on education and acceptable reasons for not attending could relate to a disparity between intention or desire and the practical realities and pressures faced by low income families. Across GEC projects, it has been found that the primary barrier to children being in school was poverty, and that attitudes affecting girls' education are mostly related to a perceived low return for the family rather than a general lack of support for girls' education in principle.⁶¹ The results at midline support this contention.

⁶¹ DFID (2018) Thematic Review: Community Based Awareness, Attitudes and Behaviour. Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/730856/TR-Community-Based-Awareness-Attitudes-Behaviour.pdf

However, it is worth noting that although a significant proportion of caregivers stated that it would be acceptable for children to miss school for reasons of work and domestic labour, this is not reflected in the data on school absences (see Intermediate Outcome 1).

In the household survey, caregivers were asked a question about the age to which they want their child to stay in school. On average, caregivers at both JSS and Primary levels answered 21 years old to this question, which at first glance seems to indicate a general desire for children to attain high education levels. However, around one third of respondents answered “don’t know” to this question. This, along with the fact that ages do not necessarily correspond with grades or specific education levels in the Sierra Leonean context, perhaps indicates that this question is not particularly valuable in this context (see recommendations).

Indicator 2: Number of government officials (MBSSE, MSWGCA) at district level who are aware of inclusive education teaching practices and report positive attitudes towards it

None of the data collection tools captured quantitative information on this indicator, which would require a dedicated survey for government officials at the district level. This was not included in the midline approach. Qualitative data was, however, collected that speaks more broadly to the government officials’ awareness of inclusive education teaching practices and attitudes towards it. This data, comprising two DEO KILs in Port Loko and Kailahun, demonstrates a good level of awareness and positive attitudes towards inclusive education teaching practices amongst government officials at the district level, though clearly the generalisability of this data is limited. This qualitative data is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5 - Sustainability.

6.5.3 Recommendations for endline

Indicator 1

Remove question PCG_30g2 - “to what age do you think your child should stay at school? - and replace with a question about which educational level/qualification caregivers want their child to attain. This should provide more meaningful data in context.

It is suggested to reformulate IO5.1 to focus on attitudes towards children with disabilities’ education, as attitudes towards girls’ education are already very high with little to no room for improvement and therefore for target setting at endline. It is recommended to ask the following question to caregivers at endline: “To what extent do you agree that a child with a disability is just as likely to use his or her education as a child without a disability?”

Given the very highly positive results relating to community attitudes towards girls’ education, this indicator in its current form provides limited insight, and does not explain enduring barriers at the community level. At endline it is recommended to explore in depth the extent to which these positive attitudes translate into positive behaviours.

Indicator 2

Remove IO5.2 - collecting the data required to respond to this indicator is unfeasible. Consider instead expanding the amount of qualitative data on this issue, which should then be subsumed under Outcome 3 - Sustainability: System.

Project Checks on Intermediate Outcomes

Ensure that the IO analysis reflects the links between different levels in the logframe and informs the validity of the Theory of Change. This includes checking whether they have:

	Measured and analysed all IO indicators presented in logframe;	Disaggregated the data according to the logframe (the project has outlined the indicators that were not disaggregated)	Used both the qualitative and quantitative analysis stated in the logframe;	Related the IO analysis to the analysis of Outcomes
IO 1	Both indicators are measured and analysed	Yes	Yes	IO 1.1 – yes IO 1.2 – no links to the outcomes
IO 2	All indicators measured and analysed	IO 2.1 – no disaggregation by gender of HTs but this is explained why	IO 2.1 – yes IO 2.2 - no inclusion on study group observation, IO 2.3 a – no inclusion of lesson observations IO 2.3 b – yes	IO 2.1 – no referring to outcomes IO 2.2 – some mention of learning and sustainability but not linking to analysis of outcomes, IO 2.3 a – yes analysis linked to learning outcomes, IO 2.3 b – yes
IO 3	All indicators measured and analysed (IO 3.3 not measured but adapted)	IO 3.1 – yes, IO 3.2 – yes IO 3.3 -no age disaggregation, but a reason was given why IO 3.4 – yes	Yes	IO 3.1 – yes, IO 3.2 – yes, IO 3.3 – no, IO 3.4 – no
IO 4	All indicators attempted to be measured and analysed, although confusion around targeting of VSLA thus not able to tell which VSLA were GATE-GEC VSLAs	IO 4.1 – no disaggregation by age IO 4.2 – yes	IO 4.1 – yes IO 4.2 – yes	IO 4.1 – slight mention of sustainability and impact on learning but not really linking to the outcomes IO 4.2 – yes
IO 5	IO 5.2 was not collected at midline	IO 5.1 – yes	IO 5.1 - yes	IO 5.1 - no

7. Conclusion & Recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

7.1.1 Changes to barriers and characteristics of beneficiaries since baseline

The GATE-GEC project reports 1670 direct learning and transition beneficiaries in 378 schools across 5 districts at midline. The target number of girls' beneficiaries that the project is supporting during the 2019-2020 academic year is 2,277.

There are a number of changes in barriers and characteristics of the beneficiary population that have been observed since baseline. At midline, there is an increase in the proportion of double orphans in the sample, a decrease in single orphans (due to attrition), and a decrease in the proportion of students living in a female-headed household. The proportion of students with caregivers with no education has also reduced. Affordability of school has increased at the JSS level and decreased at the primary level. However, poverty levels have risen across all groups tracked from baseline. A higher proportion of caregivers report it is fairly or very unsafe for girls to travel to school. The chore burden has reduced for all groups except primary girls, and the proportion of students who are not supported to stay in school and do well has decreased to almost zero. Finally, there has been an increase in students reporting that teachers treat girls and boys differently in the classroom.

At midline, the changes in characteristics and barriers cannot be attributed to the project intervention. It is likely that the changes are due to changes in the sample composition, which reflect that particular barriers have caused drop-out since baseline and therefore the sample lost at midline accounts for the difference. Nevertheless, most characteristics and barriers remain comparable between baseline and midline.

7.1.2 Learning Outcomes

The JSS intervention sample scored an average of 31.22 in literacy (SeGRA) and 39.84 in numeracy (SeGMA). Learning assessment scores in both numeracy and literacy are slightly higher for the control JSS group. However, the differences are not statistically significant. Difference-in-difference (DiD) analysis of Panel 1 (comparison to baseline) shows that there is a negative arithmetic DiD for the JSS intervention group at midline: -6.52, for a learning achievement of -3.18 in literacy, and -7.82, for a learning achievement of -5.75 in numeracy. DiD regression analysis shows a result of -3.906 in literacy and -4.845 in numeracy. This indicates no improvement in learning outcomes relative to the control group. The primary girls sample scored an average of 28.15 in literacy (EGRA) and 37.94 in numeracy (EGMA). Using a counterfactual analysis, the arithmetic difference-in-difference for literacy is -28.63, and for numeracy is -10.60 at midline for primary girls. DiD regression shows -15.395 in literacy and -4.644 in numeracy. It is important to note, however, that due to the small sample size for the primary cohort, the power achieved at midline is 68 per cent. At the primary level, boys performed better than girls in all districts for both literacy and numeracy, except for literacy in Kailahun.

At the JSS intervention level, children with disabilities score lower in all learning assessments at a 5 per cent level of statistical significance. However, primary children with disabilities do not have lower than average learning assessment results. Other characteristics which result in lower outcomes for JSS intervention students at a statistically significant level are household poverty and serious illness, both for literacy only. Safety and sanitary WASH facilities are the two main barriers to intervention student learning outcomes in both literacy and numeracy. Students who do not use a toilet score lower in at a statistically significant level at both the primary and JSS levels. Unsafe travel to and from school and feelings of safety at school also have a statistically significant impact on learning outcomes amongst JSS intervention students.

7.1.3 Transition Rates

Transition rates are high; 95 per cent of students across the whole intervention sample have a successful transition status at midline, and 98 per cent of control school students. This high transition rate can partly be explained by the classification of grade repetition as a successful transition, as well as by the fact that students lost to the sample may have dropped out but are not reflected in the transition rates. In the JSS intervention group, one of the 35 out-of-school children has successfully transitioned at midline. The most common reason for a JSS intervention child to be out-of-school is due to motherhood or pregnancy, followed closely by a lack of money to pay for schooling costs. Contrary to the expected outcome, disability is not a barrier to transition in the evaluation sample (across intervention and control groups).

7.1.4 Sustainability

The sustainability score at midline is 2, demonstrating that overall the project is still in the 'emergent' phase. However, the system level indicators have improved from 'latent' to 'emerging' (score 1 to 2), due to strong relationships at the district level and improved collaboration at the national level. Most other sustainability indicators have also seen some improvement, moving from the lower end to the upper end of the 'emergent' score bracket. The main barrier to sustainability is the availability of finance at all levels. The endline target for sustainability is 3, and recommendations on steps that can be taken to work towards that target are outlined in the Recommendations section, below.

7.1.5 Intermediate Outcomes

Some of the intermediate outcome indicators are new at midline, while others are taken from baseline and therefore comparisons can be made. In cases where comparisons from baseline to midline could be made, targets were often not met.

Attendance: at midline students' self-reported attendance was captured through student survey. Eighty-seven per cent in the JSS intervention group missed five days or fewer of school in the last school year, compared with 78 per cent in the control group. Attendance rates for primary girls are lower than for JSS, and are lowest for girls with disabilities and girls who are mothers. Health concerns are the main reason for absence from school (which includes female health considerations), with financial constraints the second main cited reason.

Teaching Quality: at midline, knowledge of inclusive teaching methods amongst head teachers is present but lacking breadth. Amongst PVs, the average score for gender-sensitive and inclusive teaching practices was 75 per cent. This is up 7 per cent since baseline, but does not quite meet the target of 7.7 per cent. The majority of students report equal treatment of boys and girls by teachers during class. Very few children with disabilities report that they are treated differently to other children by their teachers. There have been improvements in inclusive education practices, however, corporal punishment is still prevalent, although reported rates have reduced since baseline.

Self-esteem and confidence: scores amongst intervention students are fairly high, but with some room for improvement. Less than half of all students participate in decision-making about their education. For both of these indicators, levels for primary girls with disabilities were lower than average. The majority of CWD at midline reported that they are able to access facilities at school, and inclusion scores are high for the whole intervention sample, including children with disabilities. Perceptions of safety are also high, though they are lower for girls with disabilities.

Economic empowerment: At midline, a large proportion of VSLA members (GATE-GEC and non-GATE-GEC VSLAs) learned skills in saving through their VSLA, and reported feeling confident in saving. Most VSLA members had taken a loan from their VSLA, however nearly half reported that they could not meet the repayments. The majority of caregivers report that they met more than 50 per cent of their child's education costs last year, but only a small proportion met all of them. Targets from baseline for household spending on education were met for girls, but not for children with disabilities at midline.

Community attitudes: Community attitudes towards girls' education at midline are overwhelmingly positive. Community attitudes towards children with disabilities' education are also positive, but to a lesser extent than for girls. The qualitative data indicates a gradual shift in attitudes towards girls' and CWD's education within communities, and towards education more broadly. However, despite this there is an enduring belief amongst a sizable minority of caregivers that it is acceptable for a child to miss school if they need to do paid or domestic work, or if education is too costly.

7.1.6 Theory of Change

GATE-GEC's theory of change is that if school attendance rates are increased, teaching quality is improved, children have greater self-esteem and confidence, households are economically empowered and there is a high level of information and knowledge sharing, then learning outcomes and transition rates will improve and the change be sustained. At midline, the Theory of Change itself is considered to be largely valid but implementation of activities has in some respects not resulted in the foreseen outcomes. There is evidence at midline that issues with implementation for some activities may have hampered their success in terms of outputs and outcomes. In addition, there can be a time lag between some activities and evidence of impact, meaning that improvements may not yet be visible in the data at midline. Suggestions for ways to improve implementation, and therefore to improve outputs and outcomes at endline, are detailed in the recommendations below.

7.1.7 Approach to gender and social inclusion

To date the project's emphasis has been on gender inclusion and inclusion of children with disabilities. Overall the project performs well in relation to these two priorities. Tools and training for PVs and STs have included gender-sensitive and inclusive teaching methodologies, and evidence of this was observed in teaching practices at midline. Qualitative evidence in particular has shown positive impact of the project activities on community attitudes to education for children with disabilities. It is recommended that awareness-raising activities around CWD education continue and are expanded to include discussions to promote increased participation of girls and CWD in decision-making around their education. The student teacher component has also specifically recruited women who previously dropped out of school, which is further evidence of the project's attempts to address gender inequalities within communities in Sierra Leone.

Although safeguarding measures have been established as part of the project through the score carding activity, child protection has not been a main priority of the project. Furthermore, score carding was only set up at the JSS level, with no equivalent feedback mechanisms at the primary level. Child protection issues disproportionately affect marginalised groups, including girls and children with disabilities. In order to be more socially transformative, the project could engage more meaningfully with child protection to tackle the causes and consequences of mistreatment and abuse against marginalised children both inside and outside of school. In addition, whilst promoting enrollment and attendance of children with disabilities at school is clearly commendable, it is equally important to ensure that these children are safe and secure in the school environment and that attendance at school does not expose these children to increased risk of harm. The fact that half of all safeguarding issues reported to the project relate to children with disabilities, and that girls with disabilities are more likely to feel unsafe at school than their

peers, indicates that more work needs to be done on the approach to gender and social inclusion in this regard.

7.2 Recommendations

Project M&E

- It is recommended that the GATE GEC project collect data on which schools and/or communities have been targeted for the project's VSLA programme so that data can be disaggregated for analysis at endline.
- Increase monitoring of score carding activities to facilitate assessment of impact and reach.
- Strengthen measurement of impact of SMC/BoG impact. For example, specify that the community member included in project monitoring through the 'community leader' tool be a member of a SMC/BoG, or add this as an extra tool.

Project Implementation: general

- It is recommended to address the issue that hunger is a barrier to attendance and concentration in the study groups. Study groups take place after school, by which time children, who often have not eaten since breakfast, are very hungry. Establishing an initiative to combat this issue, either through a school-wide or study group specific activity is recommended to improve the efficacy of the study groups.
- The government of Sierra Leone recently lifted a ban on pregnant girls attending school.⁶² To encourage changes in community behaviours relating to this policy development, it is therefore recommended to include information on the importance of school attendance for pregnant girls to community sensitisation sessions.
- It is recommended to promote, through the establishment of formal mechanisms, knowledge-sharing between PVs and other teaching staff. This can be achieved in collaboration with school management, who will be responsible for facilitating knowledge-sharing events in their schools. This should include knowledge-sharing of child protection and safeguarding information
- It is recommended to consider focusing the additional funds repurposed from the bursary activity to enhance activities in the worst-performing regions i.e. Kenema and Port Loko. The project should also consider directing additional funds to households with children in community schools, as these schools do not benefit from the FQSE.
- Delays to distribution of project stipends or resources should be addressed and monitoring of this distribution enhanced. Distribution issues were reported in the provision of assistive devices, and by the CBRV participant and multiple LA/STs.
- It is recommended to promote model schools through a recruitment drive aimed to attract children with disabilities. It may also be necessary to provide assistance in the form of transportation stipends for children with disabilities, as they may not live in close proximity to a model school.
- It is recommended to strengthen the observation and feedback processes for PVs. Project staff should receive specialised training in study group observations and giving effective feedback. Observations should be conducted twice per term for each PV, with on-the-spot feedback following the observation. Future training for PVs should also be tailored to address the enduring gaps in inclusive teaching methods identified in Section 6.2 of Chapter 6.

1. ⁶² The Guardian (2020) 'Sierra Leone lifts ban on pregnant girls going to school but shutdown expected'. Available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/mar/31/sierra-leone-lifts-ban-on-pregnant-girls-going-to-school-but-shutdown-expected>

- It is recommended to strengthen the child protection mechanisms relating to the score carding component. Score carding currently focuses on feedback, rather than child protection, and there are currently limited follow-up mechanisms to successfully address issues of child protection that are revealed through score carding.

Project implementation: sustainability

Community

- Encourage spending on education alongside generation of sustainable income. Advance the roll-out of the livelihoods component if possible to promote its establishment before the end of the project.
- Work with community and/or district level officials to train Village Agents and ensure there is a system of support for the Agents post-project completion.
- Research VSLAs in Sierra Leone and the conditions that contribute to success.
- In community awareness raising sessions with caregivers, include explicit discussion of what it looks like to include children in decision-making with regards to education. This could cover both the types of decisions (to attend, to continue from one year to the next, until what age, what to study), and the form of inclusion (open communication).
- Continue to raise awareness of the rights of children with disabilities.

School

- Work with SMCs/BoGs and school management to generate ideas for sustainable funding sources to continue provision of project activities.
- Collaborate with the TSC and MBSSE to ensure quick enrolment following publication of results.
- Where possible, facilitate extension of the stipend for Cohort 3 to cover the transition period between exams and results publication.
- Use the results of Cohorts 1 and 2 to advocate for adoption of the model by the government.
- Conduct training for head teachers on attendance record-keeping. Data from this source was of very poor quality, indicating low skill levels amongst head teachers in attendance record-keeping.

System

- Follow-up on agreed upon changes from the district learning events.
- Host a national learning event.
- Set clear objectives for the monitoring visits with an emphasis on activities which are a priority for the government, such as the ST component.
- Include the TSC in all committees related to the LA/ST component.
- Facilitate joint monitoring visits between consortium members and national government representatives.

Endline evaluation

General

- To limit the rate of attrition at endline, it is recommended that:
 - Data collection should start later to ensure it does not occur whilst potential SSS1 girls are still awaiting the results of their JSS3 exams, as they are not likely to be at home.
 - The number of days allocated for data collection should be extended to facilitate tracking.

- Dedicated training for enumerators on how to use GPS for household tracking should be provided.
- For endline it is recommended to establish output indicators for the livelihoods and Itinerant Teachers' components of the project.
- It is recommended to assess value for money at endline with the updated calculations.
- Sequencing data collection would facilitate greater insights from the qualitative data. It is recommended to first collect and analyse the quantitative data and use those findings to inform the qualitative data collection.

Learning assessments

- For endline, it is recommended to remove EGRA subtask 1: "Letter sound identification". Results from this subtask are anomalous due to the fact that letter sound identification is a problematic in contexts such as Sierra Leone where there are multiple local languages and a lack of agreement about what constitutes an acceptable letter sound.

Surveys

- For endline it is recommended to add domestic activity and an 'other' option to the questions on current activities of children that are OOS to capture complete data. It is also recommended to include poor attainment as a reason for children being out-of-school.
- A question to assess exposure and involvement with non-GATE GEC education projects should be added to the School Data Sheet. This should include assessment of which project schools received new lesson plans as part of Leh Wi Lan. This will facilitate the process of assigning causality of change to project activities.

Intermediate Outcomes

- If attendance data from head teachers via the School Data Sheet is to be retained for IO1.1, training for head teachers should be done by GATE GEC on attendance record-keeping. Otherwise, for endline it is recommended to use this tool only for the head teacher interview and not for attendance and transition data.
- For endline it is recommended that the same questions and timeframe should be used to measure attendance for IO1.1 in both the student survey and household survey to allow for more rigorous triangulation.
- For IO1.2 at endline, it is recommended to retain economic reasons and measure reduction of economic reasons at endline (also potentially assisting at home and not motivated to attend). Disregard other reasons for absence as all scores are <1% so no meaningful comparison to endline or targets for reduction can be made. Add a specific question on secret society initiations and school closure/absence from school.
- Reword the question "Does (name) need help to get to school" for endline. A high number of the respondents misinterpreted this question to mean help to attend school more broadly, rather than assistance to travel to school as was intended. Suggest changing to, "Does (name) need help travelling to school?" for endline.
- For IO2.1 at endline, It is recommended that the target for the proportion of head teachers that mention four or more inclusive teaching methods is set at +5 percentage points.
- For IO2.2 at endline, It is recommended to expand the indicator to read 'percentage of PVs demonstrating inclusive and gender sensitive learning centred teaching practices'. This would expand the focus on inclusive education practices in a holistic manner rather than emphasising gender sensitive practices over others. The measurement used at baseline (and midline) refers to

inclusive education as a whole, and this change would ensure the indicator accurately reflects the measurement. The recommended target is +5 percentage points.

- At endline it is recommended that IO2.3 is merged with IO2.2, as this is a method of triangulation for indicator 2.
- For IO2.4, it is recommended that the target for endline is +1 for the average perception score for both literacy and numeracy.
- It is recommended to remove IO3.2a at endline and replace it with IO3.2b
- For IO3.2b it is recommended to remove two of the five components due to high achievement rates, and focus on the components with the lowest scores. It is recommended that the first two components listed below are increased by 5 percentage points, whilst the third is increased by 10 percentage points due to the low starting point:
 - Do you feel safe at school? (CS_W14s) % yes (+5 percentage points)
 - Are any students in this school bullied or teased by other students? (CS_W16s) % no (+5 percentage points)
 - Do your teachers discipline or punish students who get things wrong in a lesson? (TQ_6s) % no (+10 percentage points)
- Due to the high score for IO3.2c, it is recommended to remove half of the statements and set a target of a 5 percentage point increase for the questions with lower reported numbers for endline:
 - If you don't understand something, does your teacher(s) use a different language to help you understand? (TQ_3s)
 - Does your teacher(s) encourage students to participate during lessons, for example by answering questions? (TQ_4s)
 - Do you use drinking water facilities at school? (CS_W7s)
- Due to the small sample size of CWD, it is recommended to change the data source of indicator IO3.3 at endline to replace it with a qualitative indicator based on a targeted FGD with children with disabilities in one of the model schools. However, this will require specific planning to gather details on how many CWD are in the model schools (potentially through the project reverification data). According to the sample, there are no CWD in the model schools that will be adapted in the final year of the project, so engagement with the consortium will be key to recruit participants for this.
- It is recommended to expand IO3.4 at endline to assess actions taken against action plans by all schools. This is due to the small sample size of schools targeted for score carding at midline.
- For IO4.2 it is recommended to use disaggregated data for boys and girls with disabilities (where absolute numbers are sufficient) for comparison at endline due to disparities between these two groups.
- Remove question PCG_30g2 - "To what age do you think your child should stay at school?" from the household survey - and replace with a question about which educational level/qualification caregivers want their child to attain. This should provide more meaningful data in context.
- For endline, it is recommended to reformulate IO5.1 to focus on attitudes towards children with disabilities' education, as attitudes towards girls' education are already very high with little to no room improvement and therefore for target setting at endline. Given the very high positive results on attitudes to girls' education, IO5.1 in its current form provides limited insight, and does not

explain enduring barriers at the community level. At endline it is recommended to explore in depth the extent to which these positive attitudes translate into positive behaviours.

- It is recommended to remove IO5.2 for endline. Collecting the data required to respond to this indicator is unfeasible. Consider instead expanding the amount of qualitative data on this issue, which should then be subsumed under Outcome 3 - Sustainability: System.

Sustainability

Community:

- Include a question in the household survey to assess whether a VSLA caregivers participate in was started by Action Aid, and thus is a project VSLA.
- At endline, evaluate whether the groups that have 'graduated' from the VSLAs have continued, and include Village Agents in data collection.
- At endline, triangulate indicator 2 with the opinion of the children in decision-making, to ensure the child-centred approach is maintained. Ask both children and caregivers the same questions for more effective triangulation.

School:

- At endline, assess how many schools have incorporated project activities into their budgets, and increase the number of project activities included in the assessment, such as learning circles.
- Remove indicator 2 for endline and add an indicator at the system level on inclusive education practices in national CPD policy.
- At endline, check attendance rates at training from non-project schools that were once project schools. Attendance from these schools can be seen as a proxy indicator of interest from the wider school community in the skills taught by the project.
- At endline, include a representative of the TSC in the qualitative data collection to assess the government's opinion of the results of Cohorts 1 and 2 and plans for incorporation into the government list of teachers.
- At endline, if available, compare the results of Cohort 3 to Cohorts 1 and 2.
- At endline, include qualitative data collection with School Management Committees and Boards of Governors. This could be in the form of focus group discussions and/or interviews with the Chairs of the committee.

System:

- At endline, include qualitative data collection with MSWGCA and the TSC at the national level, and local MBSSE officials.
- At endline, assess the impact of joint monitoring visits and learning events.

Annexes

Annex 1: List of annexes

- Annex 2: Intervention roll-out dates
- Annex 3: Evaluation approach and methodology
- Annex 4: Characteristics and barriers
- Annex 5: Logframe
- Annex 6: Outcomes Spreadsheet
- Annex 7: Project design and interventions
- Annex 8: Key findings on Output Indicators
- Annex 9: Beneficiaries tables
- Annex 10: MEL Framework
- Annex 11: External Evaluator's Inception Report
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- Annex 13: Datasets, codebooks and programs
- Annex 14: Learning test pilot and calibration
- Annex 15: Sampling Framework
- Annex 16: External Evaluator declaration
- Annex 17: Project Management Response
- Annex 18: Field report
- Annex 19: Life Skills Index
- Annex 20: Qualitative distribution
- Annex 21: Enumerator training schedule

Annex 2: Intervention roll-out dates

Table 110.: Intervention roll-out dates

Intervention	Start	End
Distribution of bursary items	December 2017	February 2018
Roll-out of the VSLA component (Formation, selection, induction of groups and trainings and ongoing monitoring and support)	August 2018	June 2021
Roll-out of Livelihoods component (Community groups identification, trainings, provision of grants and ongoing monitoring and support)	Jan 2020	June 2021
Community Based Rehabilitation Volunteers component (including support and trainings and community awareness sessions)	October 2017	March 2021
Allocation/distribution of targeted assistive devices, learning aids and/or provision of individualized treatments.	June 2018	Sep 2020
Capacity building meetings for Heads of the Schools	Feb 2019	June 2021
Training for PVs (including developing training manual and running refresher trainings)	November 2017	November 2020
Roll-out of study group sessions	April 2017	June 2021
Continuous Professional Development support (CPD) - Peer Learning	October 2018	July 2021
Back to school sensitization activities (including school and community visits)	August 2018	November 2020

Meetings with SMC/BoGs on school management	Feb 2019	June 2021
Roll out of Learning Assistant component (Cohort 3) – including Identification of Learning Assistants, development and provision of learning materials, running revision camps and training of LA tutors)	December 2017	March 2019
Roll out of scorecarding activity (including running the sessions, and ongoing monitoring of scorecarding action plans)	October 2018	March 2020
Roll-out of accountability component (including distribution of accountability brochure and posters on how to report fraud and sexual harassment)	October 2019	March 2020
School adaptation through the model schools’ component (including needs mapping for adaptations/increased accessibility, distribution of model school packs, training to teachers)	May 2018	August 2020
Roll out of Itinerant teachers’ pilot	Jan 2018	July 2021
Engagement and training of the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MoBSSE) and the Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children Affairs (MoSWGCA) on inclusive education	December 2018	December 2020
Collaboration with UNICEF-GATE, Leh We Lan - GLADI, the Teaching Service Commission and other relevant stakeholders to ensure alignment, complementarity and sustainability of the project interventions	September 2017	July 2021

Annex 3: Midline evaluation approach and methodology

Outcomes and Intermediate Outcomes

Table 102: outcomes for measurement

Outcome	Level at which measurement will take place, e.g. household, school, study club etc.	Tool and mode of data collection (please specify both the quantitative and qualitative tool used)	Rationale, i.e. why is this the most appropriate approach for this outcome	Frequency of data collection, i.e. per evaluation point, annually, per term	Who collected the data?	Discuss any changes from BL (including whether this indicator is new)
Outcome 1: learning	Improved learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy for marginalised girls supported by GEC (with sub-indicator for boys with disabilities where reported)					
Literacy indicator Mean EGRA, SeGRA	School	Quant: EGRA, SeGRA	EGRA and SeGRA are set by the FM as the most appropriate approach.	Annually	External Evaluator	Familiar word recognition removed from SeGRA due to ceiling effect at baseline. One WPM score added as a subtask for SeGRA for baseline and midline.
Numeracy indicator Mean EGMA, SeGMA	School	Quant: EGMA, SeGMA	EGMA and SeGMA are set by the FM as the most appropriate approach.	Annually	External Evaluator	Addition and subtraction level 1 removed from SeGMA due to ceiling effect at baseline. Addition and subtraction word problems removed from SeGMA.
Outcome 2: Transition	More marginalised girls transition through key stages of education, training or employment (with sub-indicator for boys where reported)					

Transition indicator	Household	Quant: Household survey	Includes questions on school enrolment in the previous year and current academic year. Provides ability to track students who move school.	Annually	External Evaluator	No change from baseline.
Outcome 3: Sustainability (system level)	Improved quality of teaching through better school governance; strengthened understanding and commitment to support inclusive education from government officials					
System indicator 1: Level of engagement with district and national government stakeholders (MBSSE and MSWGCA) to support education provision to girls and children with disabilities education nationally (specifically on the Free Quality Education Programme)	Government and project partners	Qual: government officials KII, project partner KIIs	Government officials are best placed to comment on the level of government provision for marginalised groups.	Annually	External Evaluator	New at midline. Changed from 'Level and types of programme evidence and learning shared with key decision makers and actors to influence the Sierra Leonean and wider Education sector and the actions taken with this.'
System indicator 2: District and national government stakeholders (MBSSE and MSWGCA) developing education plans based on project activities (Inclusive Education, training to PVs, LA/ST component) to continue in	Government (district and national)	Qual: government officials KII	Government officials are best placed to comment on government policy.	Annually	External Evaluator	New at midline. Changed from 'Number and types of events consortium partners actively participate in'

existing GATE GEC schools, and cascade successful models to non GATE GEC schools						
Outcome 3: Sustainability (community level)	Improved attitudes and perceptions of households and communities to invest in children's education and include them in decision-making					
Community indicator 1: Parents, caregivers and community members allocating financial resources to progress girls' and children with disabilities' educational rights	Household	Quant: Household survey Qual: household members FGD, VSLA FGD	The HH survey asks about household expenditure and attitudes. The qualitative tools include questions on attitudes.	Annually	External Evaluator	New at midline. Changed from 'Community members allocating financial resource, to progress girls' and children with disabilities' educational rights, right to protection and right to participate in life choices'
Community indicator 2: GATE GEC caregivers reporting beneficiaries are actively involved in making decisions around their education.	Household, School	Quant: Household survey, Student survey	The HH survey asks specifically if the student makes decisions about education. The student survey also asks this and will be used to triangulate.	Annually	External Evaluator	New at midline. Changed from 'Community members reporting awareness of girls' and children with disabilities' educational rights, right to protection and right to participate in life choices'
Outcome 3: Sustainability (school level)	Improved quality of teaching, improved school management and governance and increased commitment to practices which encourage beneficiaries' self-esteem and safety.					

<p>School indicator 1: % of head teachers who plan to continue providing project activities after the end of the project. Disaggregated by: study groups, score carding, teacher training.</p>	School	<p>Quant: School data sheet</p>	Head teachers are a key member of school management and steer activities in schools.	Annually	External Evaluator	New at midline.
<p>School indicator 2: School staff share the skills, knowledge and materials on inclusive education with non-GATE schools.</p>	School	<p>Quant: School data sheet</p>	School staff includes head teachers and trained teachers. At the school level these positions are the best placed to cascade training.	Annually	External Evaluator	New at midline.
<p>School indicator 3: Number of STs (cohort 1,2) enrolled in the government payroll and appointed to schools in rural areas across Sierra Leone.</p>	Government/partners	Not used at midline.	Not used at midline.	Once - endline only.	External Evaluator	Not used at midline.
<p>School indicator 4: % of functional SMCs, BOGs in GATE GEC schools</p>	School	<p>Quant: School data sheet</p>	At midline there is no direct data collection with SMCs/BoGs. Head teachers are the next best placed to discuss the impact of the groups on schools.	Annually	External Evaluator	New at midline.

Intermediate outcome 1: attendance	Improved attendance of the GATE GEC cohort in schools throughout the life of the project					
Attendance indicator 1: Attendance of the GATE GEC cohort in schools throughout the life of the project	School and household	Quant: Student survey and Household survey	School data on attendance is unreliable. Combining self-reported data is therefore an appropriate alternative.	Annually	External Evaluator	New source at midline.
Attendance indicator 2: Reduction in barriers to attendance: economic, school environment, teaching inclusivity, self-esteem/confidence, family/community support.	School	Quant: Student survey	Students are best placed to provide reasons for their absence.	Annually	External Evaluator	New at midline.
Intermediate outcome 2: inclusive education	Improved knowledge and demonstration of inclusive education and gender sensitive learning centred teaching in literacy and numeracy					
Inclusive education indicator 1: % of head teachers with increased knowledge of inclusive education teaching methodologies	School	Quant: School data sheet	The school data sheet captures data from head teachers.	Annually	External Evaluator	New at midline.

<p>Inclusive education indicator 2: % of PVs demonstrating gender sensitive learning centred teaching practices</p>	Classroom	<p>Quant: Classroom observation</p> <p>Qual: FGD and KII PVs</p>	Observation is a frequently used method to assess teaching practice.	Annually	External Evaluator	Edited at midline to remove reference to LA/STs.
<p>Inclusive education indicator 3: Increase in gender inclusive practice of teachers in GATE GEC schools.</p>	School	<p>Quant: Student survey</p> <p>Qual: FGDs students</p>	The student survey allows for measurement of perceptions of students.	Annually	External Evaluator	New at midline.
<p>Inclusive education indicator 4: % of GATE GEC cohort reporting improved perceptions of learning in literacy and numeracy - broken down by literacy and numeracy.</p>	School	<p>Quant: Student survey</p> <p>Qual: FGDs students</p>	The student survey allows for measurement of perceptions of students.	Annually	External Evaluator	Questions added at midline to measure this.
<p>Intermediate outcome 3: self-esteem and confidence</p>	Improved sense of self-esteem, confidence and agency amongst marginalised girls and children with disabilities in relation to their education (including feeling safe and secure)					
<p>Self-esteem indicator 1: % of girls and children with disabilities reporting positive self-esteem to participate and learn in school</p>	School	<p>Quant: Student survey</p>	The student survey is the main tool used with students. FGDs are used for	Annually	External Evaluator	Updated at midline.

		Qual: FGDs students	triangulation and further depth.			
Self esteem indicator 2: % of marginalised girls and children with disabilities in the GATE GEC cohort reporting feeling safe, secure and included in the learning environment	School	Quant: Student survey Qual: FGDs students	The student survey is the main tool used with students. FGDs are used for triangulation and further depth.	Annually	External Evaluator	Updated at midline.
Self esteem indicator 3: % of marginalised children with disabilities in the GATE GEC cohort reporting school facilities are accessible post-school adaptation (model schools)	School	Quant: Student survey Qual: FGDs students	The student survey is the main tool used with students. FGDs are used for triangulation and further depth.	Annually	External Evaluator	Updated at midline.
Self esteem indicator 4: % (and type) of follow-up actions carried out by school management (HTs and BoGs) in targeted JSS schools (based on score carding)	School	Quant: School Data Sheet Qual: HT KII	The school data sheet captures data from head teachers who are responsible for driving changes through the action plan.	Annually	External Evaluator	New at midline.
Intermediate outcome 4: economic empowerment	Improved economic empowerment at the household level to cover educational costs					

<p>Economic empowerment indicator 1: % of the GATE GEC cohort (of targeted households) reporting confidence and skills in financial planning and management</p>	Household	<p>Quant: Household survey</p> <p>Qual: HH FGDs, VSLA FGD</p>	The household survey is the main tool for assessing household life of the sample students.	Annually	External Evaluator	Same as baseline.
<p>Economic empowerment indicator 2: % of parents/caregivers in targeted households who contribute to their child's educational costs (those not already covered by Free Quality School Education)</p>	Household	<p>Quant: Household survey</p> <p>Qual: HH FGDs, VSLA FGD</p>	The household survey is the main tool for assessing household life of the sample students.	Annually	External Evaluator	New at midline.
<p>Intermediate outcome 5: economic empowerment</p>	Improved attitudes and perceptions of communities and government officials around girls access and inclusive education					
<p>Community attitudes indicator 1: % of caregivers who report positive perceptions around girls and children with disabilities accessing education</p>	Household	<p>Quant: Household survey</p> <p>Qual: HH FGDs, VSLA FGD</p>	The household survey is the main tool for assessing household life of the sample students. Focus groups facilitate discussion on perceptions.	Annually	External Evaluator	New at midline.

<p>Community attitudes indicator 2: # of government officials (MBSSE, MSWGCA) at district level who are aware of inclusive education teaching practices and report positive attitudes towards it.</p>	<p>Government</p>	<p>Not used at midline.</p>	<p>Not used at midline.</p>	<p>Once - endline only.</p>	<p>External Evaluator</p>	<p>Not used at midline.</p>
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Evaluation methodology

The evaluation of Plan International UK's GATE GEC project adopts a quasi-experimental approach at the junior secondary school (JSS) level. Data was collected from 'intervention' and 'control' groups in order to identify the average intervention effect with a difference-in-difference (DiD) estimation. The two groups of schools are similar in terms of demographics and student characteristics that are key to the project. The DiD estimation relies on the assumption that both groups would have followed a common trend in the absence of any intervention.

Beneficiary primary schools are also included in the evaluation. A quasi-experimental approach is used for DiD analysis using a counterfactual cohort.

Cohorts

There are four main cohorts for the midline evaluation (presented in Table 103, below). Three cohorts are included to assess both learning and transition outcomes, and one cohort is included for transition outcomes only. The composition of the cohorts is different to baseline. The updated approach is explained in further detail in the 'change from baseline' column, and in more detail in the next section.

Table 103: Midline evaluation cohorts

Cohort	Learning, transition or both?	Detail	Change from baseline
Primary school girls (PS)	Both - learning and transition	<p>This cohort includes students who were in primary school at baseline in grades P2-P6 and at midline are expected to be in grades P4-JSS2.</p> <p>This cohort includes children with disabilities and children without disabilities.</p> <p>This cohort consists exclusively of project beneficiaries and does not have a control group.</p>	At baseline, this cohort included students who were in P1. The sample was small at only 12 students were included, and this group so the students are expected to be in grades P4-JSS2.
Primary school boys (PS)	Both - learning and transition	This cohort includes students who were in primary school at baseline in grades P2-P6 and at midline are expected to be in grades P4-JSS2.	At baseline, this cohort included students who were in P1. The sample was small at only 12 students were included, and this group so the students are expected to be in grades P4-JSS2.

		<p>This cohort includes children with disabilities and children without disabilities.</p> <p>This cohort consists exclusively of project beneficiaries and does not have a control group.</p>	
<p>Junior Secondary School (JSS) in-school</p>	<p>Both - learning and transition</p>	<p>This cohort includes students who were in grades JSS1 and JSS2 at baseline and at midline are expected to be in grades JSS3 and awaiting results to enter SSS1/be enrolled in SSS1. Students that have not transitioned from JSS1 and JSS2 since baseline are also included for DiD calculations.</p> <p>This cohort also includes students added at midline ('top-up') in JSS1 and JSS2 to ensure a large enough sample with exposure to the intervention for endline.</p> <p>This cohort includes children with and without disabilities. The cohort consists exclusively of girls.</p> <p>This cohort has an intervention group and a control group and will be used for difference-in-difference calculations and the outcomes spreadsheet.</p>	<p>At midline, boys have been excluded from the JSS sample (the exception is boys who were in primary school at baseline and are now in JSS).</p> <p>This group also includes CWD at midline as the sample size is too small to analyse as a separate group. Instead, CWD have been included in sub-group analysis.</p> <p>Students who were in JSS3 at baseline have not been tracked at midline.</p>
<p>Out of school children (OOSC)</p>	<p>Transition only</p>	<p>This cohort consists of students who have dropped out of school since baseline.</p> <p>This cohort includes children with disabilities, children without disabilities, and both girls and boys (at the primary level).</p>	<p>At midline, boys who were in JSS at baseline are excluded from the sample.</p>

Within these cohorts there is also a 'panel' approach where applicable. This is to disaggregate analysis by students tracked from baseline (and replacements at midline) to facilitate a cohort approach where appropriate, such as in difference-in-difference analysis in learning outcomes.

Panel 1 consists of JSS1 and JSS2 students tracked from baseline to midline regardless of midline grade, and replacement JSS3 students (former JSS3/JSS3 awaiting results were not replaced at midline). This means that students that were in JSS1 or JSS2 at baseline and are in either of those grades at midline have been included in Panel 1 and accounted for in the difference-in-difference analysis. Panel 2 consists of the ‘top-up’ students, that is the students added at midline in JSS1 and JSS2 to ensure a sufficient sample size from midline to endline.

Panel membership can be deduced with student codes and midline grade. Panel 1 consists of:

- all codes that begin with 0 (JSS and primary intervention students from baseline)
- all codes that are Cxxx-0xx (JSS control students from baseline)
- codes that are Cxxx-1xx and in JSS3 at midline (JSS control replacement students at midline)
- codes that begin with M and are in JSS3 at midline (JSS intervention replacement students at midline)

Panel 2 consists of:

- codes that begin with M and are in JSS1 or JSS2 at midline (JSS intervention top-up students at midline)
- codes that are Cxxx-1xx and in JSS1 or JSS2 at midline (JSS control top-up students at midline)

The role of the quantitative data is to track key outcomes across a representative sample of girls in intervention and control schools and their households, in order to measure progress against project output and outcome indicators. The role of the qualitative data is to provide a deeper understanding of the changes in outcomes in the past year and the drivers and barriers to change. This ensures it is possible to understand why and how change has or has not taken place, and to assess how far the change can be attributed to the project. Qualitative data collection was carried out with a small sample of beneficiaries, and is therefore not representative.

Qualitative analysis

A systematic approach is used for the qualitative data analysis, using a coding process to link back to the key output and outcome areas. Qualitative transcripts are coded in Dedoose using thematic codes identified in the data. The findings are triangulated with quantitative data throughout the report to illustrate key similarities and differences across the different datasets, and add context and explanation to key outcomes.

The assumptions underlying the relationship between intermediate outcomes and outcomes have been evaluated by disaggregating learning and transition data based on the intermediate outcomes, and regression analysis has been conducted where applicable.

GESI minimum standards set out by the FM were incorporated in the evaluation design, starting with enumerator training. Enumerators were trained in safeguarding of children and adults-at-risk by Plan International Sierra Leone. The training discussed potential risks based on the gender and other characteristics of the sample. Analysis of the project context at midline includes disaggregation by gender, disability, marital and parental status. The outcome analysis is also disaggregated by these characteristics as data on these statuses is collected at each evaluation point through both the quantitative and qualitative data collection tools. The logframe includes reference to girls, boys and disability status.

Midline sampling strategy

Pre-data collection

Quantitative sampling strategy

Primary

The baseline research was carried out with a sample of 42 primary schools. There was no control group at the primary level. In each school approximately 6 students were administered the learning assessments and student surveys. After data cleaning, the final dataset consisted of 253 primary school students.⁶³

The students from the baseline were tracked at the midline, with the exception of students from P1 at baseline who were excluded from the midline sample as there were only 12 students. The students who were in P5 and P6 at baseline and were expected to be in JSS1 and JSS2 at midline were tracked to their households and administered the student survey and learning assessment at that level. No primary school students were added at midline. The target sample for the primary level at midline is 241 students (253 minus the 12 P1 baseline students). The actual sample size reached is 184.

Table 104: Planned primary cohort breakdown at baseline and midline

Grade at evaluation point	Baseline		Midline	
	Learning	Transition	Learning	Transition
P2	41	41	-	-
P3	46	46	-	-
P4	61	61	41	41
P5	44	44	46	46
P6	49	49	61	61
JSS1	-	-	44	44
JSS2	-	-	49	49
Learning	241		241	
Transition	241		241	

JSS

The baseline research was carried out with a sample of 62 JSS intervention schools and 52 JSS control schools, providing a total of 114 JSS schools. In each school approximately 10 students were

⁶³ Baseline evaluation, page 40

administered the learning assessments and student surveys. After data cleaning, the final dataset consisted of 1,131 JSS entries.⁶⁴

The baseline sample was heavily weighted towards the later grades at baseline (JSS2 and JSS3). The midline data collection was conducted two years after the baseline. Based on these factors, two updates were made to the baseline methodology. Firstly, it was decided to remove the baseline JSS3 students from the midline sample. These students would now be in SSS2 at midline and would have left the GATE GEC intervention schools over a year ago. It therefore does not make sense to include them in an assessment of the project's impact. Secondly, students were added at midline in JSS1 and JSS2 in both intervention and control schools (also known as the 'top-up' sample). These students will be tracked from midline to endline and will ensure the learning sample is sufficiently large at endline to determine significance.

Boys were removed from the JSS quantitative sample, but were maintained in the qualitative sample through focus group discussions.

The target sample for the JSS level at midline is 1,266 students (763 tracked from baseline in Panel 1 and 503 'top-up' students in Panel 2 added). The full sample breakdown by grade and Panel can be found in the Inception Report in Annex 11. The actual sample size for learning outcomes is 997 students, consisting of 304 students tracked from baseline, 95 replacement students added, and 598 top-up students. The target for top-up students was exceeded. The actual JSS sample size including out-of-school children is 1,108.

At midline the target sample size achieves 88 per cent power, based on:

- A continuous, one-sided test
- A minimal detectable effect of 0.25 standard deviations
- Five per cent significance
- An intervention sample size of 537
- A control sample size of 460
- An intervention cluster size of 62 and control cluster size of 40
- Intra-cluster correlation of 0.1 for both clusters⁶⁵

At midline, using the 'panel' approach and the final sample size reached, Panel 1 achieves 68 per cent power, based on:

- A continuous, one-sided test
- A minimal detectable effect of 0.25 standard deviations
- Five per cent significance
- An intervention sample size of 229
- A control sample size of 170
- An intervention cluster size of 62 and control cluster size of 40

⁶⁴ Baseline evaluation, page 40

⁶⁵ These figures were calculated using the e-evaluate app. At endline, assuming attrition, it should still be possible to achieve 84 percent power, using a continuous, one-sided test, assuming an intervention sample size of 517, a control sample size of 443, a cluster size of 62 for intervention and 40 for control. See 'challenges in midline data collection and limitations of the evaluation design' for more details on this calculation.

- Intra-cluster correlation of 0.1 for both clusters⁶⁶

Qualitative sampling strategy

There is an updated qualitative sampling strategy for midline. This includes an increase in FGDs (21 at baseline, 29 at midline) and KIIs (16 at baseline, 27 at midline) and a reduction in classroom observations (153 at baseline, 40 at midline). In addition, study group observations have been added at midline. Focus group discussions with Programme Volunteers (PVs), Student Teachers (STs) and Village Loans and Savings Associations (VSLAs) have been added at midline. The increase in KIIs is due to adding interviews with project staff, PVs and STs. The sample size for classroom observations was selected by a focus on intervention schools rather than comparison to control schools at midline, and represents nearly 40 per cent of the intervention school sample. Only classes taught by PVs were included in the sample.

The qualitative data collection was distributed across districts and school levels. The emphasis is on intervention schools rather than control schools. The full distribution plan, including districts, school type, grades (where applicable) intervention type, and responsibility (External Evaluator or Dalan) is in Annex 20.

Table 105: Qualitative data collection at midline

Qualitative data collection	Quantity
FGDs	29
Girls (JSS)	8
Boys (JSS)	2
Girls (primary)*	2
Boys (primary)*	1
Intervention school teachers	4
Control school teachers	1
PVs	3
STs	3
Household members	3
VSLA	2
KIIs	27

⁶⁶ These figures were calculated using the e-evaluate app.

Head teachers	3
Community Based Rehab Volunteer	1
Student Teacher	5
Programme Volunteer teacher	6
Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) representative	1
District Education Officers	2
Humanity and Inclusion representative (SL based)	1
Action Aid representative (SL based)	1
Open University representative (UK based)	1
FAWE representative (SL based)	1
Plan International in-country Hub Senior M&E Manager (SL based)	1
Plan International UK Programme Manager (UK based)	1
Plan SL Hub Team Leader (SL based)	1
Plan Education Technical Specialist (UK based)	1
Plan Child Protection and Accountability Adviser (SL based)	1
Classroom observation	40
Study group observations	8

*Students were asked individually if they self-identified as having a disability

Data collection tools

Quantitative

At baseline two versions of each learning assessment were piloted and calibrated. The second version was used for the midline. The distribution of EGRA and EGMA subtasks was unchanged for midline; there are four EGRA subtasks and seven EGMA subtasks. Subtasks with ceiling effects at baseline in SeGRA and SeGMA have been removed at midline for a total of five SeGRA subtasks and four SeGMA subtasks. The list of subtasks is in Table 106 and Table 107.

Table 106: Learning assessment subtasks included at midline (literacy)

Subtask	Details	Included in EGRA	Included in SeGRA
Letter Sound Identification	Assesses pupil's knowledge of the relationship between letter signs and their sounds.	Yes	No
Familiar Word Recognition	Assesses pupils' sight word reading vocabulary using 40 common, high-frequency words from English language reading and writing.	Yes	No
Invented Word Recognition	Assesses ability to decode words fluently and efficiently.	Yes	Yes
Words per minute ⁶⁷	Assesses oral reading fluency through reading of a short passage.	No	Yes
Assessment of Reading Comprehension	Assesses ability to read sentences (words per minute) and understand what was read.	Yes	Yes
Advanced Reading Comprehension 1	Assesses ability to read sentences (words per minute) and understand what was read.	No	Yes
Advanced Reading Comprehension 2	Assesses ability to read sentences (words per minute) and understand what was read.	No	Yes

Table 107: Learning assessment subtasks included at midline (numeracy)

Subtask	Details	Included in EGMA	Included in SeGMA
Number identification	Assesses ability to identify numbers presented in a random order and with increasing difficulty.	Yes	No

⁶⁷ The words per minute (WPM) subtask is the score from the first of three WPM sections in the SeGRA learning assessment. This is the easiest of the WPM sections as the reading passages increased in difficulty as the test progressed. The selection of only WPM section as a subtask was included at the guidance of the FM to align with other GEC projects. The other two WPM section results are discussed in Chapter 3 but not included in the final SeGRA score.

Quantity discrimination	Assesses the ability to discriminate between two numbers.	Yes	No
Missing numbers	Assesses identification of number patterns and sequences.	Yes	No
Addition and subtraction - level 1	Assesses ability to calculate addition and subtraction problems with single digit numbers.	Yes	No
Addition and subtraction word problems	Assesses application of addition and subtraction skills using problems in a story format.	Yes	No
Addition and subtraction - level 2	Assesses ability to calculate addition and subtraction problems with double digit numbers.	Yes	Yes
Basic multiplication and division	Assesses ability to do basic multiplication and division with mostly single digit problems.	Yes	No
Advanced multiplication and division word problems	Assesses application of multiplication and division skills using problems in a story format.	No	Yes
Proportions (fractions/percentages)	Assesses application of percentage and fraction knowledge using a worksheet and word problems.	No	Yes
Space and shape (geometry)	Assesses knowledge of names of shapes and types of triangles.	No	Yes

The method of administration of learning assessments was changed at midline. The learning assessments were administered orally, and marked by enumerators using the software Tangerine.⁶⁸ Paper worksheets were used for the SeGRA and SeGMA subtasks that required the student to write or draw, and the answers were marked on the spot by enumerators and the results recorded directly in Tangerine. Laminated stimuli were used for the majority of subtasks.

The classroom observation tool was updated at midline to provide more nuanced data and qualitative data as well as quantitative. To achieve this, comment sections for each question were added, and scale responses where applicable to replace the yes/no rating from baseline. Questions with parameters which cannot be observed in a classroom setting without further information were removed from the template. This included questions such as 'the teacher uses different teaching methods to meet different needs of

⁶⁸ Tangerine was created by RTI for use with EGRA/EGMA learning assessments. More information can be found here: <http://www.tangerinecentral.org/>

children with disabilities (e.g. large print for visual disabilities, or special attention to children with special needs)'.

The school data sheet was updated to include a short head teacher survey. This was to collect information on school management groups and inclusive education to be able to respond to the updated midline logframe indicators.

The student and household surveys were updated to align with the FM's midline templates. In addition, questions on attendance were added to the student survey to respond to Intermediate Outcome 1. Questions on VSLA membership and support were added to the household survey to respond to Intermediate Outcome 4.

All of the quantitative tools except for the learning assessments were conducted on phones using Kobo Collect. Questions and response options (where applicable) were read aloud to respondents, and answers given were inputted into Kobo by enumerators.

No new quantitative tools were introduced at midline.

Qualitative

The qualitative tools were all updated from baseline to respond to the updated logframe indicators and focus on change since baseline. They were updated to probe the quantitative data further to facilitate explanation of quantitative trends, and to triangulate the data.

Study group observations were added at midline. The tool for this was based on the project monitoring tool for study group observations.

Qualitative data was collected by hand and typed up on the same day on laptops. It was then submitted via Kobo webforms.

Enumerator recruitment and training

Quantitative data collectors

Twenty-four enumerators and 12 supervisors were recruited by Dalan Consult, the local data collection company hired by Jigsaw in Freetown. Dalan was the data collection company for the baseline and came recommended by Plan. All the enumerators spoke multiple local languages and had experience in administering learning assessments and surveys. Three enumerators had worked on the GATE GEC baseline.

A four-day training was conducted jointly by Jigsaw and Plan to familiarise the enumerators with the project, data collection tools and best practice in the field. Enumerators were encouraged to offer feedback on each survey question regarding the response options and language of the question, based on their previous experience and local knowledge. Minor changes were subsequently made to adjust to the local context and add or remove response options (e.g. reasons for school absence were updated based on enumerator feedback). Changes were limited when questions came from the FM templates.

Enumerators had time to practice the surveys and learning assessments. They also completed an inter-rater reliability test, to check the consistency and accuracy of responses for the learning assessment. This was done by running a role play whereby the Jigsaw facilitators completed an EGRA/EGMA test in front of the group while all enumerators followed along as if they were administering the test themselves. The responses of the Jigsaw pair was the 'gold standard' against which accuracy was tested. Responses of the other enumerators were then checked against the 'gold standard' to identify incorrect data input and

misinterpretation. In the IRR not all enumerators reached the desired thresholds of accuracy and reliability. Extra steps were taken to mitigate the potential impact of this:

- The training was adapted to focus on the functionality of Tangerine.
- There was an additional 2-hour session with the lowest scorers to answer questions and concretise the rules and guidance.
- An additional 3/4 day of training was held with the entire team to disseminate this guidance, answer questions, and do more practice.
- Enumerators who continued to have consistent issues with reliable marking on Tangerine (<75% on IRR testing) were shifted to only carry out surveys.
- One enumerator was left off the team.

With these adjustments it was expected that there would not be further implications for the reliability and quality of the data.

In addition to the group enumerator training, there was a separate training session for the 12 supervisors. The supervisor training covered the additional responsibilities such as tracking the data collected to report back, and the school data sheet tool which was completed only by supervisors.

A one-day pre-test study was conducted in four non-sample intervention schools (two primary, two secondary) in Masiaka, Port Loko to test the learning assessments and student survey. Afterwards, a debrief was held to discuss what went well and the challenges encountered. Staff members from Plan attended the pre-test and debrief to provide their feedback as well.

GATE GEC staff provided introductions to the project activities on the first day of training. In addition, Plan Sierra Leone staff ran a comprehensive child safeguarding session. Enumerators were then asked to read and sign the Plan code of conduct. Humanity and Inclusion Sierra Leone led a session on inclusive data collection. Both the quantitative and qualitative data collectors were present for the child protection and inclusive data collection sessions.

Qualitative specialists

Four qualitative specialists were recruited by Dalan, three females and one male. They had all previously worked with Dalan. They received one and a half days of training, half a day of child protection and inclusive data collection from project staff, and one day of training in qualitative data collection best practice and the data collection tools by the Jigsaw facilitators. The qualitative specialists were not involved in the pre-test.

Three of the qualitative specialists work or are trained in education (BSc Education, Higher Teacher Certificate in Secondary Education, university lecturer). They have years of experience working on qualitative and quantitative research projects in Sierra Leone.

Qualitative specialists were encouraged to offer feedback on each qualitative tool regarding the appropriateness of the language/wording of questions and suitability of activities, based on their previous experience and local knowledge.

The training schedule is in Annex 21.

During data collection

Data collection started on 21 October 2019 and finished on 13 November 2019. The original completion date was 08 November 2019, but due to a two day mid-term break on 01 and 04 November and a public

holiday on 11 November, the data collection was delayed by three days. The qualitative and quantitative data collection was simultaneous.

Data collection protocols

Participant safeguarding

Safeguarding of research participants was central to the data collection logistics. An interactive child safeguarding session was conducted for enumerators by the Plan SL Child Protection and Accountability Adviser during the training period, and training on best practice for inclusive data collection was delivered by a representative from Humanity and Inclusion. Information on safeguarding best practice was also included in the enumerator guidance document distributed to enumerators prior to the start of data collection. Protocols for reporting child safeguarding incidents were explained by the Plan SL Plan Child Protection and Accountability Adviser, and contact details for the appropriate focal points were included in the enumerator guidance.

Informed consent protocols ensured that participants were made aware of the limits to confidentiality in the case of suspected risk of harm to the research participant or someone they know. For example, the script used for the learning assessments is as follows:

Good morning. My name is _____. Let me tell you why I am here today.

I work with Plan International and we are trying to understand how children learn to read and write, and do mathematics. We would also like to ask you some questions about you, your school and how you feel about education. What we talk about today will be used in a research report, but we will not mention you by name or share your personal details with anybody outside of our team.

You were picked by chance, like in a raffle or lottery. We would like your help in this. But you do not have to take part if you do not want to.

Firstly, we are going to play some games. I am going to ask you to do some fun exercises. Afterwards, we will talk about your life at school and home. We'll be together for about 45 minutes today.

This will NOT affect your grade at school and what you tell me will not be shared with your teachers or family. However, if I have reason to believe that you or someone else might be in danger, I will have to tell someone.

Once again, you do not have to take part if you do not wish to. Once we begin, if you would rather not answer a question, that's all right. You can also choose not to take part at any time after we have started.

Do you have any questions? Do you want to take part?

Enumerators wore identification at all times which included their name, photo, the project name, and the Dalan logo. Each team carried a letter from Plan that explained the purpose of the research. Supervisors were expected to know where their team members were at any given time and, in schools, preferably have all team members in their line of sight. Enumerators were instructed to conduct surveys and learning assessments in open locations within view of others.

During data collection, Jigsaw researchers observed evidence/were informed of practices of corporal punishment in two schools. These issues were reported by one of the Jigsaw researchers in-person to the Plan SL Plan Child Protection and Accountability Adviser at the Plan office in Sierra Leone. No other child protection issues were detected during the data cleaning process.

Enumerator safeguarding

To ensure the safety of enumerators during data collection, each enumerator had resources to buy mobile phone credit to be able to call or text their team members, Dalan or Jigsaw. The sample schools

were in safe areas and enumerators were encouraged to finish data collection during daylight hours (though this was not always possible). Enumerators travelled with a Dalan vehicle and driver to a central location in the district, and they took motorcycle taxis to reach households and for day-to-day travel.

Three WhatsApp groups were created to facilitate communication. One included the quantitative data collectors and the supervisors, another included only the supervisors, and one included qualitative specialists. Each group included Dalan and Jigsaw staff members to answer questions and troubleshoot during data collection.

Cohort tracking

Tracking sheets were created to facilitate tracking from baseline to midline. These included: school location information, student ID codes, student names, expected grade at midline, age at midline, disability status, caregiver name and location details. This was sufficient to track the girls at midline as the majority were in the same school. Where the girls were not in the same school as baseline or were former JSS3/JSS3 awaiting exam results, they were tracked at the household

Students who were absent from school on the day of the data collection but were still enrolled in that school were tracked at the household level and administered a learning assessment and student survey if they were available and able to do so. Students who were in primary school at baseline but at midline are in JSS were also tracked at the household level.

Students who were in JSS1 at baseline and expected to be in JSS3 at midline were replaced if they: had dropped out of school; had moved school; could not be located. In total, 95 JSS3 students were replaced.

Sampling

Sampling for the replacement students was done by choosing a student of the same age from the same class as the girls to be replaced. This is because there can be a wide variation in ages in a grade and this ensured comparability to the girl to be replaced.

Sampling for the top-up sample was done using the Nth method i.e. all girls in a class were counted, and this number was divided by the sample size to find the interval (k). Every Nth girl (where N=a randomly chosen number between 1 and k) was then selected to take part. If there were two classes in a grade, an equal number of students were sampled from both classes using this same method. The total number of top-up students at midline is 598.

Classes for the classroom observation were selected based on observing classes led by PV teachers only, and by prioritising maths and English lessons. In other words, if one PV was teaching a maths lesson, and another was teaching religious and moral education, the enumerator would choose to observe the maths lesson. However, if two PVs were teaching maths or English lessons at the same time, the enumerator would choose which lesson to observe at random. If maths and English lessons were not taught by the PVs then the enumerator selected any other subject taught by a PV.

Sampling for the qualitative data collection is outlined in Table 108.

Table 108: Sampling strategy for qualitative data collection

Sampling strategy	Strategy used for
Students not included in the quantitative sample. Selected by the qualitative specialist using the Nth method.	Student FGD

At the primary level and in model schools it was expected that some students may identify as having a disability. However, this was not included in the sampling criteria.	
Selected by school based on availability.	Household member FGD
Non-PV and ST teachers based on availability and qualitative specialist selection.	Teacher FGD
Selected by qualitative specialists where there were more than 6 in a school. Where there were 6 or less, all were asked to participate.	PV FGD, ST FGD
Selected by the qualitative specialists based on availability.	PV KII, ST KII
Selected by the External Evaluator to cover different districts in different regions.	VSLA FGD, DEO KII, head teacher KII
Selected by the External Evaluator.	CBRV KII
Selected by the External Evaluator to cover all districts and a mixture of primary and JSS.	Study group observations

Coding

The replacement and top-up students were assigned a unique ID from the tracking list. Student codes from control schools follow the same format as baseline, but added student codes for intervention JSS schools begin with 'M' followed by a four digit number. This is because sampling was not limited to students with a GATE GEC ID card i.e. those students previously counted as the only beneficiaries by the project, but rather any female student in a GATE GEC school to encompass the updated project definition of a beneficiary.

Table 109: Tool details

Tool (used for which outcome and IO indicator)	Beneficiary group	Sample size agreed in MEL framework for intervention and (control group)	Actual sample size intervention and (control group)	Remarks:
				1) Attrition rate from baseline to midline 2) Re-contacted sample vs replaced sample 3) Major changes to tools or differences between anticipated and actual sample sizes

EGRA and EGMA (learning outcome)	In school students (grades P4-P6)	In school 241 (N/A) School total 42	In school 184 (N/A) School total 42	23% attrition 0 replaced
SeGRA and SeGMA (learning outcome)	In school students (grades JSS1- JSS3, and JSS3 awaiting results)	In school 682 (584) School total 62 (52)	In school 537 (460) ⁶⁹ School total 62 (40)	22% attrition on learning sample (997 instead of 1,266). 61% attrition of students tracked from baseline to midline (304 instead of 763). 693 new students added at midline (95 replacement and 598 top-up).
Household Survey (transition outcome, attendance IO, inclusive education IO, self-esteem IO, economic empowerment IO, community attitudes IO, sustainability outcome)	In school students (grades P4- JSS3 awaiting results) Out of school children (would be in grades P4-JSS3 awaiting results if in school)	In school 682 (584) No target for out of school students.	In school 523 (455) Out of school 35 (9)	18% intervention attrition (21% control attrition) calculated on whole sample.
Student Survey (learning outcome, attendance IO, inclusive education IO, self-esteem IO, community attitudes IO, sustainability outcome)	In school students (grades P4- JSS3 awaiting results)	In school 682 (584)	In school 538 (459)	55% attrition intervention (50% attrition control) calculated on sample tracked.

⁶⁹ Calculated from the SeGRA SeGMA analysis Excel workbook.

Post data collection

Quality assurance

It was the responsibility of the team leader in each group to ensure that their team members uploaded data from Tangerine and Kobo at the end of every day. For SeGRA/SeGMA, they were expected to check that the students had accurately completed the student ID information at the top of the worksheets.

Data checks during the collection period were carried out by the Jigsaw team. Datasets were downloaded from Tangerine and Kobo and checked for completeness and consistency, such as ensuring all entries had an ID code and that expected questions were answered. Repeated errors were noted and Dalan was informed of the errors and the responsible enumerator, and/or Jigsaw sent a message on the WhatsApp group to inform all enumerators of the correct procedure. These checks were daily at the beginning of the data collection and then every two to three days thereafter when the mistakes were fixed.

Data cleaning

At the end of the data collection period, the data was cleaned and validated by:

- Ensuring consistency in the date of data collection, school name, district.
- Clarifying duplicates in the student ID numbers.
- A debrief meeting with Dalan to sense-check trends and clarify any confusion in the transcripts eg. meaning of certain words.
- Checking one set of the SeGRA/SeGMA worksheets per enumerator alongside the results in Tangerine as a spot check.

Respondents that did not consent to the survey were counted then removed from the dataset. In total four entries were deleted due to a lack of consent (two students and two households).

After data merging there were: 1,046 complete entries; seven entries with learning assessments but no household survey nor student survey; eight entries with a student survey but no household survey nor learning assessment; 13 entries with only a household survey and learning assessment; 88 entries with a student survey and learning assessment; and 13 entries with a student survey and household survey.

Data storage

Data in the field was stored by team leaders, including SeGRA/SeGMA worksheets, student names and household information. Tangerine does not allow enumerators to see completed learning assessments. Worksheets were kept in sealed envelopes until they could be delivered to Dalan in Freetown. Worksheets were anonymised and identifiable by student code, not name. The student household details were safely discarded at the end of each day. Kobo was set to automatically delete surveys after they had been successfully uploaded to the server.

All phones and tablets were handed in at the Dalan office in Freetown at the end of the data collection period, and were double-checked by Dalan's team leader to ensure that all devices were clean and that there were no remaining surveys that had not yet been uploaded. All laptops used by Dalan are password-protected. Files from laptops are transferred to removable drives and deleted from the internal drive. External drives are stored securely. Any paper documents held by Dalan are safely stored in a secure room for three years (in accordance with Dalan's data protection policy), after which time they are destroyed.

During the data analysis phase, data was stored on Excel in Google Drive. Access was limited to staff members of Jigsaw Consult. Google drive is encrypted. Information pertaining to the delivery of a contract is stored for as long as the contract is alive. It is then deleted. All raw data is anonymised and anonymity is ensured in all reporting.

Data analysis

Following data cleaning, the quantitative data was analysed using Microsoft Excel and R to perform demographic analysis of the sample and identify findings against logframe output and outcome indicators. Difference-in-difference regression analysis controlled for age, grade and demographic factors.

Qualitative data coding and analysis was performed using Dedoose, using both deductive and inductive approaches. Responses were grouped by outputs, outcomes and intermediate outcomes and the relevant descriptors, to identify patterns and key information in order to triangulate and supplement quantitative findings. When used, researcher comments and observations on the transcripts were also read and relevant insights input in the findings where applicable.

Analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data took place separately, and the results of the qualitative data were used to explore the trends and patterns found in the quantitative data.

Note that percentage calculations in tables may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.

All analysis was undertaken and verified by the Jigsaw evaluation team.

Table 110 details the disaggregations that were used for the quantitative analysis. Each of these categories was also disaggregated by JSS Intervention, JSS Control, PS Girls and PS Boys. These disaggregations are based on the disaggregations required for the logframe reporting, and the key groups that the project is addressing. For the logframe, disaggregation for most of the indicators is required by: school level, gender, age, disability, district. At midline it was not possible to disaggregate by type of disability due to small sample size numbers for children with disabilities (11 at JSS, 28 at primary level). These disaggregations were calculated for all quantitative outcomes. However, where there was nothing notable that came from a particular disaggregation, the results have not been reported along these lines.

Table 110: Disaggregation categories for analysis

Heading	Who is included in the disaggregation
All	CWD, children without disabilities, girls and boys (for primary).
DISABILITY	
CWD (all)	Only children with disabilities.
Serious illness	Those who answered 'yes'
AGE (baseline)	
0-11	Children with baseline age between 0 and 11.
12+	Children with baseline age 12 and older.
DISTRICT OF SCHOOL	

Kailahun	Students from all schools in this district.
Kenema	Students from all schools in this district.
Kono	Students from all schools in this district.
Moyamba	Students from all schools in this district.
Port Loko	Students from all schools in this district.
Karene	Students from all schools in this district.
MARRIAGE/PARENTAL STATUS	
Married	Everyone who is married.
Mother	Mother/pregnant – female only.
Father	Students who are fathers – male only.

Cohort tracking for endline

Multiple contact and location details were collected from the households added at midline, including: contact numbers for the head of household, caregiver and other household members; the names of neighbours; the location, including GPS details. This information will be provided to the enumerator teams and they will be encouraged to call households in advance to confirm the location and availability of the household members.

Challenges in midline data collection and limitations of the evaluation design

All possible steps were taken to ensure that the evaluation was as rigorous as possible. However, as with any real-world evaluation of social phenomena, there are a number of limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results of the midline evaluation.

First, it is important to note that the baseline evaluation was conducted by a different set of External Evaluation consultants to the midline. Approaches at midline were informed by and consistent where possible with the baseline methodology (as per the baseline report) in order to allow for comparison. However, it is not possible for the midline consultants to comment on or give assurances regarding the validity and reliability of the baseline data. Any comparison to baseline should therefore be read with this caveat in mind.

Due to inadequate sample sizes from the baseline, 598 new, or ‘top-up’, students were added at midline from JSS1 and JSS2. The introduction of a significant number of new students at midline could affect the reliability of comparisons to baseline. The effect of this on the comparability between baseline and endline has been mitigated by excluding the top-up students from the difference-in-difference learning outcome analysis at midline. Furthermore, a comparison of the panel 1 student characteristics for JSS intervention students to the whole sample of JSS intervention students shows little variation between the samples, except in the proportion of mothers, at 10 per cent for panel 1 compared to 5 per cent overall. This suggests that the students that have been added share the same characteristics as the sample from baseline.

The cohort analysis for learning outcomes at the JSS level was done using both the girls tracked to midline and the girls replaced at midline, comparing this group to the baseline sample. All necessary steps were taken to replace girls with girls with similar characteristics, as noted above, so that they were suitable to include in the cohort analysis. However, the introduction of 95 non-tracked students to the cohort (panel 1) sample could potentially affect the reliability of comparisons to baseline. In addition, the power calculation for the panel 1 sample is 68 per cent, which is lower than the ideal standard for statistical power (and lower than the FM guidance minimum of 80 per cent). This should be considered when reading and interpreting the results for the panel 1 sample.

Midline attrition rates are high at the JSS level (45 per cent for Intervention and 50 per cent for control – see Table 112). Attrition can be non-random and based on certain characteristics, and therefore may affect the representativeness of the remaining cohort. Given the attrition rate, the final sample size for the learning assessments is lower than the target of 1,266, at 997. However, this target included a buffer for anticipated attrition. The minimum sample needed at endline is 634, which provides an attrition buffer to endline of 36 per cent.⁷⁰

The endline will use the entire midline cohort for difference-in-difference analysis. The power calculations for this sample result in 87 per cent power, under the assumptions:

- A continuous, one-sided test
- A minimal detectable effect of 0.25 standard deviations
- Five per cent significance
- An intervention sample size of 517 (JSS1, JSS2 and JSS3 students at midline)
- A control sample size of 443 (JSS1, JSS2 and JSS3 students at midline)
- An intervention cluster size of 62 and control cluster size of 40
- Intra-cluster correlation of 0.1 for both clusters

This scenario assumes no attrition, which is unlikely. Assuming 30 per cent attrition occurs in both intervention and control samples between midline and endline, the power achieved will be 82 per cent, based on an intervention sample size of 362, a control sample size of 310, and the remaining assumptions the same as listed above. The high attrition rate at midline is not likely to limit the rigour of the endline evaluation.

The main reason for the attrition rate is that the former JSS3 students had not transitioned to Senior Secondary School at the time of midline data collection, but were awaiting their JSS3 exam results. During this period many of them were on vacation in other parts of the country and were therefore not contactable. Households were still included where possible to provide transition data for these students.

The baseline evaluation did not collect data on control schools' exposure to other, non-GATE GEC projects, and this data was not collected at midline. Exposure of control schools to other project interventions could have an impact on logframe indicator outcomes, thus skewing the data for the control group and reducing the reliability of comparisons between control and intervention samples. Although data collection did not specifically cover exposure to other projects, some of the data collected points to the possible presence of other projects in control schools. In particular, 26 per cent of JSS control students reported that they were members of study groups, which is potentially (though not necessarily) evidence of other projects' presence.

⁷⁰ The minimum sample size is calculated in the MEL Framework. Version 3 from November 2017 was used for the midline.

There were also a number of fieldwork challenges, outlined in the table below, that have potential implications for the evaluation:

Table 111: Fieldwork challenges

Challenge	Summary	Mitigation strategy	Implications for evaluation	Recommendations for endline
Unexpected exam period	Exams were taking place at the same time as data collection. This was not known to the EE before.	Enumerators conducted learning assessments and surveys around the exam schedule.	The learning assessment results may be lower than anticipated due to the impact of fatigue on the students. It is recommended that the endline evaluation be timed to avoid the exam season.	Data collection should be timed to avoid the midterm break and midterm exams.
Former JSS3 students on vacation	The former JSS3 students were awaiting results to see if they could progress to SS1. Many were on vacation and not available at the household level.	Household surveys were conducted where possible but students were unreachable.	The sample of former JSS3 students is lower than expected.	Data collection should be timed to take place after the JSS3 results have been published, to ensure that the students are in the community and not on holidays in another part of the country.

Remote locations of households	Some households were inaccessible due to their distant and remote locations.	Inaccessible households were called to conduct the household survey on the phone, though this was not always possible due to poor connectivity and high costs.	The total number of households surveyed is lower than expected.	Facilitate teams to use GPS information to locate households. Supervisors should be responsible for GPS information. Additional days should be added to the data collection schedule to allow for household tracking, including households further afield eg two days per school rather than one.
Unexpected school closures	Schools had a mid-term break for two days during data collection, and a public holiday.	School data collection was pushed back, and the days were used to visit households and do other pending data collection eg with former JSS3 students.	None for the evaluation results. To be considered when planning the endline.	Data collection should be timed to avoid the midterm break and midterm exams.
Schools were not informed of the data collection	Some schools, mostly control schools, were not informed of the data collection prior to it happening. No schools refused entry to the teams, but the process was delayed. School phone numbers were not available for teams to call ahead to re-confirm.	Enumerators worked with Dalan and project staff where contactable to assist entry. School phone numbers were collected on the School Data Sheet and are therefore available for endline.	None.	Check the list of control schools at the entry meeting with the project staff to ensure they exist, the location information is correct, and that they have been contacted. Centralise calls to control schools ie. from Plan Freetown office, to facilitate tracking and confirmation that the information has been relayed.

<p>Student codes could not be matched</p>	<p>The baseline data presents different codes for students across the different datasets. The majority were reconciled, but some were lost to the sample during the reconciliation process.</p>	<p>All of the students that were able to be confirmed through the baseline data were confirmed. The top-up and replacement students have a different code system to the baseline students (more details in Annex 3 of the report).</p>	<p>Sample tracked from baseline is smaller than expected.</p>	<p>Use the same codes that were used at midline. Create tracking sheets with codes, names, expected grade, disability information and household information.</p>
<p>Information not available for School Data Sheets</p>	<p>The introductory speech for the schools included information about the School Data Sheets. However, most schools did not have this information to hand on the day of data collection.</p>	<p>Supervisors provided details of the information that would be required when they entered a school, to provide a few hours for the information to be compiled. This information includes data on staff numbers, student numbers, attendance rates, drop-out rates etc.</p> <p>Where the information could not be obtained, the second part of the Sheet was completed (the headteacher survey) and the first section was left blank.</p>	<p>There are fewer complete School Data Sheets than expected.</p>	<p>Ensure the schools are given advance notice of the information that will be asked of them so that they can prepare/compile the necessary data.</p>

Representativeness of the learning and transition samples, attrition and matching of intervention and control groups

Table 112: Midline sample and attrition

This does not include JSS1 and JSS2 as there were only new students added in those grades at midline and therefore no attrition.

For the JSS2 baseline students (Former JSS3 at midline), the attrition figure has been separated into learning and transition due to the disparity between the two figures. The learning figure shows the level of attrition for the learning assessments, whilst the transition attrition figure shows the level of attrition for the household survey (from which the transition rates are calculated). This shows a higher rate of attrition for learning than transition, because students were often unavailable (mostly on vacation), whilst their household members were available.

The figures were calculated using the baseline grade, not the midline grade. This means that the recontacted numbers will differ from the final midline sample numbers per grade as many students are repeating grades at midline or have not progressed two years as expected.

Cohort group	Intervention			Control		
	Midline sample	Recontacted	Attrition	Midline sample	Recontacted	Attrition
Learning and transition - primary total	241	189	22%	-	-	-
Learning and transition (P2 BL)	41	28	32%	-	-	-
Learning and transition (P3 BL)	46	40	13%	-	-	-
Learning and transition (P4 BL)	61	54	11%	-	-	-
Learning and transition (P5 BL)	44	30	32%	-	-	-
Learning and transition (P6 BL)	49	37	24%	-	-	-
Learning and transition (JSS total)	446	245	45%	317	160	50%

Learning and transition (JSS3)	174	112	36%	164	92	44%
Learning (JSS2 BL, Former JSS3/JSS3 awaiting results ML)	272	78	71%	153	47	69%
Transition (JSS2 BL, Former JSS3/JSS3 awaiting results ML)	272	133	51%	153	68	56%

Table 113: JSS evaluation sample breakdown (by district - entire sample)

JSS (girls only)	Intervention (whole sample)		Control (whole sample)	
Kailahun (% sample in Kailahun)	91	15%	25	5%
Kenema (% sample in Kenema)	76	13%	67	13%
Kono (% sample in Kono)	58	10%	77	15%
Moyamba (% sample in Moyamba)	171	28%	114	23%
Port Loko (% sample in Port Loko)	172	28%	219	44%
Karene (% sample in Karene)	38	6%	0	0%
Total	606	100%	502	100%

Table 114: JSS evaluation sample breakdown (by district - students tracked from baseline to midline)

JSS (girls only)	Intervention (recontacted)		Control (recontacted)	
Kailahun (% sample in Kailahun)	31	13%	9	6%
Kenema (% sample in Kenema)	23	9%	25	16%
Kono (% sample in Kono)	16	7%	24	15%
Moyamba (% sample in Moyamba)	80	33%	34	21%

Port Loko (% sample in Port Loko)	77	31%	69	43%
Karene (% sample in Karene)	18	7%	0	0%
Total	245	100%	161	100%

Table 115: JSS evaluation sample breakdown (by district - new at midline)

JSS (girls only)	Intervention (new at midline)		Control (new at midline)	
Kailahun (% sample in Kailahun)	60	17%	16	5%
Kenema (% sample in Kenema)	53	15%	42	12%
Kono (% sample in Kono)	42	12%	53	16%
Moyamba (% sample in Moyamba)	91	25%	80	23%
Port Loko (% sample in Port Loko)	95	26%	150	44%
Karene (% sample in Karene)	20	6%	0	0%
Total	361	100%	341	100%

Table 116: primary evaluation sample breakdown (by district)

Primary	Intervention (recontacted)	
Sample breakdown (Girls)		
Kailahun (% sample in Kailahun)	12	14%
Kenema (% sample in Kenema)	13	15%
Kono (% sample in Kono)	9	10%
Moyamba (% sample in Moyamba)	17	20%
Port Loko (% sample in Port Loko)	36	41%

Karene (% sample in Karene)	0	0%
Total	87	100%
Sample breakdown (Boys)		
Kailahun (% sample in Kailahun)	14	14%
Kenema (% sample in Kenema)	9	9%
Kono (% sample in Kono)	19	19%
Moyamba (% sample in Moyamba)	17	17%
Port Loko (% sample in Port Loko)	43	42%
Karene (% sample in Karene)	0	0%
Total	102	100%

Table 117: JSS evaluation sample breakdown (by midline grade - entire sample)

JSS	Intervention		Control	
JSS1 (% in grade JSS1)	150	25%	136	27%
JSS2 (% in grade JSS2)	200	33%	168	34%
JSS3 (% in grade JSS3)	167	28%	139	28%
Former JSS3 (% in former JSS3)	59	10%	52	10%
OOS students (%)	28	5%	4	1%
Total (sample size)	604	100%	499	100 %

Table 118: Primary evaluation sample breakdown (by midline grade)

Primary		
Sample breakdown (Girls)		
Primary 2 (% in grade Primary 2)	1	1%
Primary 3 (% in grade Primary 3)	6	7%
Primary 4 (% in grade Primary 4)	18	21%
Primary 5 (% in grade Primary 5)	21	24%
Primary 6 (% in grade Primary 6)	19	22%
JSS1 (% in grade JSS1)	11	13%
JSS2 (% in grade JSS2)	8	9%
OOS girls (%)	3	3%
Girls (sample size)	87	100%
Sample breakdown (Boys)		
Primary 2 (% in grade Primary 2)	2	2%
Primary 3 (% in grade Primary 3)	8	8%
Primary 4 (% in grade Primary 4)	16	16%
Primary 5 (% in grade Primary 5)	19	19%
Primary 6 (% in grade Primary 6)	23	23%
JSS1 (% in grade JSS1)	22	22%
JSS2 (% in grade JSS2)	10	10%
OOS boys (%)	1	1%

Boys (sample size)	101	100%
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Table 119: JSS evaluation sample breakdown (by age - entire sample)

JSS (girls only) - age at baseline	Intervention (whole sample)		Control (whole sample)	
Aged 6-8 (% aged 6-8)	1	0%	0	0%
Aged 9-11 (% aged 9-11)	98	16%	86	17%
Aged 12-13 (% aged 12-13)	220	37%	217	44%
Aged 14-15 (% aged 14-15)	207	35%	150	30%
Aged 16-17 (%aged 16-17)	60	10%	35	7%
Aged 18-19 (%aged 18-19)	10	2%	4	1%
Aged 20+ (% aged 20 and over)	3	1%	0	0%
Total (sample size) ⁷¹	599	100%	492	100%

Table 120: JSS evaluation sample breakdown (by age - tracked from baseline to midline)

JSS (girls only)	Intervention (recontacted)		Control (recontacted)	
Aged 6-8 (% aged 6-8)	0	0%	0	0%
Aged 9-11 (% aged 9-11)	5	2%	9	6%
Aged 12-13 (% aged 12-13)	64	27%	48	31%
Aged 14-15 (% aged 14-15)	112	47%	73	47%
Aged 16-17 (%aged 16-17)	47	20%	24	15%

⁷¹ There are 6 intervention students and 10 control students who answered “don’t know” to the question on age, hence the lower total numbers for this sample.

Aged 18-19 (%aged 18-19)	9	4%	2	1%
Aged 20+ (% aged 20 and over)	2	1%	0	0%
Total (sample size)	239	100%	156	100%

Table 121: JSS evaluation sample breakdown (by age - new at midline)

JSS (girls only)	Intervention (new at midline)		Control (new at midline)	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Aged 6-8 (% aged 6-8)	2	1%	0	0%
Aged 9-11 (% aged 9-11)	93	26%	77	23%
Aged 12-13 (% aged 12-13)	156	43%	169	50%
Aged 14-15 (% aged 14-15)	95	26%	77	23%
Aged 16-17 (%aged 16-17)	13	4%	11	3%
Aged 18-19 (%aged 18-19)	1	0%	2	1%
Aged 20+ (% aged 20 and over)	1	0%	0	0%
Total (sample size)	361	100%	336	100%

Table 122: primary evaluation sample breakdown (by age)

Primary - age at baseline		
Sample breakdown (Girls)		
	Number	Percentage of sample
Aged 6-8 (% aged 6-8)	16	19%
Aged 9-11 (% aged 9-11)	40	47%

Aged 12-13 (% aged 12-13)	17	20%
Aged 14-15 (% aged 14-15)	11	13%
Aged 16-17 (%aged 16-17)	1	1%
Aged 18-19 (%aged 18-19)	1	1%
Aged 20+ (% aged 20 and over)	0	0%
Girls (sample size) ⁷²	86	100%
Sample breakdown (Boys)		
Aged 6-8 (% aged 6-8)	9	9%
Aged 9-11 (% aged 9-11)	42	43%
Aged 12-13 (% aged 12-13)	27	28%
Aged 14-15 (% aged 14-15)	14	14%
Aged 16-17 (%aged 16-17)	4	4%
Aged 18-19 (%aged 18-19)	1	1%
Aged 20+ (% aged 20 and over)	1	1%
Boys (sample size) ⁷³	98	100%

Table 123: JSS evaluation sample breakdown (by disability - entire sample)

Sample breakdown	Intervention	Control	Household Survey and Girls School survey – Washington Group and child functioning questions
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⁷² One primary girl answered “don’t know” to the question on age, hence the lower total numbers for this sample.
⁷³ Four primary boys answered “don’t know” to the question on age, hence the lower total numbers for this sample.

Girls with disability (% overall)	5 (0.9%)	6 (1.3%)	-
Provide data per domain of difficulty			
Difficulty seeing	1 (0.2%)	1 (0.2%)	Do you have difficulty seeing, even if you are wearing glasses? (CS_D1s)
Difficulty hearing	2 (0.4%)	3 (0.7%)	Do you have difficulty hearing, even if you are using a hearing aid? (CS_D2s)
Difficulty walking or climbing steps	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.4%)	Do you have difficulty walking or climbing steps? (CS_D3s)
Difficulty remembering or concentrating	2 (0.4%)	1 (0.2%)	Do you have difficulty remembering things or concentrating? (CS_D4s)
Difficulty with self-care	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	Do you have difficulty with self care such as washing all over or dressing? (CS_D5s)
Difficulty communicating	1 (0.2%)	1 (0.2%)	Using your usual language, do you have difficulty communicating; for example understanding or being understood? (CS_D6s)

Table 124: Primary evaluation sample breakdown (by disability)

Sample breakdown	Girls	Boys	Household Survey and Girls School survey – Washington Group and child functioning questions
Girls with disability (% overall)	16 students (23%)	12 (14%)	-
Provide data per domain of difficulty			

Difficulty seeing	7 (10.0%)	7 (8.0%)	Do you have difficulty seeing, even if you are wearing glasses? (CS_D1s)
Difficulty hearing	5 (7.1%)	3 (3.5%)	Do you have difficulty hearing, even if you are using a hearing aid? (CS_D2s)
Difficulty walking or climbing steps	6 (8.6%)	9 (10.3%)	Do you have difficulty walking or climbing steps? (CS_D3s)
Difficulty remembering or concentrating	4 (5.7%)	2 (2.3%)	Do you have difficulty remembering things or concentrating? (CS_D4s)
Difficulty with self-care	4 (5.7%)	1 (1.1%)	Do you have difficulty with self care such as washing all over or dressing? (CS_D5s)
Difficulty communicating	0 (0.0%)	2 (2.3%)	Using your usual language, do you have difficulty communicating; for example understanding or being understood? (CS_D6s)

Discussion of the prevalence of CWD and comparison to baseline is in section 2.3

Contamination and compliance

There were six schools that were control schools at baseline and were intervention schools by midline.⁷⁴ These schools were excluded from the sample to avoid potential impact of contamination on the analysis as these schools have been exposed to project activities for more than a year. For endline it should be noted that more control schools may become intervention schools.

Learning and transition outcomes estimation

The learning and transition outcomes, based on the simple cohort DiD estimate, and the transitions analysis are included in chapters 3 and 4 and there are no significant further changes to report at this stage.

Annex 4: Characteristics and Barriers

⁷⁴ Plan uses a ‘follow-the-girl’ model which means that project activities begin in a new school whenever a student transitions from primary school to non-GATE GEC JSS or change school from a GATE GEC school to a non-GATE GEC school.

This annex presents information on the characteristics of the sample and barriers faced by the sample. Characteristics and barriers are first presented by proportion of the entire midline sample for midline to endline comparison, and then presented by students tracked from baseline to midline to enable comparison to baseline.

Characteristics

Table 111.: Girls' characteristics (entire midline sample)

	Intervention midline	Control midline	Primary girls midline	Primary boys baseline	Source
- Single orphans	22%	19%	24%	20%	PCG_11g
- Double orphans	3%	4%	6%	3%	PCG_13g
Living without both parents (%)	21%	28%	28%	25%	PCG_10g PCG_12g
Living in female headed household (%)	33%	36%	37%	31%	HH_8
Married (%)	1%	1%	0%	1%	PCG_22g
Mothers (%)	5%	4%	1%	0%	PCG_23g
- Under 18	2%	2%	0%	0%	
- Under 16	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Poor households					
- Difficult to afford for girl to go to school	74%	77%	77%	81%	PCG_7enr
- Household doesn't own land for themselves	19%	16%	14%	17%	PCG_11econ

- Material of the roof (mud, thatch, or tarp/plastic)	16%	15%	8%	12%	PCG_2econ
- Household unable to meet basic needs	37%	40%	36%	35%	PCG_6econ
- Gone to sleep hungry for many days in past year	30%	31%	37%	29%	PCG_7econ
Language difficulties					
- Lol different from mother tongue (%)	97%	97%	97%	96%	PCG_2enr
- Girl doesn't speak Lol (%)	6%	2%	23%	12%	PCG_3enr
Parental education					
- HoH has no education (%)	57%	55%	59%	60%	HH_13
- Primary caregiver has no education (%)	40%	31%	42%	43%	PCG_6
	n=559	n=465	n=78	n=93	

Table 112.: Girls' characteristics (students tracked baseline to midline)

Panel 1 only	Intervention midline (baseline)	Control midline (baseline)	Primary girls midline (baseline)	Primary boys midline (baseline)	Source
- Single orphans	25% (26%)	17% (19%)	24% (14%)	20% (11%)	PCG_11g
- Double orphans	5% (2%)	5% (3%)	6% (0%)	3% (2%)	PCG_13g
Living without both parents (%)	18% (23%)	25% (22%)	28% (20%)	25% (26%)	PCG_10g PCG_12g

Living in female headed household (%)	31% (44%)	39% (43%)	37% (42%)	31% (39%)	HH_8
Married (%)	3% (2%)	7% (1%)	0% (0%)	1% (0%)	PCG_22g
Mothers (%)	10%	9%	1%	N/A	PCG_23g
- Under 18	3% (4%)	4% (4%)	0% (2%)	N/A	
- Under 16	0% (3%)	0% (3%)	0% (2%)	N/A	
Poor households					
- Difficult to afford for girl to go to school	71% (79%)	76% (77%)	77% (65%)	81% (69%)	PCG_7enr
- Household doesn't own land for themselves	23% (18%)	16% (29%)	14% (12%)	17% (16%)	PCG_11econ
- Material of the roof (mud, thatch, or tarp/plastic)	13% (20%)	12% (8%)	77% (10%)	12% (6%)	PCG_2econ
- Household unable to meet basic needs	34% (27%)	37% (24%)	36% (23%)	35% (22%)	PCG_6econ
- Gone to sleep hungry for many days in past year	32% (25%)	30% (31%)	37% (27%)	29% (33%)	PCG_7econ
Language difficulties					
- Lol different from mother tongue (%)	97% (98%)	98% (99%)	97% (98%)	96% (94%)	PCG_2enr

- Girl doesn't speak Lol (%)	6% (5%)	2% (4%)	23% (11%)	12% (1%)	PCG_3enr
Parental education					
- HoH has no education (%)	60% (62%)	56% (57%)	59% (72%)	60% (60%)	HH_13
- Primary caregiver has no education (%)	43% (60%)	28% (49%)	42% (70%)	43% (60%)	PCG_6
	n=224	n=147	n=78	n=93	

Barriers

Table 113.: Potential barriers to learning and transition (entire sample)

Where questions refer to the student survey, the percentages are calculated using the sample size from the student survey. Where questions refer to the household survey, the percentages are calculated using the sample size from the household survey.

	JSS intervention midline	JSS control midline	Primary girls midline	Primary boys midline	Source
Home – community					
Safety					
Fairly or very unsafe travel to schools in the area (%)	11%	8%	14%	16%	PCG_9
Doesn't feel safe travelling to/from school (%)	13%	8%	13%	7%	CS_W13s
Parental/caregiver support					

High chore burden: student spends a quarter of the day or more doing chores (%)	49%	53%	44%	33%	PCG_26g
Doesn't get support to stay in school and do well (%)	1%	0%	0%	1%	HHG_7
School level					
Attendance					
Attends school half the time (%)	1%	1%	3%	0%	PCG_6enr
Attends school less than half time (%)	2%	3%	1%	2%	PCG_6enr
Doesn't feel safe at school (%)	1%	3%	3%	1%	CS_W14s
School facilities					
No seats for all students (%)	18%	17%	17%	16%	CS_W5s
Difficult to move around school (%)	2%	1%	7%	2%	CS_W6s
Doesn't use drinking water facilities	33%	25%	23%	22%	CS_W7s
Doesn't use toilet at school	8%	14%	14%	7%	CS_W9s
Doesn't use areas where children play/socialise	5%	6%	4%	7%	CS_W11s
Teachers					

Disagrees teachers make them feel welcome	4%	4%	3%	6%	CS_WA
Agrees teachers treat boys and girls differently in the classroom	27%	20%	24%	28%	CS_1s
Agrees teachers often absent from class	18%	17%	17%	23%	CS_2s
	HH survey n = 562 Student survey n = 537	HH survey n = 466 Student survey n = 460	HH survey n = 78 Student survey n = 70	HH survey n = 93 Student survey n = 88	

Table 114.: Potential barriers to learning and transition (students tracked baseline to midline)

Where questions refer to the student survey, the percentages are calculated using the sample size from the student survey. Where questions refer to the household survey, the percentages are calculated using the sample size from the household survey.

	JSS intervention midline	JSS control midline	Primary girls midline	Primary boys midline	Source
Home – community					
Safety					
Fairly or very unsafe travel for girls to schools in the area (%)	13% (10%)	7% (5%)	14% (5%)	16% (7%)	PCG_9
Doesn't feel safe travelling to/from school (%)	16% (15%)	12% (13%)	13% (1%)	7% (12%)	CS_W13s
Parental/caregiver support					

High chore burden: student spends a quarter of the day or more doing chores (%)	49% (57%)	54% (68%)	44% (35%)	33% (55%)	PCG_26g
Doesn't get support to stay in school and do well (%)	2% (22%)	2% (19%)	0% (30%)	1% (20%)	HHG_7
School level					
Attendance					
Attends school half the time (%)*	0%	1%	3%	0%	PCG_6enr
Attends school less than half time (%)*	3%	5%	1%	2%	PCG_6enr
Doesn't feel safe at school (%)	2% (2%)	2% (6%)	3% (3%)	1% (2%)	CS_W14s
School facilities					
No seats for all students (%)	20% (14%)	20% (21%)	17% (24%)	16% (27%)	CS_W5s
Difficult to move around school (%)	1% (5%)	0% (11%)	7% (3%)	2% (4%)	CS_W6s
Doesn't use drinking water facilities	33% (35%)	30% (46%)	23% (31%)	22% (31%)	CS_W7s
Doesn't use toilet at school	10% (14%)	15% (28%)	14% (9%)	7% (5%)	CS_W9s
Doesn't use areas where children play/ socialise	8% (4%)	5% (19%)	4% (24%)	7% (47%)	CS_W11s
Teachers					

Disagrees teachers make them feel welcome	2% (10%)	3% (17%)	3% (2%)	6% (5%)	CS_WA
Agrees teachers treat boys and girls differently in the classroom	31% (14%)	15% (14%)	24% (14%)	28% (21%)	CS_1s
Agrees teachers often absent from class	18% (19%)	16% (22%)	17% (18%)	23% (18%)	CS_2s
	HH survey n = 224 Student survey n = 177	HH survey n = 147 Student survey n = 123	HH survey n = 78 Student survey n = 70	HH survey n = 93 Student survey n = 88	

*Figures are not available from baseline.

Annex 5: Logframe

The logframe is included in Excel format.

Annex 6: Outcomes Spreadsheet

There are two outcomes spreadsheets included in Excel format, JSS and primary girls.

Annex 7: Project design and intervention

Project to complete

Complete the following table.

Table 115.: Project design and intervention

Intervention types	What is the intervention?	What output will the intervention contribute to?	What Intermediate Outcome will the intervention will contribute to and how?	How will the intervention contribute to achieving the learning, transition and sustainability outcomes?
Material support Access (Year 1 and 2) Learning support (no longer part of project)	Distribution of bursary items including uniform, bag, pens, notebooks.	Output 1 - Marginalised girls and children with disabilities, and their parents/caregivers are provided support for beneficiaries, to attend and learn through PSS, to JSS and JSS to post JSS.	It will contribute to intermediate outcome 1 (Improved attendance of the GEC cohort in schools throughout the life of the project) as it is working to tackle the economic barrier to attendance. Beneficiaries will thus have the materials to access and remain in school.	Learning and transition: These materials will allow the beneficiaries/children to access the school learning environment and provide them with the tools and resources to better engage and learn inside and outside of the school environment. <i>Please note:</i> This is no longer a part of the project interventions. Due to the free quality school education (FQSE) policy for government aided schools, that came into effect in academic year starting 2018, the project was asked to stop providing bursaries
Material support Access (Year 1 and 2) Learning support	Provision of individual assistive devices to children with disabilities	Output 1 - Marginalised girls and children with disabilities, and their parents/caregivers are provided support for beneficiaries, to attend and learn through PSS, to JSS and JSS to post JSS.	It will contribute to intermediate outcome 1 (Improved attendance of the GEC cohort in schools throughout the life of the project) and 3 (Improved sense of self-esteem, confidence and agency amongst marginalised girls and children with disabilities in relation to their education (including feeling safe and secure)). Having the materials to access and remain in school. These devices will make children feel more	Learning and Transition: Through having an assistive device, they are physically able to attend school, better able to engage in the classroom and with teachers and other students and ultimately improve their learning and transition. It will also make them feel empowered and confident to effectively learn with the appropriate aid. This will broadly lead to empowerment in their day-to-day life; this will feed into sustainability as the benefits of

			positive about learning and it would be expected that if they have a supportive device that they can better engage and learn in the classroom and with teachers and other students	these devices will remain after the project has finished.
Community initiatives Access	Supporting communities in setting up and running VSLAs This activity places value on education for marginalized girls and children with disabilities and encourages caregivers/parents to use part of their savings and loans to pay for education expenses such as uniforms, transport, etc. The VSLA groups are self-owned, self-managed/governed and operated by local communities. A total of 200 groups will be formed with approximately 15-25 members.	Output 1 - Marginalised girls and children with disabilities, and their parents/caregivers are provided support for beneficiaries, to attend and learn through PSS, to JSS and JSS to post JSS.	It will contribute to intermediate outcome 1 (Improved attendance of the GEC cohort in schools throughout the life of the project) and 4 (Improved economic empowerment at the household level to cover educational costs). The most vulnerable/marginalised parents of beneficiaries will be supported through VSLAs, including financial and entrepreneurial training. Economic barriers for the most marginalised families supported with VSLAs will be addressed so they can continue to send their children to school. Clear messaging on the importance of education and sending their children to school with the support of this intervention will be important.	Sustainability, learning and transition: If households have greater economic capacity, and improved financial planning and management, they will have increased economic empowerment. Families will be able to support their children to attend school through paying for school fees, and materials for children to attend school. This will in turn have an impact on children being able to access, learn and transition throughout PS and JSS to post JSS and other successful transition points. In addition, this will also demonstrate the parents/caregivers' support to sending these girls and children with disabilities to schools, and how important education is amongst other outgoings in the household.
Community Initiatives, learning support/outcomes	CBRVs complete community awareness and sensitization on inclusive education.	Output 1 - Marginalised girls and children with disabilities, and their parents/caregivers are provided support for beneficiaries, to attend	It will contribute to intermediate outcome 5 (Improved attitudes and perceptions of communities and government officials around girls access and inclusive education) as CBRVs work with communities to instil positive	Sustainability: The presence of the CBRVs, whose support has reinforced awareness and dialogue on disability issues at community level will further support children with disabilities to attend school, learn and

		and learn through PSS, to JSS and JSS to post JSS.	perceptions around CWDs accessing education. It will also contribute to intermediate outcome 3 (Improved sense of self-esteem, confidence and agency amongst marginalised girls and children with disabilities in relation to their education (including feeling safe and secure) as dedicated support from CBR volunteers will support children with disabilities to access schools and feel comfortable and confident in the school environment. CBRVs will also be responsible for awareness and community engagement sessions to reinforce inclusive messages and dialogue on how to put inclusion into practice	successfully transition with the relevant support and guidance from the volunteers Learning: The community activities will raise awareness of disability issues at community level and knowledge on how children with disabilities can be better supported to attend school, learn and successfully transition in school
Learning support/outcomes Teaching inputs	Study groups – Afterschool study sessions taking place twice a week focusing on numeracy and literacy, led by Programme Volunteers – GATEGEC trained teachers in the schools	Output 1 - Marginalised girls and children with disabilities, and their parents/caregivers are provided support for beneficiaries, to attend and learn through PSS, to JSS and JSS to post JSS.	This will contribute to intermediate outcome 2 (Improved knowledge and demonstration of inclusive education and gender sensitive learning centred teaching in literacy and numeracy) and outcome 3 (Improved sense of self-esteem, confidence and agency amongst marginalised girls and children with disabilities in relation to their education (including feeling safe and secure)). The expectation is that additional support in two subjects - literacy and numeracy - gives them more time to concentrate on areas they are unclear on and/or would like to improve. Increased direct teaching and learning time leads to a better understanding of the subject. If children have more time to concentrate on specific subjects and their learning outcomes improve, they may feel more	Learning and Transition – Through providing additional study time and providing them with a safe and secure environment for additional learning, the expectation is that they improve their understanding and knowledge in the relevant subject area and are better equipped to successfully pass annual exams and transition to the next year. In addition, through having more support, the beneficiaries should have greater self-esteem and agency which may support them with future life choices. The expectation would also be that with the right messaging and sensitisation, that GEC schools will continue to self-sustain study groups once the project is over.

			confident and have increased self-esteem.	
Capacity building, safe spaces	GATE-GEC supports capacity building of Head Teachers and SMCs/BoGs on effective school management and mentorship	Output 1 - Marginalised girls and children with disabilities, and their parents/caregivers are provided support for beneficiaries, to attend and learn through PSS, to JSS and JSS to post JSS.	It will contribute to intermediate outcome 2 (Improved knowledge and demonstration of inclusive education and gender sensitive learning centred teaching in literacy and numeracy) as the capacity building of headteachers and SMCs/BoGs positively impacts PVs teaching, as they are supported in their teaching by head teachers and the school environment.	Learning and sustainability: It will contribute to intermediate outcome 2 (Improved knowledge and demonstration of inclusive education and gender sensitive learning centred teaching in literacy and numeracy) as the capacity building of headteachers and SMCs/BoGs positively impacts PVs teaching, as they are supported in their teaching by head teachers and the school environment.
Capacity building Learning support/outcomes	Teachers professional development: trainings, mentoring and coaching for the teachers/PVs on literacy and numeracy, and gender responsive and inclusive pedagogy.	Output 2 - Increased number of skilled PVs, LAs/STs (who support the cohort beneficiaries) to improve learning of marginalised girls and children with disabilities	It will contribute to intermediate outcome 1 (Improved attendance of the GEC cohort in schools throughout the life of the project), 2 (Improved knowledge and demonstration of inclusive education and gender sensitive learning centred teaching in literacy and numeracy) and 3 (Improved sense of self-esteem, confidence and agency amongst marginalised girls and children with disabilities in relation to their education (including feeling safe and secure)). The importance of the teachers' continuous professional development package will be in raising the teaching skills of PVs, recognising its role to support and complement other education programmes in Sierra Leone. With a specific focus on literacy, numeracy and inclusive education, PVs and teachers will further develop their teaching capacity, knowledge and skills set and girls and children with disabilities will be supported to remain in schools and raise their learning levels.	Learning, Transition and sustainability: Increased skills and competencies of study group leaders, and resourcing and monitoring of study groups will result in improved learning outcomes. It is anticipated that structured pedagogy programmes will have the largest and most consistent positive average effects on learning outcomes. If teaching and learning is more effective, students will learn and transition. In addition, the skills that these PVs are trained in will be beneficial to the broader school environment and other children in the school as these PVs (teachers in schools) will teach other classes in the school.

<p>Safe spaces</p>	<p>Score-carding is a participatory, community-based feedback and accountability mechanism; and an innovative way of getting feedback from children in schools to evaluate the quality of education and surface issues to make schools safer and more inclusive. The approach brings together school leaders, local government and others to identify issues and mutually generate action plans to improve the provision and quality of girls' and children with disabilities' education.</p>	<p>Output 3 - Marginalised girls and children with disabilities are supported to learn in a safe and inclusive learning environment</p>	<p>Intermediate outcome 1 (Improved attendance of the GEC cohort in schools throughout the life of the project) and 3 (Improved sense of self-esteem, confidence and agency amongst marginalised girls and children with disabilities in relation to their education (including feeling safe and secure) Providing a mechanism by which children can register their concerns and provide feedback on the school environment will help beneficiaries feel that they are listened to by authority, raising their self-esteem. This may improve their experience at school, leading to improved attendance, and encourage them to engage more in class, enabling a better quality of learning.</p>	<p>Learning and sustainability: The score-carding process looks to empower children as it gives them the opportunity to express their feelings about the schools in a safe and secure way. This should in turn increase their self-esteem and confidence as they will feel their voice is being listened to and they can seek redress whenever there are safety concerns. If children are more confident in class and feel comfortable in school, this may impact on their learning in school as it creates a child-friendly learning environment. There could also be the potential that there is increased retention in schools as children are less likely to drop-out. In addition, if issues are resolved in and around schools, this will create a positive learning environment for all children and therefore there will be broader impact.</p>
<p>Material support Access</p>	<p>School adaptations to selected schools for improved accessibility and support through CBRVs</p>	<p>Output 3 - Marginalised girls and children with disabilities are supported to learn in a safe and inclusive learning environment</p>	<p>This will contribute to intermediate outcome 1 (Improved attendance of the GEC cohort in schools throughout the life of the project) and 3 (Improved sense of self-esteem, confidence and agency amongst marginalised girls and children with disabilities in relation to their education (including feeling safe and secure)). A selection of 20 schools will be adapted to support children with disabilities to access schools, providing</p>	<p>Learning, Transition and sustainability: Through easier accessibility to schools through the support of CBRVs and an adapted school environment, the expectation is that these children will be able to access the learning environment and improve their learning outcomes and transition. These schools will also help support children beyond the cohort, and beyond the lifetime of the project. The school adaptations will involve cluster</p>

			the infrastructure that will enable children with disabilities to access and remain in school. These school adaptations will make children feel more positive about learning and it would be expected that if they have supportive infrastructure that they can better engage in the classroom and with teachers and other students.	inclusive. training, which will be open to schools neighbouring the model schools.
Teaching inputs, learning support/outcomes	Support on inclusive education to teachers in selected schools through the Itinerant Teachers (five traveling teachers across the districts that support children with disabilities/learning difficulties)	Output 2 - Increased number of skilled PVs, LAs/STs (who support the cohort beneficiaries) to improve learning of marginalised girls and children with disabilities	It will contribute to intermediate outcome 2 (Improved knowledge and demonstration of inclusive education and gender sensitive learning centred teaching in literacy and numeracy)	<p>Learning, transition and sustainability</p> <p>The activities of the itinerant teachers lead to increased awareness of disability issues and disseminate knowledge and expertise on how to better support children with disabilities and marginalised girls in beyond the project schools.</p> <p>There is capacity building through the training of new staff of how they can support staff to train and support schools and their teachers.</p> <p>Itinerant teachers are now working in the 5 districts with Port Loko and Karene being counted as one.</p>
Learning support Community initiatives Female voice/role models	Training young women to become teachers through the Learning Assistant/Student Teacher component	Output 2 - Increased number of skilled PVs, LAs/STs (who support the cohort beneficiaries) to improve learning of marginalised girls and children with disabilities	It will contribute to intermediate outcome 1 (Improved attendance of the GEC cohort in schools throughout the life of the project), 2 (Improved knowledge and demonstration of inclusive education and gender sensitive learning centred teaching in literacy and numeracy) and 3 (Improved sense of self-esteem, confidence and agency amongst marginalised girls and children with disabilities in relation to their education (including feeling safe and	<p>Learning, Transition: Female role models in the schools (during in-school practice) may encourage girls to learn and remain in school.</p> <p>Sustainability – this component aims to contribute to an increase in the number of female teachers in schools in the future.</p>

			secure)). Support to women to enter the teaching workforce, particularly from marginalised rural backgrounds. The LAs will also act as female role models within the schools for the boys and girls. They will have the opportunity to engage with and support the beneficiaries to feel more confident, have increased self-esteem, learn and remain in school. They may also provide inspiration to the children for future life choices	
<p>Learning support</p> <p>Access</p> <p>Teaching inputs</p> <p>Community initiatives</p> <p>Female voice/role models</p>	<p>Variety of advocacy, communication and influencing over decision makers and actors. Bi-annual meetings with project's district and community stakeholders to reinforce inclusion and child protection messages. Learning Event where consortium partners share evidence from the GATE-GEC project with key educational stakeholders. Engagement of the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MoBSSE) and the Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children Affairs (MoSWGCA) on</p>	<p>Output 4 - Programme evidence and learning is shared with key educational decision makers and actors to influence the Sierra Leonean Education sector</p>	<p>This will contribute to intermediate outcome 5 (Improved attitudes and perceptions of communities and government officials around girls access and inclusive education) as government officials are being actively engaged around these issues and advocacy is underway to create positive perceptions of CWDs and girls accessing and education. The project works with other partners to maximise this impact.</p>	<p>Learning and sustainability</p> <p>These activities will raise awareness of issues about marginalised girls and disabled children, what can be done to support them in school .</p> <p>Dialogue on disability issues at community level will further support children with disabilities to attend school, learn and successfully. By gaining support and buy-in with key decision makers ensures continuation of the aims of the project after it has finished.</p> <p>The education sector also learns about our CPD approach and is moving to include this in the national framework.</p>

	<p>inclusive education. Collaboration with UNICEF-GATE, Leh We Lan - GLADI, the Teaching Service Commission and other relevant stakeholders to ensure alignment, complementarity and sustainability of the project interventions</p>			
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Annex 8: Key findings on Output Indicators

This annex should be completed by the project.

Table 116.: Output indicators

Logframe Output Indicator	Means of verification/sources	Collection frequency
Number and Indicator wording	List all sources used.	E.g. monthly, quarterly, annually. NB: For indicators without data collection to date, please indicate when data collection will take place.
Output 1: Marginalised girls and children with disabilities, and their parents/caregivers are provided support for beneficiaries, to attend and learn through PSS, to JSS and JSS to post JSS.		
Output 1.1: % of the GEC cohort receiving bursaries (disaggregate the data by gender, disability and type (severity), age (grade) and geographical location.)	Re/verification tool Bursary Distribution tool Bursaries Monitoring Form Study Group monitoring form - parents	Annually Annually (at point of distribution) Biannually (three months after distribution and at end of academic year) Quarterly
Output 1.2: Average attendance rates (%) of GATE GEC cohort in study groups	Study group observation tool Baseline, Midline, Endline evaluation	Quarterly At key evaluation points
Output 1.3: % of VSLA members reporting utilizing some of their loans on education needs for a child	Baseline, Midline, Endline evaluation. VSLA target household survey, Parent/Guardian Survey	At key evaluation points Quarterly Quarterly
Output 1.4: % of School Management Committees (SMCs) in Primary Schools that have developed an annual school development plan.	GATE GEC School Management Committee / Board of Governors Profiling Tool	Annual
Output 1.5: % of targeted Board of Governors (BoGs) in Junior Secondary schools that	GATE GEC School Management Committee / Board of Governors Profiling Tool	Annual

have developed a school action plan		
Output 1.6: # of GATE GEC Children with disabilities (CWDs) receiving assistive devices and individualised treatments (disaggregated by gender, age and type of disability)	<p>CWD screening tool then to a service provider (medical professional) identify what assistive devices are required</p> <p>HI provide a list of numbers and types of devices and treatments provided</p> <p>Event completion form meeting and dialogue monitoring</p> <p>Baseline, Midline, Endline evaluation.</p>	<p>Annually</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Quarterly</p> <p>At key evaluation points</p>
Output 1.7: # of Community Based Rehabilitation Volunteers (CBRVs) actively engaged in the programme in supporting children with disabilities and their families in the project into education	<p>HI records of CBRVs (CBRV profiling tool)</p> <p>Event completion form meeting and dialogue monitoring</p> <p>CBRV monitoring tools</p>	<p>Annual</p> <p>Quarterly</p> <p>Quarterly</p>
Output 2: Increased number of skilled PVs, LAs/STs (who support the cohort beneficiaries) to improve learning of marginalised girls and children with disabilities		
Output 2.1: # of Programme Volunteers (PVs) engaged in the GATE GEC project	PV profiling tool	Annual
Output 2.2: % of Learning Assistants (LAs) passing the marked assignment	LA marked assignment results from FAWE	Annually
Output 2.3: % of Student teachers completing teacher training college course (cohort 1 and 2 (GEC 1) and cohort 3 (GATE GEC))	Student teacher survey	Annual
	GATE GEC LA / ST School Attendance / Placement Tracker	Quarterly
	TTC modular results tool	Annual
	OU/Plan endline evaluation (cohort 1/2 STs)	Key evaluation point (endline)
	Reverification of STs (cohort 1/2)	Annual
Output 2.4: % of GEC beneficiaries reporting positive perceptions of PVs teaching skills and	Baseline, Midline, Endline evaluation.	At key evaluation points
	Study group monitoring form beneficiaries.	Quarterly
		Quarterly

support in the classroom	Beneficiary survey	
Output 2.5: % of PVs recorded to have attended teacher learning circles on a quarterly basis	PV survey tool	Quarterly
	CPD reporting tool	Quarterly
Output 2.6: % of PVs recorded to have attended at least one coaching observation session in a quarterly basis (disaggregated by gender)	PV survey tool	Quarterly
	CPD reporting tool	Quarterly
	IEP follow-up (undertaken by itinerant teachers)	Quarterly
Output 2.7: % of PVs reporting positive use of at least 3 (three) key teaching skills during coaching/observation sessions	PV survey tool	Quarterly
	CPD reporting tool	Quarterly
	Study group Observation tool	Quarterly
	IEP follow-up (undertaken by itinerant teachers)	Quarterly
Output 3: Marginalised girls and children with disabilities are supported to learn in a safe and inclusive learning environment		
Output 3.1: % of targeted JSS school stakeholders involved in the scorecarding process at the beginning of the school year	Scorecarding attendance registers (disaggregated by gender, roles, disability and location).	Quarterly
Output 3.2: # of score carding action plans developed by targeted JSS school stakeholders on an annual basis	Scorecarding database	Quarterly
	Scorecarding-roll-out activity reports (record of school action plans and processes followed is captured in the project's scorecarding database)	Quarterly
	Baseline, Midline, Endline evaluation.	At key evaluation points
Output 3.3: Of beneficiaries who are aware of a suggestion box, % who have used it (or know someone who has)	Beneficiary survey tool	Quarterly
	Baseline, Midline, Endline evaluation.	At key evaluation points
Output 3.4: # of schools that are adapted to be disability friendly (model schools).	Inclusive pedagogical practices tool,	Termly
		Bi-annual

	Inclusiveness of the school environment tool. Baseline, Midline, Endline evaluation.	At key evaluation points
Output 4: Programme evidence and learning is shared with key educational decision makers and actors to influence the Sierra Leonean Education sector		
Output 4.1: # of MOBSSE and MSWGCA officials participating in trainings on inclusive education and gender sensitive pedagogical teaching practices.	Stakeholder engagement tool	Quarterly
	Attendance records of trainings, meetings and other engagements	Quarterly
Output 4.2: # of 'Learning events' consortium partners share evidence and learning from the GATE GEC project with key educational stakeholders	Stakeholder engagement tool Minutes and presentations from learning events	Quarterly
Output 4.3: # of MOBSSE and MSWGCA officials supporting joint monitoring visits	Stakeholder engagement tool	Quarterly
	Joint monitoring visit tools and records	Bi-annual

Table 117.: Midline status of output indicators

Logframe Output Indicator	Relevance of the indicator for the project ToC	Midline status/midline values
Number and Indicator wording	What is the contribution of this indicator for the project ToC, IOs, and Outcomes? What does the midline value/status mean for your activities? Is the indicator measuring the right things? Should a revision be considered? Provide short narrative.	What is the midline value/status of this indicator? Provide short narrative.
Output 1: Marginalised girls and children with disabilities, and their parents/caregivers are provided support for beneficiaries, to attend and learn through PSS, to JSS and JSS to post JSS.		
Output 1.1: % of the GEC cohort receiving bursaries (disaggregate the data by gender, disability and type (severity), age (grade) and geographical location.)	This indicator was contributing to Intermediate Outcome 1 – attendance – as beneficiaries are likely to be absent due to lack of fees, equipment or having to work to earn money	The FQSE policy started in September 2018 and is likely to take a few years to be fully implemented. Under the policy, schooling and basic materials are paid for by the government, but crucially, the policy does not apply to community schools, of which there are, in the midline sample 19 (6 JSS intervention, 11 JSS control, 2 primary

	<p>No longer relevant due to the change in policy in the form of Free Quality School Education (FQSE).</p>	<p>schools). This uneven distribution of FQSE and the removal of bursary items may partly explain the lack of affordability of school as a factor in children not being enrolled.</p> <p>In terms of the output, the GATE-GEC project ceased distribution of bursary items at the government's request when FQSE was introduced. As some of the partners had already purchased items before the FQSE came into effect, beneficiaries from these districts received bursary items. A distribution report was completed for this process.</p>
<p>Output 1.2: Average attendance rates (%) of GATE GEC cohort in study groups</p>	<p>Study groups are the key additional element which the beneficiaries receive. Through providing additional study time and providing beneficiaries with a safe and secure environment for learning, the expectation is that they improve their understanding and knowledge in the relevant subject area and are better equipped to successfully pass annual exams and transition to the next year. In addition, through having more support, the beneficiaries should have greater self-esteem and agency which may support them with future life choices. The expectation would also be that with the right messaging and sensitisation, that GEC schools will continue to self-sustain study groups once the project is over.</p> <p>Attendance figures indicate whether our beneficiaries are receiving this element and therefore benefitting from the additional support in their learning. If attendance was low, corresponding IOs and outcomes related to the study group would have less rigour and this would highlight a fundamental flaw in our approach.</p> <p>As study group attendance appears to be high, this indicator appears to still be appropriate and measuring the right thing. However, in line with</p>	<p>The midline data does not capture attendance at study groups, but rather looks at attendance at the school level for different subgroups.</p> <p>Project monitoring captures study group attendance via attendance spot-checks for the academic year 19/20 (e.g. Sept 2019 – present) and reports an average of 91.7% attendance of GATE-GEC beneficiaries in the study groups (94.4% for girls, and 82.5% for boys).</p>

	<p>the midline recommendations, there should be training for head teachers by GATE GEC on attendance record-keeping to improve this skill across the project.</p>	
<p>Output 1.3: % of VSLA members reporting utilizing some of their loans on education needs for a child</p>	<p>Financial constraints are a key barrier for a household to educate their children. If households have greater economic capacity and improved financial planning and management, they will have increased economic empowerment. Families will be able to support their children to attend school through paying for materials and necessities. This will in turn have an impact on children being able to access, learn and transition throughout PS and JSS to post JSS. In addition, this will also demonstrate the parents/caregivers' support to sending these girls and children with disabilities to schools, and how important education is amongst other outgoings in the household. Thus, this indicator enables to understand the extent to which our message of prioritising education is diffusing.</p> <p>The data at midline implies that the output is broadly measuring the right things, although at midline members of a GATE-GEC VSLAs could not be distinguished from members of non GATE-GEC VSLAs, thus this needs to be specified for endline as the data is not as useful in this format. Therefore at endline, the evaluators will ask caregivers in the household survey that are VSLA members if the VSLA was set up by Action Aid (and therefore is a project VSLA). This can be cross-referenced with the list of VSLA targeted communities that the project holds. This will enable distinction to be made between caregivers that are part of a VSLA specifically set up by the project and those that are part of a VSLA supported by another organisation or self-organised.</p>	<p>Midline data reports that overall 61% of VSLA members (both PS and JSS) that had taken out a loan reported the main item they spent it on was education.</p> <p>When broken down by school level, the parents/caregivers at JSS level remain at 61% mainly spending the loans on education and 80% of those of primary schools mainly spending the loan on education. It must be noted that the primary school parents/caregivers had a small sample size of 5.</p> <p>When disaggregated by gender, a higher percentage of male VSLA members (64%) report the main item they spent their loan on being education than female VSLA members (64%). However the sample of women was much higher than men, with 93 in comparison to 14.</p>
<p>Output 1.4: % of School Management Committees (SMCs) in</p>	<p>This output contributes to intermediate outcome 2 (Improved knowledge and demonstration of</p>	<p>Project monitoring reports that 49% of SMCs of the schools sampled in 2019</p>

<p>Primary Schools that have developed an annual school development plan.</p>	<p>inclusive education and gender sensitive learning centred teaching in literacy and numeracy) as the capacity building of headteachers and SMCs/BoGs positively impacts PVs teaching, as they are supported in their teaching by head teachers, and the wider school environment. Having an action plan contributes to this as it shows the schools are putting strategies in place to implement these changes. These plans give a sense of accountability to SMCs. The act of creating action plans allows prioritisation to take place, as often restricted budget means that not all activities can take place.</p> <p>This indicator is fit for purpose, however the midline external evaluators recommend strengthening measurement of impact of SMC/BoG impact. For example, specify that the community member included in project monitoring through the 'community leader' tool be a member of a SMC/BoG, or add this as an extra tool.</p>	<p>had developed annual school development plans.</p> <p>This indicator is scored 2 at midline, 'emerging', given that the SMCs/BoGs are functional but there is only anecdotal evidence for the SMCs/BoGs holding school management to account.</p>
<p>Output 1.5: % of targeted Board of Governors (BoGs) in Junior Secondary schools that have developed a school action plan</p>	<p>This output contributes to intermediate outcome 2 (Improved knowledge and demonstration of inclusive education and gender sensitive learning centred teaching in literacy and numeracy) as the capacity building of headteachers and BoGs positively impacts PVs teaching, as they are supported in their teaching by head teachers, and the wider school environment. Having an action plan contributes to this as it shows the schools are putting strategies in place to implement these changes. These plans give a sense of accountability to BoGs. The act of creating action plans allows prioritisation to take place, as often restricted budget means that not all activities can take place.</p> <p>This indicator is fit for purpose, however the midline external evaluators recommend strengthening measurement of impact of SMC/BoG impact. For</p>	<p>Project monitoring reports that 48% of the BOGs from schools sampled in 2019 had developed annual school action plans.</p> <p>This indicator is scored 2 at midline, 'emerging', given that the SMCs/BoGs are functional but there is only anecdotal evidence for the SMCs/BoGs holding school management to account.</p>

	<p>example, specify that the community member included in project monitoring through the 'community leader' tool be a member of a SMC/BoG, or add this as an extra tool.</p>	
<p>Output 1.6: # of GATE GEC Children with disabilities (CWDs) receiving assistive devices and individualised treatments (disaggregated by gender, age and type of disability)</p>	<p>Through having an assistive device, CWDs are physically able to attend school, better able to engage in the classroom, with teachers and other students and ultimately improve their learning and transition rates. It will also make the CWD feel empowered and confident to effectively learn with the appropriate aid. This will broadly lead to empowerment in their day-to-day life; this will feed into sustainability as the benefits of these devices will remain after the project has finished.</p> <p>The midline value doesn't fully capture the individualised treatment element and is not disaggregated by disability, but does tell us about assistive devices. It may be beneficial to change this indicator to reflect as a percentage who have received support based on those that need it as the number does not tell us much alone.</p>	<p>Based on project monitoring data, 214 beneficiaries received assistive devices and individualised treatment. In the midline sample, 6 intervention children with disabilities received assistive devices, representing 18.8% of intervention CWDs. This includes one JSS girl, three primary girls and two primary boys.</p>
<p>Output 1.7: # of Community Based Rehabilitation Volunteers (CBRVs) actively engaged in the programme in supporting children with disabilities and their families in the project into education</p>	<p>CBRVs provide the assistive and individualised treatments and support CWDs. On top of this, the community activities raise awareness of disability issues at community level and aim to improve knowledge on how children with disabilities can be better supported to attend school, learn and successfully transition in school. The presence of the CBRVs, whose support has reinforced dialogue on disability issues at community level, will further support children with disabilities to attend school, learn and successfully transition with the relevant support and guidance from the volunteers</p> <p>No revision is proposed for this indicator.</p>	<p>Based on the project monitoring data 138 CBRVs actively engaged in the project</p>

Output 2: Increased number of skilled PVs, LAs/STs (who support the cohort beneficiaries) to improve learning of marginalised girls and children with disabilities		
<p>Output 2.1: # of Programme Volunteers (PVs) engaged in the GATE GEC project</p>	<p>This indicator contributes to Intermediate Outcome 2 – effective inclusive education teaching skills. Under the theory of change, more effective teaching will enable girls and children with disabilities will achieve sustained, improved transition from primary school to JSS and from JSS to post-JSS options. Additionally, increased skills and competencies of study group leaders, and resourcing and monitoring of study groups will result in increased learning outcomes. Evidence shows that structured pedagogy programmes have the largest and most consistent positive average effects on learning outcomes.</p> <p>No revision is proposed to this output indicator.</p>	<p>Based on the project monitoring data 1506 PVs are engaged in the project. The majority are male with 86% male and 14% female. Most teach at JSS level (67%) in comparison to primary (33%).</p>
<p>Output 2.2: % of Learning Assistants (LAs) passing the marked assignment</p>	<p>This indicator contributes to Intermediate Outcome 2 – effective inclusive education teaching skills. Under the theory of change, more effective teaching will enable girls and children with disabilities will achieve sustained, improved learning outcomes and transition from primary school to JSS and from JSS to post-JSS options.</p> <p>For the next phase of the project, this indicator will no longer be measured as the LAs have now undertaken their assignments and they are now Students teachers (see output indicator 2.3). We are now considering as a project to include another output to capture the number of ‘# STs engaged in school experiences in the project, or the broader number engaged in the project”</p>	<p>The cohort 3 LAs marked assignment was completed between September 2018 and Feb/March 2019. These LAs are now Student teachers and are attending Teacher Training colleges (this is being measured under output indicator 2.3).</p>
<p>Output 2.3: % of Student teachers completing teacher training college course (cohort 1 and 2 (GEC 1) and cohort 3 (GATE GEC)</p>	<p>This indicator contributes to Intermediate Outcome 2 – effective inclusive education teaching skills. Under the theory of change, more effective teaching will enable girls and children with disabilities will achieve sustained, improved learning outcomes and transition from primary</p>	<p>The project is awaiting the results yet from the board of examinations. These were expected in March 2020.</p>

	<p>school to JSS and from JSS to post-JSS options. STs particularly contribute to learning, but also towards a generally safer and more inclusive school environment for girls as they are young women from their communities. Research when the project was being set up showed a lack of female teachers in schools.</p> <p>No revision is proposed to this output indicator, however see the proposal above of adding another indicator to measure the number engaged in school experiences.</p>	
<p>Output 2.4: % of GEC beneficiaries reporting positive perceptions of PVs teaching skills and support in the classroom</p>	<p>This indicator contributes to Intermediate Outcome 2 – effective inclusive education teaching skills. In addition to providing teachers with training and the right skills and methodologies in the classroom, the project also recognises that the children in the classroom have to benefit from the teaching skills and support provided. This output allows us to better understand the perceptions and feelings of the beneficiaries of the teachers’ teaching methods and support.</p> <p>No revision is proposed to this output indicator.</p>	<p>Based on project monitoring, via a beneficiary survey, 100% (n=42) believe the teacher is supportive (60% very supportive and 40% quite supportive).</p>
<p>Output 2.5: % of PVs recorded to have attended teacher learning circles on a quarterly basis</p>	<p>Continuous professional development (CPD) allows increased skills and competencies of study group leaders, and resourcing and monitoring of study groups will result in improved teaching methodologies. If teaching and learning is more effective, students will learn and transition. In addition, the skills that these PVs are trained in will be beneficial to the broader school environment and other children in the school as these PVs (teachers in schools) will teach other classes in the school. Learning circles specifically allow teachers to learn from peers; where they can discuss challenges, share best practices and therefore improve their own teaching.</p> <p>No revisions should be made to this indicator.</p>	<p>Based on the midline evaluation findings 49% of PVs have attended a teacher learning circle in the last three months.</p> <p>Our project monitoring data found 59% had attended a teaching learning circle in the last three months.</p>
<p>Output 2.6: % of PVs recorded to have</p>	<p>Continuous professional development (CPD) allows increased</p>	<p>Based on the midline evaluation findings 58% of all PVs have attended</p>

<p>attended at least one coaching observation session in a quarterly basis (disaggregated by gender)</p>	<p>skills and competencies of study group leaders, and resourcing and monitoring of study groups will result in improved learning outcomes. If teaching and learning is more effective, students will learn and transition. In addition, the skills that these PVs are trained in will be beneficial to the broader school environment and other children in the school as these PVs (teachers in schools) will teach other classes in the school. Coaching sessions contribute towards PV's professional development as it allows individualised support to PVs. PVs can therefore discuss their challenges to work on in the future and highlight successes in their teaching.</p> <p>No revisions should be made to this indicator.</p>	<p>at least one coaching session in a quarter, of which nearly two thirds (58%) were women.</p> <p>Our project monitoring data found that 66% of the PVs had attended a coaching session in the last quarter.</p>
<p>Output 2.7: % of PVs reporting positive use of at least 3 (three) key teaching skills during coaching/observation sessions</p>	<p>This indicator contributes to Intermediate Outcome 2 – effective inclusive education teaching skills. This indicator encompasses whether the elements that the PVs are learning through trainings, coaching, and materials are present in their teaching. The idea being that the showing of these skills and thus the incorporation of teaching skills in their practice will mean their teaching is more effective. With more effective teaching, students will learn and transition more successfully.</p> <p>No revisions should be made to this indicator.</p>	<p>Based on the midline evaluation findings, 75% of PVs at JSS (based on 34 observations) and 76% at primary level (based on 10 observation) used at least three key teaching skills during observations of a one-period lesson. The main areas highlighted for improvement are speaking to children at their level and making eye contact, use of examples, use of local materials and use of gender appropriate language.</p> <p>The project will consider how to improve on this activity based on the midline and project monitoring findings.</p>
<p>Output 3: Marginalised girls and children with disabilities are supported to learn in a safe and inclusive learning environment</p>		
<p>Output 3.1: % of targeted JSS school stakeholders involved in the scorecarding process at the beginning of the school year</p>	<p>The score-carding process looks to empower children as it gives them the opportunity to express their feelings about the schools in a safe and secure way. This should in turn increase their self-esteem and confidence as they will feel their voice is being listened to and they can seek redress whenever there are safety concerns. If children are</p>	<p>Based on the midline evaluation findings, forty-one JSS intervention schools reported having score carding activities (66 % of the sample). Although not all these schools were targeted for score carding, this could be evidence of knowledge sharing between schools. All of the schools state that the score carding process includes students.</p>

	<p>more confident in class and feel comfortable in school, this may impact on their learning in school as it creates a child-friendly learning environment. There could also be the potential that there is increased retention in schools as children are less likely to drop-out.</p> <p>No revisions to this indicator should be made.</p>	<p>This counteracts project monitoring data which reports that all the JSS schools (100%) in the GATE GEC project have undertaken scorecarding at the point of the midline phase.</p>
<p>Output 3.2: # of score carding action plans developed by targeted JSS school stakeholders on an annual basis</p>	<p>The score-carding process is participatory process which allows children to voice their concerns and suggested improvements for the school. This indicator looks to see if this process is implemented correctly and actions take place in schools where the scorecarding take place. When action plans are made this gives accountability to the schools and community to implement these changes. If issues are resolved in and around schools, this will create a positive learning environment for all children and therefore there will be broader impact.</p> <p>No revisions to this indicator should be made. Although this varies slightly from our internal monitoring.</p>	<p>The midline evaluation found that 57 JSS schools have been targeted for score carding activities, but only three were included in the sample at midline. 41 JSS intervention schools reported having score carding activities (66%) and of those that have score carding activities, 76% report that they have developed an action plan (32 schools).</p>
<p>Output 3.3: Of beneficiaries who are aware of a suggestion box, % who have used it (or know someone who has)</p>	<p>The suggestion boxes aim to empower children as it gives them the opportunity to confidentially express suggested improvement for their school. This should in turn increase their self-esteem and confidence as they will feel their voice is being listened to and they are having an active role in the improvement of their school. Not only this, but it allows children to anonymously raise safety or other issues which may be impeding their learning. This may impact on their learning and the broader experiences at school by creating a positive learning environment for all children.</p> <p>No revisions to this indicator should be made. Although this varies slightly from our internal monitoring.</p>	<p>At midline 41% of all intervention girls who are aware of a suggestion box in their school have used it (or know someone who has). This was 41% for JSS intervention girls and 27% for primary intervention girls. 11% of intervention CWD who are aware of a suggestion box in their school have used it (or know someone who has). Kailhaun (50%) and Karene (59%) had the highest number of girls saying they used a suggestion box (or know someone who has), and the lowest was in Kono (14%).</p> <p>This differs from the project monitoring data which shows that 62% of beneficiaries who know of the suggestion box have or know someone who have used it.</p>

<p>Output 3.4: # of schools that are adapted to be disability friendly (model schools).</p>	<p>Through easier accessibility to schools through an adapted school environment, the expectation is that CWD will be able to access the learning environment and improve their learning outcomes and transition. The adapted schools will also help support children beyond the cohort, and beyond the lifetime of the project. The school adaptations will involve cluster inclusive training, which will be open to schools neighbouring the model schools.</p> <p>No revisions to be made.</p>	<p>Based on the project monitoring data, 3 schools have been adapted. 3 model schools are currently being adapted.</p>
<p>Output 4: Programme evidence and learning is shared with key educational decision makers and actors to influence the Sierra Leonean Education sector</p>		
<p>Output 4.1: # of MOBSSE and MSWGCA officials participating in trainings on inclusive education and gender sensitive pedagogical teaching practices.</p>	<p>This indicator contributes to Intermediate Outcome 5 - increased engagement with MOBSSE and MSWGCA officials and other education actors. Engagement with government officials and other education actors is imperative to the ongoing sustainability of the work for marginalised girls and children with disabilities to achieve positive educational attainment and transition successfully throughout their lives. To see sustained learning post-GEC will require working hand-in-hand with the ministry, at both national and District level, full collaboration, involvement and a level of ownership and responsibility from communities (with a reduced reliance of external agencies) reflecting local needs and aspirations, and ensuring consistency with the local and national education approach. The idea being that if ministry officials attend trainings that the knowledge gathered in the project will outlast the project itself and will embed itself in the ministry practices.</p> <p>No revisions will be made to this indicator, but steps will be put in place to strengthen the measurement of this engagement.</p>	<p>Since the project inception, 53 MOBSSE and 4 MOSWGA members of staff have been part of inclusive education and gender sensitive pedagogy trainings.</p> <p>The data from midline, comprising two DEO KIIs in Port Loko and Kailahun, demonstrates a good level of awareness and positive attitudes towards inclusive education teaching practices amongst government officials at the district level.</p>
<p>Output 4.2: # of 'Learning events' consortium partners share evidence and</p>	<p>This indicator relates to the sustainability outcome (outcome 3) at the school and system level as this shares best practice and</p>	<p>Based on the project monitoring data, we have run 5 district learning events since the beginning of the GATE GEC project. The project is also planning a</p>

<p>learning from the GATE GEC project with key educational stakeholders</p>	<p>evidence with stakeholders. These activities will raise awareness of issues about marginalised girls and disabled children, what can be done to support them in school. Dialogue on disability issues at community level will further support children with disabilities to attend school, learn and successfully.</p> <p>By gaining support and buy-in with key decision makers ensures continuation of the aims of the project after it has finished.</p> <p>No revisions are to be made to this indicator.</p>	<p>national learning event in Summer 2020.</p> <p>These meetings, have allowed the project to identify and share instances of good practice and discuss ways in which they can be applied and replicated in different contexts. This has enabled us to facilitate dialogue and create opportunities for collaboration for example with the TSC and organisations like GLADI and Leh We Learn. This has been intrinsic in directing project activities and schools. This engagement will continue as we process, in order to promote sustainable change by creating opportunities to build and strengthen longer-term networks.</p>
<p>Output 4.3: # of MOBSSE and MSWGCA officials supporting joint monitoring visits</p>	<p>This indicator contributes to Intermediate Outcome 5 - increased engagement with MOBSSE and MSWGCA officials and other education actors. Joint Monitoring in particular allows the Ministry to see first-hand the project implementation and hear from the beneficiaries and stakeholders of the effect the project is having. This trip allows knowledge sharing of the Ministry in giving the GATE-GEC recommendations and of the Ministry feeding back what they have seen from the project. On top of this, the Joint Monitoring visit allows the Ministry staff to feel closer to the project and take ownership of certain elements. All of this ultimately aids with the sustainability of the project.</p> <p>At present, no revisions will be made to this indicators.</p>	<p>The programme has had one joint monitoring visit. This visit took place in February 2020. Two MOBSSE and MSWGCA officials were involved, and two TSC members were also involved.</p> <p>There was an expectation to have more joint monitoring visits over the course of 2018/2019 (May/June), once the new government was in place, and new Ministry of Education came on board. However, as they were becoming further acquainted with processes, it was felt that the primary focus should on setting up of the GATE-GEC and GLADI national steering committee which commenced in the last quarter of 2018 and has continued since. There is an expectation to continue the joint monitoring visits during the remainder of the project.</p>

Table 118.: Output indicator issues

Logframe Output Indicator	Issues with the means of verification/sources and the collection frequency, or the indicator in general?	Changes/additions
Number and Indicator wording	E.g. inappropriate wording, irrelevant sources, or wrong assumptions etc. Was data collection too frequent or	E.g. change wording, add or remove sources, increase/decrease frequency of data collection; or leave as is.

	too far between? Or no issues?	
Output 1: Marginalised girls and children with disabilities, and their parents/caregivers are provided support for beneficiaries, to attend and learn through PSS, to JSS and JSS to post JSS.		
Output 1.1: % of the GEC cohort receiving bursaries (disaggregate the data by gender, disability and type (severity), age (grade) and geographical location.)	No issues have been identified and the indicator will not be amended	
Output 1.2: Average attendance rates (%) of GATE GEC cohort in study groups	The project is aware that they need to increase their frequency of monitoring data collection. Due to activities including the reverification and VSLAs taking priority, the project has now identified a proposal to ensure enough data is gathered to provide a good evidence base.	Training for head teachers should be done by GATE-GEC on attendance record-keeping.
Output 1.3: % of VSLA members reporting utilizing some of their loans on education needs for a child		In addition to this indicator, it is recommended that the GATE-GEC project collect data on the number of beneficiaries families that have been targeted for the project's VSLA programme so that data can be disaggregated for analysis at endline.
Output 1.4: % of School Management Committees (SMCs) in Primary Schools that have developed an annual school development plan.	It is recommended that the project strengthen measurement of the impact of SMC/BoGs in the primary schools.	Develop a tool to capture the notes from the meeting with them and review on a quarterly basis. We have to be mindful the issue of budget
Output 1.5: % of targeted Board of Governors (BoGs) in Junior Secondary schools that have developed a school action plan	It is recommended that the project strengthen measurement of the impact of SMC/BoGs in the junior schools.	Develop a tool to capture the notes from the meeting with them and review on a quarterly basis. We have to be mindful the issue of budget
Output 1.6: # of GATE GEC Children with disabilities (CWDs) receiving assistive devices and individualised treatments (disaggregated by gender, age and type of disability)	No issues have been identified and the indicator will not be amended	
Output 1.7: # of Community Based Rehabilitation Volunteers (CBRVs) actively engaged in the	No issues have been identified and the indicator will not be amended	

programme in supporting children with disabilities and their families in the project into education		
Output 2: Increased number of skilled PVs, LAs/STs (who support the cohort beneficiaries) to improve learning of marginalised girls and children with disabilities		
Output 2.1: # of Programme Volunteers (PVs) engaged in the GATE GEC project	No issues have been identified and the indicator will not be amended	
Output 2.2: % of Learning Assistants (LAs) passing the marked assignment	As the LAs are now STs in the project, we would propose removing this indicator entirely, or replacing it with an indicator that captures the # of LAs/STs engaged in the GATE GEC project.	Replace with an indicator that captures the # of LAs/STs engaged in the GATE GEC project. "Number of STs actively engaged in school experiences in the primary schools"
Output 2.3: % of Student teachers completing teacher training college course (cohort 1 and 2 (GEC 1) and cohort 3 (GATE GEC)	No issues have been identified and the indicator will not be amended	
Output 2.4: % of GEC beneficiaries reporting positive perceptions of PVs teaching skills and support in the classroom	No issues have been identified and the indicator will not be amended	
Output 2.5: % of PVs recorded to have attended teacher learning circles on a quarterly basis	No issues have been identified and the indicator will not be amended	
Output 2.6: % of PVs recorded to have attended at least one coaching observation session in a quarterly basis (disaggregated by gender)	No issues have been identified and the indicator will not be amended	
Output 2.7: % of PVs reporting positive use of at least 3 (three) key teaching skills during coaching/observation sessions	No issues have been identified and the indicator will not be amended	
Output 3: Marginalised girls and children with disabilities are supported to learn in a safe and inclusive learning environment		
Output 3.1: % of targeted JSS school stakeholders involved in the scorecarding process at the beginning of the school year		It has been recommended that an increase monitoring of scorecarding activities to facilitate assessment of impact and reach. The project is currently exploring monitoring options including involving local community structures in monitoring the implementation of the actions plans.

Output 3.2: # of score carding action plans developed by targeted JSS school stakeholders on an annual basis		Increase monitoring of score carding activities to facilitate assessment of impact and reach. The project is already capturing progress on plans and actions developed during the scorecarding activity through a scorecarding database. The project is also exploring monitoring options including involving local community structures in monitoring the implementation of the actions plans.
Output 3.3: Of beneficiaries who are aware of a suggestion box, % who have used it (or know someone who has)	No issues have been identified and the indicator will not be amended	
Output 3.4: # of schools that are adapted to be disability friendly (model schools).	No issues have been identified and the indicator will not be amended	
Output 4: Programme evidence and learning is shared with key educational decision makers and actors to influence the Sierra Leonean Education sector		
Output 4.1: # of MOBSSE and MSWGCA officials participating in trainings on inclusive education and gender sensitive pedagogical teaching practices.		The midline proposed including qualitative data collection with MSWGCA and the TSC at the national level, and local MBSSE officials. The project accepts this recommendation and will identify an appropriate tool, even though partners already capture some of this information as part of their monthly activity report, a tool can support gathering this data on a consistent basis.
Output 4.2: # of 'Learning events' consortium partners share evidence and learning from the GATE GEC project with key educational stakeholders	No issues have been identified and the indicator will not be amended	
Output 4.3: # of MOBSSE and MSWGCA officials supporting joint monitoring visits	No issues have been identified and the indicator will not be amended	

Annex 9: Beneficiaries tables

This annex should be completed by the project.

Describe the project's primary target groups in terms of age range, grades, country/region, characteristics, and expected exposure to interventions over the course of the project.

The project's primary target are girls in primary (PI-6) and junior secondary school (JSSI-3) in Kenema, Kailahun, Kono, Port Loko, Karene and Moyamba. Their age ranges from 6 to 20 years old. The characteristics of these primary target groups: 33% have a disability (according to Washington Group Questions), 4% have lost both parents and 27% have lost one parent, 30% of households can only afford food some of the time, 55% of households own land and 65% of households own livestock. Beneficiaries are expected to be exposed to, at minimum, study groups twice a week for an hour taught by trained PVs. If they have a disability, they will receive additional interventions with access to a CBRV, and a smaller expected exposure with 600 receiving assistive devices and 18 adapted schools. In addition, varying exposure to STs, scorecarding, and their households via VSLAs.

Provide the target number of girls' beneficiaries (direct learning and transition beneficiaries) and the monitoring data that support this number (for example, in-school population numbers, number of schools, number of communities etc.). Describe the method for calculating the number, any assumptions made.

The target number of girls' and children with disabilities beneficiaries that we are supporting during the 2019-2020 academic year is 2,277 (based on the annual reverification dataset). The number we support of direct learning and transition beneficiaries is 1670 in 378 schools across 5 districts and 249 communities.

Describe how the project defines educational marginalisation for its context and how this definition has been applied to selecting beneficiaries. What proportion of direct beneficiaries are estimated as still meeting this definition of educational marginalisation (if known) and how has this been verified? (See GESI addendum for Midline Template - Dec 2018 for the FM marginalisation framework and terminology): *Our beneficiaries are girls and CWDs from rural areas, from poor background, orphans or living with single parent, living with extended family, or parent with disabilities. These universal and contextual characteristics relate/interact with cultural, structural and systemic barriers which negatively influence the learning outcome of our beneficiaries. Capturing information on the economic, social and cultural status of our cohort, we are better able to understand the level of need of the beneficiaries and their families. It is recognised that although due to the nature of this programme, and tracking a cohort of the GEC 1 and transition phases, our cohort of children are still some of the most marginalised, however as they have received exposure to the project for a number of years, there may well be more marginalised children that are in need of this support. The project continues to support these children through other mechanism including the study groups, scorecarding process, access to the suggestions boxes and engaging in information we roll out through our sensitisation campaigns.*

From our verification, we know that at least 70% still meet this (are CWD, orphans, living with one parent) as we ask these questions in our yearly verification. It is likely this number is higher.

Are boys receiving project interventions? How are these boys selected?

Many of the boys supported by the project are a part of our cohort of children with disabilities. Both boys and girls have been supported through our inclusive education component, there are also boys that have been supported as part of the study groups. These boys are indirect beneficiaries and are not a part of the cohort of children with disabilities. The boys that do not have disabilities, and are attending the study groups, are identified by the PVs (teachers) through their individual assessments based on the level of need, barriers and learning results of these students. The children that are having difficulty in their learning are selected as learning beneficiaries.

Present and justify any difference to baseline.

Difference to baseline:

For the direct learning beneficiaries at baseline this was 6585 total and 2277 at midline (girls and children with disabilities). This includes 5754 girls and at midline is 1670 girls, this figure includes both girls with and without disabilities. For learning beneficiaries (boys) this was 832 at baseline and is now 607. This is due to our way of tracking beneficiaries in which we track the same cohort through the project, thus this number will decrease as beneficiaries transition out of the project. The breakdowns by subgroups have also changed, reflecting this change with lower numbers overall.

Broader student beneficiaries (boys) has increased from baseline from 58,157 to 58,532 and the broader student beneficiaries (girls) has increased from 57,019 to 57,871. This is due to our follow the girl approach where if our beneficiaries move the project moves with them and supports the new school they attend (if in project districts), therefore has increased.

At baseline, 1202 PVs were predicted to be trained, the actual number is 1359 and 467 not 436 predicted at baseline have been trained. This is due to our increased number of schools. There are less STs than predicted 228 and not the predicted 250 due to turnover (moving to different communities, having families, getting married).

The broader community beneficiaries is less than expected at baseline which was 2,625 VSLAs and this is currently 1875 as there are still VSLAs to set up and train.

Please fill in the tables below. Individuals included in the project’s target group should be direct beneficiaries of the project.

Table 30: Direct beneficiaries

Beneficiary type	Total project number	Total number of girls targeted for learning outcomes that the project has reached by Endline	Comments
Direct learning beneficiaries (girls) – girls in the intervention group who are specifically expected to achieve learning outcomes in line with targets. If relevant, please disaggregate girls with disabilities in this overall number.	As of 2019 reverification data, 1670 girls are direct learning beneficiaries (according to the 2019 reverification), of which 1122 do not have disabilities and 548 do have disabilities.	5754 girls (this includes the number of beneficiaries we support since the beginning of the GATE GEC project from the 2017 reverification), of this 4971 do not have disabilities and 783 do have disabilities	<p>This data has been captured from our project’s annual reverification phase from September 2019-January 2019. This process allows us to track the transition of our GATE beneficiaries and determine which of the cohort will continue to receive support throughout the academic year. It also allows us to conduct an initial scoping of beneficiaries with disabilities using the Washington group questions to determine the numbers of children with disabilities we may be supporting, this is further investigated by our IEDOs through a rigorous screening process determine the type, degree and need of the disability.</p> <p>The methodology involved district based project offices interviewing beneficiaries and their families in schools between the beginning of the academic year to January the following term, allowing for extra time where children are still returning to school and awaiting their exam results to determine transition (particularly in the case of our JSS 3 cohort who receive results in January each year). The data was gathered on a tablet using the KoboCollect platform.</p>

Table 31: Other beneficiaries

Beneficiary type	Number	Comments
Learning beneficiaries (boys) – as above, but specifically counting boys who will get the same exposure and therefore be expected to also achieve learning gains, if applicable.	607 boys in total (391 do not have a disability, and 426 have a disability)	
Broader student beneficiaries (boys) – boys who will benefit from the interventions in a less direct way, and therefore may benefit from aspects such as attitudinal change, etc. but not necessarily achieve improvements in learning outcomes.	58532 boys (across all the GATE GEC schools)	<p>This figure is taken from the project 2017/2018 school verification dataset. As with the reverification phase, we conducted interviews with Head teachers in each of the GATE GEC schools. Using the school records, they were able to share details about the numbers and types of children in school. The numbers provided reflect the overall school based numbers with the assumption that the project’s support/capacity development provided, although specific to a GATE GEC cohort, is also accessible by other children in the schools i.e. PVs receiving trainings, study group sessions, safeguarding feedback mechanisms in place, school sensitisations and awareness raising, that all the children in the school are indirectly benefitting from the project.</p> <p>As a project, we developed a proposal to capture the impact on some of our indirect beneficiaries (accessing the study groups) in order for us to understand our impact on a whole school-based approach (this involved gathering perceptions and feelings of learning and teaching within these groups). Monitoring tools and data collection took place after the midline data collection phase. Although, these beneficiaries are not currently being monitored for learning outcomes.</p>
Broader student beneficiaries (girls) – girls who will benefit from the interventions in a less direct way, and therefore may benefit from aspects such as attitudinal change, etc. but not necessarily achieve improvements in learning outcomes.	57871 girls (across all the GATE GEC schools)	<p>This figure is taken from our 2017/2018 school verification dataset. As with the reverification phase, we conducted interviews with Head teachers in each of the GATE GEC schools. Using the school records they were able to share details about the numbers and types of children in school. The numbers provided reflect the overall school based numbers with the assumption that the project’s support/capacity development provided, although specific to a GATE GEC cohort, is also accessible by other children in the schools i.e. PVs receiving trainings, study group sessions, safeguarding feedback mechanisms in place, school sensitisations and awareness raising, that all the children in the school are indirectly benefitting from the project.</p> <p>As a project, we developed a proposal to capture the impact on some of our indirect beneficiaries (accessing the study groups) in order for us to understand our impact on a whole school-based approach (this involved gathering perceptions and feelings of learning and teaching within these groups). Monitoring tools and data collection took place after the midline data collection phase. Although, these beneficiaries are not currently being monitored for learning outcomes.</p>
Teacher beneficiaries – number of teachers who benefit from training or related interventions. If possible /applicable, please disaggregate by gender and type of training, with the comments	2,059 in total	The total number of teaching staff both qualified and in the process of being qualified includes our teachers (Programme Volunteers), Head teachers, Student teachers, and Itinerant teachers.

<p>box used to describe the type of training provided.</p>	<p>1359 Programme Volunteers/Study group teachers (188 are female and 1171 are male). <i>29 of these PVs, also support STs as Practice Study Mentors</i> 228 LAs/STs (all female) 467 Headteachers 5 Itinerant teachers</p>	<p>As part of our 2019 reverification phase, we conducted a Programme Volunteer (project teachers) profiling to better understand their qualifications, how they support the project, knowledge and skills base, area of need and feedback of their experiences of the project. This data will be used to inform the project design, specifically the upcoming PV trainings and be fed back to the head teachers in schools to inform the school plans and processes for supporting teachers. PVs have received PV training addressing teaching pedagogical practices, enhancing literacy & numeracy knowledge base and skills, gender responsive pedagogy and assessing learning and positive discipline. In addition to developing further understanding of inclusive education</p> <p>Learning Assistants have supported distance study to enter teacher college and become Student Teachers and practice placements (School experiences) in community primary schools in the project districts. These STs support teachers and children and gain practical experience in the teaching environment to support them towards their qualification. Although they are not formally teachers, they still support the teachers in their teaching capacities and the project felt should be reflected accordingly here.</p> <p>Head teachers (former teachers) have also received support through the project in the form of participating in the PV training, supporting teachers in their schools in a mentoring role, undertaking study group observations and supporting teacher in preparing continuous professional development (CPD) tools, sharing returning to school sensitisation messaging, facilitating and participating in steering meetings with the SMCs/BOGs and ensuring the effective implementation of scorecarding action plans are effectively implemented in schools.</p> <p>The itinerant teachers have received support through training by inclusive experts on inclusive pedagogy, interactions with CWDs and how to support and capacity build teachers. The ITs support in the form of classroom management and pedagogy through supporting teachers to identify children with learning difficulties and better understanding their needs, supporting these teachers with the development and implementation of individual education plans (IEPs)for the children identified. They also have the role of providing one on one coaching after classroom observations in a mentoring capacity, as well as supporting parents of children with disabilities and other stakeholders who are also involved in the implementation of the IEPs through regular and ongoing engagement. The ITs are all men and 2 have a visual impairment themselves.</p>
<p>Broader community beneficiaries (adults) – adults who benefit from broader interventions, such as community messaging /dialogues,</p>	<p>6,110 in total Including 138 CBRVs, 1875 individuals of families supported</p>	<p>The project works with Community Based Rehabilitation Volunteers (CBRVs) who have received ongoing trainings to support them in their roles as CBRVs. They</p>

<p>community advocacy, economic empowerment interventions, etc.</p>	<p>through the VSLA so far, and 4097 SMC members</p>	<p>are responsible for supporting the IEDOs with the screening of CWDs, and providing assistive devices.</p> <p>They also provide ongoing support to Children with disabilities in the project ranging from accompanying them to school, supporting them in the classroom and providing mentorship to the children with disabilities. They also hold community-based awareness raising sessions to promote education for CWDs.</p> <p>During the school verification process Head Teachers were asked to provide the number of SMC members in their school. According to this data, there are a total of 4,097 SMC members operating across the 467 GATE-GEC schools (an average of 8.8).</p> <p>The project set-up 125 VSLA groups with approximately 25 members per group – these are mixture of GATE GEC cohort families, and non-GATE GEC families. So far, a total of 1875 community members have benefitted from membership of these groups over the past years. It is expected that by the end of this project, this figure should have doubled. The groups are provided advice and guidance on setting up groups, ongoing on-going support ensuring the groups run effectively, and have access to resource and tools to support them in this activity.</p>
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- Tables 32-35 provide different ways of defining and identifying the project’s target groups. They each refer to the same total number of girls, but use different definitions and categories. These are girls who can be counted and have regular involvement with project activities.
- The total number of girls in the last row of Tables 32-35 should be the same – these are just different ways of identifying and describing the girls included in the sample.

Table 1: Target groups - by school

School Age	Project definition of target group (Tick where appropriate)	Number targeted through project interventions	Sample size of target group at Midline
Lower primary (P1 – P3)	✓	117	241
Upper primary (P4-P6)	✓	258	
Lower secondary (JSS 1-3)	✓	1295	446
Upper secondary	n/a	n/a	N/A
Total:		1670	687

Table 2: Target groups - by age

Age Groups	Project definition of target group (Tick where appropriate)	Number targeted through project interventions	Sample size of target group at Midline
Aged 5	✓	0 (%)	0
Aged 6-8 (% aged 6-8)	✓	28 (1.7%)	18
Aged 9-11 (% aged 9-11)	✓	162 (9.7%)	138
Aged 12-13 (% aged 12-13)	✓	186 (11.1%)	237
Aged 14-15 (% aged 14-15)	✓	521 (31.2%)	218
Aged 16-17 (% aged 16-17)	✓	611 (36.6%)	61
Aged 18-19 (% aged 18-19)	✓	154 (9.2%)	11
Aged 20+ (% aged 20 and over)	✓	7 (0.4%)	3
Total:		1670	687

Table 3: Target groups - by sub group

Social Groups	Project definition of target group (Tick where appropriate)	Number targeted through project interventions	Sample size of target group at Midline
Disabled girls (please disaggregate by domain of difficulty)	✓	<p>548 (communicating: 13%, hearing: 36%, remembering or concentrating: 14%, seeing: 35%, self-care: 8%, walking or climbing steps: 22% - these overlap as beneficiaries can have multiple impairments)</p> <p>This is the total number of beneficiaries identified as a child with disability under GEC 1, as recorded in the reverification data. Each beneficiary was also asked the Washington Group Short Set questions to ascertain what type of impairment they have, but this should be treated as an initial screening process and does not give definitive data on type of disability. This will be ascertained during the follow-up medical assessment.</p>	
Orphaned girls	✓	633	
Pastoralist girls			
Child labourers			
Poor girls	✓	<p>1670</p> <p>We would contend that all GATE-GEC beneficiaries are from low-income and marginalised backgrounds, recognising that GATE-GEC beneficiaries have had the</p>	687

Social Groups	Project definition of target group (Tick where appropriate)	Number targeted through project interventions	Sample size of target group at Midline
		advantage of 3-4 years of GEC support under the previous phase. Furthermore, our cohort can come under a multiple number of these social groups and the total is not absolute for each.	
Other (please describe)			
Total:		1670	N/A

Table 4: Target groups - by school status

Educational sub-groups	Project definition of target group (Tick where appropriate)	Number targeted through project interventions	Sample size of target group at Midline
Out-of-school girls: have never attended school		0	
Out-of-school girls: have attended school, but dropped out		0	
Girls in-school	✓	1670	687
Total:		1670	687

Once the project has provided information as per the guidance box and tables 30-35 above, the External Evaluator must:

- Review the numbers and methodology proposed by the project. Comment on the counting methodology, the assumptions that are made, the expected quality of the data underpinning the final numbers (e.g. project own monitoring data and government data).
- Was data collected, e.g. in the school survey, that enables to verify any of the assumptions made by the project in calculating the beneficiary numbers? Examples of such data would be: size and number of communities, size and number of schools, size and number of classrooms, size and numbers of girls clubs, number of disabled girls, number of girls at risk of dropping from school, dropouts in the last year etc. Present any of these data and compare them with the project. monitoring data. You can use the sample data collected and presented in Annex 3 to elaborate.
- When the available evidence is considered, do the proposed beneficiary numbers look reliable? Why yes or why not?

Table 36: Beneficiaries matrix

Outcomes	Direct beneficiaries			Indirect beneficiaries				
	In-school girls (6-10 grade)	OSG (6-9 years)	OSG (18-25)	In-school boys	HT/Teachers	Parents	SMC/PTA	Local government
Learning	✓			✓	✓	✓		
Transition	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Sustainability	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
IO 1: Attendance					✓	✓		
IO 2: Self-esteem and empowerment	✓	✓	✓					
IO3: Parental engagement	✓	✓	✓			✓		
IO4: Quality of teaching	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
IO5: School management and governance	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓

Annex 10: MEL Framework

The MEL Framework is included in Word format.

Annex 11: External Evaluator’s Inception Report

The midline Inception Report is included as a PDF.

Annex 12: Data collection tools used for Midline

The qualitative and quantitative data collection tools are attached in Excel and Word formats, as applicable.

Two English language transcripts have been provided.

Annex 13: Datasets, codebooks and programs

The codebooks and anonymised merged dataset are included in Excel format.

Annex 14: Learning test pilot and calibration

At baseline, two versions of each learning assessment were piloted and calibrated. The second version of each of the learning assessments was used at midline.

The method of data collection for the learning assessments differed at midline to baseline. At baseline, all learning assessments were administered orally by enumerators and the results recorded on paper and later manually input in electronic format. At midline, the learning assessments were also administered orally, but they were marked on-the-spot by the enumerators in the software Tangerine. This software was developed by RTI for use with EGRA/EGMA.

At endline a new version of the learning assessments will need to be piloted and calibrated.

Details of the subtasks included in each learning assessment are in Annex 3. Annex 3 also includes challenges in data collection.

Details of marks available and how scores were calculated are available in Chapter 3.

Annex 15: Sampling Framework

The sampling framework is included in Excel format.

Annex 16: External Evaluator declaration

Name of Project: Girls' Access to Education (GATE)

Name of External Evaluator: Jigsaw Consult

Contact Information for External Evaluator: p.dhillon@jigsawconsult.com

Names of all members of the evaluation team: Preeti Dhillon, Julia Pacitto, Joel Mitchell

I, Preeti Dhillon certify that the independent evaluation has been conducted in line with the Terms of Reference and other requirements received.

Specifically:

- All of the quantitative data was collected independently (Initials: PD)
- All data analysis was conducted independently and provides a fair and consistent representation of progress (Initials: PD)

- Data quality assurance and verification mechanisms agreed in the terms of reference with the project have been soundly followed (Initials: PD)
- The recipient has not fundamentally altered or misrepresented the nature of the analysis originally provided by Jigsaw Consult (Initials: PD)
- All child protection protocols and guidance have been followed (Initials: PD)
- Data has been anonymised, treated confidentially and stored safely, in line with the GEC data protection and ethics protocols (Initials: PD)

P. Dhillon

(Name)

Jigsaw Consult

(Company)

29 January 2020

(Date)

Annex 17: Project Management Response

This annex should be completed by the project.

This annex gives the project the chance to prepare a short and concise management response to the evaluation report before the report is published.

What is the project's response to the key findings in the report? Make sure to refer to main conclusions (Section 6)

- This is an opportunity to describe where the project feels the evaluation findings have confirmed or challenged existing understanding and/or added nuance to what was already known. Have findings shed new light on relationships between outputs, intermediate outcomes, and outcomes and the significance of barriers for certain groups of children – and how these can be overcome?
- This should include critical analysis and reflection on the project theory of change and the assumptions that underpin it.

Project response: COVID-19

Ahead of responding to the midline findings, the project would like to highlight the impact of the existing global situation of COVID-19 and response taking place in Sierra Leone. Due to COVID-19, the Government of Sierra Leone closed all schools and tertiary institutions as of 31 March. It is uncertain whether the schools will reopen after the second term break. The possible protracted closure of the schools, as well as stringent movement restrictions, has

already impacted the project's ability to implement activities planned for Q12 such score-carding activities, study groups, and capacity building meetings for SMCs and BoGs. The closure of schools also halted the ST school placements, study sessions with the PSMs and the postponement of April's residential study session and module 3 exams. A short-term COVID-19 response plan is currently being discussed with the Fund Manager to ensure the project's implementation is adapted in response to the changing context, and the Education Needs Assessment planned for May, will provide the project with data and evidence to support the medium to long term response plan to COVID-19.

Project response to midline learning rates

The GATE GEC project is surprised by the learning rates overall. There continues to be a clear need to support these children with advanced literacy and numeracy skills as these results were quite poor overall. The findings clearly evidence a need for the project to assess the impact of current interventions and assess whether such interventions are effective. Re-examination of the project's ToC and interrogating the validity of any assumptions made based on these midline findings, will determine whether there are implicit assumptions that might not hold in the current context. For example, examining whether higher rates of attendance at school, targeted interventions in the form of study groups, and improved self-esteem and confidence, leads to improved learning outcomes.

Examining the quality of teaching and learning of numeracy (where learning scores are particularly low) and literacy during the study groups through the CPD component, and ongoing monitoring is important. The assumption is that through these groups, children will have a space for more targeted support, in addition to what they are taught in their normal classes, providing them with the additional knowledge, understanding, confidence and opportunity to improve their learning outcomes and transition. The project accepts that learning of students is impacted by the quality of teaching provided in the classroom, as is evidenced from research around the world. Although project monitoring has highlighted some successes in changes to pedagogies used in the teaching, the midline highlights the need for the project to examine this further in light of the poor learning outcomes. In order to explore the teaching and understand where some barriers may lie, the project will look to explore this further, from an initial review, we may consider exploring the following through our ongoing monitoring, a) do PVs have the belief they can use what they learn in this training), b) is the content of the training conducive to improve numeracy/literacy c) can PVs apply what they learn in the training in the numeracy/literacy lessons, d) can the PV fit what they learn with what they have to teach according to the national curriculum and national examination requirements? e) does it effectively address the learning needs of the beneficiaries for numeracy and literacy, f) what is the level of implementation and embedding in normal lessons and study groups? g) identify what barriers are the PVs experiencing with the embedding of the advocated pedagogies; h) explore issues around the use of a non-standard curriculum and how the midline learning assessments during a midline compares to that taught in the classroom. It would also be useful to explore the differences between qualified and non-qualified teachers

The project may also consider a comparison with the teaching of learning of 'normal' lessons: what learning opportunities are there for numeracy and literacy and to explore what is being taught, and how? We also want to compare our PVs lessons with lessons from the control group and identify areas of best practices that our schools can also adopt.

The midline findings also highlight regional variations with some districts doing better than others. The project was already aware of these disparities across the districts, and proposes to explore the practices taking place in these districts to try and understand better "what works, how, in which conditions, to what extent, in what contexts and for whom", and then compare with the practices of districts that did not do well. This can also help us identify further barriers to learning. It will allow us to better tailor the interventions and type of support provided accordingly.

The project accepts there is considerable work to be done to respond to these findings, and this will be explored further with the wider consortium to identify proposed adaptations. Therefore project interventions (like the study groups, building the capacity of teachers to effectively teach children these advanced literacy and numeracy skills and additional support provided by female student teachers in primary schools) will need to be reviewed as part of

the midline after action review and as part of the project RAM, and steps will need to be taken to adapt or re-design project interventions to better impact on the learning of our cohort as we move towards the endline, leading to children achieving better learning outcomes as they progress throughout school.

Although the project recognises that certain adaptations may be required around the project interventions, there are also other factors that are outside of the project's control, that should also be considered during the review of the midline findings. The project also recognises the systemic issue that children across SLE are not learning as expected according to their age and grade and that has been affecting the education sector since before the start of the FSQE. It may be helpful to explore the impact of the FSQE policy particularly in relation to the government and community-based schools, and whether this may have had an adverse effect on the children and the schools. The project will undertake a further analysis of the midline dataset, to better understand where the children in the community schools were performing worse than the ones in the government schools at both intervention and control.

It is also important to examine the context of some of the control groups, as there may be some factors that may lead to contamination – this has also been highlighted in the midline findings, however it may be useful to explore these factors during the endline evaluation phase to give us a clear picture of variables involved with the intervention and comparable groups. For example, did these groups take part in other intervention programmes (as the EE noted some control groups were also involved in study groups)? Did our PVs miss out on other training because they were part of the GEC programme? For example, did some training take place to improve the teaching of numeracy but that our PVs were not part of?

Project response to midline transition rates

The midline transition rates across the project remain high which is generally positive. In particular, the midline and project findings highlight the importance and the need to continue reinforcing the work on inclusive education and children with disabilities. It is positive to see the findings that disability is not seen a major barrier, this highlights the importance in support provided by the CBRVs in accessing and remaining in schools.

The midline findings suggest that the VSLA component may also be contributing to the consistently higher transition rates. Through the VSLA component the project ensured that the 'most marginalised' households were identified to be supported with VSLAs (this was part of the identifying criteria for the selection of these groups) particularly as it has been highlighted that a low proportion of households are able to fund their children's education costs. Since the VSLA intervention has been rolled out, the findings are positive both in that VSLA members reporting they were more likely to use their finances to support the education of the children.

Although transition rates were broadly high, there were some disparities across the districts. The project will look to explore and further interrogate the midline data on the differences in the district where districts (Port Loko and Kailahun) have the lowest successful transition (mainly at JSS). The project will also aim to understand why some districts, such as Kenema and Moyamba, have better successful transition rates. It may also be important to explore the inconsistencies with the roll out of FQSE, as the community schools in particular have been the most impacted as they are not receiving any government support and therefore leading to drop outs of children/not being enrolled or able to continue on in education. As 16 of the 19 community schools (in the sample) have applied to be government schools, we are hoping that enrolment numbers will improve for these schools. It is recognised that the project will need to continue to support the community school HTs/SMC/BOGs in following up on the government applications and understand how many schools that are now government-assisted schools have actually received Ministry support. The project also accepts the EE's suggestion that the high transition rate may partly be due to the definition of 'successful transition', as repetition is deemed as successful transition. The

project would like to examine what this really means for the project. We are aware that repetition is systemic in the Sierra Leonean education system and it is therefore appropriate to classify it as a successful transition, but this prevents being able to assess which students are repeating due to poor performance versus systemic barriers to transition. The project will therefore consider what we can do better understand more about those repeating, and the decision making involved in requiring children to repeat, with the possibility of undertaking an in-depth analysis to better understand whether repetition is actually systematic or due to poor performance. It may also be useful for the project to explore of these children repeating, we do not have any figures in how many children are repeating more than once the same year/in their schooling career.

Project response on midline sustainability

There is evidence from the midline that positive work has been done in this area, but the project accepts more still needs to be at each level to ensure that the project is sustainable. Although, the target for the system level was met, the targets at community and school level were not, with a score of “emerging” rather than “becoming established”. The project will need to enhance work in all three levels as it moves into the last year of the intervention. There is particularly a need for continued efforts around sustainable incomes for the households of our beneficiaries as affordability of education, hunger of beneficiaries and poverty is a continued barrier to education. There is also the need to explore further opportunities for engagement with ministry at the national level, which may involve new multi-sectorial pathways and ways of working

Community: The project agrees with the midline findings that although community level awareness of the importance of education is regarded as high, and now through the economic empowerment component, the tangible contribution that households allocate to their child’s education is increasing (based on findings from the VSLAs and the use of potential use of finances to support their child’s education), there is still more work to be done. The project accepts that the VSLA component is still becoming more established in the programme, however initial monitoring results both in the evaluation and our project seem to be positive, with some of these established VSLA groups graduating, which should lead to them becoming more self-sustaining. The project will continue to monitor the success of those VSLA groups that have graduated throughout the remainder of the project. There has also been success in the VSLA component through appropriate awareness raising and sensitisation on how savings and household funds should be prioritised to support education. The midline shows prioritisation of caregivers to spend on education and evidence that VSLA members are using their loans to support education. The project monitoring data supports this finding, showing that VSLA members are gaining financial skills, with the saving and budgeting being the most reported skill. There is perhaps some deviation from our internal monitoring and the findings in the midline due to the inability of the midline to determine which were GATE-GEC VSLA members and only having a sample from batch 2 of the VSLAs, which are the more recently established VSLAs and thus less developed than other groups of VSLAs.

The project recognises the findings of the midline that poverty is still a major barrier to education. Financial resources still remain limited in many cases and beneficiaries are experiencing setbacks (hunger, lower learning outcomes) thus continued work needs to be done in this area. The VSLA is contributing to improving financial resources available to these communities, and the project is instituting a livelihoods component this year, to help address this and to help households source a sustainable source of income. It would be good to know how we can enhance this further and improve the impact of this component.

School: There have been some positive steps to improve sustainability at the school level, but we may need to monitor this further and assess what other measures can be developed to support the schools to maintain these activities as the project is coming to an end in July 2021, particularly around key school stakeholders like the HTs and SMC/BOG networks to explore initiatives to support the schools once the project has ended.

The project has been successful in engaging more with the SMCs/BOGs in GATE GEC schools, which has led to improvements in governance structures and developing more accountable mechanisms. Starting from mid-2019 the project has roll out capacity building trainings for SMCs and BOGs members with the aim of strengthening the school management team capacities to provide strategic direction and support to schools in a way that promotes safe quality and inclusive education for all children. The midline recognises that there is limited or anecdotal evidence of the SMCs/BoGs holding schools to account, the project agrees and recognises it needs to strengthen the monitoring of the SMCs and BoGs with a monitoring tool developed to capture this information this year. Similarly, positive work has been conducted with head teacher in ensuring they are engaged with the project, the PVs and inclusive education. The HTs have engaged in trainings and are key in working towards a more inclusive school. When considering whether they are planning to continue with activities after the project, there is enthusiasm for elements of the project; namely study groups. A key perceived barrier by stakeholders in continuing these activities is the cost associated with them. The approach of the project was that the elements of the project became part of the normal school practice and were incorporated into existing structures, so no additional money would be required. There is a need for some additional work to be done to investigate how could they become further embedded into established practices and including these pedagogies in everyday lessons.

An element of these mechanisms for feedback are the score-carding and suggestions boxes. These mechanisms allow students to raise any concerns or improvements for the school and this has shown to have an impact, most notably with beneficiaries reporting that corporal punishment has reduced. This is a key element in creating change at the school level to create change, led by the beneficiaries, in which the children can see change from. The project will work to ensure these mechanisms can be maintained, by ensuring that the process of suggestion boxes is accessible (both in location and in terms of feeling safe) for all children and that members of staff will continue to engage with this element.

The project is continuing to work hard to ensure the STs are enrolled onto the government payroll. The project is not surprised by the outcome of this indicator at midline, as there have been delays out of our control and we continue to advocate for the STs. The ST element is a key success for the project and has enthusiasm with stakeholders, including the government. The project wants to deepen the understanding of this component on both the beneficiaries and the STs themselves to understand the wider impact of this element and understand the STs intended career plans. The project can use previous reports of partners for this to start building this understanding. The project is collaborating with the partners for cohort 1 and 2 to share findings and inputting into tools, to understand the potential for sustainable impact on this element and what the consequences of the delays in being enrolled are having.

The work at the school level will need to be intensified in the last year of this project. Steps to collaborate and connect with other agencies and organisations like Leh Wi Learn will be fundamental in ensuring these changes are sustainable.

System: The project feels it has made positive strides in sustainability at the system level, this is reflected in the target for this being met.

Although the midline suggests the need for joint monitoring to take place. Since data collection took place a successful joint monitoring trip has happened. The GATE-GEC project worked with the Ministry to organise a joint monitoring trip, including collaboration on the aims and approach. The team of four members (MBSSE, Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs and the TSC) were joined with staff from GATE-GEC and travelled to Kenema and Moyamba. The visit allowed the members of the ministry to talk to a range of stakeholders to understand the context of the project and the impact it is having on beneficiaries. The officials themselves noted the need for sustainability of the project activities across the districts and gain support and buy-in from key stakeholders. Further work is being conducted to ensure learnings from the trip are incorporated into the project and to inform the Ministry's work.

The Learning Assistant (LA)/Student Teachers (STs) component of the project has potential to be a replicable model to support women in entering the teaching profession as well as a model to address work force shortages in Sierra Leone. The project has had positive engagement with the Teaching Service Commission who recognised the added value of this intervention and are interested in facilitating the formal enrolment of the Student Teachers in the teacher's workforce and their deployment in the rural areas where they have been already working.

The project accepts that there is still considerable work to be done with the ministry and other key stakeholders to ensure long-term policy changes come into effect to support all children in education. Initial steps have already been taken in engaging these key stakeholders and making them understand their roles and responsibilities to affect wider change. For example, HI has been critical in supporting the Ministry in their development of a national Inclusive Education Policy. The government are currently working with development partners in the establishment of implementation plans to enact this policy. At the district level, there has been a good level of engagement, however national level engagement needs to be ramped up particularly in the remaining time in the project. Work will be done to ensure considerably higher engagement with MBSSE officials at both national and local level. A key focus for the project in engaging the Ministry is to continue the work with the TSC on developing their professional development for teachers. The TSC is currently finalising their national framework and will continue to participate in this.

The project is also exploring opportunities in following a multi-sectoral approach to achieving change, it will better the lives of our cohort as well as other children across Sierra Leone. An avenue to pursue with this, is to work with our partners in collaboration with the teacher colleges to either incorporate successful components of the project into their teaching training or to use the approaches of the project as an additional CPD component.

What is the project’s response to the conclusions and recommendations in the report?

- The management response should respond to the each of the External Evaluator’s recommendations that are relevant to the grantee organisation (see Section 6). The response should make clear what changes and adaptations to implementation will be proposed as a result of the recommendations and which ones are not considered appropriate, providing a clear explanation why.
- Does the external evaluator’s analysis of the projects’ approach to gender, social inclusion and disability correspond to the projects’ ambitions and objectives? Please respond to opportunities highlighted by the evaluator to be more transformative in your approach.

Project responses:

Recommendations on attendance

Recommendation	Programme response
<p>Conduct training for head teachers on attendance record-keeping. Data from this source was of very poor quality, indicating low skill levels amongst head teachers in attendance record-keeping.</p>	<p>Although attendance broadly remains high, the project agrees there is a need to have consistent attendance record keeping within the schools, including the need for further training for Head Teachers and teachers on attendance recordkeeping to ensure data gathered during monitoring and evaluation points is rigorous. Working in collaboration with the ministry, the project will develop a training specific to monitoring attendance in a coherent way. This will be in place for the final academic school of the project.</p>
<p>To address the issue of hunger as a barrier to attendance, establish an initiative to combat this issue, either through a school-wide or study group specific activity is recommended to improve the efficacy of the study groups.</p>	<p>The project accepts that these barriers exist in the Sierra Leonean context, however, feel that addressing a ‘hunger initiative’ would be beyond the scope of the project. However, it is worth noting challenges with hunger have been included in SMC/BoG action plans, with this being noted as a priority across many schools/communities. Thus, the project has been attempting to support mitigation</p>

	<p>measures in this space using community initiatives and resourcing.</p>
<p>To include information on the importance of school attendance for pregnant girls to community sensitisation sessions, in order to encourage changes in community behaviours relating to the lifting of the ban on pregnant girls attending school by the government of Sierra Leone,</p>	<p>Community sensitization activity includes information on the importance of attendance and retention in school, which includes common reasons for drop-out (such as pregnancy); and reiterating government messages on girls’ attendance in school, even if pregnant. We will continue our messaging at the community level; and include this into our gender mainstreaming activity in shifting social norms.</p>
<p>Recommendation on teaching quality and accountability within schools</p>	
<p>In community awareness raising sessions with caregivers, include explicit discussion of what it looks like to include children in decision-making with regards to education. This could cover both the types of decisions (to attend, to continue from one year to the next, until what age, what to study), and the form of inclusion (open communication)</p>	<p>This is currently in process through our score-carding activity.</p> <p>The project staff and the community-based roving volunteers (CBRVs) have been engaging caregivers in sensitization activities around the importance of education for all children. In addition, the Itinerant Teachers are also working with caregivers of children with learning difficulties to enhance their capacities in support children learning. The project will mainstream the importance of including children in decision-making during engagements with community members and look to include content in our community awareness raising sessions and in VSLAs around children's agency, what this means and positive communications</p>

	strategies to support an open discussion between caregivers and children.
Continue to raise awareness of the rights of children with disabilities.	This is an ongoing priority within the project and continues to be address as part of the existing project implementation activities. The project will continue to ensure inclusive education and the rights of CWDs is recognised for the remainder of the project through continued awareness raising and sensitisation, ongoing engagement with the ministry on the importance of CWDs being in school.
To promote, through the establishment of formal mechanisms, knowledge-sharing between PVs and other teaching staff. This can be achieved in collaboration with school management, who will be responsible for facilitating knowledge-sharing events in their schools. This should include knowledge-sharing of child protection and safeguarding information	The project recognizes this as an ongoing priority and has continued to make positive strides through the roll out of the CPD package which have shown some successful results. The project will continue to ensure this is effectively rolled out, and knowledge sharing takes place with key stakeholders within the schools.
To consider focusing the additional funds repurposed from the bursary activity to enhance activities in the worst-performing regions i.e. Kenema and Port Loko. The project should also consider directing additional funds to households with children in community schools, as these schools do not benefit from the FQSE.	This recommendation is not applicable as all funds from the bursary component were already repurposed (late 2018/early 2019). There aren't any additional funds to repurpose from the bursary component. There is a concern for the worst-performing districts, as well as community schools, but further discussions would

	need to be had with the FM if we/they were to consider repurposing funds from current activity to support the above.
To address the delays to distribution of project stipends or resources and to enhance the monitoring of this distribution. Distribution issues were reported in the provision of assistive devices, and by the CBRV participant and multiple LA/STs.	This is an ongoing priority within the project and continues to be addressed as part of the existing project implementation activities.
To promote model schools through a recruitment drive aimed to attract children with disabilities. It may also be necessary to provide assistance in the form of transportation stipends for children with disabilities, as they may not live in close proximity to a model school.	The project will need to consider this recommendation further. There may be scope to further promote model schools. However, there are concerns as to whether distributing stipends would be feasible, appropriate and permitted by MBSSE, in addition to raising questions around this bring an unsustainable model.
To strengthen the observation and feedback processes for PVs. Project staff should receive specialised training in study group observations and giving effective feedback. Observations should be conducted twice per term for each PV, with on-the-spot feedback following the observation. Future training for PVs should also be tailored to address the enduring gaps in inclusive teaching methods.	This is an ongoing priority within the project and continues to be addressed as part of the existing project implementation activities including the CPD component. The project also recognises that there still needs to be some further work done to ensure that this component is more effective and streamlined across the GATE GEC schools in the remaining time of the project. It will also encourage schools to see the value of how this can support them from a sustainability perspective.

Recommendations on VSLAs and livelihoods component

Recommendation	Programme response
Advance the roll-out of the livelihoods component if possible to promote its establishment before the end of the project.	The project was preparing to roll-out the first round of the livelihood component (trainings and the provision of grants in July/August 2020), however, this activity will now likely be impacted by COVID-19.

	<p>GATE-GEC will be determining how best to manage this component once more is known in relation to the current pandemic and this will be outlined in the project’s workplan.</p>
<p>Establish a system of support for Village Agents. The project will train voluntary Village Agents to support VSLAs after the end of project support. To ensure Village Agents have access to a support system for problem solving and knowledge sharing, the project could establish a network of Village Agents for exchange of information, and/or work with district officials to provide support from the government.</p>	<p>The project accepts this recommendation and plans to link the Village Agents to relevant community, chiefdom and district stakeholders. The workplan and upcoming reporting will reflect this activity accordingly.</p>
<p>VSLAs are a popular model worldwide for economic empowerment, including in Sierra Leone. It is recommended that Plan conduct a literature review of conditions that lead to success of VSLAs in Sierra Leone and similar contexts, and consider engaging a consultant to test the program design in the specific project context (similar to the livelihoods scoping exercise)</p>	<p>The project agrees that the VSLA model is popular, and based on project monitoring data, has been a successful component of the GATE GEC project in supporting families of these groups with financial support, knowledge and skills. Although the project agrees it would be valuable to explore this success further, this will have to be assessed in terms of priority, existing project workplanning and budget available. In addition, the livelihood consultancy has already started to provide insights into the successes and challenges of the VSLAs within the SLE context.</p>
<p>Include a question in the household survey to assess whether a VSLA caregivers participate in was started by Action Aid, and thus is a project VSLA.</p>	<p>The project accepts this recommendation but would suggest that the questions asks whether the VSLA was started by the GATE GEC project and not solely ActionAid.</p>

<p>Encourage spending on education alongside generation of sustainable income.</p>	<p>The project feels this recommendation is not applicable, as the project talks of the importance of education throughout sensitization activities, as well as part of the VSLA component in particular, however also accepts that in order for the importance of education to be prioritized, it has to come from the families own autonomy and decision making power. The project monitoring data shows the top three areas of spend include food, medicine and education. The project will continue ongoing project messaging particularly with covid-19 to encourage the generation of sustainable income through the livelihood component.</p>
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Recommendations on LA/ST component

<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>Programme response</p>
<p>Collaborate with the TSC and MBSSE to ensure quick enrolment following publication of results.</p>	<p>GATE-GEC has been collaborating with the TSC and MBSSE for over a year to ensure immediate enrolment of the STs in the teaching workforce following exam results. The project had positive engagements with the Teaching Service Commission who recognised the potential of the LA/ST component in addressing the issue of shortage of qualified female teachers particularly in rural areas. The TSC are interested in facilitating the formal enrolment of the Student Teachers in the teachers workforce and their deployment in the rural areas where they have been already working. The project will continue this discussion with TSC and relevant Ministries (MBSSE and Ministry of Finance). Our working engaging these key stakeholders around their ability to affect wider change, particularly in filling the SL</p>

	teaching workforce with qualified female teachers, is on-going.
Where possible, facilitate extension of the stipend for Cohort 3 to cover the transition period between exams and results publication.	Although, the project agrees this is important, we feel this would be outside of the scope of the current project. However, Plan SLE are looking at additional funding to support this cohort beyond the project.
Use the results of Cohorts 1 and 2 to advocate for adoption of the model by the government.	The Advocacy has already been occurring in this space. MOBSSE have promoted the model and it has been recognized by the government as successful. Funding for this model remains a challenge in SL and other low-resource settings, however, OU and Plan continue to advocate for this within the government.
Include the TSC in all committees related to the LA/ST component.	GATE-GEC partners regularly engage the TSC in district and national level discussions not only to support the inclusion of the STs in the teaching workforce, but also to support professional development needs of the STs. This will continue to take place for the remainder of the project.

<p>Ensure the planned monitoring visits occur as scheduled. The monitoring visits should have clear and measurable objectives to maximise their impact on sustainability. For example, the project and relevant ministries could identify the specific project activities that the visits will cover, such as the LA/ST component which is of particular interest to the MBSSE</p>	<p>This is already happening and it's the approach applied to roll out the first joint monitoring. The project has worked closely with the monitoring team to ensure that a clear ToR was developed, discussed and agreed on before the roll out of the monitoring visit. Guidance and tools were also developed and discussed with the team members. The LAs/STs component was covered by the first monitoring visit</p>
<p>At endline, include a representative of the TSC in the qualitative data collection to assess the government's opinion of the results of Cohorts 1 and 2 and plans for incorporation into the government list of teachers.</p>	<p>This is perhaps a misunderstanding on the part of the EE and needs to be refined by them.</p> <p>Cohort 1 and 2 are not being monitored by the GATE GEC project as it is outside of its scope.</p>
<p>At endline, if available, compare the results of Cohort 3 to Cohorts 1 and 2.</p>	<p>The project is unclear on how this would support the project and the STs. if we want to focus on ST we would see their impact on the community, their retention in the schools and how they compare to other students taking the same course.</p> <p>Cohort 1,2 and 3 are very different cohorts – they started at different times in different locations and respond to slightly different models therefore the project is unclear on what the added value is of this recommendation. The project will request further clarity on</p>

	this recommendation from the consultants.
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Recommendations on Engagement of Ministry and key education stakeholders

Recommendation	Programme response
Follow-up on agreed upon actions from the district learning events.	The project has been working in increasing coordination with district stakeholders as it was one of the key actions discussed during the district learning events. We are also working towards strengthening the sustainability of the interventions and school and community levels with increased efforts in supporting school governance structure and community structure such as the VSLAs.
Ensure the planned national learning event is held, and results in agreed actions with clear timelines, responsibility and measurable outcomes.	The national learning event was due to be held in June 2020, however, due to the current COVID pandemic, the timeline will likely be shifted. As soon as the situation will allow the national learning event will be held.

<p>Facilitate joint monitoring visits between consortium members and national government representatives.</p>	<p>The project has already undertaken one joint monitoring visits involving the MOBSSE, MOSGWA and TSC officials. Overall, this was a success. Follow up actions from this visit, including agreeing next steps are currently being discussed with the team.</p> <p>The project is expecting to undertake another joint monitoring visit during the next academic school year. The project would also like to explore monitoring other components including the score-carding component during the next visit.</p>
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Recommendations on sustainability component

<p>Work with SMCs/BoGs and school management to generate ideas for sustainable funding sources to continue provision of project activities.</p>	<p>The project accepts this recommendation and agrees that this should become part of the normal school practice as part of the existing structures, so no additional budget is required. Since baseline, the success of engaging more with the SMCs/BOGs in GATE GEC schools has been encouraging, with project monitoring reporting improvement in governance structures and implementing (and raising awareness) of the accountable mechanisms including the score-carding and suggestions boxes. However, the project still recognizes further work will need to be done in order for the work to continue past the project lifetime. The project will explore methods in which these groups established practices and including these pedagogies in everyday lessons.</p>
<p>At endline, assess how many schools have incorporated project activities into their budgets, and increase the number of project activities included in the assessment, such as learning circles.</p>	<p>Although the EE has provided these recommendations to consider for the endline phase, the project accepts that these recommendations will be important to monitor as part of the ongoing project monitoring to</p>

	<p>ensure we capture and make any relevant adaptations as required before the end of the project.</p>
<p>At endline, check attendance rates at training from non-project schools that were once project schools. Attendance from these schools can be seen as a proxy indicator of interest from the wider school community in the skills taught by the project.</p>	<p>The project accepts the value of this recommendation and the importance of capturing attendance of non-GATE GEC schools. The project encourages the attendance of former GEC schools in teacher trainings, and other key activities including scorecarding where budget is available. The project will continue to explore this further for the upcoming academic year, and phase of trainings.</p>
<p>Evaluate whether the groups that have 'graduated' from the VSLAs have continued, and include Village Agents in data collection.</p>	<p>The project agrees with this recommendation and thinks it will be an important part of sustainability to have village agents acting as data collectors. We can monitor how effectively this works for those groups that have already graduated.</p>
<p>Assess the impact of joint monitoring visits and learning events.</p>	<p>Although this was recommended by the EE at the endline, the project is already undertaking an activity to explore the impact of the recent joint monitoring visit, including exploring agreed steps of action the project and ministry officials will take on the recommendations highlighted during the visit.</p> <p>The project has continued to take the learnings gather at the district learning events to inform and support engagement with the ministry at national level through the national steering committees and others. The upcoming national learning event will also to explore and assess the impact of district and national level learnings, and how this can better inform key meetings and points of engagement with the ministry and other key stakeholders.</p>

Recommendations: Project MEL (this is further explored in the next section with adaptations to the logframe)

Recommendation	Programme response
<p>It is recommended that the GATE GEC project collect data on which schools have been targeted for the project's VSLA programme so that data can be disaggregated for analysis at endline.</p>	<p>The project accepts this recommendation. However, there may have been a misunderstanding of the VSLA targeting, this data is available at project level. The project will ensure all relevant documentations is provided to external consultants for the endline phase.</p>
<p>Increase monitoring of score carding activities to facilitate assessment of impact and reach.</p>	<p>The project agrees with this recommendation. The score card system seems to be raising awareness of issues with our students but there is limited evidence at the project level of whether the activities undertaken by the school leaders to address issues raised through the score card system do not really seem to be addressing these. The project will be developing monitoring tools in order to capture how score-carding action plans are being implemented.</p> <p>This will take place over the remainder of the 2019/2020 academic year (once schools resume) and for the upcoming 2020/2021 academic school year</p>
<p>Strengthen measurement of impact of SMC/BoG impact. For example, specify that the community member included in project monitoring through the 'community leader' tool be a member of a SMC/BoG, or add this as an extra tool.</p>	<p>The project agrees with this recommendation and will be developing monitoring tools in order to capture how score-carding action plans are being implemented. This will take place over the remainder of the 2019/2020 academic year (once schools resume) and for the upcoming 2020/2021 academic school year</p>
<p>Include qualitative data collection with MSWGCA and the TSC at the national level, and local MBSSE officials at endline.</p>	<p>The project accepts this recommendation, and although this is a specific recommendation for the endline phase, the project has already developed qualitative tools for data collection of these stakeholders within the project. The project will refine these tools in light of the midline findings and deploy them once the schools resume as part of the qualitative data collection phase. The project will ensure that this data is gathered at the endline also. Results will</p>

	be fed into quarterly and annual reporting to the FM.
<p>At endline, include qualitative data collection with School Management Committees and Boards of Governors. This could be in the form of focus group discussions and/or interviews with the Chairs of the committee</p>	<p>The project accepts this recommendation, and although this is a specific recommendation for the endline phase, the project has already developed qualitative tools for data collection of these stakeholders within the project. The project will refine these tools in light of the midline findings and deploy them once the schools resume as part of the qualitative data collection phase. The project will ensure that this data is gathered at the endline also. Results will be fed into quarterly and annual reporting to the FM.</p>
<p>Encourage spending on education alongside generation of sustainable income.</p>	<p>The project is unclear on the recommendation and hopes to have further clarity in version 3 of the report. The project will then respond accordingly.</p>
<p>To limit the rate of attrition at endline, it is recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection should start later to ensure it does not occur whilst potential SSS1 girls are still awaiting the results of their JSS3 exams, as they are not likely to be at home. • The number of days allocated for data collection should be extended to facilitate tracking. • Dedicated training for enumerators on how to use GPS for household tracking should be provided. • To assess value for money at endline with the updated calculations. • On the surveys for endline it is recommended to add domestic activity and an ‘other’ option to the questions on current activities of children that are OOS to capture complete data. It is also recommended to include poor 	<p>The project accepts these recommendations and will take this forward with the Endline EE during the inception phase. The project is also discussing the proposal for conducting the endline evaluation at a later date to account for the factors highlighted by the midline EE, in addition to learnings from previous evaluation timelines.</p> <p>Although some of these recommendations are suggested for the endline phase and some are specific to the endline tools and processes, there are some recommendations that would benefit the project on an ongoing basis, therefore these will be explored as part of the project’s ongoing monitoring process.</p>

attainment as a reason for children being out-of-school.

- On the surveys for endline to add a question to assess exposure and involvement with non-GATE GEC education projects to the School Data Sheet. This should include assessment of which project schools received new lesson plans as part of Leh Wi Lan. This will facilitate the process of assigning causality of change to project activities.
- If training of head teachers on the use of the School Data Sheet can not be provided, It is recommended for the endline to use the School Data Sheet only for the head teacher interview and not for attendance and transition data.
- For endline it is recommended that the same questions and timeframe should be used to measure attendance for IO1.1 in both the student survey and household survey to allow for more rigorous triangulation.
- For IO1.2 at endline, it is recommended to retain economic reasons and measure reduction of economic reasons at endline (also potentially assisting at home and not motivated to attend). Disregard other reasons for absence as all scores are <1% so no meaningful comparison to endline or targets for reduction can be made. Add a specific question on secret society initiations and school closure/absence from school.
- Reword the question “Does (name) need help to get to school” for endline. A high number of the respondents misinterpreted this question to mean help to attend school more broadly, rather than assistance to travel to school as

<p>was intended. Suggest changing to, “Does (name) need help travelling to school?” for endline.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remove question PCG_30g2 - “To what age do you think your child should stay at school?” from the household survey - and replace with a question about which educational level/qualification caregivers want their child to attain. This should provide more meaningful data in context.	
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What changes to the logframe will be proposed to DFID and the Fund Manager?

- The management response should outline any changes that the project is proposing to do following any emergent findings from the baseline evaluation. This exercise is not limited to outcomes and intermediate outcomes but extends also to outputs (following completion of Annex on the output indicators).

Project response

As proposed by the midline evaluator's, the following amendments to the project logframe will be explored further with the wider consortium, taking into consideration the impact, how this aligns with the existing interventions and planned activities (in light of the recent COVID-19 situation), any timelines and/or budget implications. Amendments will be agreed with FM and updated in the relevant project documentation:

EE Recommendation	Project's response
To establish output indicators for the livelihoods and Itinerant Teachers' components of the project.	The project agrees with this recommendation and will take this forward with the consortium to develop suitable indicator/s.
Remove indicator 2 for endline and add an indicator at the system level on inclusive education practices in national CPD policy	As discussed in earlier recommendations, the project agrees that the CPD component does need further work, however indicators around policy change will need to be explored further. The project will discuss/agree this with the wider consortium and the FM and make adaptations as required.
For IO2.1 at endline, it is recommended that the target for the proportion of head teachers that mention four or more inclusive teaching methods is set at +5 percentage points.	The project will discuss this with the wider consortium and FM and if agreed will make the adaptations as required.
It is recommended that the project amend intermediate outcome 2.2 – the consultants suggest expanding the indicator to read 'percentage of PVs demonstrating inclusive and gender sensitive learning centred teaching practices'	The project agrees with this recommendation but would need to explore how to ensure this is captured properly. This will be discussed further as a consortium and if agreed, the logframe and relevant tools will be updated to gather this information accordingly.

<p>For IO2.4, it is recommended that the target for endline is +1 for the average perception score for both literacy and numeracy.</p> <p>It is recommended to remove IO3.2a at endline and replace it with IO3.2b</p>	<p>The project will discuss/agree this with the wider consortium and the FM and make adaptations as required.</p>
<p>For IO3.2b it is recommended to remove two of the five components due to high achievement rates and focus on the components with the lowest scores. It is recommended that the first two components listed below are increased by 5 percentage points, whilst the third is increased by 10 percentage points due to the low starting point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do you feel safe at school? (CS_W14s) % yes (+5 percentage points) ○ Are any students in this school bullied or teased by other students? (CS_W16s) % no (+5 percentage points) ○ Do your teachers discipline or punish students who get things wrong in a lesson? (TQ_6s) % no (+10 percentage points) 	<p>The project will discuss/agree this with the wider consortium and the FM and make adaptations as required.</p>
<p>Due to the high score for IO3.2c, it is recommended to remove half of the statements and set a target of a 5 percentage point increase for the</p>	<p>The project will discuss this with the wider consortium and the FM to check it aligns with endline guidance. If agreed, the project will take this further with the endline EE during the inception phase.</p>

<p>questions with lower reported numbers for endline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If you don't understand something, does your teacher(s) use a different language to help you understand? (TQ_3s) ○ Does your teacher(s) encourage students to participate during lessons, for example by answering questions? (TQ_4s) ○ Do you use drinking water facilities at school? (CS_W7s) 	
<p>Due to the small sample size of CWD, it is recommended to change the data source of indicator IO3.3 at endline to replace it with a qualitative indicator based on a targeted FGD with children with disabilities in one of the model schools. However, this will require specific planning to gather details on how many CWD are in the model schools (potentially through the project reverification data). According to the sample, there are no CWD in the model schools that will be adapted in the final year of the project, so engagement with the consortium will be key to recruit participants for this.</p>	<p>The project accepts this recommendation and will discuss this with the endline EE during the inception phase. The relevant considerations will also be taken into account in terms of schools adaptations and model schools.</p>
<p>It is recommended to expand IO3.4 at endline to assess actions taken against action plans by all schools. This is due to</p>	<p>The project accepts this recommendation and is already capturing this information at</p>

<p>the small sample size of schools targeted for score carding at midline.</p>	<p>project level. This will be discussed with the endline EE during the inception phase.</p>
<p>For IO4.2 it is recommended to use disaggregated data for boys and girls with disabilities (where absolute numbers are sufficient) for comparison at endline due to disparities between these two groups.</p>	<p>The project accepts this recommendation and will discuss this with the endline EE during the inception phase.</p>
<p>For endline, it is recommended to reformulate IO5.1 to focus on attitudes towards children with disabilities' education, as attitudes towards girls' education are already very high with little to no room improvement and therefore for target setting at endline.</p>	<p>The project seeks further clarity from the EE on this, is it suggested that we revise the indicator or include an additional indicator for endline to assess attitudes toward CWDs specifically?</p>
<p>Given the very high positive results on attitudes to girls' education, IO5.1 in its current form provides limited insight, and does not explain enduring barriers at the community level. At endline it is recommended to explore in depth the extent to which these positive attitudes translate into positive behaviours.</p>	<p>The project accepts this recommendation and will explore either expanding this indicator or including an additional indicator to assess how these attitudes develop into actions. This will be further explored with the consortium and agreed.</p>
<p>It is recommended to remove IO5.2 for endline. Collecting the data required to respond to this indicator is unfeasible. Consider instead expanding the amount of qualitative data on this issue, which should then be subsumed under Outcome 3 - Sustainability: System.</p>	<p>The project accepts this recommendation and will discuss this with the endline EE during the inception phase.</p>

Annex 18: Fieldwork report

The fieldwork data collection report is included as a PDF.

Annex 19: Life Skills Index

The FM life skills index template is included in Excel format.

Annex 20: Qualitative distribution plan

The qualitative distribution plan for interviews and focus groups is included in Excel format.

Annex 21: Enumerator training schedule

The schedule is included in Word format.



Inception report for Girls' Access to Education: Girls' Education Challenge (GATE-GEC) midline evaluation

Plan International UK

Date	20 September 2019
Version	3
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1. Introduction

1.1 Context

This document details the proposed approach to conduct the midline evaluation. It has been prepared following conversations with Plan International UK and the Fund Manager (FM) regarding the most appropriate way to overcome the challenges of the baseline and ensure that the midline evaluation is conducted in a rigorous and reliable manner.

1.2 Programme objectives and activities

DFID provided £355m between 2012 and 2017 through the Girls' Education Challenge Fund (GEC), disbursed to 37 individual projects across 18 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia to improve girls' education. In 2016, the GEC-Transition (GEC-T) window was launched with additional DFID funding to support GEC beneficiaries to further improve their learning and continue their journeys through education.

Plan International UK's Girls' Access to Education (GATE-GEC) project aims to improve support approximately 6,500 marginalised girls and children with disabilities to attend school, reach their full learning potential, learn in a safe and inclusive environment, and successfully transition to further education and beyond. The project works with individuals, households, schools, and communities to overcome economic, physical and social barriers to education for marginalised girls and children with disabilities. These barriers include poverty, a lack of inclusive teaching methods, child safeguarding issues, attitudes towards girls' education and education for children with disabilities (CWD), and low self-esteem of girls. Characteristics such as orphanhood and disability status have been shown to contribute to poor learning outcomes.¹

Plan International UK works with partners Humanity and Inclusion (HI), ActionAid, the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), and The Open University (OU) to deliver the project across six districts in Sierra Leone.²

The programme aims to achieve three high-level outcomes, in learning, transition and sustainability. To achieve these, there are five intermediate outcomes:

- Improvement in attendance of marginalised girls and children with disabilities (CWD) throughout the life of the project
- Improvement in teaching practices in gender-responsive learner-centred pedagogy of targeted teaching staff
- Increased self-esteem and confidence of children to participate in their education and make decisions
- Increased economic empowerment of targeted children's households
- Consistent level of shared learning, collaboration and influence around girls' and children with disabilities' education nationally and between key

¹ Impact of orphanhood status on education: K Beegle et al. (2007) 'Orphanhood and the long-run impact on children', *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*. C Ardington and Leibbrandt, M (2010) 'Orphanhood and schooling in South Africa: Trends in the vulnerability of orphans between 1993 and 2005', *Econ Dev Cult Change*, 58:3. Impact of disability on education: Plan International (2013) 'Include us! A study of disability among Plan International's sponsored children'. A Sæbønes (2015) 'Towards a disability inclusive environment: Background paper for the Oslo summit on Education for Development'.

² HI operates in Kenema and Kailahun, Action Aid in Kono and Moyamba, and FAWE (with OU) in Moyamba, Port Loko and Karene. Plan SL oversees the consortium and directly operates in Port Loko and Karene.

stakeholders

To achieve these outcomes, the programme aims to achieve the following four outputs:

1. Marginalised girls and children with disabilities, and their parents/caregivers, are provided with support for beneficiaries to attend school, learn and transition. This support includes participation in study groups, assistive devices for CWD, participation in Village Saving and Loan Associations (VLSA), Community Based Rehab Volunteer (CBRV) activities, and actions of School Management Committees (SMC) and Boards of Governors (BoG).
2. Increased number of skilled Programme Volunteers, Learning Assistants, and Student Teachers.
3. Marginalised girls and children with disabilities are supported to learn in a safe and inclusive learning environment, through child protection scorecarding and other feedback mechanisms, and subsequent action plans.
4. Programme evidence and learning is shared with decision makers in the Sierra Leonean education sector, through joint monitoring visits, training and consortium events.

Project activities focus on teachers and trainee teachers, school management, children with disabilities, other marginalised girls, and communities of CWD and marginalised girls.

- Female Learning Assistants (who progress to become Student Teachers) in Port Loko, Moyamba and Karene are supported to become qualified teachers. Plan, FAWE and OU support the trainees in the application process, during Teacher Training College, and provide placements in GATE-GEC schools. There are 250 women aged 18-30 in this component.
- Children with disabilities are supported by the provision of assistive devices (for 600 children), the adaptation of schools to be accessible and inclusive (18 'model schools'), and CBRVs.
- Marginalised girls and CWD in the cohort have access to twice-weekly study groups in literacy and numeracy. They are also supported by activities aimed at their families (VSLAs and livelihood grants), child protection score-carding activities (in selected Junior Secondary Schools), and capacity development of teaching staff.

1.3 Evaluation objectives

The midline evaluation will establish the progress and success of Plan International UK's GATE-GEC project, measuring performance against the above outputs and outcomes. The evaluation aims to demonstrate added value by employing a quasi-experimental research design, assessing impact using the difference-in-difference (DiD) approach and making use of mixed qualitative and quantitative methods.

The evaluation will address the following overarching questions. These questions are requested by the Fund Manager to facilitate comparability across all projects in the GEC-T portfolio:

1. Process: Is the project successfully designed and implemented? Is the project design still valid?
2. Impact: What impact is the project having on the learning and transition of

marginalised girls and children with disabilities? How and why is this impact achieved?

3. Value for money: Does the project demonstrate a good VfM approach?³
4. Effectiveness: What works (and does not work) to increase the learning and transition of marginalised girls and children with disabilities as defined by the project?
5. Sustainability: How sustainable are the activities funded by the GEC and is the project successful in leveraging additional interest and investment? What were the major factors which influenced the sustainability of the project?

Questions specific to GATE-GEC as noted in the Terms of Reference (ToR) will also be addressed. Below are the areas of interest to the project. Annex 1 outlines the questions for each area, and the data that will serve to answer these questions.

1. Meeting needs
2. Non-discrimination and inclusion
3. Gender
4. Child-centeredness
5. Community participation
6. Access and attendance
7. VSLAs
8. Teaching quality
9. Governance
10. Learning Assistants
11. School environment
12. Indirect impact
13. Education sector alignment

1.4 Inception phase methodology

The inception phase consisted of a thorough review of baseline and background documentation, and inception meetings with Plan and selected stakeholders. These are listed in Annex 2. The evaluation methodology was discussed and agreed with Plan and the FM to ensure it is aligned with wider project and programme expectations.

2. Methodology

2.1 Summary of approach

The methods proposed are based on the criteria outlined by Plan International UK in the ToR and the understanding of the baseline evaluation. The evaluation will use internationally accepted guidance on methodological structure from OECD-DAC, evaluating the process, impact, value for money, effectiveness and sustainability of the programme.

The evaluation will be conducted in close collaboration with project stakeholders, including Plan International UK, project partners, the Fund Manager, and direct and indirect beneficiaries. This is central to the way Jigsaw Consult works, prioritising iterative design and participation throughout, and working flexibly to respond to stakeholder priorities. The baseline evaluation was concluded in May 2018

³ This will be assessed using data that Plan collects on costs per component and beneficiary.

(fieldwork was conducted in November-December 2017). The midline evaluation will be conducted according to the timeline in section 5, with fieldwork concluded by November 2019.

2.2 Updates to the baseline approach

There are four main proposed methodological changes for the midline as compared to baseline. The changes are explained in the body of the report and summarised here. The proposed changes are:

- Exclusion of Primary 1 students and Junior Secondary School (JSS) boys from the learning and transition sample. There were only 12 Primary 1 students included at baseline, and a small sample of JSS boys. JSS boys will still be included in qualitative data collection.
- A change in the qualitative data collection. This includes an increase in FGDs (21 at baseline, 29 at midline) and KIIs (16 at baseline, 27 at midline) and a reduction in lesson observations (153 at baseline, 40 at midline).
- A reduction in the number of SeGRA/SeGMA subtasks, due to ceiling effects at baseline.
- Location of survey completion. The student survey will be administered entirely at the school level (for in-school students), and not separated between the school and household levels. The household survey will still be administered within communities, at the household level.

2.3 Methods and sample size

There are four main cohorts for the evaluation which will be included for both the learning and transition cohorts, and two of which will be used for DiD analysis. There are 763 JSS (and former JSS) girls included from the baseline sample, and 503 JSS girls that will be added at midline. See Annex 3 for more details.

Cohort	Descriptive detail	Notes
Primary students	Girls and boys, CWD	For the sample, these are beneficiary CWD (girls and boys) and there is no control sample. ⁴ The primary cohort will be analysed to show change over time. Since it will not be possible to show the impact of the interventions through difference-in-difference, the data from this group will show simple change over time. This cohort will be used to show learning and transition rates and pathways of CWD through primary school and beyond.
JSS	Girls (without disabilities)	This cohort consists of girls in intervention and control schools and will be used for difference-in-

⁴ The total cohort of primary level beneficiaries includes children who are marginalised but do not have a disability. For the purposes of the evaluation, only CWD are sampled.

		difference calculations and the outcomes spreadsheet. The midline will follow the baseline approach and will only include girls without disabilities in this group. This cohort will be used to show transition rates and pathways of girls through junior secondary school and beyond.
Former JSS3	Girls (without disabilities)	Students who were in JSS2 at baseline and have recently graduated from JSS3 by midline. They will be included in the learning and transition cohorts, and will be included in the difference-in-difference analysis.
JSS (and former JSS3)	Girls with disabilities	This cohort is similar to the primary cohort in that difference-in-difference will not be conducted. The JSS GWD will be analysed separately from the rest of the JSS cohort, following the baseline methodology. This cohort will be used to show learning and transition rates and pathways of CWD through junior secondary school and beyond. This includes the former JSS3 students with disabilities.

In addition, there is likely to be a small cohort of out of school students, that is, students who have dropped out of school since baseline. They will be tracked at the household level and form part of the transition cohort but not the learning cohort.

The tables below summarise the methods and sampling approach. The full breakdown by intervention type, gender and grade can be found in Annex 3.

Primary cohort			
Learning assessments	Student surveys	Household surveys	Qualitative data collection
241	241	241	3 FGDs (2 girls, 1 boys), 10 Lesson Observations. 1 FGD teachers. 2 study group observations and short interview.

JSS and former JSS3 cohorts (CWD and marginalised girls)⁵

Learning assessments	Student surveys	Household surveys	Qualitative data collection
1266	1266	1266	6 FGDs intervention school students. 2 FGDs JSS control. 2 FGD boys (1 intervention, 1 control). 4 FGDs teachers (3 intervention, 1 control). 3 FGDs STs. 3 FGDs PVs. 3 FGDs household members. 3 KII head teachers. 5 KIIs STs. 6 KIIs PVs. 6 study group observations and short interview. 30 Lesson Observations.

Quantitative methods (JSS and primary)	Treatment	Control	Total
School data sheets	104	52	156
Student learning assessments	923	584	1,507
Student surveys	923	584	1,507
Household surveys	923	584	1,507*

*Students who have dropped out of school since baseline will be tracked at the household level and a household survey completed to track transition. This figure may be higher as those students will be replaced in the sample, detailed below.

Qualitative methods	Details
Focus group discussions	29
Key informant interviews	27

⁵ It is not possible at this time to detail how many CWD will be in JSS as children who self-identified at the baseline may no longer self-identify as having a disability, and vice versa. In addition, new students will be sampled at midline. An estimate can be made from the baseline figure, which was 51 CWD beneficiaries at the JSS level.

2.3 Tracking and Replacement

The sampling approach outlined in the MEL Framework includes 1,398 students (1,148 secondary school students, 250 primary school students) and accounts for an attrition rate of 30% overall.

Replacement will occur for the current JSS cohort (for the learning assessment and both surveys) if a student cannot be tracked at midline. Substitution will occur from the same grade as the student lost to the sample and will choose from all female students in the grade ie. selection will not be restricted only to students listed in Plan's reverification data. Primary students will not be replaced if they cannot be tracked at midline, nor will former JSS3 students. If a student has dropped out of school, they will be tracked at the household level for transition data through the household survey, but will not complete a learning assessment or student survey. The same unique codes will be used from baseline to facilitate tracking.

Personal information was collected at baseline for tracking purposes. This included: GPS coordinates of households and schools, contact information of heads of households/caregivers, and consent to contact neighbours as a final option. Students will be asked to confirm the contact and location details of their households during the student survey and learning assessment data collection.

Children who have dropped out of school, students who have changed school, and households will be tracked using the steps outlined below. The options are presented in the order they will be tried, and result in the household/child being considered lost to the sample if they cannot be tracked.

Households	Students (and former students)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student will be asked to provide/confirm contact and location details for their household. 2. The household will be called and/or visited if close to the school. The household will be called a maximum of three times, at different times in the day to account for working hours.⁶ 3. Household is considered lost to the sample. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If the student was included in reverification and provided contact details and permission to be contacted, they will be called. They will be called a minimum of three times, at different times in the day. 2. If the head of household/caregiver was included in reverification/baseline sample and provided contact details and permission to be contacted, they will be called and/or visited if the household is close

⁶ Note that households within 30 minutes of travel time from the school are considered close and there will be a maximum of one visit to attempt to track them even if they cannot be contacted on the phone.

to the school.

They will be called a maximum of three times, at different times in the day to account for working hours.

3. Student is considered lost to the sample.

2.4 Data collection tools

A mixed-methods approach will be used for the midline evaluation. Quantitative and qualitative data collection will be undertaken simultaneously. Data collection will be electronic where possible, on tablets using Tangerine and Kobo Collect.

School data sheets

A data sheet from each school will be analysed to collect data on enrolment figures, transition data, and dropout and repetition rates. It will also collect basic information from the head teacher to assess knowledge of inclusive teaching methods and actions taken after score-carding processes (in selected schools where this activity takes place).

Learning assessments

Learning assessments will be administered at the school level for in-school students, and at the household level for the former JSS3 students. For the primary grades, EGRA/EGMA will be used for the learning assessments, and at the secondary level SeGRA/SeGMA will be administered. For the primary students that have transitioned to secondary since baseline, EGRA/EGMA will be administered to them to allow for comparability at each evaluation point. At midline there will be no overlap of tasks between the primary and secondary tests. Both tests (EGRA/EGMA and SeGRA/SeGMA) will be administered electronically by the enumerators, using Tangerine, though SeGRA includes some written tasks which will be marked on the spot by enumerators using Tangerine.

The test administered according to the student's baseline grade is as follows:

Baseline grade	Midline grade	Test
P3	P5	EGRA/EGMA
P4	P6	EGRA/EGMA
P5	JSS1	EGRA/EGMA

P6	JSS2	EGRA/EGMA
-	JSS1	SEGRA/SEGMA
-	JSS2	SEGRA/SEGMA
JSS1	JSS3	SEGRA/SEGMA
JSS2	Former JSS3	SEGRA/SEGMA

The following subtasks will be administered to secondary school students:

Test	Subtask 1	Subtask 2	Subtask 3	Subtask 4
SeGRA	Reading comprehension	Advanced reading comprehension 1	Advanced reading comprehension 2	-
SeGMA	Addition and subtraction 2	Advanced multiplication/division word problems	Percentages and fractions	Spaces and shapes

From baseline, two subtasks have been removed from SeGRA, and two subtasks have been removed from SeGMA. The details of the tests and rationale for the removal of subtasks from baseline can be found in Annex 4.

The EGRA/EGMA subtasks will be the same as baseline using the second version of the test that was piloted at baseline.

Once the sample is finalised, the list of students will be shared with HI so they are able to advise which students will require adaptations for the learning assessments and/or survey, and will be in touch with CBRVs and/or parents and caregivers for their assistance in this process. HI will review the learning assessment tools and suggest adaptations for CWD. It is expected that these will be similar to baseline adaptations, including the use of larger font size and colour contrast.⁷

Student survey (from the Fund Manager)

A survey will be administered to the primary and secondary school students, including former JSS3 students. It will not be administered to any children who have dropped out of school. The survey will be administered digitally using Kobo Collect by the enumerator team. Enumerators will translate the survey into the preferred language of the student. The survey will ask questions on life skills,

⁷ HI will be sent the templates via Plan by September 27th, with feedback anticipated by October 4th.

teaching quality, the school environment, and study habits. The survey will be administered entirely at school and will take approximately 20 minutes.⁸ Updates to the survey at midline will be shared with Plan and the FM for approval.

Household survey (from the Fund Manager)

The household survey will be administered to the heads of households and caregivers, at the household level. It will be administered digitally using Kobo Collect by the enumerator team and will take approximately 30 minutes. Enumerators will translate the survey into the preferred language of the head of household/caregiver. The survey will ask for caregivers' opinions on education, school governance, and the economic situation of households. The household survey is administered to households of the learning cohort and the transition cohort. For the transition cohort, it is used to provide the current status of the student and is the source for determining whether a student has transitioned successfully or not. Updates to the survey at midline will be shared with Plan and the FM for approval.

Focus group discussions

In addition to quantitative data collection, qualitative focus group discussions (FGDs) will be used to triangulate findings, explore nuances in participant experiences and understand project implementation and related drivers and barriers. FGDs will be conducted with girls, boys, teachers and household members. FGDs will also be used to analyse project sustainability, by gathering qualitative information on attitudes towards, and commitment to, the project, as well as teachers' self-reported capacity.

FGDs will be facilitated by pairs, by two Dalan qualitative specialists (or two Jigsaw researchers), in a selection of both intervention and control schools. They will be conducted in small groups of 5-6 participants, to enable participatory methods and in-depth discussion. Groups of female participants will be conducted by a female member of the evaluation team. The FGDs will follow a series of open questions to guide discussion, encouraging participants to respond to one another and explore ideas in detail. Inclusive group activities will be employed to be responsive to the needs of children with disabilities, following best practices and guidelines such as Plan's guidelines for consulting with children and young people with disabilities, Plan's internal guidelines and guidance (eg. scopeo), Pike and Lenz's 'toolbox' and UNICEF's guidance on including CWD in humanitarian action.⁹ Jigsaw will work with HI to identify extra assistance that is needed for CWD to participate in qualitative work, such as the presence of Community Based Rehab Volunteers (CBRVs).

Key informant interviews

Key informant interviews (KIIs) will use semi-structured question templates to assess the success of project design and implementation, project sustainability, value for money and effectiveness (drivers and barriers), and will be conducted in person wherever possible.

Interviews with teachers (including STs and PVs) and head teachers will be used to understand progress on project implementation and key drivers and barriers, and

⁸ At baseline, the student survey was partially administered at school and partially at the household level.

⁹ Plan International (2016) Guidelines for consulting with children and young people with disabilities.

Pike, S and J Lenz (2010) Child friendly participatory assessment tools: a toolbox of ideas, Save the Children.
UNICEF (2017) Guidance for including children with disabilities in humanitarian action.

perceptions of girls’ learning and transition, teaching quality and life skills. They will also gather qualitative data on project sustainability, assessing school and community-wide attitudes towards the project, aspirations and ability to continue project activities after project closure and associated investments required.

Interviews with education and government officials will seek to understand how the project is aligned with government strategy, and assess government support for the project and willingness to scale up project activities.

Interviews with Plan International UK staff and partners will triangulate findings from surveys, informant interviews, and document review processes. They will explore project design and implementation, project costs and value for money, drivers and barriers to implementation and impact, and staff perceptions of school, community and system level commitment to the programme and anticipated sustainability of project activities.

Classroom observations

Classroom observations will be conducted in 40 selected intervention schools (30 JSS, 10 primary) to collect data about inclusive and gender sensitive teaching practices, one of the key intermediate outcomes. Observations will be collected by the Dalan Supervisor in each team using a tool similar to baseline to assess teacher practice in the classroom. Only Programme Volunteer (PV) teachers will be observed, to assess the impact of the intervention on their teaching style.

Qualitative data breakdown

The following is a breakdown of the qualitative data collection. The majority of the qualitative data collection will be conducted by Dalan, with the project staff and some beneficiary data collection conducted by Jigsaw. The breakdown is subject to change in the fieldwork planning phase based on recommendations from project partners and in-depth document review.

Qualitative data collection	Quantity	Notes
FGDs	29	
Girls (JSS)	8	Six in intervention schools (one in each district), two in control schools. One intervention school FGD will be conducted by Jigsaw with the assistance of a Dalan enumerator.
Boys (JSS)	2	One intervention school and one control school. Conducted by Dalan.
Girls with disabilities (primary)*	2	One will be conducted by Jigsaw with the assistance of a Dalan enumerator.
Boys with disabilities	1	Conducted by Dalan.

(primary)*		
Intervention school teachers	4	Non-PV and ST teachers. Conducted by Dalan.
Control school teachers	1	Conducted by Dalan.
PVs	3	Conducted by Dalan.
STs	3	One conducted by Jigsaw, two conducted by Dalan.
Household members	3	With caregivers or heads of households of beneficiaries. One will be conducted by Jigsaw.
VSLA	2	To be identified in conjunction with Plan and partners. One will be conducted by Jigsaw with the assistance of a Dalan enumerator.
KIIs	27	
Head teachers	3	One will be conducted by Jigsaw, in a model school.
Community Based Rehab Volunteer	1	Conducted by Dalan.
Student Teacher	5	Conducted by Dalan.
Programme Volunteer teacher	6	One will be conducted by Jigsaw, five will be conducted by Dalan.
Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE)	1	Will be conducted by Jigsaw.
District Education Officers	2	One will be conducted by Jigsaw. Districts to be identified in conjunction with project partners.
Humanity and Inclusion representative	1	Sierra Leone based senior staff member. Will be conducted by Jigsaw.

Action Aid representative	1	Either a UK based or Sierra Leone based representative, to be decided in conjunction with Plan. Conducted by Jigsaw.
Open University representative	1	Conducted by Jigsaw.
FAWE representative	1	Sierra Leone based staff member. Will be conducted by Jigsaw.
Plan International in-country Hub Senior M&E Manager	1	With the Sierra Leone based hub lead. Will be conducted by Jigsaw.
Plan International UK Programme Manager	1	With the UK based Programme Manager. Will be conducted by Jigsaw.
Plan SL Hub Team Leader	1	Conducted by Jigsaw.
Plan Education Technical Specialist (UK based)	1	Conducted by Jigsaw.
Plan Child Protection and Accountability Adviser	1	With the Sierra Leone based staff member. Conducted by Jigsaw.
Classroom observations	40	Will observe PV teachers only. 30 in secondary schools, 10 in primary schools.
Study group observations	8	Two conducted by Jigsaw, 6 by Dalan. Followed by a short interview with the PV/ST running the study group.

*Note that disability information will be taken from baseline. It may be that the students no longer identify as having a disability.

2.5 Enumerator recruitment and training

Selecting enumerators

A specialist research organisation based in Sierra Leone has been contracted to provide data collection services, Dalan Consult. Dalan conducted the quantitative data collection at baseline and are experienced in large mixed-methods projects.

They have a pool of qualified and experienced quantitative and qualitative researchers.

Overview of training

A three-day quantitative training, one day pre-test and one-day qualitative training will be conducted immediately prior to the testing period. During training, the enumerator teams will be thoroughly trained in how to implement the surveys and collect data in a rigorous and reliable manner. Jigsaw will be primarily responsible for training, with input from Dalan and project partners. Supervisors/qualitative specialists will have their own sessions. They will be walked through the qualitative tools, sampling strategy and transcription format. They will be provided with a supervisor guide with key information and the required paperwork will be explained.

A representative from each of the four partner organisations will attend various sessions in the training, as well as Plan’s Child Protection Adviser and Hub Lead. The partners will provide useful context and background to the project where applicable and will co-deliver specific sessions. The following sessions in the training will be delivered in conjunction with the partners:

- Project introduction (Plan Hub Lead)
- Safeguarding of children and adults-at-risk (Plan Child Protection Adviser)
- Inclusive data collection (HI)

Partner representation at training will provide a level of quality assurance, and facilitate information-sharing between Jigsaw, Dalan and the project partners.

Training will include:

- Introduction and familiarisation with tablets and digital tool
- Introduction and familiarisation with surveys and learning assessments
- Survey and learning assessment practice, including an inter-rater reliability test
- Data collection protocols, including sampling and communication
- Child safeguarding protocols
- Best practice in inclusive data collection
- Specialist training for qualitative data collectors

The training schedule will follow a similar structure as below. The details will be finalised with Dalan in the data collection planning phase.

Day	Morning Session name (organisation responsible)	Which team(s)?	Afternoon Session name (organisation responsible)	Which team(s)?
1	<p>Introductions - team and project (Jigsaw, Dalan, Plan)</p> <p>Lessons learned from baseline, and change in approach (Jigsaw)</p> <p>Tool overview and tablet</p>	Quantitative and qualitative	<p>Student survey walk-through (Jigsaw)</p> <p>Student survey practice (Jigsaw)</p>	Quantitative

	familiarisation (Jigsaw)			
2	Household survey walk-through (Jigsaw) Household survey practice (Jigsaw)	Quantitative	Learning assessment familiarisation and practice (Jigsaw) IRR (Jigsaw)	Quantitative
3	Inclusive data collection practices (HI) Safeguarding (Plan, Jigsaw)	Quantitative and qualitative	IRR debrief (Jigsaw) Lesson observation tool (Jigsaw) Pre-test logistics (Dalan, Jigsaw)	Quantitative
4	Pre-test (Dalan, Jigsaw, Plan)	Quantitative	Pre-test debrief (Jigsaw) Next steps (Jigsaw, Dalan)	Quantitative
5	Qualitative specialist training (Jigsaw)	Qualitative	Qualitative specialist training con. (Jigsaw) Team supervisor training (Jigsaw, Dalan)	Qualitative Selected quantitative

Inter-rater reliability

Throughout the training period, facilitators will observe enumerators to identify the procedures that need clarifying and the subtasks that need further practice. An inter-rater reliability (IRR) test will be used to measure how accurately enumerators mark the survey responses, and the consistency between enumerators. The IRR test involves two co-facilitators playing the role of student and enumerator. The 'student' uses a script that specifies a response to each questions, and the enumerators score responses as they have been trained. Following the test, the Jigsaw team will download the data and calculate the IRR scores. Scores will be shared with the enumerators as a group, and individually as necessary, to discuss any issues and encourage learning. Enumerators will be expected to score above 90 per cent to continue in the process, and there will be more enumerators than required at the training in part to facilitate this flexibility.

Pre-test

The training will also include a pre-test day. This allows enumerators to practice what they have learned, and facilitates follow-up training to improve data collection. The pre-test schools will be GATE-GEC schools that are not in the sample. They will be in Masiaka in Port Loko. Following the pre-test, the tools will be modified for clarity as needed. These changes will be discussed with Plan and the FM as required.

2.6 Approach to school and community visits

Using the current anticipated sample size, it is expected that a team of 39 enumerators will be sufficient to gather the required data, plus a team of four for

the qualitative work. The training will include more than 39 enumerators to provide potential replacements in case an enumerator has to withdraw from the data collection. Data collection will take place over two consecutive weeks. All teams will be overseen and managed by Dalan, with additional data checks and overall oversight by Jigsaw staff. The breakdown of roles and responsibilities is as follows:

Role	Number	Responsibility
Enumerator (Dalan)	26 (13 pairs)	<p>Administer student and household surveys, and learning assessments.</p> <p>Work as team players and support the Supervisor and co-enumerator to ensure quality and complete data collection all assigned school.</p> <p>Ensure timely arrival at schools and take all required materials and forms to school each day.</p> <p>Be responsible for the safety and secure storage of all assigned IT equipment.</p> <p>Ensure that all daily tasks are completed within the allotted time and data is correctly and transparently recorded.</p> <p>Submit all required forms to the Supervisor at the end of each day, and jointly fill out the daily school report form.</p> <p>Ensure any ethics or safeguarding issues, incomplete interviews and other field issues are flagged to the supervisor for action in a timely manner.</p>
Supervisor (Dalan)	13 (one per pair of enumerators)	<p>Lead and manage a three-member team, with responsibility for ensuring all assigned schools are covered within stipulated period and daily school data is complete.</p> <p>Arrange timely and safe transport to ensure teams arrive in school on time (before assembly) and take all required materials.</p> <p>Contact head teachers in advance of arriving in school to confirm the arrival time and consent to participate.</p> <p>Introduce the objective, scope of the research, and team members to head teachers and all relevant stakeholders.</p>

		<p>Ensure team's safety and security at all time and serve as first point of contact and support in school.</p> <p>Be responsible for the safety and secure storage of all assigned IT equipment.</p> <p>Ensure internet coverage for team members to synchronize data on a daily basis. Check that data has been uploaded by team members.</p> <p>Conduct learning assessments, student surveys, and household surveys.</p> <p>Conduct classroom observations. Fill out the school data sheet with the relevant stakeholder in the school.</p> <p>Manage participant sampling and logistics at the school site.</p> <p>Assign households to enumerators for efficient household survey data collection.</p> <p>Report any safeguarding or ethics concerns in accordance with reporting pathways.</p> <p>Maintain regular communication and coordinate with the Project Coordinator to ensure timely and quality data collection.</p> <p>Complete documentation and paperwork as required, and keep documents with sensitive information secure.</p> <p>Participate in a debrief with Jigsaw at the end of all data collection.</p>
<p>Qualitative Specialists</p>	<p>4 (two pairs)</p>	<p>Conduct FGDs, KIIs and study group observations.</p> <p>Complete documentation and paperwork as required, and keep documents with sensitive information secure.</p> <p>Be responsible for the safety and secure storage of all assigned IT equipment.</p> <p>Report any safeguarding or ethics concerns in accordance with reporting pathways.</p> <p>Maintain regular communication and coordinate with the Project Coordinator to</p>

		<p>ensure timely and quality data collection.</p> <p>Participate in a debrief with Jigsaw at the end of all data collection</p>
<p>Project Coordinator (Dalan)</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Plan fieldwork to ensure the data collection targets are met within the stipulated time frame.</p> <p>Plan logistics for the pre-test during training week.</p> <p>Organise and ensure all logistics are in place (accommodation, transport, blank forms, communication) for teams to carry out activities.</p> <p>Support supervisors in securing school and principal contact information and ensure all supervisors are contacting their schools in advance.</p> <p>Manage supervisors and ensure they provide a daily update on progress.</p> <p>Serve as primary contact between field teams and Jigsaw, including creation and management of a WhatsApp group between Jigsaw, the Project Coordinator, supervisors and enumerators.</p> <p>Be the first point of contact for supervisors for troubleshooting.</p> <p>Ensure compliance with survey protocols, safeguarding procedures and other process and contractual requirements at all times amongst field teams.</p> <p>Participate in a fieldwork debrief session with Jigsaw at the end of all data collection.</p> <p>Visit schools with teams to quality control the data collection and provide feedback and solutions to challenges.</p> <p>Liaise with school and government and project partners as needed.</p> <p>Contribute to training of enumerators and supervisors.</p> <p>Assist Jigsaw team with arrangement of</p>

		logistics (accommodation, transport, data collection appointments) as needed.
Jigsaw research team (fieldwork)	2 (Project Manager and one Jigsaw researcher)	<p>Train enumerators and supervisors in use of the tools, safeguarding and ethics, and the purpose of the research.</p> <p>Download and back-up data on a regular basis to carry out spot checks and provide feedback to Dalan.</p> <p>Collect selected qualitative data, including FGDs, KIIs and study group observations.</p> <p>Communicate regularly with the Project Coordinator to resolve challenges in the field and stay up-to-date on progress.</p>
Jigsaw project team (in the UK)	2	<p>The Project Director has overall oversight of the project.</p> <p>The Technical Lead ensures the research is methodologically rigorous and compliant with project guidelines.</p>
Project partners	All	<p>Facilitate communications of Dalan and Jigsaw with beneficiaries, schools, households, government authorities, and others.</p> <p>Be available for a KII (if requested) and provide extra information and data as requested by Jigsaw.</p> <p>Send a representative to the training and, if requested by Jigsaw, deliver part of the training.</p>

3. Evaluation phases and timeline

Tool development

The evaluation design will incorporate and be in keeping with Plan International UK's MEL Framework and baseline data collection, and designed in accordance with the indicators outlined in the project logframe. The tools will be reviewed by Plan,

selected partners and the FM before finalisation. The mixed methods, quasi-experimental approach will utilise the following tools:

- Literacy and numeracy testing, using EGRA/EGMA and SEGRA/SEGMA
- Student survey (based on the FM template)
- Household survey (based on the FM template)
- Focus group discussions with students (girls and boys), parents, teachers and community members
- Key informant interviews with head teachers, teachers and project stakeholders
- Classroom observations
- Study group observations

In combination, these methods will provide triangulated quantitative and qualitative data that will enable the midline to be completed in a rigorous and holistic manner. The midline is a critical point for learning whether the project is on track to deliver against key outcomes, and to improve implementation in the project's final year.

Data collection

Quantitative and qualitative data collection will be simultaneous and will start after training. Data collection will take 14 working days to complete. For the first five days of data collection the inputs will be monitored and checked online on a daily basis by Jigsaw, and feedback provided to enumerators via the Dalan Project Coordinator/WhatsApp as appropriate. For the remainder of the data collection, spot checks will be carried out every other day.

Dalan will complete their internal checks and submit the final datasets to Jigsaw by November 15th.

Data cleaning and analysis

After collection, the data will be cleaned to remove duplicate, invalid and incomplete entries. It is expected that these will be minimal as the enumerator training, pre-test and ongoing spot checks aim to prevent this from occurring. The Jigsaw team will adopt a rigorous approach to data analysis, using the appropriate software to facilitate straightforward ongoing use of results, including Excel and Dedoose. The report will incorporate the following quantitative analysis:

- Descriptive statistics of survey results and school and student profiles, disaggregated by gender and disability
- Difference-in-difference analysis of treatment and comparison scores
- Regression analysis exploring relationships between outcomes and student profile, school environment and other characteristics

Jigsaw will adopt a systematic, evidence-based approach to qualitative data analysis, using a coding process to link back to the key evaluation themes. This approach ensures that, although there is a limited volume of qualitative data, the analysis engages with the substance and weighting of interviewee and focus group responses rather than relying solely on anecdotal feedback. This in turn enables us to impose a structure on the analysis that ensures it is representative, clear and accessible for the reader.

Midline evaluation report

The report will use the GEC-T structure to address findings against key outcomes, ensuring a consistent, accessible and rigorous style appropriate for the various audiences. The midline will document lessons learned and provide a set of recommendations and priorities for the final stage of project implementation. Feedback from Plan International UK and the Fund Manager will be collected through written documentation and calls as required, and will be incorporated into the final report. The report will be presented to relevant stakeholders via a webinar.

3.1 Timeline of study

Activity	Timing
Phase 1: tool development and fieldwork preparation	
Fieldwork logistics (with Dalan, and Plan)	September - October 2019
Tool review by Plan, FM and HI	September 27 – draft tools sent to Plan and FM. October 4 – feedback expected from Plan and FM.
Phase 2: data collection	
Enumerator training and pre-test	14 - 18 October 2019
Data collection	21 October - 15 November 2019 ¹⁰
Phase 3: data cleaning and analysis	
Data cleaning and validation	18 – 29 November
Data analysis and report writing	December 2019 – January 2020
Phase 4: midline report	
Draft midline report submitted	10 January 2020
Final midline report submitted	31 January 2020

3.2 Communication plan

¹⁰ Data collection is expected to finish early November. Dalan has a few days after data collection to perform final quality control checks.

Jigsaw aims to keep clients informed of progress, changes and challenges through the evaluation process. In the phases outlined above, the following can be expected:

- During the tool development and fieldwork preparation phase:
 - Any proposed changes to the approach outlined at inception will be discussed with Plan (and the FM as required).
 - Requests for HI input (via Plan) on adapting the tools to make them inclusive, and ensure participants who will require extra assistance during data collection have this available.
 - Jigsaw will liaise directly with partners to arrange KIIs for the data collection phase.
 - Jigsaw will share the schedule with Plan, who will in turn share this with the partners and coordinate informing schools of data collection days.
- During data collection:
 - Jigsaw will write to Plan at the end of each week to summarise the activities (training week and two weeks of data collection). The format of this will be discussed with Plan.
 - Any challenges that arise which have methodological implications will be discussed with Plan and the FM.
- After data collection:
 - Plan will receive a concise data collection report after the 15 November which will detail the data collected compared to the targets, and will discuss challenges faced with the mitigation strategies implemented, and recommendations for the endline.
 - Any challenges that have implications for analysis will be discussed with Plan and the FM.
 - Jigsaw will liaise directly with partners if additional information is required.
 - Once analysis is underway, Jigsaw will meet with Plan to discuss the initial findings and reporting priorities.
- Feedback on the midline report from Plan and the FM will be collected through written documentation and calls, and will be incorporated into the final report. The report will be presented to relevant stakeholders via a webinar.

Plan will be copied into communications between Jigsaw and the Fund Manager, and between Jigsaw and project partners.

4. Evaluation deliverables

4.1 Core deliverables

The core deliverables below are listed for the midline. All deliverables will be submitted in full accordance with FM guidance.

Deliverable	Details
Data collection report	A report on the data collection phase, to include the challenges, solutions to problems faced, and implications for the evaluation. Submitted soon

	after completion of the fieldwork (approximately 5 pages).
Midline evaluation report	A comprehensive midline evaluation, written in accordance with the FM reporting requirements. Two versions will be submitted, a draft and a final version (approximately 100 pages). ¹¹
Midline presentation	Presentation to Plan International UK and the FM on the key findings at midline. Sierra Leone based partners can be invited via weblink at Plan's discretion. An opportunity for questions and discussion before final submission of the midline report.
Instruments and datasets	All instruments for data collection and all clean raw data will be submitted to Plan International UK and the FM.

4.2 Supplementary deliverables and dissemination

The Jigsaw team will also provide two supplementary deliverables, as requested by Plan. These will be a community friendly version of the report, and a targeted project consortium report.

Deliverable	Details
Community friendly version of report	A two-page activity report to inform the intervention communities about: the purpose of the study; the data collected eg. "XX girls were surveyed, XX households were surveyed"; and high level findings eg. aggregate literacy and numeracy scores. Will be in English, with minimal use of narrative and an emphasis on visuals. One report will be produced to cover all of the activities of the evaluation, enabling communities to see how the data collected in their community fits into the evaluation. It will also serve as a 'thank you' to the communities for participating. The main audience will be households, students and community members, but will not provide specific information for head teachers and teachers. Jigsaw will provide the report in the Jigsaw format and the final design will be completed by Plan.

¹¹ The report is final when FM sign-off is received.

Project consortium report	A ten to twelve-page report with: a summary of findings; up to one page for a discussion of each partner's work; and an expanded recommendations section to reflect on implications for each partner on what is presented in the midline report ie. actions to be taken by each of the partners. Information will be presented in the Jigsaw style in a mixture of visuals and narrative.
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The draft submissions for both deliverables will be sent in February 2020, with final submission in March 2020.

Annexes

Annex 1: GATE-GEC project questions and data collection methods

The following questions were presented by the consortium in the midline terms of reference as priority areas for the midline evaluation. Details of how the questions will be addressed are presented below. At the midline evaluation stage, the core of the research will be to assess what has changed in the last year (if anything), and the cause(s) of this change, with regards to: learning and transition outcomes; attendance; inclusive pedagogy; students' self-esteem and confidence; economic empowerment; and attitudes and perceptions. The midline evaluation will also review systemic and institutionalised changes that could sustain the project after 2021.¹²

Research question	Notes and data collection methods
<p>Meeting needs – To what extent has the project addressed the needs of marginalised girls and children with disabilities?</p>	<p>The surveys and FGDs will highlight the greatest needs marginalised girls and CWD have in access to and thriving in education, and how far the project has addressed those needs at midline. This will assess the relevance of the Theory of Change.</p>
<p>Non-discrimination and inclusion – Who is benefiting from the project and who is excluded, and why? How are marginalised/ vulnerable groups included? What is the impact on specific groups of children with disabilities (see Washington Group for the types of disabilities)?</p>	<p>The sample will be representative of the project beneficiaries. Assuming that the beneficiary group consists of marginalised children, or those at risk of marginalisation, the intervention sample will reflect that. The control sample will highlight marginalised groups that are not included in the project.</p> <p>At the primary level, results will be disaggregated by type of disability</p>

¹² Some project activities were not assessed at baseline eg. LAs. As such, the midline will not include discussion of change since baseline.

	(according to the Washington Group classification). At the secondary level, it is expected that the sample of students with disabilities will be too small to be able to meaningfully disaggregate.
Gender – To what extent is the project contributing to increased equality and equity between boys and girls, women and men? To what extent is the project gender transformative, in what ways and how could this be strengthened?	The qualitative components of the project will highlight opinions, perspectives and attitudes towards girls’ education as well as the role of girls in society. The midline recommendations will address potential improvements to the project, including in the area of gender transformative practices as required.
Child-centeredness – To what extent are children involved in the project, how were they selected, what is the impact on boys and girls of their participation in the project and how does the project affect girls and boys, directly or indirectly, positively or negatively? Is there increased usage of feedback boxes in 2018 score-carding target schools? Do children (especially girls, girls with disabilities) feel more confident to voice out safeguarding issues at schools?	<p>The selection criteria of children for the project will not directly be addressed, though it may arise during the qualitative research. The impact on boys and girls will be seen in disaggregation of the surveys and learning assessment results, and through FGDs with boys and girls, with and without disabilities.</p> <p>Questions on feedback boxes and confidence in voicing safeguarding will be explored in the surveys and qualitative data collection.</p>
<p>Community participation – How effectively has the project involved communities, schools and other stakeholders in implementing the project? What difference has this made and how could participation be made more meaningful?</p> <p>How effectively has the project involved communities, schools and other stakeholders in implementing the score-carding feedback / actions? Since the project has been interacting with community stakeholders and services (mapping CP referral services / involving community stakeholders in score carding), are we beginning to see some efforts in building linkages with child protection structures and referral networks in communities where we work?</p>	<p>FGDs with teachers, VSLAs, and household members will provide details on stakeholder engagement in the project, and the impact of this. KIIs with government officials will also address this topic.</p> <p>Project staff will also be asked about community involvement and engagement.</p>
Access and attendance – What difference has the GATE-GEC made to	The student and household surveys will provide the bulk of information on

<p>enabling marginalised girls and children with disabilities to be in school? To what extent has the project been successful at ensuring retention? Where drop-outs have happened, what are the reasons, and how can the project learn from and avoid these in the future? What connections have been made with parents/caregivers – particularly around attendance?</p>	<p>attendance, repeat and dropout rates. The reasons for dropout are covered in the household survey as well as in FGDs and KIIs with students, households, and teaching staff.</p> <p>There are two model schools that have already been adapted in the school sample. There will be qualitative data collection in at least one of the schools.</p>
<p>VSLAs – What are the contributions of the project’s VSLAs to beneficiaries’ ability to access and transition through education?</p>	<p>FGDs with VSLA members will aim to assess the changes that participation of caregivers has had on the students’ access to and engagement with education.</p>
<p>Teaching quality – To what extent has the project been successful at improving the quality of teaching in targeted schools? Has the project been effective in moving towards more student-centred and active teaching methodology? To what extent have teachers adopted gender-responsive pedagogy techniques? What approaches could be taken to extend teachers’ subject matter and methodological understanding? What are the changes in teachers’ classroom management approaches? Where are examples of good practice within the project that could be utilised to improve teaching quality more widely?</p>	<p>KIIs and FGDs with teachers will assess changes in the last year in pedagogy and practices, and the causes for those changes. Student and household surveys will be triangulated with the qualitative research to assess if students and households have noticed a change or not.</p> <p>Classroom observations will assess the teaching quality of Programme Volunteers.</p>
<p>Governance – How effective has the project been in strengthening the skills of School Management Committees and Boards of Governors to provide quality school management (including improving attendance, quality of teaching and the school environment)? What are the contributions of targeted School Management Committees and Boards of Governors in improving attendance, quality of teaching and the school environment?</p>	<p>KIIs with head teachers and project staff will assess these questions. FGDs with household members and the household survey will assess perspectives of the activities of the SMCs and BoGs.</p>
<p>Learning Assistants – What is the impact of the project’s training and support for Learning Assistants? How are these cohorts progressing and what are the lessons learnt to support ongoing improvements?</p>	<p>FGDs with LA/ST participants, and a KII with FAWE, will address this component.</p>

<p>School environment – To what extent are there differences in outcomes between schools which are receiving additional support through Learning Assistants, Score-carding and Itinerant Teachers? What is the added value of these activities to beneficiaries and the school environment?</p> <p>Has the PV and SMC/BOG training/ awareness in child protection reinforced the effectiveness of score-carding intervention, and ultimately safeguarding in target schools?</p>	<p>Data may be disaggregated by these factors depending on the final number of each in the sample.</p> <p>The link between training and score carding can be explored in the qualitative data collection.</p>
<p>Indirect impact – What impact has GATE-GEC had on indirect beneficiaries including boys within the schools?</p>	<p>FGDs with indirect beneficiaries will assess this impact, and the household survey.</p>
<p>Education sector alignment – To what extent has the project been framed within national educational priorities and policies? How successful has the project been at integrating with national, district and school level systems?</p>	<p>KIIs with government officials and project staff will address questions of alignment with national policy, and sustainability through integration and adoption of project activities.</p>

Annex 2: Background information sources

Documents reviewed:

- Baseline inception report
- Baseline evaluation report
- Learning histograms
- MEL Framework
- Theory of Change
- Logframe
- Data collection tools
- Raw data collected
- Sustainability Plan
- Baseline sampling framework
- Reverification data 2018
- Model Schools tracker
- ST school placement
- General GATE-GEC Presentation
- 190226 Plan-HI meeting notes
- PV numbers
- MEL Guidance Parts 1 and 2 (from Fund Manager)
- Field Challenges (from Dalan)

Inception meetings:

- Plan inception meeting
- FM inception meeting
- Plan Educational Technical Specialist
- HI Sierra Leone

Annex 3: Proposed quantitative sampling approach

Primary cohort

Grade at evaluation point	Baseline		Midline proposal	
	Intervention		Intervention	
	Learning	Transition	Learning	Transition
P2	41	41	-	-
P3	46	46	-	-
P4	61	61	41	41
P5	44	44	46	46
P6	49	49	61	61
JSS1	-	-	44	44
JSS2	-	-	49	49
Learning	241		241	
Transition	241		241	

Primary 1 students are excluded as the number is too small to be meaningful (12 Primary 1 students were sampled at baseline).

JSS cohort

Grade at evaluation point	Baseline				Midline (panel 1)				Midline (top up - panel 2)				Midline (total = panel 1 + panel 2)			
	Intervention		Control		Intervention		Control		Intervention		Control		Intervention		Control	
	L	T	L	T	L	T	L	T	L	T	L	T	L	T	L	T
JSS1	174	174	164	164	-	-	-	-	110	110	110	110	110	110	110	110
JSS2	272	272	153	153	-	-	-	-	126	126	157	157	126	126	157	157
JSS3	167	167	77	77	174	174	164	164	-	-	-	-	174	174	164	164
Former JSS3	-	-	-	-	272	272	153	153	-	-	-	-	272	272	153	153
Total	613	613	394	394	446	446	317	317	236	236	267	267	682	682	584	584
Learning	1007				763				503				1266			
Transition	1007				763				503				1266			

At midline, the girls from baseline will be included in the sample (panel 1) and additional girls will be sampled from the existing schools in the sample (panel 2). It is noted that the top-up figures may be affected by the number of non-sample beneficiaries in the selected schools, though Plan’s latest reverification data indicates that there should be sufficient non-sample beneficiaries.

Power calculations on the secondary school panel 1 sample of 763 students and 115 schools in with a minimum detectable effect of 0.25 standard deviations and 5% significance results in 84% power achieved.¹³ This meets the minimum standards set by the fund manager. Power calculations were not carried out on the primary school or additional cohort (panel 2).

Annex 4: Learning assessment subtasks

This section outlines the rationale for changing the composition of SeGRA/SeGMA subtasks at midline. The tests used will be version two of the tests piloted at baseline, as this was calibrated with version one and deemed comparable. The same applies to EGRA/EGMA.

SeGRA		
Subtask number	Subtask name	Keep/remove and rationale
1	Familiar word recognition	Remove. High scores at baseline, 72% of students scored between 81-100%.
2	Invented word recognition	Remove. High number of 0 scores. Benchmark did not do much better, suggesting that the task is ill-suited to the curriculum.
3	Reading comprehension	Keep.
4	Advanced reading comprehension 1	Keep.
5	Advanced reading comprehension 2	Keep.

Short essay construction will not be included at midline. Students in all years at JSS are expected to be able to write in different formats for different audiences, but maintaining subtasks from baseline will allow for greater comparability at midline. There was no ceiling effect in the subtasks 3, 4 and 5 at baseline.

¹³ These figures were calculated using the e-evaluate app, using a continuous, one-sided test, assuming an intervention sample size of 446, a control sample size of 317, a cluster size of 63 for intervention and 52 for control and intra-cluster correlation of 0.10 for intervention and control groups.

SeGMA		
Subtask number	Subtask name	Midline status
1	Addition and subtraction - level 1	Remove at midline. Over 65% of people scored between 81-100% at baseline.
2	Addition and subtraction - level 2	Keep.
3	Word problems	Remove at midline. At baseline consisted of addition and subtraction word problems, these skills will be covered in subtask 2. In SeGMA, it is common practice to include multiplication, division, percentages and fractions, so one subtask for addition and subtraction is sufficient.
4	Advanced multiplication/division word problems	Keep.
5	Percentages and fractions	Keep.
6	Spaces and shapes	Keep.

Annex 5: Gender inclusion and child protection

Child protection and inclusion are priorities for the research. Jigsaw works with partner organisations to seek the most appropriate approval process for the context, and will implement the partner's preferred means of recording consent. The midline evaluation will abide by Plan International's Child-Centered Community Development Standards and Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy.

Priority will be given to child-friendly research approaches and inclusiveness in the recruitment and training of the enumerator team and the design of research protocols and instruments. HI will work with Jigsaw to deliver training on best practice in inclusive data collection.

Sampling of focus group participants will ensure inclusion of relevant minorities. For student focus groups and interviews, participants will be selected to represent a variety of ages, including hard-to-reach children where possible.

The research team will include as many female enumerators as possible. Researchers responsible for conducting focus groups with girls will be female. The team will also ensure regional teams are fluent in regional mother tongue languages, so that participants can switch to mother tongue language when

preferred.

The training of enumerators will include a session on child protection procedures, delivered in conjunction with Plan's Child Protection Adviser, to train on how to conduct the assessments in a child-friendly manner, how to obtain informed consent, and how to respond to child protection disclosures. The enumerators will be trained in how to encourage and calm the students such that they feel able to respond to the survey freely. Enumerators will be assessed during training for their ability to create a child-friendly environment. During the pre-test, the team will observe each enumerator and provide feedback. Failure to create an inclusive, child-friendly environment will result in replacement of the enumerator.

Data collection will be conducted in a child-friendly manner. Focus group techniques will be adapted to ensure a child-friendly and disability-inclusive approach. A child-friendly manner includes adequate time dedicated to rapport building and using a range of techniques in addition to a regular question and answer/discussion model eg. using flashcards as prompts and asking which one children identify with most.

Assessment protocols will include verbal consent for all students, household members and teachers participating in data collection. Before administering the assessment, the enumerator will explain the objectives of the study and inform students, household members and teachers of how the information will be used. Participants will be asked if they would like to participate. It will be made clear that participants can choose to end the survey without giving a reason. Basic elements of good practice will be maintained, including remaining objective, offering empathy without advice, and practicing active listening.

While names will be collected to track students, enumerators will make clear to participants that their name will not be reported and their individual results will not be disclosed to anyone inside or outside the school, unless the child is identified as being at risk of harm. No individual's names will be used in the final report. Composite case studies may be created to uphold confidentiality and protect the identity of young people where necessary.

Existing Plan International UK and Fund Manager policies and procedures will be adhered to regarding child protection, confidentiality, sensitive issues and referrals. A detailed referral process for child protection concerns will be developed together with Plan International UK.

Annex 6: Research ethics

Jigsaw Consult seeks to protect the dignity, rights and welfare of all those involved in research.

The table below details the ethical framework, including the general protocols followed and the risk assessment specific to the project. This ethical risk assessment is considered a living document and will be amended and updated throughout the life-cycle of the research, as needed. It is the responsibility of the entire research team to uphold and maintain the ethical standards set out in this framework. This includes the enumerators and the supervisors. It is the responsibility of the Project Manager to follow up on reported incidents of ethical breaches, and to amend and update the risk assessment.

Ethical consideration	Jigsaw protocol	Project details
Consent	<p>Informed, ongoing and voluntary consent is sought from all research participants. Children and adults at risk can provide consent where appropriate. Participants are able to withdraw their consent at any stage of the research.</p>	<p>Children at risk constitute at least half of the research sample. It is important to Jigsaw that adequate time is taken to inform participants of the purpose of the research and how their information will be used before consent is given.</p> <p>To that end, the beginning of a student survey will have a script similar to this:</p> <p><i>Hello, my name is XX and I would like to ask for your permission to interview you on behalf of a research program which is aiming to improve girl's education in lots of countries around the world.</i></p> <p><i>We would like to ask you some questions about you, your school and how you feel about education. We would also like you to take a short numeracy and literacy test. This will take approximately XX minutes.</i></p> <p><i>If you choose to take part, the results will not be shared with your school and do not affect your grades. It is your choice to take part or not. If you choose to take part, you can refuse to answer any questions you are uncomfortable with, and can choose to stop the process at any time. We will record your answers to use them in our research but we will not mention you by name or share your personal details with anybody outside of our team. However, if I believe that you or another child might be at risk, it is my duty to report this to somebody. Do you have any questions? Is</i></p>

		<p><i>that acceptable and do you agree to take part in our research to help improve girl's education?</i></p> <p>Informed consent will also be sought at the beginning of household surveys, FGDs and KIIs.</p> <p>Informed consent will be sought from CWD. Where this is not possible, for example, in a case of difficulty in communicating, consent will be sought from the child's caregiver.</p>
Training	Jigsaw staff are trained in research ethics and current best practice in research. Contracted enumerators are trained by Jigsaw staff in ethics before data collection begins.	Jigsaw will work in conjunction with HI to train enumerators and supervisors in inclusive data collection methods with a focus on CWD. This will include discussion of the importance of inclusive practices from an ethical standpoint.
Data collection tools	Jigsaw uses innovative and project-appropriate data collection methods. Data collection is often participatory. The tools are developed to be inclusive and accessible to all participants. Data collection tools are appropriate to the local context.	<p>Jigsaw will work with HI to ensure the tools are adapted for use by CWD and adequate support is provided during data collection. This adaptation will include time extensions and larger font sizes.</p> <p>Data collection tools will be sense-checked for the local context by Dalan. This includes the surveys as well as the qualitative templates.</p>
External evaluators and enumerators	<p>Jigsaw regularly works with externally contracted enumerators. The recruitment process ensures that only candidates with the appropriate and relevant expertise are selected.</p> <p>If enumerators are</p>	Dalan has a pool of experienced researchers it will draw from for the midline. There will be some overlap with the team from baseline.

	<p>contracted directly, the recruitment process follows all Jigsaw procedures. Where external evaluators are not recruited directly by Jigsaw, the recruitment process of the supplier is reviewed to ensure it meets the requirements of the project.</p>	
Data protection	<p>Jigsaw has a comprehensive data protection policy. Data is stored on a secure server, and access is restricted to staff who require it.</p>	<p>Documents which contain personal information about participants eg. names, DOB, contact details will be shared using password protection. The password will be shared in a separate email.</p>
Confidentiality and anonymity	<p>All information provided in data collection is treated confidentially and anonymously, except when safeguarding procedures are triggered. Participants are made aware of this exception.</p>	<p>The script for informed consent contains information on confidentiality and anonymity, including the exception for safeguarding (exact wording to be determined during tool development):</p> <p><i>We will record your answers to use them in our research but we will not mention you by name or share your personal details with anybody outside of our team. However, if I believe that you or another person might be at risk, it is my duty to report this to somebody.</i></p>
Location selection	<p>Research is conducted in a location accessible to all participants, including participants with disabilities and people living in hard-to-reach areas.</p> <p>Location selection also considers potential local cultural factors which may</p>	<p>Jigsaw will work closely with Dalan and project partners to ensure that focus groups which require people to travel will be conducted in a location that is safe to travel to/from, and accounting for accessibility needs of participants.</p>

	<p>impact accessibility, and best practice conducting research with children and adults at risk.</p>	
Responsibility	<p>It is the responsibility of the entire research team to uphold and maintain the ethical standards set out in this framework. This includes the enumerators and the supervisors. All members of the research team are required to sign a Code of Conduct. For each project, a member of the evaluation team is assigned overall responsibility for ethics.</p>	<p>The Code of Conduct includes 'dos and don'ts' for behaviour. This will be covered in the safeguarding training session.</p>
Incident reporting	<p>Jigsaw works with its clients to decide on incident reporting pathways for a project. Jigsaw has reporting procedures for safeguarding issues related to children and adults at risk. In case of a breach of ethics, there is a named person on each evaluation team for reporting purposes.</p> <p>Enumerator training includes information on incident reporting procedures, including for a breach of: ethics, the Code of Conduct, and the children and adults at risk safeguarding policy.</p>	<p>Enumerators will be informed of the following:</p> <p>In case of a suspected breach of the ethics as outlined in this framework, members of the research team should immediately report the incident to Preeti Dhillon at p.dhillon@jigsawconsult.com. The report of the breach should include the following, where available: the specific ethical consideration; the time, date and location of the incident; the person who may have breached the consideration; details of the incident.</p> <p>Reports will be treated confidentially.</p>
Research dissemination	<p>At a minimum, research participants are informed about the dissemination plan for the research. Jigsaw encourages the dissemination of research</p>	<p>Dissemination recommendations can be found in the 'supplementary deliverables and dissemination' section.</p>

findings to its participants.

Annex 7: Risk assessment framework

The risk assessment outlines the potential risks that could impact the research. Each risk is accompanied by an assessment of the probability of the risk occurring, the impact on the research should the risk occur, and a suitable mitigation and correction strategy.

Risk category	Probability (low/medium / high)	Potential impact (low/medium/ high)	Planned mitigation/corrective actions
<p>Harm to research participants - psychological</p> <p>Participants will be asked some questions on sensitive topics, such as bullying from peers and punishment from teachers. This could potentially be traumatic for participants.</p>	Medium	Medium	<p>Questions will be worded to prevent triggering participants, and enumerators will be trained in how to ask sensitive questions eg. how to react when participants are uncomfortable or upset.</p> <p>Jigsaw will share Plan’s service map with in-country enumerators to be able to refer participants to local support services as necessary.</p>
<p>Harm to research participants - physical</p> <p>The research includes work with children, and children with disabilities. Accidents are a risk moving to and from the data collection area ie. around the school site.</p>	Medium	Medium	<p>In case of a health and safety incident in a school, the school contact will be informed. In the event of an incident in a household or community, the supervisor on site is responsible for following the appropriate procedure eg. calling local emergency services, or seeking help.</p>
<p>Harm to researchers - psychological</p>	Low	Low	<p>Enumerator training will include discussion of self-care while in the field. This includes the importance of</p>

<p>The content of the surveys, qualitative templates and learning assessment does not include many sensitive topics.</p> <p>A small risk of psychological harm may result from stress associated with fieldwork.</p>			<p>sleeping, a good diet, and exercise.</p>
<p>Harm to researchers - physical</p> <p>Enumerators will be moving around using transportation that they organise for themselves, therefore are at risk of travel accidents.</p> <p>Enumerators will be working in schools with varied facilities which will be physically demanding eg. lack of shade.</p> <p>Sierra Leone was severely impacted by the Ebola epidemic in 2014-2016.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Enumerators will have a communications budget to be able to use their mobile phones for logistics and in case of an emergency.</p> <p>Enumerator training will include discussion of self-care while in the field.</p> <p>Sierra Leone has been Ebola free since March 2016. News sources will be monitored in case of an outbreak and the data collection adjusted as necessary (in conjunction with Dalan, Plan and the FM).</p>
<p>Change in socio-political context</p> <p>The Foreign and Commonwealth Office indicates that all areas in Sierra Leone can be visited, following their advice. The political situation is stable.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Jigsaw will work with Dalan to ensure that the research schedule accounts for local conditions eg. early finish time where needed to facilitate travel.</p> <p>A WhatsApp group between the Dalan enumerators and Jigsaw will be created to facilitate rapid dissemination of information, including any potential events that could affect security or safety.</p>
<p>Change in staff members - internal</p> <p>Jigsaw recognises that staff turnover is a risk in multi-year projects.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Jigsaw assigns multiple staff members to each project to mitigate potential risks from staff turnover/absence. When a staff member leaves Jigsaw they are expected to leave detailed handover notes for each active project with which they are involved.</p>

<p>Change in staff members - external</p> <p>There is a risk of staff turnover from: Plan International UK, Action Aid, FAWE, OU, HI. There is also risk of turnover at the fund manager level.</p>	High	High	<p>Jigsaw expects the client to have a thorough handover strategy in place for new staff, and to facilitate an introduction between Jigsaw and new staff members.</p> <p>Jigsaw will facilitate staff turnover by meeting with new staff members.</p>
<p>High attrition rate - research participants</p> <p>In cohort tracking, participants may be uncontactable, or they may refuse to be included in multiple rounds of research.</p>	High	Medium	<p>There are multiple tracking mechanisms in place to prevent attrition through inability to track. As well as asking the school administration for details in case a student cannot be located, there are methods in place at the household level. These include multiple contact details of the head of household, location information for the household, and permission to ask a neighbour in case the household cannot be tracked.</p> <p>At midline, students in the JSS learning cohort will be replaced if they are lost to the sample or do not consent to participate.</p>
<p>High attrition rate - enumerators</p> <p>Enumerators could drop out during the training or field work eg. due to illness. This would impact the data collection timeline.</p>	Low	Low	<p>Dalan will hire 2-3 extra enumerators that will attend the training and will act as back-up in case of illness or dropout. Given the short data collection period, the risk of dropout is low.</p>
<p>Inconsistencies in data collection</p> <p>Size of research team and demands of tools that could lead to errors in data and uneven data collection.</p>	Medium	High	<p>At least one inter-rater reliability test will be conducted with enumerators to ensure consistency of data collection. This will be done with both EGRA/EGMA (on Tangerine) and with SeGRA/SeGMA (through marking one of each).</p> <p>Pre-test data will be checked for completeness and accuracy and enumerators will receive feedback.</p> <p>Team Supervisors will have a checklist of quality assurance steps to conduct on a daily basis.</p>

			Jigsaw will also check data on a daily basis at the beginning of the data collection, and then conduct spot checks thereafter.
<p>Misuse of data</p> <p>Personal details of participants will be collected, including names, DOBs, phone numbers and location information. This could be misused by any of the data collection team or a third party.</p>	Medium	High	<p>Enumerator training will include a discussion of data protection and confidentiality.</p> <p>Data with identifying information will be shared with Plan and the FM using password-protection.</p> <p>Enumerators will not have access to data after it has been collected and submitted.</p> <p>Jigsaw has a GDPR compliant Data Protection Policy that will be followed (this can be shared upon request).</p>
<p>Problems with technology</p> <p>The data collection relies heavily on electronic equipment, such as tablets, which could disrupt data collection if there are technical issues.</p>	Medium	Low	<p>Enumerator training will include discussion of optimal tablet settings for field work eg. how to conserve battery.</p> <p>Supervisors will be encouraged to carry a spare tablet for team use in case of emergency. Supervisors will be responsible for ensuring they have SIM cards with a network that has coverage in the areas they will be travelling to. This may require sourcing multiple SIM cards.</p> <p>Tablets will be hired via Dalan and replacement tablets provided if a tablet stops working in the field.</p> <p>The Project Coordinator will share multiple contact details with the enumerators in case one method does not work in the field.</p>