

# Project Evaluation Report

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<b>Evaluator:</b>	Oxford Policy Management
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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](mailto:uk_girls_education_challenge@pwc.com).

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# Educating Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises (ENGINE II): Endline Evaluation Report

by



for



Final

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## Executive summary

Oxford Policy Management (OPM) has been contracted by Mercy Corps to undertake an impact evaluation of the Educating Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises (ENGINE) II programme. This report presents the findings of the endline evaluation of ENGINE II, which was carried out between February 2020 and September 2020.

### Background to the ENGINE II programme

ENGINE II is a three-year programme implemented from April 2017 to September 2020 across four states in Nigeria that aims to transform the lives of marginalised in-school girls (ISGs) and out-of-school girls (OSGs) by allowing them to fulfil their potential in education and work. ENGINE II is funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) through its Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) fund, with match funding from Mercy Corps. The Fund Manager (FM) of the GEC fund is a consortium led by PwC UK. Mercy Corps leads the implementation of ENGINE II, in collaboration with four implementing partners.

ENGINE II is targeted at over 18,000 marginalised girls aged between 17 and 23 years. The programme works with both ISGs and OSGs in 79 schools (14 in the FCT, 30 in Kano, 35 in Kaduna) and 194 communities across 18 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the four states.<sup>1</sup> In Lagos, ENGINE II only works with OSGs, while in the other states, ENGINE II works with both ISGs and OSGs.

### Programme activities

ENGINE II delivers activities under five outputs. The first output is focused on enhanced learning experiences of marginalised girls. Under this output, ENGINE II established learning centres for ISGs and OSGs where Learning Centre Facilitators (LCFs) deliver weekly sessions on literacy, numeracy, life skills, and financial education. LCFs are trained to deliver these sessions using a learner-centred teaching methodology (LCTM). LCFs participate in regular mentoring sessions and receive monthly supervision visits. Girls are allocated to different learning centres based on their current skill levels, and class sizes are capped at 25 girls.

The second output is focused on increased asset-building skills and income generation for marginalised girls. In addition to the financial education sessions at the learning centres, ENGINE II supports beneficiaries to register for ID cards, open bank accounts, form informal or formal savings groups, and access loans. ENGINE II also links girls to vocational training institutes (VTIs) to complete skills training courses in their area of interest, and links girls to internships and work placements. The programme provides girls with businesses with business expansion / diversification grants.

The third output is focused on providing enhanced life skills training opportunities through the learning centre sessions. In addition, ENGINE II identified a group of girl ambassadors who act as peer mentors, and share life skills content with girls who are not direct beneficiaries of the programme. The fourth output is focused on creating an enabling environment at the school and community level through community sensitisation activities and training school-based management committees (SBMCs) to promote gender-friendly

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<sup>1</sup> ENGINE II works in AMAC and Bwari LGAs in the FCT; Alimosho, Epe, Kosofe, Ojo, and Shomolu LGAs in Lagos; Chikun, Jaba, Kaura, Makarfi, Sabon-Gari, and Zaria LGAs in Kaduna; and Dala, Fagge, Kumbotso, Tarauni, and Ungogo LGAs in Kano.

schools. The fifth output is focused on creating an enabling environment at the state level by ensuring that policies that are supportive of girls' education are effectively implemented.

As illustrated in the programme's theory of change (ToC), these outputs are mutually reinforcing and interact to lead to improvements in the programme's targeted outcomes.

## ToC

Figure 2 presents the ENGINE II ToC used for the evaluation. The diagrammatic presentation was created by the authors based on ENGINE II's logframe.<sup>2</sup>

**ENGINE II targets two final outcomes: improvements in learning outcomes (literacy, numeracy, and life skills) and increased rates of successful transition.** For ISGs, successful transition is defined as progression to the next highest grade, or completion of secondary school and enrolment in tertiary education, vocational training, or employment. For OSGs, successful transition is defined as enrolment in vocational training, an internship, or an apprenticeship; expansion or diversification of their business; or re-enrolment in formal education.

**Sustainability** is also considered as a final outcome of ENGINE II, highlighting the importance that ENGINE II places on investing significant resources in the policy environment by working with state governments, civil society groups, and religious, community and school leaders. This investment aims to ensure that improvements in learning and transition are sustained after the programme ends.

Outputs are expected to lead to these final outcomes through five **intermediate outcomes** (attendance, teaching quality, access to economic opportunities, life skills, and school governance).

**Figure 1: ENGINE II ToC**

Theory of Change			Assumptions	
Outcomes	Improved learning outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Literacy</li> <li>Numeracy</li> <li>Life skills</li> </ul>	Successful transition to next phase of education and work	Sustainability of initiatives for continued education and empowerment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government, private sector and communities are willing to engage</li> <li>There is demand from ENGINE II girls for the programme</li> <li>Political, economic and security situation does not deteriorate</li> </ol>
Intermediate outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular attendance at learning centres of ISGs and OSGs</li> <li>Improved teaching quality of LCFs</li> <li>Increased access to economic opportunities</li> <li>Increased knowledge of the ENGINE II life skills curriculum</li> <li>Improved school governance of SBMCs and PTAs to make school an enabling environment</li> </ul>			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls regularly attend learning centre sessions.</li> <li>Teachers are willing to apply the LCTM and are available.</li> <li>Girls are willing to access trainings on economic skills and life skills.</li> <li>Girls' gatekeepers and parents are supportive of project intervention, incl. the life skills curriculum.</li> <li>Girls have enough time to involve in project's financial service activities.</li> <li>SBMC have the will and means to ensure schools are inclusive and safe for girls.</li> </ol>
Outputs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced learning experiences for marginalised girls</li> <li>Increased asset building skills and income generation for marginalised girls</li> <li>Enhanced life skills training opportunities for marginalised girls</li> <li>Improved gatekeeper commitment towards girls' education and empowerment</li> <li>Expanded protection policies and practices benefitting adolescent girls and young women</li> </ol>			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LCFs are willing to participate in training.</li> <li>OSGs with disrupted education are motivated to return to formal education.</li> <li>Learning centres are flexible and can meet the specific educational needs of girls with interrupted education.</li> <li>Learning centre sessions provide sufficient support for ISGs to prepare them for examinations.</li> <li>Girls have resources to sit for examinations.</li> <li>Girls are interested in learning business and entrepreneurship skills.</li> <li>Formal banking services can be accessed by girls.</li> <li>Safe income generating opportunities can be made accessible to girls in the current economic climate; Girls have a supportive environment that allows for uptake of income generation activities</li> <li>Community based value chains and micro-finance institutions are willing to provide their support.</li> <li>The duration of the programme is sufficient to bring about changes in protection policy and practice through advocacy.</li> </ol>
<p>Barriers: Poverty, access to finance, pressure for early marriage, early pregnancy, lack of life and vocational skills, illiteracy, poor school infrastructure and lack of WASH facilities, inadequate reproductive health education and services, lack of gatekeeper support and enabling environment, inadequately trained teachers, gender inequalities and norms, security, lack of access to diverse markets for income generation</p>				

<sup>2</sup> The logframe was the guiding document for the evaluation. ENGINE II also has a ToC diagram but there are some discrepancies between the diagram and the logframe. Information on barriers is taken from ENGINE II's ToC diagram.

Source: OPM's representation of ENGINE II logframe. Information on barriers is taken from ENGINE II's ToC diagram.

## Methodology

### Approach to the evaluation

The endline evaluation was expected to be a mixed-methods, quasi-experimental impact evaluation, involving a large-scale school-based quantitative survey and qualitative data collection in schools and households. Due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 global pandemic and the resulting school closures, the original evaluation design was no longer viable. **We therefore adjusted the endline evaluation design to a design that could be implemented through remote data collection and analysis of secondary data. This necessarily required a review of the scope of the evaluation, as several of the questions that the evaluation had set out to answer cannot be answered effectively through these data collection methodologies.**

To define the scope of the endline evaluation, **Mercy Corps, the FM, and OPM worked together to identify seven research questions<sup>3</sup> on specific areas of ENGINE II that it is of interest for the programme to understand further, based on the findings of the midline evaluation and the experiences of the programme implementation teams.** When defining the research scope, we also considered the available remote data collection methodologies, the available timeframe, and ethical considerations. Despite focusing on a more limited set of research questions, the endline evaluation aims to capture perceptions of programme effectiveness and implementation in a timely manner and to ensure that crucial learning that will be useful for future implementation is not lost.

**A major component of the original intended endline evaluation approach had been an impact evaluation to assess the attributable impact of ENGINE II on key outcomes and intermediate outcomes.** Many of the quantitative impact indicators cannot be collected through remote data collection methods or while schools are closed (e.g. attendance, learning outcomes, teaching quality), while others cover topics that are too sensitive to be administered over the phone (e.g. menstrual hygiene management). Therefore, the endline evaluation **does not report on the impact** that ENGINE II has had and will not quantify the impact on key outcomes (learning outcomes and transition) in comparison to a control group. **It focuses by necessity on a qualitative assessment of the factors that stakeholders perceive to be influential in driving change in outcomes,** and on understanding how ENGINE II activities are perceived to contribute to any perceived changes in outcomes. Programme documentation and monitoring data are used to support this qualitative assessment.

**The endline evaluation focuses on evaluating ENGINE II activities as they were designed prior to COVID-19** and therefore on the period of implementation before the COVID-19 outbreak (i.e. up to February 2020).

### Evaluation methodology

Research questions are answered through remote primary qualitative data collection. Phone interviews were conducted with a variety of respondents at school, community and state level. Respondents were selected by state and across rural and urban locations.

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<sup>3</sup> This report focuses on the first six research questions. The seventh research question asks 'Does ENGINE II represent good value for money?' and is answered in an accompanying report called 'Value for money analysis of the ENGINE II programme' (OPM, 2020).

The primary qualitative data collection was supported by a document review and analysis of monitoring data that focused on understanding the implementation fidelity of the programme.

## Programme implementation

*Research question 1: Were the activities implemented in the expected format and for the expected duration, and did they reach the expected people? Were adaptations made to the planned activities, and why?*

**The implementation review focused primarily on Output 1 (learning experiences) and Output 2 (economic activities).** This is because these two outputs are tied most closely to ENGINE II's final outcomes, learning, and transition. These outputs are most closely linked to the engagement of ENGINE II's direct beneficiaries, and the most time- and resource-intensive activities fall into these two outputs.

**Output 1 was largely implemented as expected.** ENGINE II established ISG and OSG learning centres and recruited LCFs to facilitate sessions at these centres through a rigorous process. Learning centre sessions started with a two-month delay but this was made up for by a no-cost extension that allowed the learning centre sessions to run for the expected duration. Information on LCFs' attendance at trainings and mentoring sessions, and on the number of hours of learning centre sessions delivered, was not consistently available. While it was reported that learning centre sessions, LCF trainings, and LCF mentoring sessions were delivered regularly, it was not possible to establish whether the expected frequency was delivered, and whether they reached the expected numbers of LCFs.

**A key adaptation of the programme was that it adapted its approach to the mentoring of LCFs in response to the slow adoption of the LCTM, and low subject matter competency amongst LCFs.** The approach evolved over multiple iterations. The final model included monthly cluster-level mentoring sessions, where small groups of LCFs came together to discuss challenging topics and to learn from each other. These sessions were led by super LCFs who were identified part way through the programme as LCFs who had adopted the LCTM well. In addition, there were quarterly LGA-level meetings with larger groups of LCFs where subject matter experts would deliver sessions on topics that are complicated to teach, to build LCFs' subject matter knowledge. Perceptions from stakeholders suggest that this was a positive adaptation that addressed the challenges that had been observed with the original model and led to an improved use of the LCTM by LCFs.

**Master trainer supervision visits were conducted at a lower frequency than expected.** Master trainers were not able to visit all learning centres allocated to them each month because of difficulties in combining these visits with other job responsibilities, and because of the long distances to some of the centres. The programme adapted to this by enlisting head teachers to conduct supervision visits. This was an effective strategy where learning centres were located close to or at the schools because it removed both the barriers mentioned. An additional benefit was that head teachers became more engaged in and supportive of the programme generally.

**Output 2 experienced substantial delays, and challenges with the programme design that required substantial revisions in the programme's strategy.** The linking of girls to VTIs was delayed by 10 months, and many girls had not yet completed their training by the end of the third year of the programme. There were also some implementation challenges, with some training providers reportedly not yet having been paid by the programme, and some girls being left out from this component because no training providers were available in the immediate vicinity that offered the skill they were interested in learning.

**In addition, there were challenges with the programme’s strategy of providing girls with access to loans and formal savings through bank accounts.** There were few opportunities available for girls to access loans with conditions that were realistic for them to meet, i.e. low single-digit interest rates and a low initial deposit. In addition, most girls were not interested in taking out loans because they re-invested any earnings directly in their businesses. Many girls did not have the required funds to maintain minimum account balances for bank accounts, and banks were often far away, which prevented them from using formal bank accounts as a savings mechanism. As a result of this challenge, the programme adapted its approach in two ways. Firstly, it focused more strongly on supporting girls’ access to informal savings groups in their communities, an approach that had worked well during ENGINE I but that the programme had been hoping to expand on by providing access to loans.

Secondly, ENGINE II substantially changed its strategy around business expansion, and decided to provide girls with business expansion grants or with equipment to expand their businesses. Eligible businesses were identified through a business assessment and it was required that there be a clear objective for how the grant or equipment would be used. This strategy was developed relatively late in implementation and the first business grants had just been disbursed when COVID-19 disrupted the programme. Evidence on the delivery and uptake of this strategy is therefore not yet available.

**Output 3, Output 4, and Output 5 were largely delivered as expected, although the reach and duration of some of the activities could not be established from the available data.** ENGINE II was particularly successful in developing a CVAP protocol. This was done based on an identified need during programme implementation and has since been adopted for implementation by all states.

## Attendance

### Research question 2: Did ISGs and OSGs attend the learning centre sessions regularly?

**Attendance at the learning centre sessions was poor throughout the programme duration, particularly for OSGs.** Programme monitoring data show that between April 2019 and March 2020, about 40% – 50% of registered OSGs were attending learning centre sessions, and attendance rates did not improve throughout the programme.

**The key reason for poor attendance among OSGs was that girls were expecting to receive financial benefits or economic empowerment through ENGINE II, and were less interested in the educational aspects of the programme.** There were two key underlying themes in this regard. The first was that, in many cases, the financial benefits provided during ENGINE I had set specific expectations, and the girls assumed that the same model would continue. Better communication to beneficiaries about the purpose and design of ENGINE II might have addressed this somewhat. However, the delays in linking girls to VTIs are also likely to have contributed to girls thinking that they would not receive any benefits in terms of economic empowerment from the programme.

**Secondly, many girls had pressing economic needs and needed to look after the welfare of their families.** Therefore, irrespective of any expectations that had been created, what was important for these girls was that they were learning something that would translate into the ability to earn an income for their family within a short period of time. For them, learning a vocational skill was most relevant. The delays in linking girls to VTIs are therefore likely to have contributed to some girls not attending the learning centre sessions because they might have been motivated to attend if they had been learning a vocational skill that they felt was useful to them at the same time.



**In general, OSGs were a mobile population, with competing interests for their time, so even OSGs who were interested in attending the learning centre sessions found it difficult to attend them regularly.** OSGs were not able to get time off work to attend sessions, had to look after their businesses, had to work on farms during the farming season, or had childcare responsibilities, which all led to irregular attendance. In addition, many OSGs had a child during the course of programme implementation, which necessarily meant that they could not attend the learning centre for at least several weeks. While household sensitisations were effective at improving attendance for some cases where support from parents or a husband was lacking, sensitisation efforts were generally not able to overcome these barriers.

**ISGs had higher rates of attendance at the learning centres but this differed by state.** In Kano, approximately 70% of registered girls attended learning centre sessions, compared to 60% in the FCT and only 40% – 50% in Kaduna.

**For ISGs, the main barrier to attendance was the timing of the learning centre sessions.** Girls missed learning centre sessions because they clashed with other school activities, or because they had to help out in the household. Where learning centre sessions were held after school, this meant that girls were hungry and tired, and potentially faced an insecure journey home. In many cases, **these challenges could be resolved by moving the learning centre sessions to a more convenient time.**

## Learning

*Research question 3: Has ENGINE II contributed to improvements in learning for ISGs and OSGs?*

**Overall, respondents reported that they had observed improvements in girls' performance in literacy and numeracy within the past year.** This was demonstrated by improved scores in continuous assessments, passing WAEC exams, and being able to pass on knowledge to peers and family. In literacy, girls reported being able to speak better, construct sentences, write letters, and read words. In numeracy, girls reported that their understanding of basic calculations, algebra, logarithm, and geometry, among others, had improved.

**These improvements were largely attributed to the teaching methods of the LCFs at the ENGINE II learning centres.** Girls and LCFs were able to identify aspects of the learning centre sessions that contributed to girls' improvement in learning. LCFs explained topics multiple times and worked with students who got answers wrong to help them arrive at the correct answer. By using group work and a peer-to-peer learning approach, girls were encouraged to learn from each other. Some girls also reported their own increased commitment to learning and receiving extra help through paid tutorials as contributing to their improvement.

**Girls also reported having increased confidence in learning.** Certain subjects and topics which were previously approached with fear were now better understood and thus approached with confidence. Girls felt confident to ask and answer questions in class. Again, the LCFs' approach to teaching was identified as the major reason for this. LCFs created a classroom environment where girls felt comfortable. Girls felt that they could participate in the sessions without fear, because LCFs did not reprimand, punish, or embarrass girls who made mistakes.

Some girls reported that they felt that they were not being taught at the right level of ability because the learning centre sessions were too easy for them. Both LCFs and girls felt that learning could have improved more if girls had their own textbooks to take home with them and use to revise.

## Life skills

Research question 4: Has ENGINE II contributed to improvements in ISGs' and OSGs' goal setting, and assertiveness and communication skills?

**Respondents strongly felt that ENGINE II had contributed to girls' communication and assertiveness skills.** They expressed that girls had learned to communicate with others respectfully and had become more confident in expressing their own opinions. Increased confidence was the change that parents noticed most about their daughters because of them attending the ENGINE II learning sessions.

Confidence and respectful communication are the key qualities of an assertive communication style. Because girls had become more assertive communicators, they were able to stand up for themselves and others.

ENGINE II built girls' communication and assertiveness skills using teaching methods at the learning centre that encouraged active participation of the girls, such as role play, peer-to-peer learning, and group work.

**Girls found the life skills sessions on goal setting useful, but most girls were not able to recall specifically what they had learnt.** Some girls reported having learnt that it is important to put in place a plan for achieving your goal that breaks the goal down into smaller tasks.

Many girls, particularly OSGs, had expected that they would receive direct financial support from ENGINE II to support them with achieving their goals. The fact that this support was not available discouraged girls from attending the learning centre sessions.

## Teaching quality

Research question 5: Has ENGINE II contributed to LCFs' use of the LCTM?

**LCFs and girls strongly felt that LCFs at the learning centre were now teaching using a learner-centred approach.** Common methods used during the learning centre sessions included group work, role play, research and presentations, and peer-to-peer learning.

**Girls and LCFs indicated that girls' active participation in the learning centre sessions had increased because of the teaching methods that LCFs used.** Programme monitoring data also show that girls participated in the sessions and volunteered answers in most observed lessons. Respondents were able to provide detailed examples of how the teaching methods mentioned above encourage girls to actively participate during the sessions. In particular, LCFs and girls felt that group work and peer-to-peer learning approaches were particularly helpful for encouraging weaker pupils to participate, because they learn from their stronger peers, and have the space to ask their peers questions when they do not understand something.

**One aspect that girls found important was that LCFs created an environment where girls could make mistakes without fear of punishment or embarrassment.** Girls reported that they were punished only for being disruptive, but not for answering questions incorrectly. When they made a mistake, the LCF would explain the concept again or would patiently work together with the student to help them arrive at the correct answer. As noted above, this approach gave the girls confidence in their ability to learn, as well as confidence in their ability to communicate effectively.

**LCFs did not use corporal punishment at the learning centre sessions. Most LCFs made use of at least some positive discipline practices, such as giving additional**

**learning activities to disruptive students and rewarding good behaviour.** However, many reported that they asked students to stand or kneel as punishment for being disruptive, in some cases for up to 30 minutes. Girls were motivated not to be disruptive both by the rewards for their good behaviour, but also because they wanted to avoid embarrassment.

All respondents indicated that LCFs had changed their teaching methods because of ENGINE II. This was mostly attributed to attendance at the trainings, as well as to the teacher guides that were distributed.

**Despite these improvements, some master trainers noted that some LCFs were still using teacher-centred approaches, and that there was further room for improvement in the use of some learner-centred techniques,** such as the use of group work. This is in line with the programme progress reports, which indicate that LCFs were slow to adopt the LCTM, and continued to struggle with some aspects of the LCTM, including the use of group work and the use of improvised materials later on in the programme. In addition, as reported in programme progress reports, LCFs had low subject matter competency, particularly in numeracy.

For LCFs, the main challenges in applying the LCTM centred around a lack of textbooks and teaching aids, and a lack of sufficient space at the learning centre.

## **System and community changes in child protection policies and practices**

### *Research question 6: Has ENGINE II contributed to the adoption and implementation of policies and practices to support CVAP?*

**There is strong evidence that ENGINE II has led to the adoption of child protection policies at the state, community, and school level. A substantial achievement of the ENGINE II programme is the adoption of the CVAP referral protocol by all four state governments for use across the state.** The protocol details the responsibilities of various agencies and promotes collaboration in the handling of child protection incidents. The CVAP protocol details the responsibilities of case management agencies, as well as additional support services, such as health services, legal support, and mental health and psychosocial support. It therefore supports coordination of these services, which have previously been fragmented.

ENGINE II has also contributed to the adoption of a code of conduct that provides guidelines for the behaviour of teachers and students. The code of conduct has been adopted for use in schools in the FCT, Kaduna, and Kano. A code of conduct for use in non-formal education centres has been adopted at the federal level for national use.

**There is also evidence that ENGINE II has led to the implementation of these policies.** The CVAP protocol has been shared with schools and communities, although at least in one state this is limited to ENGINE II schools and communities for now. **School- and community-level respondents in turn were aware of the protocol, and some school management have taken supportive actions,** including the establishment of school-level committees to deal with cases of abuse inclusively. Schools have also developed or updated their codes of conduct to include zero-tolerance policies on bullying, harassment, and abuse. ENGINE II also implemented trainings for SBMC members, gender champions, and girl ambassadors. Respondents reported that this training increased their understanding of child protection issues and helped them to understand their roles in the implementation of the child protection policies.

**However, awareness of child protection policies is not yet universal.** Some respondents were not aware of the CVAP protocol, and some had not observed any changes in child protection at the community level. While schools reported making the code of conduct visible in the school and discussing it during assemblies, students seemed to be less aware of these developments than the school leadership.

**Lastly, the evaluation can provide only limited evidence on whether these child protection policies are actively being used.** The short duration of the phone interviews and the sensitive nature of the topic when it comes to discussing actual cases meant that this was difficult to explore.

**The available evidence suggests that while some progress has been made, it is likely that systemic issues around the reporting and prosecution of abuse cases continue to dissuade people from reporting cases of abuse when they occur.** Some state-level respondents reported that through ENGINE II's efforts and the introduction of the CVAP referral protocol reporting of abuse cases had increased. At the community level, however, while respondents were aware of the protocol, it had generally not yet been used. This might in part be due to reductions in such cases, where awareness raising has led to preventative actions being taken. However, it is also likely that systemic issues around the reporting and prosecution of abuse cases continue to dissuade people from reporting cases of abuse when they occur.

## Lessons learnt

This section draws out some lessons that have been learnt from the endline evaluation about the implementation and the design of future programmes to support marginalised girls to improve their learning outcomes and to help them transition successfully.

Given the limitations to the evaluation design because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the evaluation was not able to evaluate all components of the programme's design and this limits our ability to identify clear lessons in these areas.

### Lessons related to programme implementation:

- **Establish partnerships with VTIs and understand their selection criteria early in the inception phase to avoid delays:** A MIW assessment could have been carried out at the time of tracking the beneficiaries. This would have allowed the programme to identify earlier on which types of skills they needed to identify vocational training providers for, and understand earlier on where these types of training institutes might not be accessible because of the entrance requirements. This would also have allowed the programme to clearly identify before the start of the learning centre sessions which skills there would be no VTIs available for, so that girls could be offered alternative choices based on the skills for which VTIs were available.
- **Consider how barriers to learning centre attendance for ISGs can be addressed at the start of the programme:** ENGINE II was able to address some issues around the timing of the learning centre sessions by working closely with schools, LCFs, and girls themselves. For future programming, it would be worth considering whether making some provision for food could reduce barriers related to girls feeling hungry, and whether making safe travel arrangements could reduce barriers related to girls feeling it is unsafe to travel home after school.
- **Continue to identify supervisors who are close to the learning centres where possible:** Involving head teachers as supervisors for the learning centres was a positive adaptation that overcame the barriers that master trainers faced in regard to

carrying out their supervision visits, i.e. long distances to the centres and combining visits with other responsibilities. In addition, it meant that school management was more engaged in the programme and could become a greater collaborator in the delivery of the learning centre model.

### Lessons related to programme design:

- **Reconsider how to provide access to learning and vocational training opportunities to marginalised OSGs:** The findings show that the current learning centre model is not accessible to many marginalised OSGs because they need to earn an income and look after their families. Evidence from other programmes suggests that providing girls with stipends and providing childcare opportunities while girls attend training or learning centre sessions may be effective ways to address these barriers (Stavropoulou, 2018).
- **Consider condensing the learning centre curriculum by identifying which skills OSGs are likely to need or value in future:** The evaluation found that OSGs have limited time available to spend on their skills development. In addition, many OSGs are mobile and may not stay in the same location for 18 months, which was the duration of the ENGINE II programme. Therefore, the current expectation that OSGs would be able to attend learning centre sessions for six hours a week for 18 months, in addition to concurrently attending vocational skills training organised by the programme, is therefore likely not achievable for most girls. As a result, it may be beneficial to conduct further research to identify which particular skills girls are likely to need or to value (and which can be taught in the duration of the programme), and to develop a shortened curriculum focusing on these skills.
- **Reconsider how to provide support to girls on business expansion:** For the group of marginalised girls targeted by ENGINE II, accessing loans does not seem to be a feasible strategy at the moment. While the informal savings groups created during ENGINE I were reported to be valued by the girls, it would be useful for future research to establish whether they lead to increased savings, and whether and how girls are able to expand their businesses based on these savings. Similarly, the strategy that ENGINE II introduced of providing girls with access to business expansion grants and equipment would require further evaluation to determine whether it leads to sustained business expansion over time.

### Promising areas for further research and implementation:

- **Continue to provide teacher professional development that involves a strong focus on a learner-centred teaching pedagogy but that combine this with a focus on subject matter competency:** This evaluation was unable to provide evidence on whether ENGINE II has had an impact on learning and teaching quality at endline. However, the midline evaluation demonstrated some initial impacts on learning outcomes. In addition, perceptions at endline show that LCFs and girls greatly value the LCTM and feel that it has contributed to improvements in girls' learning. For future programming, it would be beneficial to combine this approach with a focus on subject matter competency, which programme monitoring revealed to be low amongst LCFs. Whilst focused on primary schools rather than secondary schools and non-formal education, other evaluations in northern Nigeria that have measured subject matter competency directly have also pointed to low levels of subject matter competency amongst teachers, for example the evaluation of DFID's Teacher Development Programme.
- **Continue with a learning centre approach to build girls' confidence, assertiveness, and communication skills:** Perceptions from all stakeholders

strongly indicate that girls became more confident, more assertive, and better communicators as a result of the learning centre sessions, and in particular as a result of the LCTM, which encouraged them to actively participate and share their opinions during the sessions. Once again, while the evaluation was unable to measure impacts on life skills outcomes, this appears to clearly be a positive benefit arising from the learning centre sessions.

- **Continue to involve a broad range of stakeholders at state, community, and school level on child protection issues:** The adoption of child protection-related policies at the state level, and subsequent implementation at a community and school level, are a key success of the ENGINE II programme. Engaging a broad range of stakeholders on these issues, as well as identifying key actors within the community to act as gender champions, appeared to be a strategy that worked well to raise awareness of child protection issues. Further research would be needed to understand to what extent this approach also leads to better child protection outcomes, and how some of the structural barriers that are likely to emerge during further implementation of the CVAP protocol could be overcome.

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## List of abbreviations

AKGIS	Always Keeping Girls in School
AME	Agency for Mass Education
CAC	Community Action Committee
CBMC	Community-based Management Committee
CVAP	Child and vulnerable adult protection
DFID	UK Department for International Development
EGMA	Early Grade Mathematics Assessment
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
ENGINE	Educating Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FM	Fund Manager
GAR	Gross attendance ratio
GEC	Girls' Education Challenge
GEC-T	Girls' Education Challenge Transition
ISG	In-school girl
JSS	Junior Secondary School
KII	Key informant interview
LCF	Learning Centre Facilitator
LCTM	Learner-centred teaching methodology
LGA	Local Government Area
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation, and learning
MFI	Micro-finance institution
MIW	Matching Interest to Work
MoE	Ministry of Education
NAR	Net attendance ratio
NECO	National Examinations Council
NIMC	National Identity Management Commission
NYSC	National Youth Service Corps
OPM	Oxford Policy Management
OSG	Out-of-school girl
PTA	Parent-teachers association
SAP	School Action Plan
SBMC	School-Based Management Committee
SSCE	Senior School Certificate Examinations

SSS	Senior Secondary School
SUBEB	State Universal Basic Education Board
ToC	Theory of change
TPDD	Teacher Professional Development Day
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VTI	Vocational training institute
WAEC	West Africa Examination Council

# 1 Introduction

Oxford Policy Management (OPM) has been contracted by Mercy Corps to undertake an impact evaluation of the Educating Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises (ENGINE) II programme. This report presents the findings of the endline evaluation of ENGINE II, which was carried out between February 2020 and September 2020.

ENGINE II is a three-year programme implemented from April 2017 to September 2020 across four states in Nigeria that aims to transform the lives of marginalised in-school girls (ISGs) and out-of-school girls (OSGs) by allowing them to fulfil their potential in education and work. ENGINE II is funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) through its Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) fund, with match funding from Mercy Corps. The Fund Manager (FM) of the GEC fund is a consortium led by PwC UK. Mercy Corps leads the implementation of ENGINE II, in collaboration with four implementing partners.

The impact evaluation includes data collection over three rounds: a baseline in 2018, a midline in 2019, and an endline in 2020. The evaluation was designed as a mixed methods quasi-experimental evaluation involving quantitative and qualitative interviews and assessments in schools and communities. This approach was followed for the baseline and midline evaluation rounds. At endline, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting school closures and physical distancing measures, it was not possible to conduct school visits and face-to-face research. Given that ENGINE II ends in September 2020 and the endline evaluation had to be completed within this timeframe, the scope of the endline evaluation was revised, and limited to information that could be collected through remote qualitative data collection, secondary data, and programme documentation. To define the scope of the endline evaluation, Mercy Corps, the FM, and OPM worked together to develop a set of research questions on specific areas of ENGINE II that it is of interest for the programme to understand further. This report presents the findings against these research questions.

## 1.1 Structure of the report

The report is structured as follows:

1. The rest of Chapter 1 introduces the ENGINE II programme, its theory of change (ToC), and the context in which ENGINE II is implemented.
2. Chapter 2 describes the research methodology, including the approach to the evaluation, sampling, data collection, and data analysis.
3. Chapter 3 presents the findings of the implementation review, including an assessment of the extent to which ENGINE II has been implemented as it was designed.
4. Chapters 4 – 8 provide thematic findings around the key research questions on learning, life skills, teaching quality, and system and community change.
5. Chapter 9 concludes by highlighting the key findings and recommendations from this round of research.

## 1.2 The ENGINE II programme

The first phase of the programme, ENGINE I, ran from 2013 to 2017 in Kano, Kaduna, and Lagos states and in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The second phase of the programme, ENGINE II, builds on the achievements from the first phase and runs from April 2017 to September 2020 in the same four states. The programme is implemented by Mercy Corps in collaboration with four implementing partners: Society for Women Development and Empowerment of Nigeria (SWODEN) in Kano, Action Health Incorporated (AHI) in Lagos, Kindling Hope Across Nations Initiative (KHAN) in Kaduna, and Tabitha Cumi Foundation (TCF) in the FCT.

ENGINE II is targeted at over 18,000 marginalised girls aged between 17 and 23 years. The programme works with both ISGs and OSGs in 79 schools (14 in the FCT, 30 in Kano, 35 in Kaduna) and 194 communities across 18 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the four states.<sup>4</sup> In Lagos, ENGINE II only works with OSGs, while in the other states, ENGINE II works with both ISGs and OSGs.

### 1.2.1 Programme beneficiaries

**Direct beneficiaries** of ENGINE II are marginalised ISGs and OSGs aged between 17 and 23 years old, who were previously enrolled in the ENGINE I programme. At the start of ENGINE I, beneficiaries who were enrolled in the programme had to meet at least one of the following **marginalisation characteristics**:

1. girls who were married by or before 18;
2. girls who had a child by or before turning 18 years old, or who were pregnant;
3. girls who are divorced or widowed;
4. girls who have a disability;
5. girls who are orphans or come from a single-headed household;
6. girls who come from households with a sick parent or husband;
7. OSGs who did not complete secondary school; or
8. girls identified by school principals as marginalised given their specific circumstances.

At the start of ENGINE II, beneficiaries from ENGINE I were tracked and re-enrolled in the programme.

**Indirect beneficiaries** of the programme are the girl fora members, teachers and boys in the same school or community as the target girls, the girls' parents/caregivers, community leaders, government officials, and vocational skills mentors.

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<sup>4</sup> ENGINE II works in AMAC and Bwari LGAs in the FCT; Alimosho, Epe, Kosofe, Ojo, and Shomolu LGAs in Lagos; Chikun, Jaba, Kaura, Makarfi, Sabon-Gari, and Zaria LGAs in Kaduna; and Dala, Fagge, Kumbotso, Tarauni, and Ungogo LGAs in Kano.

## 1.2.2 Programme activities

ENGINE II delivers activities under five outputs:

### 1. Output 1: Enhanced learning experiences for marginalised ENGINE II girls

- ISGs and OSGs receive literacy and numeracy sessions at learning centres established by ENGINE II. Sessions are delivered by Learning Centre Facilitators (LCFs), who are trained by ENGINE II to adopt a learner-centred teaching methodology (LCTM) during their sessions.
- In addition to these sessions, ISGs who are due to take transitional examinations (organised by the West African Examination Council (WAEC) or the National Examination Commission (NECO)) are provided with three months of intensive coaching classes at the learning centres.
- For OSGs who would like to re-enter formal education, ENGINE II supports the enrolment process, provides material support, and provides coaching classes. OSGs who have completed secondary education are supported to retake end-of-school examinations or tertiary entrance examinations through coaching classes and payment of examination fees.

### 2. Output 2: Increased asset-building skills and income generation for marginalised ENGINE II girls

- ISGs and OSGs receive sessions on financial literacy and business education at the learning centres.
- ENGINE II links OSGs to vocational training institutes (VTIs) to complete skills training courses through partnerships with various institutions and programmes.
- ENGINE II supports OSGs to legally register their businesses, and facilitates access to small loans, capital, and equipment. The programme also links girls to internships, apprenticeships, and other income-generating opportunities.
- To promote financial inclusion, ENGINE II supports ISGs and OSGs to register for national ID cards (from the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC)) and to open formal bank accounts. The programme also provides girls with access to informal savings and credit groups, and supports them to turn these informal groups into formally registered cooperative associations.

### 3. Output 3: Enhanced life skills training opportunities for marginalised ENGINE girls

- ISGs and OSGs receive life skills sessions at the learning centres, focusing on a variety of topics including goal setting, assertiveness and communication, decision-making skills, and reproductive health education.
- In all its schools and communities, ENGINE II selects girl ambassadors, who act as peer mentors. Girl ambassadors work with girl fora (or girls' clubs), who consist of both direct beneficiaries and girls who are not direct ENGINE II beneficiaries (and therefore do not attend the learning centres). Girl ambassadors receive specific training on leadership, gender issues, and child and vulnerable adult protection (CVAP) issues. They then mentor fora girls on

these topics and on the topics covered in the life skills sessions that they attend at the learning centres.

#### **4. Output 4: Improved gatekeeper commitment towards girls' education and empowerment**

- ENGINE II identified a group of gender champions (also known as SHEroes) in their schools and communities. These are women, men, girls, and boys who are passionate about girls' education. They advocate for girls' education, raise awareness about barriers to girls' education, and respond to day-to-day issues faced by girls in the communities.
- ENGINE II trains members of School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) and parent-teacher association (PTAs) on gender and CVAP issues, and supports them to develop action plans to ensure gender-friendly schools and address barriers to girls' education.
- ENGINE II organises community sensitisation events (educational outreaches) to gain support for the programme, mobilise for girls' education, and create awareness around barriers to girls' education.

#### **5. Output 5: Expanded protection policies and practices benefitting adolescent girls and young women**

- In each state, ENGINE II convenes a State Advisory Group made up of influential government and non-government stakeholders to provide high-level support for, and buy-in of, programme activities.
- ENGINE II works with state governments to develop, update, or reinforce policies that support the education and protection of marginalised girls.
- ENGINE II supports schools to develop, update, or reinforce school policies and codes of conduct on bullying, harassment, exploitation, and abuse, that will set the context for a safe and inclusive learning environment.

### **1.3 ToC**

Figure 2 presents the ENGINE II ToC used for the evaluation. The diagrammatic presentation was created by the authors based on ENGINE II's logframe.<sup>5</sup>

**ENGINE II targets two final outcomes: improvements in learning outcomes (literacy, numeracy, and life skills) and increased rates of successful transition.** For ISGs, successful transition is defined as progression to the next highest grade, or completion of secondary school and enrolment in tertiary education, vocational training, or employment. For OSGs, successful transition is defined as enrolment in vocational training, an internship, or an apprenticeship; expansion or diversification of their business; or re-enrolment in formal education.

**Sustainability** is also considered as a final outcome of ENGINE II, highlighting the importance that ENGINE II places on investing significant resources in the policy environment by working with state governments, civil society groups, and religious,

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<sup>5</sup> The logframe was the guiding document for the evaluation. ENGINE II also has a ToC diagram but there are some discrepancies between the diagram and the logframe. Information on barriers is taken from ENGINE II's ToC diagram.

community and school leaders. This investment aims to ensure that improvements in learning and transition are sustained after the programme ends.

Outputs are expected to lead to these final outcomes through five **intermediate outcomes** (attendance, teaching quality, access to economic opportunities, life skills, and school governance).

**Figure 2: ENGINE II ToC**

Theory of Change				Assumptions
Outcomes	Improved learning outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Literacy</li> <li>Numeracy</li> <li>Life skills</li> </ul>	Successful transition to next phase of education and work	Sustainability of initiatives for continued education and empowerment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government, private sector and communities are willing to engage</li> <li>There is demand from ENGINE II girls for the programme</li> <li>Political, economic and security situation does not deteriorate</li> </ol>
Intermediate outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular attendance at learning centres of ISGs and OSGs</li> <li>Improved teaching quality of LCFs</li> <li>Increased access to economic opportunities</li> <li>Increased knowledge of the ENGINE II life skills curriculum</li> <li>Improved school governance of SBMCs and PTAs to make school an enabling environment</li> </ul>			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls regularly attend learning centre sessions.</li> <li>Teachers are willing to apply the LCTM and are available.</li> <li>Girls are willing to access trainings on economic skills and life skills.</li> <li>Girls' gatekeepers and parents are supportive of project intervention, incl. the life skills curriculum.</li> <li>Girls have enough time to involve in project's financial service activities.</li> <li>SBMC have the will and means to ensure schools are inclusive and safe for girls.</li> </ol>
Outputs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced learning experiences for marginalised girls</li> <li>Increased asset building skills and income generation for marginalised girls</li> <li>Enhanced life skills training opportunities for marginalised girls</li> <li>Improved gatekeeper commitment towards girls' education and empowerment</li> <li>Expanded protection policies and practices benefitting adolescent girls and young women</li> </ol>			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LCFs are willing to participate in training.</li> <li>OSGs with disrupted education are motivated to return to formal education.</li> <li>Learning centres are flexible and can meet the specific educational needs of girls with interrupted education.</li> <li>Learning centre sessions provide sufficient support for ISGs to prepare them for examinations.</li> <li>Girls have resources to sit for examinations.</li> <li>Girls are interested in learning business and entrepreneurship skills.</li> <li>Formal banking services can be accessed by girls.</li> <li>Safe income generating opportunities can be made accessible to girls in the current economic climate; Girls have a supportive environment that allows for uptake of income generation activities</li> <li>Community based value chains and micro-finance institutions are willing to provide their support.</li> <li>The duration of the programme is sufficient to bring about changes in protection policy and practice through advocacy.</li> </ol>
Barriers: Poverty, access to finance, pressure for early marriage, early pregnancy, lack of life and vocational skills, illiteracy, poor school infrastructure and lack of WASH facilities, inadequate reproductive health education and services, lack of gatekeeper support and enabling environment, inadequately trained teachers, gender inequalities and norms, security, lack of access to diverse markets for income generation				

Source: OPM's representation of ENGINE II logframe. Information on barriers is taken from ENGINE II's ToC diagram.

ENGINE II's ToC does not describe the pathways through which the outputs are expected to lead to the intermediate outcomes and final outcomes. Based on our understanding of the programme, we have constructed three broad causal pathways to guide the evaluation:

- ISGs' and OSGs' learning outcomes (literacy, numeracy, and life skills) improve if they regularly attend learning centre sessions and are taught by competent teachers through a LCTM. Teachers become more competent at using a LCTM through training.
- ISGs and OSGs are more likely to transition successfully if they have improved learning outcomes, including life skills and business skills, and if they have access to economic opportunities. Access to economic opportunities is increased through linking girls to bank accounts and ID cards, opportunities to access savings and loans, and opportunities to access vocational skills training or expand their businesses.
- The above pathways are facilitated by an enabling environment: that is, an environment where families and communities are supportive of girls' education, and where school policies promote an inclusive and safe environment for girls. This enabling environment is built through training and support provided to school governance bodies, particularly SBMCs and PTAs, as well as through work with state-level governments to promote inclusive education policies at the state level.

It is important to note that activities under the five outputs are assumed to be mutually reinforcing and are all assumed to be necessary to lead to the final outcomes.



## 1.4 Context of implementation

### 1.4.1 Socio-demographic and socio-cultural context

The recently concluded National Demographic Health Survey indicates that half of Nigeria's population is made up of young and productive people between 15 and 64 years old.<sup>6</sup> Women are more likely to be uneducated than men and the proportion of uneducated females is higher in rural areas.

Nigeria ranks 128 out of 153 in the 2020 Global Gender Gap Index. In the home, men usually make the decisions. The majority of girls (64%) marry before age 18 and two-thirds of married girls have no say in decisions made in their household. There is a relationship between education, literacy, and marriage. Just 15% of girls who have never been in a marital union are illiterate, compared with 89% of girls married by age 15.<sup>7</sup> The relationship between marriage and illiteracy is stronger than that between motherhood and illiteracy. Nigeria has one of the highest adolescent birth rates in the world; only 1% of married or cohabiting girls use modern contraception. Although there is strong demand for financial products and services, many young women lack access to and knowledge of formal financial institutions.<sup>8,9</sup>

Nigeria also has one of the highest numbers of out-of-school youth in the world<sup>10</sup>, with the majority of these being young girls and women<sup>11</sup>. Demand-side factors contributing to non-enrolment, absenteeism, and/or dropout from school include: illness or hunger; the need to do paid/unpaid work (including caring for siblings and sick relatives); an inability to pay school costs and fees; lack of uniforms or other materials; distance to school; and parental attitudes. Supply-side factors contributing to non-enrolment, absenteeism, and/or dropout from schools are related to quality and generally revolve around: poor infrastructure and facilities; lack of space or overcrowding; teacher absenteeism; pupil avoidance of harassment, bullying, or corporal punishment; an inability to understand the medium of instruction; and the poor quality of teaching and learning taking place.

### 1.4.2 Education policy context

According to the National Education Policy, basic education should be compulsory, free, universal, and of high quality. The Nigerian education system operates the 9-3-4 formal schooling system, where the first nine years form basic education i.e. primary education up to the JSS level; another three years are acquired in the senior secondary school (SSS) level, before four years are spent in tertiary education.

To mitigate the effects of having fewer literates compared to the nation's population size, more financial and human resources have been deployed in informal education programmes, where technical and vocational skills can be acquired, to promote employment and improve living standards. The department for adult mass education (AME) has been

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<sup>6</sup> National Population Commission and ICF (2019) 'Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2018 – Final Report', National Population Commission and ICF, Abuja, Nigeria. Available at <http://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR359/FR359.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Girl Effect (2016) 'State of the Girl Report, Nigeria'.

<sup>8</sup> Mercy Corps (2013) 'Adolescent Girls in Northern Nigeria: Financial Inclusion and Entrepreneurship Opportunities Profile'.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Abdullahi, D., Abdullah, J. (2014) 'The Political Will and Quality Basic Education in Nigeria', *Journal of Power, Politics, and Governance* (American Research Institute for Policy Development) 2(2), pp. 75–100.

<sup>11</sup> Nmadu, G. Avidime, S., Oguntunde, O., Dashe, V., Abdulkarim, B. and Mandara, M. (2010) 'Girl Child Education: Rising to the Challenge', *African Journal of Reproductive Health* 14(3), p. 107.

established, with responsibility for increasing literacy levels in Nigeria, with its main focus being adult education. The agency plans and executes continuing education programmes for youth and adults who desire to have an education but are above school age.

### **1.4.3 Educational outcome context**

Across the geopolitical zones, the North East and North West lag behind others in educational attainment, with more than 60% of females and about half of males having no formal education. In places like Kano and Kaduna, as well as interior parts of the FCT, adolescent girls are faced with early marriage and teenage pregnancies, and drop out from school more than their male peers. In the North East, only 5.9% of girls complete primary school. The north-eastern states have the lowest levels of secondary school completion by girls in Nigeria. By geopolitical zone, the North East has the lowest net attendance ratio (NAR)<sup>12</sup> at the primary and secondary levels (44% and 29%, respectively). Attendance is higher among wealthy households than poorer households at both the primary and secondary levels. At age 16, attendance rates begin to decline with increasing age, and the decline is faster for females than males after age 16. The FCT, Kano State, and Kaduna State (three out of the four intervention states for ENGINE II), fall within the northern part of Nigeria, which has consecutively reported<sup>13</sup> very low educational uptake and a high out-of-school population, which results in high illiteracy compared to other parts of the country.

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<sup>12</sup> The NAR is an indicator of participation in schooling among children of official school age (age 6–12 for primary school and age 13–18 for secondary school), and the gross attendance ratio (GAR) indicates participation at each level of schooling among those of any age between five and 24 years. The GAR is nearly always higher than the NAR for the same level because the GAR includes participation by those who may be older or younger than the official age range for that level.

<sup>13</sup> National Education Data Survey, 2010 and 2015; National Demographic and Health Survey, 2003, 2008, and 2015

## 2 Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology for the endline evaluation. The first section describes the approach to the endline evaluation. In this section, we explain that the evaluation had to be redesigned in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We also describe the seven evaluation questions answered by the endline evaluation. In the second section, we describe the evaluation methodology for three components of the evaluation: the implementation review, the primary qualitative data collection, and the analysis of the monitoring data. In the third section, we discuss limitations to the evaluation. Additional detail on the methodology is provided in Annex B.

### 2.1 Approach to the evaluation

The endline evaluation was expected to be a mixed-methods, quasi-experimental impact evaluation, involving a large-scale school-based quantitative survey and qualitative data collection in schools and households. The endline evaluation was expected to quantify the impact that ENGINE II has had on its two key outcomes (learning outcomes and transition), on sustainability, and its intermediate outcomes.

Due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 global pandemic and the resulting school closures, the original evaluation design was no longer viable. In addition, because of the timeframe in which the programme will be completed, it was not possible to postpone the endline evaluation until a time when social distancing measures are eased and school visits and face-to-face research are feasible. **We therefore adjusted the endline evaluation design to a design that could be implemented through remote data collection and analysis of secondary data. This necessarily required a review of the scope of the evaluation, as several of the questions that the evaluation had set out to answer cannot be answered effectively through these data collection methodologies.** Despite focusing on a more limited set of research questions, the endline evaluation aims to capture perceptions of programme effectiveness and implementation in a timely manner and to ensure that crucial learning that will be useful for future implementation is not lost.

To define the scope of the endline evaluation, **Mercy Corps, the FM, and OPM worked together to develop a set of research questions on specific areas of ENGINE II that it is of interest for the programme to understand further, based on the findings of the midline evaluation and the experiences of the programme implementation teams.** The research scope was defined with the following factors in mind:

- Where possible, research questions should focus on priorities for evidence that the ENGINE II team and the FM identify as particularly important for learning for future implementation, and where the midline evaluation revealed gaps in knowledge or areas for further research.
- It had to be possible to answer each research question by relying on three sources of data: remote data collection through phone interviews, analysis of monitoring data, and review of programme reports and other documents.
- The evaluation had to be concluded by September 2020, which provided only six months for the re-design, data collection, analysis, and reporting to be completed. This timeline was considered in the re-design.
- Ethical implications needed to be taken into account, including consideration that many of our respondents are vulnerable and are likely to face additional

vulnerabilities during COVID-19, including effects on their livelihoods, lifestyles, and their health, including their mental health.

**A major component of the original intended endline evaluation approach had been an impact evaluation to assess the attributable impact of ENGINE II on key outcomes and intermediate outcomes.** This was designed as a mixed methods approach, with the quantitative impact evaluation determining the robust estimates of impact attributable to ENGINE II, whilst the qualitative impact evaluation was to be used to understand how the interventions may have contributed to the observed impact. Many of the quantitative impact indicators cannot be collected through remote data collection methods or while schools are closed (e.g. attendance, learning outcomes, teaching quality), while others cover topics that are too sensitive to be administered over the phone (e.g. menstrual hygiene management). In addition, achieving an unbiased sample through a remote phone survey would have been challenging given that our household contact information was already two years old, and we expected many respondents to have changed numbers, to not use their phones regularly, or to be affected by network issues. Considering this, the FM advised against conducting a quantitative phone survey.

Therefore, the endline evaluation **does not report on the impact** that ENGINE II has had and will not quantify the impact on key outcomes (learning outcomes and transition) in comparison to a control group. **It focuses by necessity on a qualitative assessment of the factors that stakeholders perceive to be influential in driving change in outcomes,** and on understanding how ENGINE II activities are perceived to contribute to any perceived changes in outcomes. Programme documentation and monitoring data are used to support this qualitative assessment.

**It is important to note that the school closures have also disrupted the final phase of the ENGINE II programme implementation** that was expected to last until September 2020. In the current circumstances, ENGINE II has revised its design for the final phase of implementation to engage with its beneficiaries through online mechanisms (such as WhatsApp groups). **The endline evaluation focuses on evaluating ENGINE II activities as they were designed prior to COVID-19** and will therefore focus on the period of implementation before the COVID-19 outbreak (i.e. up to February 2020). This is necessary because of the tight timelines of the evaluation and the evolving nature of the new ENGINE II activities, which does not leave enough time for these activities to form part of the endline evaluation. In some limited instances, we asked about the effect of COVID-19 on ENGINE II outcomes as a secondary focus.

### 2.1.1 Evaluation questions at endline

Table 1 shows the seven research questions answered by the endline evaluation. This report provides answers to the first six research questions. The seventh question on value for money is answered in an accompanying report called 'Value for money analysis of the ENGINE II programme' (OPM, 2020).

**The first research question focuses on programme implementation.** Understanding the extent to which programme activities have been implemented as intended is useful because it can help to explain the outcomes that are observed. Where an outcome is not observed, it can help to explain whether this was because of challenges with the programme design, or challenges in implementing the activities as designed. In addition, exploring factors that led to adaptations of the programme can identify where original assumptions made in the ToC did not hold or were incomplete.

**The second research question focuses on girls' attendance at the learning centres, an intermediate outcome of the programme.** Girls' attendance at the learning centre was not

defined as an evaluation question at the endline design phase because it had not been prioritised as a particular area of interest during joint discussions on the endline design. However, during data collection, important themes related to learning centre attendance emerged across interviews for different research questions. We therefore added a research question on attendance retrospectively to allow us to explore and report on this theme in a consolidated way. Regular attendance is an important intermediate outcome in the programme's ToC, and the findings are important for understanding the achievements of the programme.

**The other evaluation questions focus on key outcomes and intermediate outcomes of the intervention.** Collecting data via phone interviews meant that some of the research questions had to be narrowed, and could not be used to assess the breadth of outcomes targeted by the programme:

- For the question on life skills, we reviewed the ENGINE II life skills manual and identified goal setting, and assertiveness and communication, as two key life skills targeted by ENGINE II that are valuable for both ISGs and OSGs, and that are applicable in both schooling and work or business contexts. The selection was discussed with Mercy Corps and the FM. Menstrual hygiene management, which is a key life skill targeted by the programme, was considered to be too sensitive to discuss over the phone, particularly because privacy of the phone conversation could not be guaranteed.
- Mercy Corps and the FM were particularly interested in having a research question exploring system-level change, including at the state level, which was not a focus of the baseline and midline evaluation rounds. Activities at state level focused on promoting the implementation of inclusive and gender-friendly policies generally, but ENGINE II had a key focus on child protection, with one of the key achievements of the programme being the development and adoption of the CVAP referral protocol. Child protection was therefore chosen as the focus area for this research question, and was explored at the state, school, and community level.
- **Due to the sensitivity of conducting research during the COVID-19 pandemic, access to economic opportunities and the transition outcome were not a focus of the endline evaluation.** A key strategy of ENGINE II is to link OSGs to vocational training, employment, and business expansion opportunities. In discussion with ENGINE II and the FM, we felt that conducting interviews on this topic would be particularly sensitive in the current circumstances, where many girls may have lost work or business, and may be worried about their work opportunities in the future.

**Table 1: Evaluation questions at endline**

#	Research theme	Primary question	Sub-questions	Source of data
1	<b>Programme implementation</b>	Were programme activities implemented as intended?	<p>Were the activities implemented in the expected format and for the expected duration, and did they reach the expected people?</p> <p>Were adaptations made to the planned activities, and why?</p> <p>What external factors affected programme delivery, and how?</p>	<p>Programme strategy documentation</p> <p>Programme progress reports</p> <p>Monitoring data</p> <p>Interviews with programme staff, state implementing</p>

#	Research theme	Primary question	Sub-questions	Source of data
				partners (SIPs), and beneficiaries
2	<b>Attendance</b> (intermediate outcome)	Did ISGs and OSGs attend the learning centre sessions regularly?	What were the barriers to regular attendance?  What contributed to improved attendance?	Interviews with programme staff, SIPs, ISGs, OSGs, and LCFs  Analysis of monitoring data
3	<b>Learning</b> (final outcome)	Has ENGINE II contributed to improvements in learning for ISGs and OSGs?	How did ENGINE II contribute to improvements in learning for ISGs and OSGs? What worked well and what was challenging?  Has ENGINE II contributed to ISGs and OSGs feeling more confident in the learning process? How?  How has ISGs' and OSGs' learning been affected by COVID-19? (secondary focus)	Interviews with ISGs and OSGs, parents, LCFs, master trainers, principals, SBMCs, and faith and traditional leaders
4	<b>Life skills</b> (final outcome)	Has ENGINE II contributed to improvements in ISGs' and OSGs' goal setting, and assertiveness and communication skills?	How has ENGINE II contributed to improvements in these skills? What worked well and what was challenging?  Are ISGs and OSGs using life skills to cope with changes to their life as a result of COVID-19? (secondary focus)	Interviews with ISGs and OSGs, parents, LCFs, master trainers, principals, SBMCs, and faith and traditional leaders
5	<b>Teaching quality</b> (intermediate outcome)	Has ENGINE II contributed to LCFs' use of learner-centred pedagogy (LCTM)?	Has LCFs' use of LCTM in learning centres increased over time?  How has ENGINE II contributed to LCFs' use of LCTM? What worked well and what was challenging?  Have LCFs cascaded the training down to other teachers? What aspects of the training have been cascaded and in what format?  How has teaching been affected by COVID-19? (secondary focus)	Interviews with LCFs, master trainers, teachers not directly trained by ENGINE II, ISGs and OSGs, parents, principals, and SBMCs  Analysis of monitoring data
6	<b>System- and community-level change in child protection</b>	Has ENGINE II contributed to the implementation of	How has ENGINE II contributed to schools and communities implementing	Interviews with girl ambassadors, SBMCs, faith and traditional leaders,

#	Research theme	Primary question	Sub-questions	Source of data
	(intermediate outcome)	policies and practices to support CVAP?	policies and practices to support CVAP?  How has ENGINE II contributed to state governments implementing policies and practices to support CVAP?	LGA- and state-level child protection focal persons
7	<b>Value for money</b>	Does ENGINE II represent good value for money?		Budget and expenditure data  Interviews with programme finance staff  Monitoring data

## 2.2 Evaluation methodology

The evaluation methodology comprises three components. First, we describe the methodology for the implementation review, which is used to answer the first research question. Next, we describe the methodology for the primary qualitative research, which is used to answer research questions 2 – 6. Lastly, we discuss the analysis of the monitoring data, which provide information used across several research questions. Further details on the evaluation methodology are provided in Annex B.

### 2.2.1 Implementation review methodology

The implementation review addresses the **first research question on programme implementation**. The implementation review sought to **review the fidelity of actual implementation** to implementation plans, as well as changes to implementation and why they were made. It focused on three questions:

- Were the activities implemented in the expected format and for the expected duration, and did they reach the expected people?
- Were adaptations made to the planned activities, and why?
- What external factors affected programme delivery, and how?

The implementation review began with **documenting the planned ENGINE II implementation strategy at the output level as it was originally designed**, drawing on programme design and strategy documents, workplans, and the logframe. A challenge for this research question was that an implementation review was not part of the original evaluation design. As a result, the detailed programme design was not documented at the start of the evaluation and had to be reconstructed from the documents available programme documentation. This was challenging because strategy documents and workplans were regularly updated over the course of the programme, and usually only more recent versions were made available to the evaluation team. This write-up of the programme design was shared with the Mercy Corps team to check accuracy and completeness before other work was undertaken.

Next, we reviewed programme progress reports, workplans, monitoring data, attendance records, and other documentation of implementation of the programme to **understand what implementation has taken place, whether the activities were implemented in the expected format and for the expected duration, and whether they reached the expected people.**

After the desk-based review was completed, we identified areas where the implementation of the intervention had not been fully captured by the available documentation, and areas where implementation deviated from the plans. Based on this, we **selected respondents for key informant interviews (KIIs), including representatives from Mercy Corps and the SIPs and beneficiaries.** For the SIP interviews, several representatives from the same SIP attended each interview. This was preferred because programme staff had overlapping functions and had been part of the programme for different lengths of time, and therefore had complementary knowledge of the evolution of the implementation. A breakdown of the respondents interviewed is provided in Annex B.

## 2.2.2 Primary qualitative data collection

This section briefly describes the methodology for the primary qualitative data collection. The methodology is described in detail in Annex B.

### Scope of data collection

We spoke to ISGs, OSGs, girl ambassadors, parents, LCFs, teachers not directly trained by ENGINE II, master trainers, principals, SBMC members, faith and traditional leaders, National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members, education desk officers, and child protection focal persons. Generally, we could only explore one research question with each primary respondent. This means that, for example, one group of OSGs was sampled for the 'learning' question, while another group of OSGs was sampled for the 'life skills' question. For other respondents who were not directly targeted by this component of the programme, but who could still provide secondary perspectives on the research question, we covered at most three themes in the same interview. Table 12 in Annex B provides an overview of the respondents that were interviewed for each research question.

### Sampling

**We used a purposive sampling approach for the qualitative data collection by sampling a subset of the schools from the quantitative sample for the endline qualitative sample.** We then selected individual respondents who belong to these schools and communities. Respondents were selected from two LGAs each in Lagos, Kaduna, Kano, and the FCT, cutting across 18 schools and 20 communities. The selected LGAs in each state consisted of one urban and one rural LGA.

### Data collection

Data collection was preceded by an eight-day training which was conducted remotely. **The training covered sessions on research ethics, with a focus on applying ethical principles, safeguarding referral protocols, and seeking consent over the phone.** Three pilot exercises were carried out over the course of the training to ensure that enumerators tested the instruments in actual field conditions.

The qualitative data collection took place remotely from 23 June to 6 July 2020. KIIs and in-depth interviews were held over the phone using a semi-structured interview guide. All



sessions lasted between 25 and 50 minutes, with interviewers completing at least three interviews each day.

## Synthesis and analysis of findings

**For this research, there were four stages to the analysis, starting during fieldwork itself.** As a key part of the research process, we asked teams to start initial synthesis and analysis following each interview. This was followed by a daily debrief with all the researchers at the end of each day to discuss key findings and identify research gaps to be addressed in subsequent fieldwork days. The debriefs were documented and shared with the qualitative research leads, who then conducted the next stage of analysis and consolidation of the findings. The evaluation expert and the qualitative expert then interrogated the findings from the debrief session, challenging the researchers to provide details and evidence to substantiate these findings. This process involved returning to the translations of the transcripts, and researchers had to present specific quotes to support each stage of the analysis. Once the research leads were satisfied with the thematic analysis, the research team developed detailed annotated outlines for each chapter. The research leads then assessed and improved these outlines further, which provided the basis for the write-up of the report.

The process of analysis thus included verification at multiple levels, i.e. at the level of the respondent (by speaking to multiple respondents in each category), at the level of stakeholders (by speaking to multiple stakeholders in each area), at the level of researchers (by conducting debrief sessions with multiple researchers), and then finally through a thorough interrogation of the initial findings. All team members kept written records of all their activities, including interview notes, detailed transcripts, and debriefing notes, which were used during the analysis stage. The findings from the data collection were also triangulated against different existing data sources and the implementation review to minimise researcher bias and establish the validity of the findings.

### 2.2.3 Analysis of monitoring data

**Analysis of the monitoring data focused on contributing evidence to the various research questions.** Monitoring data were requested from Mercy Corps' monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) team at the start of the endline evaluation. As we received various pieces of monitoring data, we reviewed the data, sought clarification from Mercy Corps' MEL team where necessary, and requested additional data. A detailed description of the monitoring data analysed for this report is provided in Annex B.

Monitoring data are collected for different purposes to data collected specifically for an evaluation. For example, monitoring data are particularly important for programme implementers to learn new things about their implementation. It is therefore not always important that monitoring instruments remain comparable over time. At the same time, monitoring data can provide useful insights to an evaluation because the data are collected more frequently and can show trends over time. Where there were limitations to the monitoring data or to the analysis, we mention these in the relevant section.

## 2.3 Limitations to the evaluation

Given the parameters within which the endline evaluation needs to be completed and which have been set out above, there are several questions that the endline evaluation cannot answer:

- The endline evaluation does not **report on the impact** that ENGINE II has had and did not quantify the impact on key outcomes (learning outcomes and transition) in comparison to a control group. Instead, the endline evaluation **focuses on perceptions** of the effectiveness of ENGINE II activities. This means, for example, that the evaluation speaks about whether respondents *felt* that girls' learning outcomes had improved because of ENGINE II activities, but is unable to provide quantitative data to compare learning outcomes at midline and endline.
- The endline evaluation **does not provide information to populate the logframe.**
- **The depth of the qualitative data collected to answer the research questions was more limited than data collected during face-to-face interviews would have been** because we were unable to gauge non-verbal cues over the phone, were unable to add observations of the school and community context, and were unable to conduct group interviews. In addition, phone interviews were shorter than face-to-face interviews would have been, so there was less time to explore topics in depth. We used two key strategies to overcome these shortcomings: a) we spoke with a broad range of respondents about each theme to triangulate across different perspectives; and b) we focused on asking about specific examples of things that have worked well and that have been challenging. This limitation is particularly relevant to the research question on system and community changes in the implementation of child protection policies and practices. This turned out to be a complex topic, both because child protection is a broad term and can mean different things to different people, and because the processes involved in changing behaviours around child protection are complex.
- In addition, we must be aware of **recall bias**. To understand perceptions of how ENGINE II outcomes have changed, we had to ask respondents about times when they attended learning centre sessions in person before the COVID-19 outbreak. Respondents would be likely to recollect these events less accurately or completely than events that had happened in the more recent past.
- **Our data collection was limited to respondents who had access to a phone.** While our sampling strategy took into consideration the marginalisation characteristics of ENGINE II beneficiaries, it is possible that we excluded the voices of some of the most vulnerable or poorest respondents from our data collection. Any methods to reach these groups would have required some form of travel or face-to-face interaction, which may have put our researchers and respondents at risk.
- **Our data collection was also limited to respondents for whom Mercy Corps had contact information.** It is possible that this might have excluded some respondents who have been less engaged with programme activities.
- **Our quantitative analysis was limited to analysis of monitoring data, which were not collected for evaluation purposes nor with the above research questions in mind.** There are therefore some specific limitations to the data and to the analysis, which are mentioned in Annex B and in the respective chapters that report on the monitoring data.

### 3 Programme implementation

This chapter presents the findings from the implementation review. The chapter begins by briefly describing the overall timeline for programme implementation. We then describe the process for tracking beneficiaries from ENGINE I and re-enrolling them in ENGINE II, and look at the number of beneficiaries that could be successfully tracked in the third year of the programme. The subsequent sections examine implementation of each of the five outputs under which activities are organised. Since ENGINE II is a complex programme with many moving parts, it was not feasible to give equal attention to all outputs. **The implementation review focused primarily on Output 1 (learning experiences) and Output 2 (economic activities).** This is because these two outputs are tied most closely to ENGINE II's final outcomes, learning, and transition. These outputs are most closely linked to the engagement of ENGINE II's direct beneficiaries, and the most time- and resource-intensive activities fall into these two outputs.

**The implementation review aimed to assess to what extent ENGINE II has been implemented as it was designed, including whether activities have been delivered for the expected duration, in the expected format and to the expected beneficiaries. The review also aimed to document adaptations that were made to the design, and the reasons for these adaptations.** ENGINE II is a complex programme, and outputs are assumed to interact in different ways to collectively lead to the final outcomes of improving learning outcomes and successful transition rates. The implementation review was focused at the output and activity level, and therefore did not set out to describe the programme intervention strategy in its entirety. Rather, the focus was on describing the format, reach and duration of activities under each output, and assessing to what extent implementation has followed the original targets.

When a programme implementation review is included in the original evaluation design, it is possible to follow the flow of implementation: that is, to establish the programme design at the beginning and to document implementation progress over the course of the programme. In this evaluation, a research question focusing on programme implementation was added to the evaluation design at endline, because of the need to re-design the evaluation. In the absence of robust impact data on ENGINE II's outcome indicators, an implementation review provides a useful complement to the qualitative research. However, adding this research question at endline means that it is necessary to retrospectively reconstruct the programme design from available documentation, and to look for information on implementation in progress reports that do not always systematically document this information in such a way that it is easily accessible several years later.

**As a result, the implementation review faces two limitations.** Firstly, it is not always possible to fully capture why certain adaptations were made. Secondly, certain information to assess the duration and reach of activities was not available. In particular, as we discuss in Annex B, information on attendance at trainings was captured manually and therefore generally not available in a consistent summary format. This made it difficult to assess whether the expected numbers of stakeholders were reached. The findings of the review also point to some differences in reach and duration of some activities across states. However, the outputs and achievements listed in programme progress reports were often not broken down by state.

A programme strategy that cuts across outputs is that ENGINE II aimed to largely leverage existing government structures and resources for the implementation of its activities to build capacity and promote the sustainability of the intervention.

### 3.1 Overall timeline of ENGINE II

ENGINE II is implemented between April 2017 until September 2020. The programme was originally intended to last for three years from April 2017 until March 2020. Because of delays in starting the learning centre sessions, the programme received a six month no-cost extension. The first year of the programme was an inception year, with implementation due to start in April 2018. Learning centre sessions were expected to run for 18 months from July 2018 onwards.

The implementation review focuses on the first three years of the programme up until March 2020, when implementation was disrupted by COVID-19. Programme reports and workplans report against progress by quarter, and we occasionally refer to these timelines by year and by quarter. Year 1 covers Quarter 1 to Quarter 4 from April 2017 to March 2018, Year 2 covers Quarter 5 to Quarter 8 from April 2018 to March 2019, and Year 3 covers Quarter 9 to Quarter 12 from April 2019 to March 2020.

### 3.2 Tracking and re-enrolment of beneficiaries

**ENGINE II worked with a group of direct beneficiaries who were initially beneficiaries of the first phase of the programme, ENGINE I.** All programmes under the Girls' Education Challenge Transition (GEC-T) funding window, which includes ENGINE II, are required to continue working with the same group of beneficiaries as during the first phase of the programme where possible.

At the end of ENGINE I, 14,034 OSGs and 7,128 ISGs had been registered as ENGINE I beneficiaries (see Table 2). At the start of ENGINE II, the programme tracked these beneficiaries. **Overall, the programme re-enrolled 12,348 OSGs (88% of the ENGINE I enrolment) and 5,699 ISGs (80% of the ENGINE I enrolment).** Despite overall high rates of re-enrolment, ENGINE II had challenges tracking girls in some locations. As shown in Table 2, only 48% of ISGs in the FCT could be tracked. In addition, ENGINE II had challenges in tracking OSGs in Lagos because young women in Lagos are a particularly mobile group, and many had relocated, found jobs or were not interested in joining the programme. As a result, ENGINE II received approval from the FM to enrol some girls who had been indirect beneficiaries of ENGINE I as direct beneficiaries into ENGINE II in Lagos. These girls are included in the numbers shown in Table 2. Overall, the process of re-enrolling beneficiaries into ENGINE II took longer than anticipated because of challenges in tracking beneficiaries and contributed to the delayed start of the learning centres described in the next section.

**Table 2: Beneficiary numbers**

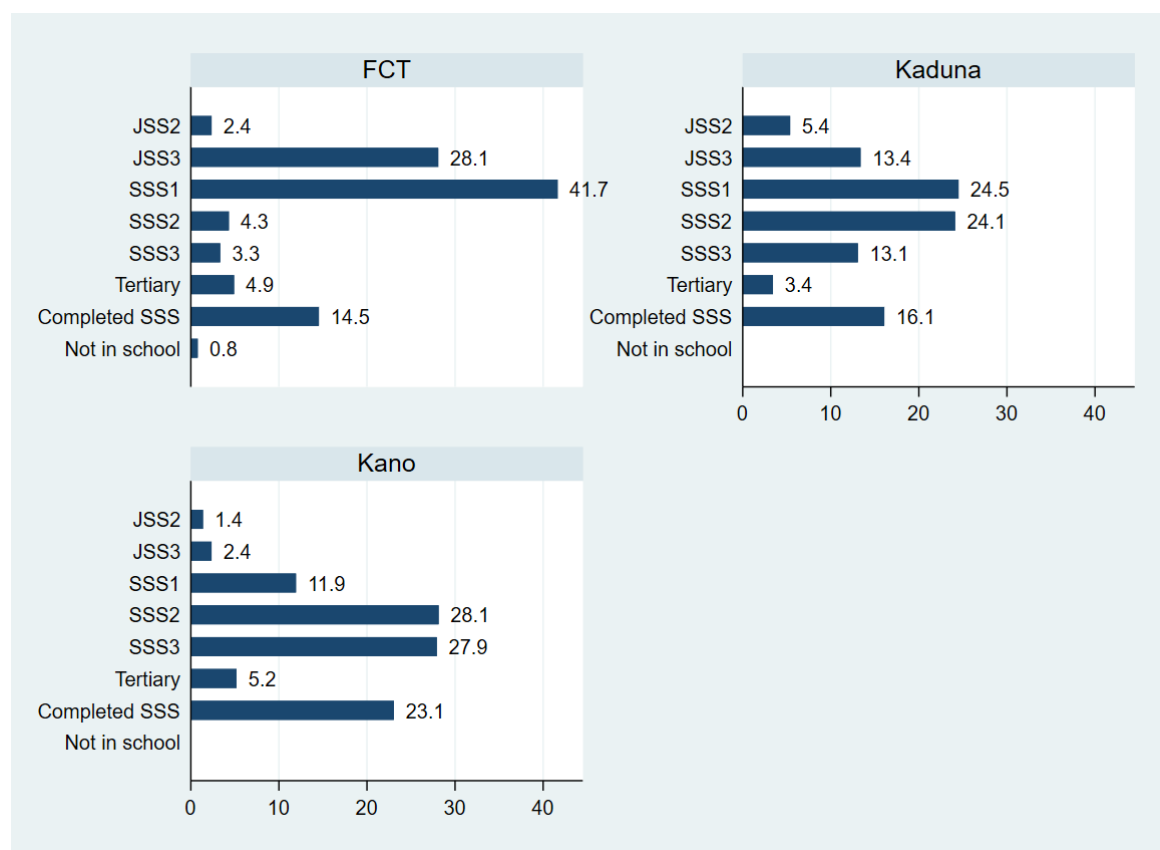
	End of ENGINE I	Start of ENGINE II	Start of ENGINE II as % of ENGINE I
<b>ISG total</b>	7128	5699	80.0%
FCT	1063	509	47.8%
Kaduna	2716	2301	84.7%
Kano	3349	2889	86.3%
<b>OSG total</b>	14034	12348	88.0%
FCT	1583	1373	86.7%

	End of ENGINE I	Start of ENGINE II	Start of ENGINE II as % of ENGINE I
Kaduna	1972	1849	93.8%
Kano	3222	3264	101.3%
Lagos	7257	5862	80.8%

Figure 3 shows the current grade of the ISG beneficiaries at the time of enrolment into ENGINE II. The enrolment exercise was conducted in the 2017/18 school year, but learning centre sessions only started at the start of the following school year (2018/19), so most beneficiaries would have progressed one year further by the time the sessions started. These findings are of interest for two reasons. Firstly, they illustrate that **a small number of beneficiaries in each state were still in JSS when learning centre sessions started.** This was unexpected for ENGINE II because based on the grade the girls were in during ENGINE I, it was expected that all girls would have completed JSS by the start of ENGINE II. As we discuss in the next section on Output 1, this meant that ENGINE II had to adapt its design to establish some learning centres in JSS.

Secondly, **a large proportion of ISG beneficiaries from ENGINE I were no longer in school at the time that learning centre sessions started.** Taking together those girls in SSS3, those in tertiary education, and those who had already completed secondary education, 55% of beneficiaries in Kano were expected not to be in school at the start of the learning centre sessions. In the FCT and in Kaduna, this figure was lower, at approximately 22%.

The programme design documentation does not outline a strategy for supporting these girls. The implementation team reported that these girls continued to be captured as ISGs and were not absorbed into the OSG strategy. During implementation, the programme developed different approaches for supporting these girls. Girls who were in SSS3 at the time of enrolment would have benefitted from intensive coaching classes that ENGINE II organised before the start of the learning centre sessions to prepare girls for examinations. The implementing team also reported that the programme supported these girls with taking entrance examinations for tertiary institutions. In some cases, ISGs who had completed school were encouraged to continue attending learning centre sessions, to act as mentors during life skills and financial education sessions, and to be active members of the girl fora. **While these girls were captured by some of the programme activities, their overall engagement with the programme is likely to have been more limited.**

**Figure 3: Educational level of ISGs at the start of ENGINE II**

### 3.3 Output 1: Enhanced learning experiences for marginalised ENGINE II girls in target areas

This section presents an assessment of the activities conducted under Output 1 to understand adherence, modifications, challenges, and mitigations that happened throughout the programme implementation cycle. In Section 3.3.1, we discuss how and when the learning centres were established. Here, we describe the challenges encountered in the establishment of the centres and the operational delays that ensued. We then assess the programme targets for the number of learning centres against their achievements, detailing reasons for the differences observed. In Section 3.3.2, we describe how the LCFs were recruited and provide evidence to demonstrate the rigour of the process.

Furthermore, in Section 3.3.3 we discuss how master trainers and LCFs were trained, including the frequency, content, and quality of training, as well as issues faced with provision of, and attendance at, the trainings. We then describe how LCFs were supervised and the quality of teaching sessions, in Sections 3.3.4 and 3.3.5, respectively. Finally, we describe how ENGINE II provided other direct support for education, such as registering beneficiaries for the end of secondary school and transition examinations (Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE)/National Examinations Council (NECO)) and the Second Chance Initiative that provides the opportunity for OSGs to go back to school.

### 3.3.1 Establishment of learning centres

#### Original design and targets

ENGINE II aimed to establish **learning centres** (also known as learning spaces or safe spaces), with separate centres for ISGs and OSGs. Learning centres were intended to be located within existing government structures. For ISGs, they were intended to be located at the respective school, while learning centres for OSGs were intended to be located at AME centres. Learning centres were intended to be operational from July 2018.

Once OSGs were allocated to a learning centre, the intention was to conduct a learner assessment to gauge the girls' current level of knowledge. Girls would be divided into different groups (basic, post-basic, and continuing education) based on their performance on the assessment. ISGs were divided into groups based on their current grade at school. Each learning centre was limited to a **maximum of 25 girls**.

#### Implementation

##### Timeline for establishment of learning centres

**The establishment of the learning centres was delayed by approximately two months, with most learning centres being operational from September 2018, rather than July 2018 as originally intended<sup>14</sup>.** Reasons for this included the delay in the enrolment of beneficiaries, difficulties with identifying suitable venues for learning centres in some cases, and delay in the disbursement of the teacher handbook to SIPs.

**Identifying suitable venues for OSG learning centres was a challenge in Kano, Kaduna, and Lagos because AME centres were not established in some communities.** Existing centres in other communities were too far for girls to reach safely and without incurring large transportation costs. Hence, ENGINE II had to work with stakeholders to identify alternative venues within the community, such as chief palaces, community halls, and LCFs' residences<sup>15</sup>.

During the midline qualitative research, some of these alternative venues were reported to be prone to distractions and not conducive for learning<sup>16</sup>. For example, an OSG LCF reported at midline, *'Because of the type of spaces used as learning centres at the community, girls lacked access to certain educational materials like boards'*. An SIP reported that it was difficult for most beneficiaries to write comfortably as for the most part they sat on mats on the floor.

**ENGINE II took steps to address issues around the conduciveness of the learning centres.** Across all states, the programme was able to secure permission from the State Universal Education Board (SUBEB) for OSG learning centres to be located in primary schools. In Lagos, state-level approval for this was difficult to secure because the use of public schools for activities other than mainstream learning is not generally permitted. ENGINE II was able to work with AME and the SUBEB to secure approval to use 113 primary schools as learning centres, but this approval was only granted in August 2018, which contributed to the delay of the start of the learning centre sessions (SIP interview). In addition, approximately 50 of the primary schools initially allocated to ENGINE II by SUBEB were found to be in unsafe areas, far away from where the girls lived, or lacking sufficient

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<sup>14</sup> Monthly report September 2018.

<sup>15</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 8.

<sup>16</sup> ENGINE II Midline Evaluation Report.

infrastructure<sup>17</sup>. ENGINE II requested new schools to be allocated, which resulted in further delays in these locations<sup>18</sup>.

At endline, an OSG master trainer in Lagos also reported that one of the centres he supervised was merged with another because the centre was not conducive for learning as it lacked some basic learning resources.

*We had to move a centre that lacked a writing board, sufficient seating arrangements and protection from the elements, that was being held at a chief's palace to a primary school. It was bad I tell you, when it rains or when the weather is very hot, no shade to shield beneficiaries from this.*

The Mercy Corps implementation team indicated that resources such as writing boards and markers were provided to learning centres during the course of programme implementation. Therefore, while the programme took steps to ensure that learning centres were conducive to learning, **identifying these spaces took longer than expected and contributed to delays** in the start of the learning centre sessions.

In Kaduna, outside of the general delay experienced across all programme states, the start of the learning centre sessions in three out of the six LGAs (Chikun, Jaba, Kaura) had to be further delayed because of security challenges<sup>19</sup>. When the tension finally died down, it took some time to succeed in deploying LCFs who were willing to work in those areas.

Although some SIPs used the delay period to finalise implementation plans, there was some negative impact resulting from the delay, as gathered during interviews with SIPs. **In Lagos and Kaduna, the initial delay was reported to have impacted on the enthusiasm with which the programme was received by girls and other stakeholders.** As demonstrated by the quote below from an interview with a SIP, it took one year from the period of first sensitisation for the programme to finally kick off. Therefore, another sensitisation activity was required to re-awaken interest that had previously been gained.

*The momentum that had been built a year before among the girls and other stakeholders for the programme was lost because of the delay. You see, a lot of people had already lost interest. When the programme was ready to start, another sensitisation activity had to be carried out to get people to begin to see the importance overall again.*

While the two-month delay would have contributed to the long period between sensitisation activities and the start of the learning centre sessions, this also suggests that sensitisation activities generally could have been more continuous throughout the one-year inception period of the programme.

Another SIP noted that, by the time they were ready to start, some of the girls had moved on to other activities and were no longer interested in continuing in the programme. A couple of them were personally approached and encouraged to enrol. This was successful in some instances.

### **Number of learning centres established**

**Across all states, ENGINE II established more learning centres than expected (see Table 3) to ensure that the learning centres were close to where the girls live, because**

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<sup>17</sup> Monthly report September 2018.

<sup>18</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 8.

<sup>19</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 8.



of clustering of girls by their learning level, and, in Kaduna, because of interest from the community to establish more centres.

**Table 3: Number of learning centres established**

	Y2 target	Learning centres established in Y2					Learning centres maintained as at Nov/Dec 2019				
		Total	FCT	KD	KN	LG	Total	FCT	KD	KN	LG
<b>ISG</b>	80	156	21	68	67	n/a	82	19	38	25	n/a
<b>OSG</b>	450	522	83	76	110	253	408	83	69	86	170

For ISGs, it was expected that the ENGINE II programme would be implemented in 82 SSSs. As mentioned above, some beneficiaries were still enrolled in JSS, despite expectations that they would have transitioned to SSS. As a result, ENGINE II established a larger number of ISG learning centres to accommodate these girls across all states. ISGs were placed in their cohort in an attempt to not mix girls with different grades.

**Similarly, ENGINE II established more OSG learning centres than expected (522, compared to a target of 450). Additional OSG learning centres were established because of clustering girls based on their learning level.** In Kano, Kaduna, and Lagos, girls were allocated to different learning centres based on the last grade that they had completed when they were at school<sup>20</sup>:

- basic literacy – never been to school or dropped out in Primary 3;
- post-basic – dropped out in Primary 6; or
- continuing education – dropped out in secondary school.

In the FCT only, OSGs were assigned to different learning centres based on a placement exercise conducted in collaboration with AME<sup>21</sup>. The FCT SIP explained:

*From the initial ENGINE II design, learners were not grouped based on their learning level, so a placement test was conducted for OSGs in collaboration with FCT AME. Girls were categorised into basic literacy class, post-basic class, and continuing education/literate class. This increased the number of learning centres initially stated for FCT.*

The clustering of girls by their learning level resulted in the establishment of additional OSG learning centres across all states because it was not known initially how girls with different learning levels would be distributed across locations.

**Another reason for establishing more learning centres was to ensure that learning centres were located close to where the girls live.** In some communities, particularly in Kaduna State, where communities are very dispersed, the programme had to establish some learning centres with as few as eight girls. The smaller sizes of these centres was viewed as advantageous as it allowed instruction to be more individualised<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 7.

<sup>21</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 7.

<sup>22</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 7.

**In addition, in Kaduna State, additional learning centres were established because of community interest in the ENGINE II programme taking on additional girls.** To get their buy-in, more centres were established. The SIP reported that:

*There was a lot of interest and community buy-in of the programme, many girls indicated interest to join and the community wanted us to take them in. So, we worked with the community leaders to create additional spaces.*

However, due to budget constraints, additional LCFs could not be recruited to coordinate the activities of a handful of these extra centres. Rather, girl ambassadors were assigned to teach these girl fora members, with the support of LCFs. In addition, some of the fora girls were re-distributed across centres, which resulted in some centres exceeding the threshold of 25 girls. According to an SIP, the centres that these girls were allocated to have the capacity to accommodate over 25 girls, including having sufficient space (SIP interview).

*The number of learning centres was exceeded in Kaduna due to clustering to avoid overshooting the limit of 25 per learning centre. Mercy Corps gave permission for the extra centres to be created. However, some centres still exceeded 25 because of financial constraints and unavailability of LCFs in some schools, creating a need for centres to be merged, mostly in Jaba and Kaura LGAs.*

Mercy Corps and the SIPs reported that approximately 25 girls were enrolled per learning centre during the initial enrolment, although there were some centres with substantially fewer girls and a few centres with more girls, for the reasons described above.

### **Assessment of girls' learning levels**

**ENGINE II intended to conduct a learner needs assessment to gauge the OSGs' current learning levels after they were enrolled in the learning centre, and to subsequently allocate girls to different groups based on this assessment.** As explained above, in the FCT, the SIP adapted this approach by conducting a placement exercise before allocating girls to learning centres. This allowed the SIP in the FCT to immediately allocate girls to different centres based on their results in the assessment, while in the other states the last completed grade was used as a proxy for the girls' learning levels.

**Across all states, the learner needs assessment was conducted after the start of the learning centre sessions. It revealed that girls' skills were not always aligned with the last grade they had completed.** For example, ENGINE II reports that 60% of OSGs who had been grouped in the 'continuing education' level were not able to answer questions beyond primary level. On the other hand, 35% of OSGs who had been grouped in the lowest learning level ('basic literacy') were able to answer questions beyond this level of difficulty<sup>23</sup>.

**In Lagos, Kaduna and Kano, following this assessment, and about five months after the start of the learning centre sessions, girls were re-categorised and placed in learning centres based on their competency level.** However, as described by the SIP in Lagos below, some girls had acclimatised to their old learning centres and made friends. In his words:

*Some girls struggled to continue to receive learning at the new centres after they had been re-distributed to their various grade-appropriate level. Some complained that they were already used to the previous centre, made friends, or gotten attached to the LCFs. So, you find a few of them still going back to the previous centre to still be receiving learning content that is not appropriate for them.*

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<sup>23</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 7.

A similar challenge was faced in Kaduna. In both states, this hesitation was overcome via a sensitisation campaign targeting girls and community leaders, to make them understand why it was important for them to stick to the centres that they had been assigned to (SIP interview).

### **Closures of learning centres**

In Year 3, a smaller number of ISG learning centres were retained because the majority of ISGs had transitioned to SSS by then, and others had completed secondary education. OSG learning centres were also closed because of low levels of attendance at some centres, including where girls had dropped out of the programme entirely. Chapter 4 describes the reasons for poor learning centre attendance and attrition in detail. This was confirmed in a statement by a SIP:

*In year three, some learning centres had to be closed as a result of attrition. To maximise programme funds, girls in those centres that were closed were merged with other centres. Some of the reasons for attrition included girls securing admission into universities outside the programme LGAs, others getting paid employment which clashed with programme activities. Many girls had basic needs that had to be met for their day-to-day living [that prevented them from attending the sessions].*

Because of the closures, beneficiaries were merged across different learning centres.

## **3.3.2 Recruitment of LCFs**

### **Design**

Learning centres are run by **LCFs** (also known as Learning Space Coordinators). LCFs are schoolteachers (for ISGs) and volunteers or educators from AME (for OSGs) that run sessions with the ENGINE II beneficiary girls. LCFs were recruited by ENGINE II in partnership with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and AME. ENGINE II placed a strong emphasis on recruiting existing teachers and AME volunteers to build their capacity in the LCTM, and to demonstrate the benefits of this approach to the government partners.

For ISG LCFs, mathematics and English language teachers within the selected ENGINE schools were selected as numeracy and literacy LCFs, respectively. In addition, school guidance and counselling teachers were selected to conduct the life skills and financial literacy sessions.

Based on experience from ENGINE I, where LCFs for the OSGs did not have any teaching background, teacher experience and a teaching qualification were a requirement to be recruited as an LCF for ENGINE II. In addition, the selection process consisted of a written examination and an interview to assess candidates' technical skills, delivery approach, and attitudes towards girls' education.

### **Implementation**

**All respondents interviewed confirmed that LCFs were selected through a rigorous screening process comprising written and oral tests, as well as background checks.** SIPs report working with government partners in the recruitment of the LCFs. One ISG LCF in Kano explained the rigour of the recruitment process:

*I sent in an application to ENGINE II, sat for an aptitude test, and an oral interview. After the aptitude test, only 450 LCFs were selected out of the 650 applicants who sat for the aptitude test. Few weeks later, I was issued an appointment letter, after*

*which I attended a five-day induction training on the key ENGINE II subjects, such as financial education, literacy, and numeracy, and how to take care of basic and non-basic students in the learning centre.*

An OSG LCF from Lagos reported undergoing a similar recruitment process, as presented in the quote below:

*I have been an LCF from ENGINE I in 2015. The recruitment on ENGINE I was way different from ENGINE II. [For ENGINE II], I wrote a test on literacy, numeracy, and general knowledge, and was interviewed by a master trainer from Lagos State education board, staff from ENGINE, and one community leader who has been part of ENGINE from the beginning.*

However, there were a few LCFs selected based on how active and exceptional they had been on ENGINE I who did not possess an education degree. Based on this, some LCFs with only higher SSCE certificates and others without an education degree were tested and recruited for ENGINE II (SIP interview). The Mercy Corps implementation team indicates that the selection of teachers without teaching qualifications occurred in rare cases and was done with approval from the government partners.

**In Kaduna State, the availability of qualified teachers was low, and it was challenging to recruit enough LCFs with sufficient teaching experience for the role. Following an initial round of recruitment, the programme realised that some LCFs performed far below expectations, especially in numeracy.** Therefore, another round of recruitment was initiated to identify candidates with better subject matter knowledge (SIP interview). In addition, another round of LCFs had to be recruited three months into programme implementation to replace LCFs that had dropped out of the programme.

**It was particularly challenging to identify suitably qualified candidates who were willing to be posted to remote or insecure parts of Kaduna, where living conditions are poor.** As a result, another strategy adopted in Kaduna was that the programme liaised with the government to deploy NYSC members to such locations. NYSC members are Nigerian graduates deployed by the government to all states on a compulsory year of community service. Many of them are posted to schools to teach. However, even NYSC members were re-deployed from some areas when insecurity escalated. The SIP in Kaduna explained:

*In Jaba, Chikun, and Kaura LGAs we had to work with NYSC corps members. The LCFs posted there from the ministry refuse to live and work in such communities due to the poor road network (extremely hard to reach area), poor transportation means, and security challenges. Things got so bad to the extent the NYSC officers themselves stopped posting corps members to the area.*

In other cases, NYSC members asked to be re-deployed due to the poor living conditions. This thought was echoed by the SIP:

*We had over 200 NYSC corps members who indicated interest to be posted to these LGAs to help facilitate sessions, but as soon as they resume, a lot of them opted out. In the end, we were only able to retain about six of them who stayed on.*

Two guidance and counselling teachers reported that they did not undergo the rigorous recruitment process described above but were automatically selected as LCFs because they are guidance and counselling teachers. Mercy Corps confirmed that guidance and counselling teachers generally did not go through a recruitment process because most schools only have one guidance and counselling teacher. These teachers were automatically selected to teach the life skills and financial education sessions at the ISG

learning centres because their professional training in guidance and counselling was considered to be the most suitable skillset for these sessions.

Master trainers were selected from government agencies and included government officials from school services, quality assurance, the education resource centre and AME. They were all qualified teachers with previous experience in delivering teacher training<sup>24</sup>.

As we have reported in this section, some LCFs were replaced because they dropped out of the programme or because their performance was poor. Information on the rate of turnover of LCFs was however not consistently available.

### 3.3.3 Training and mentoring of LCFs

#### Design

ENGINE II intended to deliver a **two-day training once every six months**. Trainings were planned to be delivered by master trainers, themselves trained by programme staff and volunteer consultants. The training was intended to be delivered at an LGA-level cluster and targeted at ISG and OSG LCFs, trained separately.

The training focused on **LCTM**, including lesson plan development, use of teaching and learning aids, and practical lesson sessions and improvisation. The training also covered CVAP, the life skills content, and the use of data capturing tools, such as the attendance tracking tool.

There was intended to be a **quarterly peer mentoring meeting (Teacher Professional Development Day (TPDD))**, facilitated by master trainers, to continuously re-train and improve the LCFs' capacity and content delivery, and also to share best practices that would enhance learning for the beneficiaries. Specific content for each training session was determined by the master trainers based on skill gaps identified in the previous supervision period.

#### Implementation

##### Training sessions

In line with the programme design, **the first training session for LCFs was delivered before the start of the learning centre sessions**. A total of 74 master trainers across the four states were trained by ENGINE II in June 2018 and stepped down the training to 1,026 LCFs between July and September 2018. Table 4 shows the breakdown of LCFs trained during the first training. In total, 87% of LCFs trained were female.

**Table 4: Breakdown of LCFs trained at first training, by state, gender, and ISG / OSG status**

State	ISG – LCF		OSG – LCF		Total trained LCFs		Total learning centres established	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	ISG	OSG	ISG	OSG
<b>FCT</b>	6	51	0	52	57	52	21	83

<sup>24</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 5.

State	ISG – LCF		OSG – LCF		Total trained LCFs		Total learning centres established	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	ISG	OSG	ISG	OSG
<b>Kaduna</b>	56	99	25	121	155	146	68	76
<b>Kano</b>	42	86	0	246	128	246	67	110
<b>Lagos</b>	n/a	n/a	0	242	n/a	242	n/a	253
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>686</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>522</b>

Note: Numbers of training attendees are reported in the quarterly report for Quarter 6. The number of learning centres established is taken from the logframe as reported at the end of Year 2.

**In comparing the number of LCFs trained per state to the number of learning centres established in the state, some disparities were observed.** For ISGs, approximately two LCFs per learning centre were trained in each state. For OSGs, on the other hand, approximately two LCFs per learning centre were trained in Kaduna and Kano; one LCF per centre was trained in the FCT; but in Lagos, less than one LCF per centre was trained during the initial training. Presumably, additional LCFs were trained in Lagos at a later date to support the other learning centres but this is not reported in the programme progress reports. In Kaduna, a substantial number of LCFs either opted out of the programme after the first training or were dropped due to their poor performance, as mentioned in the previous section. As a result, an additional 57 ISG and OSG LCFs were trained in October 2018<sup>25</sup>.

A refresher training was conducted in March/April 2019 to further strengthen the capacity of the master trainers in ensuring LCTM was carried out by the LCFs in their assigned learning centres. Attendance at the refresher training was not available in a summary format.

According to the initial ENGINE II design, two days of LGA-level quarterly training were to be delivered. However, only two quarterly training sessions were held in total at the LGA level. The Mercy Corps implementation team reports that this is due to the adaptations that were made to the mentoring session (described in the next section) which included quarterly LGA-level sessions delivered by subject matter experts.

### **Mentoring sessions**

**The format of the mentoring sessions evolved during the programme implementation to provide more ongoing and individualised support to LCFs.** The first adaptation was that the frequency of the mentoring sessions was increased from quarterly to monthly. The second adaptation was that mentoring sessions moved from the LGA level to a smaller cluster level. A cluster was made up of a small number of learning centres, meaning that each session was attended by a smaller group of LCFs. Some LGA-level sessions were maintained but these were led by highly trained, subject matter experts, rather than by the master trainers, to support LCFs with teaching particularly challenging topics. These sessions led by subject matter experts were introduced because the programme monitoring identified that gaps in LCFs' subject matter competency, as we discuss in section 3.3.6.

As per the programme design, following the first training session, the first quarterly TPDD was held at the LGA level (October – December 2018). However, it became clear after the first TPDD session that SIPs, master trainers, and LCFs all required additional training on

<sup>25</sup> Monthly report October 2018.

the LCTM. As a result, the frequency of the TPDD sessions was changed to monthly sessions. Between January and September 2019, progress reports from the SIPs indicated that TPDD sessions were held regularly, but the progress reports do not consistently report on whether all states held these sessions monthly. Progress reports also do not consistently report on attendance at these sessions.

**In September 2019, ENGINE II again shifted the format of the mentoring sessions to monthly sessions held at a cluster level rather than an LGA level.** This resulted in many more meetings being held; it was not possible for master trainers to attend all mentoring sessions. Therefore, ENGINE II identified a group of 75 ‘super LCFs’ to support these monthly cluster-level mentoring sessions. Super LCFs were LCFs who had shown a high level of commitment and capacity.

In addition, to these cluster-level sessions, LGA-level sessions were held once a quarter. These were led by highly trained subject matter experts, rather than by the master trainers. Some LCFs described the LGA-level TPDD mentoring class as contributing to deepening their knowledge on classroom management, pupil–teacher relationships, lesson plan development, and teaching methodology, as these sessions were delivered by subject matter experts.

**While some clusters initiated the peer mentoring between July and September 2019, cluster-level peer mentoring in most clusters began between October and December 2019.** During that quarter, peer mentoring is reported to have occurred in only 94 clusters (Kaduna – 44, Kano – 27, Lagos – 55, FCT – 31) out of 157 clusters created across programme locations<sup>26</sup>.

**Mercy Corps and all the SIPs spoke of the benefits of LCFs being able to meet in smaller groups during the monthly cluster-level mentoring sessions.** They reported that the cluster-level sessions allowed LCFs to express themselves more freely, and allowed individual challenges to be identified and acted on more easily. For example, one SIP explained:

*Since TPDD was changed from a quarterly meeting to monthly cluster-level meetings, challenges were easily identified, and the master trainers are able to train LCFs based on the needs reported. The LGA quarterly level meetings were usually rowdy and overcrowded, sometimes reaching up to 200 people, so it was difficult to identify individual challenges there.*

Furthermore, an SIP reported that a lot of the LCFs had viewed the LGA-level TPDD meetings more like an assessment or evaluation of their performance, rather than as a capacity building exercise. The SIP explained: ‘*LCFs were usually not free to ask questions at the LGA level, everyone was being too careful to express themselves*’. In contrast, cluster-level meetings were reported to promote a natural and healthy competition among LCFs, as everyone was eager to share their experiences with others. Mercy Corps described this as follows: ‘*LCFs came alive because they had opportunities to share their own experience*’. The perception shared by Mercy Corps and SIPs of how efficient the monthly TPDDs became in comparison to the quarterly meeting was also corroborated by some master trainers and LCFs across the states. As depicted in the quote below, one master trainer from FCT explained how through the cluster-level mentoring session, LCFs spoke up more often and confidently. They often partnered with each other to share learnings on how to manage activities better:

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<sup>26</sup> Workplan tracker Quarter 11.

*The monthly TPDD offers us opportunity to nominate LCFs who know better to deliver sessions to others. With time, we noticed that LCFs became more energetic and improved on how they share their knowledge. Many of them also started reaching out to other LCFs to mentor them personally on aspects where they were having issues so that they can deliver a more interesting session to their girls.*

In another instance, one LCF from Kaduna also expressed (in the quote below) how the monthly cluster-level mentoring class had been beneficial to him:

*When we discuss at the training, we can identify where each LCF is lagging, what action to take, and the improvement that we expect to see. Personally, this has helped me learn how to tailor sessions to meet each girl's needs. I have also improved on my teaching style, which is very crucial.*

Some LCFs relayed issues they had with the cluster-level TPDD training. For example, one respondent spoke about not being comfortable to speak up at the cluster-level meetings. Another LCF from Kaduna complained of the long training duration, and the late arrival of master trainers and some LCFs, which they found very demotivating.

**Other issues some OSG LCFs in Kaduna mentioned as hindrances to regular attendance at the monthly cluster-level mentoring sessions were that LCFs that were transferred to areas outside the community/LGA found it difficult to cover the distance to the cluster-level location.** A few LCFs also reported that over the years they had been allocated extra responsibilities at their place of work, making it complicated for them to balance their commitment to ENGINE II and their regular job. One LCF from Kaduna said:

*Before school closure last year, we had just one cluster-level meeting. When it was time for the second meeting, all the LCFs had their personal commitment because some of the LCFs were transferred to non-ENGINE schools, which in some cases was a distance away from the venue of the training, and some would have travelled.*

**Another issue raised by most LCFs in several states that seemed to also affect attendance was the irregularity and short notice of training dates.** One LCF from Lagos said that, even though one meeting was held per month, there was no fixed date in the month for the meetings and they could get called any time for the meeting, usually on short notice and with little time to plan: *'The time and date for meeting can be communicated anytime in the week, sometimes this is too short for people to plan for a two hours meeting.'*

Another ISG LCF in the FCT also explained this: *'the challenge I have with the training is the impromptu nature of it. We usually get messages for training without giving us enough time to prepare for the training'*.

This thought was also echoed by a master trainer in the FCT, in the quote below. She added that, apart from the impromptu meeting schedule, distance was also a challenge for attending mentoring sessions:

*The challenge sometimes is the distance to the training ground and even locating the training venue. For me, the meetings have been successful except for the late notification of meetings sometimes.*

The shift to cluster-level training meant that several clusters emerged, increasing the workload for the master trainer. Also, because the idea was for LCFs to operate meetings flexibly, their timing did not always align with master trainers' availability for mentoring and supervision.



**Table 5: Summary of LCF training and TPDD sessions**

	Date	Comments
<b>Training sessions</b>		
Master trainer training	June 2018	
Step-down training to LCFs	July – Sept 2018	
Refresher master trainer training	January – March 2019 (Kaduna and Kano) April 2019 (FCT and Lagos)	Training included training of 75 super LCFs, who would support the step-down of the training, in addition to the master trainers, and who would support cluster-level peer mentoring at clusters lower than LGA level
Step-down refresher training to LCFs	April – June 2019	Two days
<b>TPDD sessions</b>		
First quarterly LGA-level TPDD	October – December 2018	
Monthly LGA-level TPDD sessions	January – September 2019	Exact frequency and attendance were not reported
Quarterly LGA-level TPDD sessions, supported by monthly cluster-level peer mentoring sessions	October 2019 – March 2020	

### 3.3.4 Monitoring and supervision visits

#### Design

Master trainers carried out **supervision visits**. It was expected that master trainers would conduct at least one supervision visit to each learning centre per month, and conduct classroom observations, and retraining and mentoring based on identified needs. ENGINE II programme officers (at least one per LGA) carried out at least one visit to each learning centre per month. State team leads (two per state, three in Kaduna) carried out less regular monitoring visits.

#### Implementation

**Programme progress reports and interviews with SIPs suggest that master trainers did not manage to conduct as many monitoring visits as intended because of the number of learning centres that were allocated to them, the distance from the learning centres, and difficult physical terrain and insecurity in some instances.**

During Year 3 (April 2019 – March 2020), which covers the main period of implementation of the learning centres, master trainers conducted a total of 3,283 classroom observations, with an average of 273 visits per month, based on programme progress reports<sup>27</sup>. At the end of Year 3, 490 learning centres remained active.<sup>28</sup> The average number of monitoring visits completed per month therefore fell well short of the target of one visit per centre per month.

**The reported reasons why the target for the number of monitoring visits could not be met differed somewhat across the states.** However, detailed data on the number of monitoring visits conducted per state were not available in the progress reports, so it is difficult to know to what extent these challenges affected the number of visits that could be completed in each state.

One reason that the expected number of monitoring visits could not be completed is that the number of learning centres assigned per master trainer was difficult to effectively manage, especially in Kano and Kaduna. Combining such a role with their day-to-day job was burdensome for a lot of master trainers. This was expressed in the quote below by an SIP:

*Master trainers often could not cover all centres assigned to them. There was budget constraint to recruit additional hands, pay for hotel bills and transportation for master trainers who might be required to stay overnight in certain locations. Combining this task with their primary assignment was also difficult.*

One master trainer in Lagos reported that, under her schedule, she was required to visit a maximum of four centres in a month. Occasionally, she was unable to make it to all four centres in this period due to her other responsibilities as a headteacher. However, another master trainer in Lagos confirmed that she visited learning centres twice in a month. Another master trainer, from Kano, explained that the frequency of his visits to a centre depended on how many he was assigned to. For example, he reported that when he had just three centres to manage, he visited each centre twice in a month, but this changed to once a month as soon as his centres were increased to six. In Lagos, master trainers are high-level civil servants from the ministry and they found it difficult to combine learning centre visits with their other responsibilities.

Insecurity in Kaduna was also a key setback. For instance, in Kaduna State, programme monitoring activities could not be carried out in Kaura and Jaba LGAs because of insecurity emanating from community crises<sup>29</sup>. Later, all monitoring activities were halted completely because the security incidents increased. This was echoed in a quote during an interview with an SIP:

*One major risk the programme grappled with in relation to monitoring and supervision was the increasing rate of insecurity, especially in areas that have hitherto been relatively peaceful. In Kaduna, kidnapping incidence increased at an alarming rate and occurrences moved from the highways to homes of victims. Monitoring of activities became challenging.*

In Lagos, learning centres in Epe LGA also had fewer monitoring visits from the master trainers because of its very far distance from the AME office where the master trainers were situated. A staff member of the SIP in Lagos said:

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<sup>27</sup> Annual report Year 3.

<sup>28</sup> At the start of Year 3, 678 learning centres were active, but 188 centres were closed during the year. Therefore, in several months during Year 3, more than 490 monitoring visits would need to have been completed to meet the target. The minimum average number of visits per month that we would expect is 490.

<sup>29</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 8.

*Our master trainers are staff of the AME. They have their regular AME work to do. Visiting Epe is a whole day's journey because it is very far from their office. They cannot go and return that same day. So learning centres in that area received fewer supervisory visits from master trainers.*

One master trainer in the FCT expressed how she was naturally inclined to visit centres that were in close proximity to her, and that were more accessible compared to those located far away. She tried to tell LCFs in centres where she did not visit to send her pictures of the girls at the centre so that she could judge attendance. She reported that visiting OSG learning centres was more challenging because the locations could be obscure, or moved without notice.

**Some adaptation was made in Q10 that involved principals and headteachers in monitoring activities at the learning centre.** In Lagos State, the programme worked with the government to engage primary school headteachers to fill this role in supporting master trainers in monitoring and supervision activities<sup>30</sup>. LCFs who had demonstrated superior competencies in delivering learning sessions were also nominated from the states to attend the refresher training alongside master trainers, to enable them to support other LCFs at their clusters as a master trainer would have.

### 3.3.5 Delivery of learning centre sessions

#### Design

Learning centres aimed to deliver **six hours of teaching and learning per week** (two hours of literacy, two hours of numeracy, one hour of life skills, one hour of financial education). Some centres had sessions twice weekly and others three times weekly, to cover the required duration.

ISG LCFs facilitated learning centre sessions in addition to the normal classes they taught at school. OSG LCFs also continued their usual jobs, and took on the role of LCF in addition to these.

#### Implementation

The programme progress report and monitoring data do not provide consistent information on the number of hours of learning centre sessions that were delivered.

One ISG LCF in the FCT narrated how he was unable to deliver his three hours' weekly quota of literacy sessions because most of the girls in his centres were also enrolled in other school activities, such as sport. He said the school sports master had gone as far as to request that the girls pull out of the programme if they were serious about excelling in sport. Similarly, another LCF in a different school in the same state who facilitated the life skills and financial education sessions at the learning centre, reported that most times he was only able to deliver two hours out of his three hours' schedule for the week because the only time and day convenient for the girls also coincided with the art and craft period in the mainstream timetable. Because of this, some girls did not attend the learning centres on the said days, or came in very late.

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<sup>30</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 10.

One OSG LCF in Kaduna, as indicated in the quote below, complained that the duration allocated to his session was not enough to cover all content because the girls' foundational-level knowledge of literacy was poor:

*It sometimes takes me more than an hour for each session as some of the girls do not have an educational background, so they find it difficult to understand or even write notes from the board. This slows down the class so I will just add 30 mins to the one hour to take them one-on-one.*

In some instances LCFs spent more time delivering sessions than was stipulated in the programme design to ensure that they cover all the content. For instance, an interview with an LCF in Kaduna reviewed that, according to the programme design, numeracy sessions were to be delivered three times a week for an hour, but he took the lessons for one hour and 30 minutes instead, because of his passion to teach the girls as he wanted them to learn better and to understand his sessions. He explained that this was not in any way indicative that the hour allocated was not enough to cover the content, but that he took his time to explain more and provided girls with extra opportunity to clarify issues. His only challenge was that their session timetable was not being followed strictly. He lamented that the literacy LCF, who was a superior at his school, usually wanted to teach literacy first and by the time he/she finished and it was his turn to teach numeracy, the girls would have become tired and grumpy. He stressed that this had always been the case. As with other aspects of implementation, insecurity in certain parts of Kaduna contributed to fewer hours of learning centre sessions being delivered during some periods, due to communal clashes and post-election conflicts<sup>31</sup>.

**According to most ISG LCFs, attendance at their teaching sessions was regular except on rare occasions when they had to attend to personal matters. However, a couple of LCFs interviewed expressed that it was not easy combining their role under ENGINE II with their other responsibilities.** For example, one ISG LCF in Kaduna reported difficulties in combining his role under ENGINE II with other commitments:

*Some of the challenges I face while dispatching my duty is that is not always easy for me because I teach JSS1–JSS3 in the school and I'm not based in that community. I travel every day from Zaria, so combining these responsibilities are not always easy.*

Another LCF in Kano reported that it was very tiring for her to deliver sessions at the centre because of other activities she carried out during the day:

*It has not been easy for me to combine being an LCF together with my teaching job because I have to wait after school to teach even while tired and sometimes I have other home commitments. I have been paid only three times since I started facilitating the sessions last year.*

She added that she was not motivated as her salary from the programme was often delayed, coupled with the fact that the amount was not even sufficient to cover her transportation cost and food was not being paid for. This view was also shared by several LCFs across the state, with delays in receipt of payments sometimes occurring. As one LCF put it: *'I think ENGINE II has done their best and the only thing I want them to improve is their monthly payment which is not always stable as we are currently owed for two months.'*

By contrast, other LCFs reported that it was easy for them to effectively manage their time on ENGINE II and their other responsibilities. According to an OSG LCF who was a volunteer teacher under a federal government scheme called Npower, combining his role under ENGINE II and his other responsibilities was easy because he taught at a primary

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<sup>31</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 5.

school that closed at 1 pm daily, so he had enough time to attend to his sessions. Another OSG LCF in Lagos said: *‘Combining my job as a nutritionist with being an LCF is easy. I had an agreement with my boss to be absent from work on days when I have to facilitate sessions’.*

### 3.3.6 Quality of the learning centre sessions

This section reports evidence from the programme monitoring reports of the quality of the learning centre sessions. The quality of the learning centre sessions was monitored through lesson observations conducted by master trainers. Findings from these lesson observations are reported in Chapter 6, where we link this to evidence from respondents in the qualitative research of how they used learner-centred approaches during their sessions. This section focuses on challenges that were identified in the delivery of high quality learning centre sessions and how these were addressed.

**From monitoring data and findings from the Teachers Needs Assessment conducted in Q6 – Q7 it was discovered that many LCFs, and some master trainers, lacked sufficient capacity to deploy the LCTM initially.** Early monitoring visits showed a slow adoption of the LCTM<sup>32</sup>. It took a while for LCFs to make the shift from their regular classroom teacher-centred approach of teaching to the ENGINE II LCTM.

During interviews with Mercy Corps, it was confirmed that it took some time before LCFs started implementing the LCTM in the delivery of sessions. The programme tried to institute behavioural and attitudinal changes for LCFs, given their long-standing experience of delivering lessons using the institutionalised teacher-centred method. In their opinion, the structure of the mainstream classroom offered little opportunity for LCFs to hone their LCTM skills on a daily basis, considering the large class size of over 70 students.

*It was not easy for LCFs to take up the concept of LCTM initially as it was not an institutionalised practice for them. These are teachers who have been teaching for five to 10 years using the teacher-centred methodology in their mainstream schools. They teach classes of over 70–100 persons. Getting students to participate effectively in such settings is difficult.*

Over time, Mercy Corps reported that LCFs who were open to learning showed considerable progress in the use of the LCTM, while a few were not willing to make the transition. The programme dropped some LCFs in Kaduna as a result: *‘some LCFs in Kaduna State who were consistently defaulting and were unwilling to make a shift to using the LCTM were dropped from the programme.’*

**Through programme monitoring, ENGINE II identified that OSG LCFs also had low subject matter competency, especially in numeracy<sup>33</sup>.** Many OSG LCFs who taught numeracy sessions did not have a background in mathematics, which likely contributed to their poor subject matter competency. LCFs also struggled with competency in phonological awareness. This challenge was only identified several months after the start of the learning centre sessions in Quarter 9 (April – June 2019) because initial monitoring focused on implementation of the LCTM. Once the programme identified this challenge, the programme aimed to address this in several ways. Firstly, as described in section 3.3.3., the programme shifted the focus of its quarterly TPDD sessions to focus on subject matter competency by bringing in subject matter experts to deliver sessions on particularly complex topics. Previous training and mentoring sessions had focused predominantly on pedagogy, i.e. the

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<sup>32</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 7.

<sup>33</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 9.

use of the LCTM. The programme also revamped its teachers' handbook to address capacity gaps more clearly among LCFs and master trainers<sup>34</sup>. ENGINE II also developed a tutorial video on phonetics, which was one of the gaps uncovered during the Teachers Needs Assessment. This was uploaded to the Android tablets provided to the LCFs<sup>35</sup>.

Other challenges that affected the delivery of sessions at the learning centres included **girls' poor foundational level**, as gathered from interviews with LCFs: a couple of OSGs lacked foundation knowledge in most topics, so LCFs would have to spend several hours trying to deliver just one session to be able to bring them up to speed. Also, there was the issue **of language of instruction**: some sessions in Kaduna and Kano were said to have been delivered in the local languages when it became evident that some OSGs struggled to comprehend sessions in English (SIP interview).

### 3.3.7 Other direct support to completion of education

#### Design

At the start of the programme, ENGINE II identified all OSGs who were willing to re-enter formal education. Through what is referred to as the Second Chance Initiative, the programme intended to provide these girls with intensive coaching classes to support their re-entry into school. OSGs who are 18 years old or older are linked to AME to continue their education, while OSGs younger than 18 year are reintegrated into secondary schools.<sup>36</sup> ENGINE II also intended to cover school-related costs for these girls.

ENGINE II also supported both ISGs and OSGs in regard to paying registration fees for end of secondary school examinations or examinations to enter tertiary education. Girls who registered for these exams were supported to pay examination fees and with intensive coaching classes.

#### Implementation

By the end of Year 3, 1,173 OSGs had been supported to re-enter formal education or to pass key examinations. This represented 53% of OSGs who had been willing to re-enrol in formal education, and exceeded the programme's target of 40%. Based on the annual reports, 405 OSGs (203 in Year 2 and 202 in Year 3) were supported to re-enrol in formal schooling, suggesting that the remaining 766 OSGs were supported to pass key examinations, although this is not clearly reported in the progress reports and a breakdown by state was not available. The available information below indicates that progress in this component did not seem to happen at the same pace across states.

At the end of Year 2, 316 girls (75 in the FCT, 241 in Lagos) had been supported to write end-of-school examinations (SSCE and NECO). Amongst these girls, pass rates were very low the FCT with only 14% of girls achieving five credits with English and mathematics (which is usually considered the minimum requirement for a pass). In Lagos, pass rates were higher but still low with 50% of applicants passing their examination. In addition, 301 girls (88 in the FCT, 213 in Lagos) had registered for the placement examination for a tertiary institution (UTME), but information on the number of girls that scored high enough to

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<sup>34</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 7.

<sup>35</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 7.

<sup>36</sup> Although there are no written policies to support this, secondary schools often refuse to re-enrol girls who are above 18 years in their schools so AME supports the education of these girls.

secure admittance was not reported. The programme progress reports contain little information about whether these girls progressed to tertiary institutions.

There were some unfavourable policies and contextual factors that impeded the transition of OSGs' second chance at formal education. Government policies in Lagos and Kano, for example, did not allow girls beyond a certain age category to be re-enrolled in formal education (i.e. for basic or secondary school education), limiting the opportunity for certain girls to go back to school. In addition, there were insufficient AME centres to accommodate girls from various communities<sup>37</sup>. In Lagos, the alternative high school for girls who wanted to return to mainstream education was in just one LGA. As a result of this, only girls who were in this area were enrolled (interview with SIP).

### **3.4 Output 2: Increased asset-building skills and income generation for marginalised ENGINE girls in target areas**

Output 2 is intended to compliment Output 1 by addressing economic barriers to enrolment, retention and completion. ENGINE II aimed to promote financial inclusion of all ENGINE II beneficiaries through the financial education sessions at the learning centres, through registering girls for ID cards, and through providing girls with access to options to save or take out loans. Beyond that, the approach for Output 2 was to provide ENGINE II beneficiaries with individualised support. Girls who were interested in learning a skill were aimed to be supported to enrol in a VTI. Girls who were interested to work in the service industry were aimed to be linked to internships or apprenticeships. Girls who have existing businesses were aimed to be supported through business expansion grants.

Section 3.4.1 describes the implementation of the financial literacy and business education sessions at the learning centres. Section 3.4.2 describes the implementation of the other ENGINE II activities aimed at promoting financial inclusion, including registration for ID cards, opening of bank accounts, promoting savings groups and cooperatives, and supporting access to loans. Section 3.4.3 describes the implementation of linking girls to VTIs, while Section 3.4.4 describes the implementation of the business expansion grants and linking girls to internships and apprenticeships.

#### **3.4.1 Learning centre sessions on financial literacy and business education for ISGs and OSGs**

##### **Original design**

The aim was for LCFs to deliver sessions on financial literacy and business education to ISGs and OSGs at the learning centres using the ENGINE II financial and business education manual. One hour of financial literacy and business education was meant to be delivered per week.

##### **Implementation**

##### **Development of the financial and business education manual**

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<sup>37</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 10.

**ENGINE II developed a financial and business education manual that was to be used to deliver the financial literacy sessions in the learning centres.** The manual was reviewed by a broad range of stakeholders, both from the government and from industry<sup>38</sup>.

### **Delivery of the financial literacy sessions**

LCFs were trained on the delivery of these sessions during the main LCF trainings that have been described under Output 1. Financial literacy sessions appeared to be held regularly but, as for the other subjects, it was not possible to verify whether sessions were held for the expected number of hours. The challenges around the delivery of the financial literacy sessions were the same as those that have been reported under Output 1 for learning centre sessions generally.

## **3.4.2 Financial inclusion**

### **Original design and targets**

ENGINE II's original design around financial inclusion focused on encouraging girls to save and providing them with access to loans. Under ENGINE I, girl fora groups formed informal savings groups. For ENGINE II, the programme aimed to reactivate these groups. The programme also aimed to encourage girls to register these groups as cooperatives because this would facilitate access to loans. ENGINE II aimed to support 5,000 girls to have access to informal savings.

ENGINE II also aimed to provide girls with access to loans through micro-finance institutions (MFIs). The programme aimed to form partnerships with MFIs located close to the girls, to provide them with loans at single-digit interest rates, and for which OSGs would be able to meet the application criteria.

In addition to this, ENGINE II aimed to register 5,000 girls for national ID cards, and support 5,000 girls to open a bank account.

### **Implementation**

#### **Access to loans**

**The process of establishing partnerships with MFIs was slow.** For example, in Kano, the SIP had identified a potential partner in March 2018, and girls were sensitised about the opportunity in November 2018. By September 2019, only 50 girls had established bank accounts, and none had yet taken out a loan<sup>39</sup>. In Kaduna, despite meeting with several MFIs in March and April 2018, no suitable MFI could be identified that provided conditions that it would be realistic for the girls to meet<sup>40</sup>. In the FCT, after initially identifying potential partners in January 2018, there appears to have been a long break, with further meetings only conducted in February 2019 when a partnership with an MFI was eventually established<sup>41</sup>. In Lagos, no partnership with an MFI was established but the programme formed a partnership with the Ministry of Wealth Creation and Employment's Trust Fund at the start of the programme (September 2017), through which girls could access loans.

**Once opportunities to access loans were established, uptake of these opportunities was very low.** In Lagos, this was partially due to girls not having the required

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<sup>38</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 5.

<sup>39</sup> Kano state monthly activity reports March 2018 – September 2019.

<sup>40</sup> Monthly report April 2018.

<sup>41</sup> FCT state monthly activity report February 2019.



documentation: in September 2017, 413 girls applied for a loan, but only 59 received one<sup>42</sup>. In Kano, many girls did not have enough money to make the deposit that they needed to make to qualify for a loan. In addition, in Kano, interest-bearing loans were unacceptable to girls for religious reasons, although the MFI that ENGINE II partnered with in Kano did provide interest-free loans<sup>43</sup>. Most importantly, across the states, while some girls had expressed an interest in taking out a loan at the start of the programme, it became clear that girls were reluctant to take out loans because they considered their business risks to be higher than the prospects of repayment<sup>44</sup>.

**Amongst girls who had taken out a loan, many struggled with their repayment plan.**

By September 2019, only 13 out of the 59 girls in Lagos who had taken out a loan had completed the repayment of their loans two years after taking them out, while another 15 were on track with their repayments. On the other hand, 23 girls were overdue, seven had not paid, and one loan had been cancelled<sup>45</sup>. Reasons for non-payment included that some girls had used their loan for large investments, such as the rental of a shop, which they were not able to make a return on. Some other girls had transferred the loan to their parent or household head<sup>46</sup>.

**Overall, it became clear that loan opportunities were not accessible to many girls, and the risk of defaulting on their repayments prevented many girls from considering this opportunity.** As a result of this, ENGINE II changed its strategy on business expansion in October 2019. The programme decided to increase its support towards providing girls with access to savings through informal savings groups and cooperatives, and to increase its support towards the provision of business expansion grants. This is discussed further in the following sections.

### **Savings and cooperative groups**

**ENGINE II reported that 4,601 girls had access to savings or credit groups at the end of Year 3<sup>47</sup>, therefore falling slightly short of the target of 5,000 girls.**

ENGINE II supported 112 informal savings groups to register as formal cooperatives by the end of Year 3<sup>48</sup>. However, in line with what is described in the section above, girls were often not interested in accessing loans through these cooperatives. Instead, they preferred to use the cooperatives to pool savings, similar to how the informal savings groups had been used during ENGINE I.

**Programme monitoring showed that girls continued to value the opportunity to save, both through cooperatives and through the informal savings groups.** For example, one of the LCFs in Kaduna said: *'I encourage them to do group savings "adashe", which they have been doing and they share the money at the end of the month'*. Some innovations were introduced by the girls in some locations. A girl ambassador in Lagos had this to say:

*In our savings group, we have two pockets – one where we save individually and then a general pocket where we can give cash to any girl for a member that may need it and then they can return it when they can.*

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<sup>42</sup> Monthly report April 2018.

<sup>43</sup> Workplan tracker Quarter 9.

<sup>44</sup> Workplan tracker Quarter 10.

<sup>45</sup> ENGINE II – LSETF loan repayment status database.

<sup>46</sup> Monthly report May 2018.

<sup>47</sup> Workplan tracker Year 3.

<sup>48</sup> The workplan tracker for Quarter 11 reports that 77 cooperatives had been registered so far, and the workplan tracker for Quarter 12 reports registration of a further 35 cooperatives. The breakdown by state is not reported.

## Account opening

**ENGINE II supported 2,086 girls to open formal bank accounts by the end of Year 3 (1,051 in Year 2<sup>49</sup> and 1,035 in Year 3<sup>50</sup>), compared to a target of 5,000 girls.** Challenges included long distances from banks, slow processing of forms from the banks, and girls not having all the information they needed to open a bank account<sup>51</sup>.

**In addition, for those girls who had opened bank accounts, several banks reported that bank accounts were frequently not used for savings.** Programme monitoring showed that many beneficiaries had start-up businesses that required revolving capital, and cash was therefore directly re-invested in the business. Bank charges and long distances from banks also discouraged girls from maintaining their bank accounts<sup>52</sup>. One of the LCFs interviewed confirmed this, saying:

*Some of them could not open because they did not have money to open the bank accounts. Some girls even complain that even though they have opened the account, they have no money to save in it and they are afraid the account may go dormant.*

In addition to the factors mentioned in the previous section, the lack of use of formal bank accounts amongst ENGINE II girls also contributed to ENGINE II changing its strategy around business expansion.

## NIMC registration

**ENGINE II also fell well short of its target of registering girls for national ID cards, as shown in Table 6.** In progress reports, the reason for this was reported as ongoing operational challenges with NIMC, the responsible government agency, including registration centres not being open or not being functional, particularly because there were constant electricity or network failures<sup>53</sup>.

**Table 6: Logframe targets on financial inclusion**

	Y2 target	Y2 actual	Y2 actual by state				Y3 target	Y3 actual	Y3 actual by state			
			FCT	KD	KN	LG			FCT	KD	KN	LG
<b># girls registered to access NIMC card</b>	5,000	2,548	0	1,786	25	737	8,000	3,848	228	2,097	488	1,035

Notes: (1) Year 3 target and actuals are cumulative. (2) KD = Kaduna, KN = Kano, LG = Lagos.

**In addition to operational challenges with the government agency, there was mixed awareness among LCFs about this component of the programme.** Some LCFs actively supported both direct and indirect beneficiaries to complete the NIMC registration. For example, one ISG LCF from Kano said:

*The programme supported all the learners to register with NIMC, including some non-ENGINE girls. They facilitated the registration of girls by paying a bus fee to*

<sup>49</sup> Annual report Year 2.

<sup>50</sup> Workplan tracker Year 3.

<sup>51</sup> Workplan tracker Quarter 9.

<sup>52</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 10.

<sup>53</sup> Workplan tracker Quarter 9.

*carry them to the registration centre, and they also supported them to open a bank account.*

Other LCFs were aware of the activity but reported that it was the responsibility of another LCF from their centre or community. However, some LCFs were not aware of this activity at all. For example, an LCF in Kaduna said: *'I don't know about the girls registering for NIMC or bank accounts'*. Similarly, an OSG LCF from Kano said: *'In our tenure, none of them were registered, they didn't even talk about that'*.

### 3.4.3 Vocational skills training

#### Original design and targets

ENGINE II aimed to link OSGs to VTIs through partnerships with various institutions, organisations, and individuals. The programme intended to conduct a robust market assessment with the active participation of beneficiaries and stakeholders to identify VTIs and business opportunities that girls could be integrated into. The programme then intended to approach organisations, private individuals, non-governmental organisations, and women's empowerment centres to identify training and internship opportunities for OSGs.

As per the original workplan, ENGINE II aimed to have started linking girls to these opportunities by August 2018 (Q6).<sup>54</sup> The programme aimed to link 1,500 girls to VTIs by the end of Year 2, and 2,350 girls (cumulatively) by the end of Year 3.<sup>55</sup>

#### Implementation

##### Timeline

**ENGINE II encountered a substantial 10-month delay in linking girls to VTIs in Kaduna, Kano and the FCT, with the first group of girls only starting their training courses in June 2019, compared to a planned start date of August 2018.** In Lagos, there was an eight-month delay, with the first group of girls starting their training courses in April 2019. The key reason for the delay was that the process for identifying the skills that girls were interested in learning, and the process for registering girls with VTIs, took longer than expected.

As planned, ENGINE II conducted a market assessment through focus group discussions with girls and KIIs with stakeholders<sup>56</sup>. ENGINE II then decided to administer a Matching Interest to Work (MIW) questionnaire to OSGs to identify which girls would qualify for vocational training, and what the specific skills were that they were interested in learning. Because the programme intended to link girls to VTIs based on their preferences, the programme planned to only confirm VTIs based on the findings of this assessment (Q5 WP tracker).

**However, the MIW assessment was delayed substantially.** This was firstly because learning centre sessions only started in September 2018, two months later than expected. Secondly, once sessions started, the learner needs assessment was prioritised. This meant that the MIW assessment could only be completed in March 2019, six months after learning centre sessions had started.

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<sup>54</sup> ENGINE II workplan June 2017.

<sup>55</sup> ENGINE II logframe Year 3.

<sup>56</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 3.

**While discussions with VTIs had begun prior to the completion of the MIW assessment, most agreements were only finalised after completion of the assessment. It therefore took a further three months until OSGs were finally linked to VTIs in June 2019.** In Kano and Kaduna, ENGINE II formed a partnership with MAFITA, a DFID-funded economic empowerment programme, and many of the girls in the two states were linked through this initiative.

### **Targets**

Table 7 shows the number of OSGs that ENGINE II linked to 'level 2' vocational training in Year 2 and Year 3. Due to the delay, no OSGs had been linked to VTIs by the end of Year 2. Approximately 560 girls<sup>57</sup> were linked to VTIs in June 2019, and more were linked in the following months. ENGINE II met its target for Year 3. However, 841 of these girls were only linked to a VTI in the last three months of Year 3, and would not have completed their training yet by the end of Year 3.

In addition, while 2,361 were linked to VTIs as per the logframe, ENGINE II's database as of September 2020 includes a total of 1,678 girls who actually attended the training. Several girls did not attend the training or dropped out of the training courses for various reasons despite initially being linked.

There are differences in the percentage of girls who participated in vocational training across the states. The FCT has the smallest percentage of girls who participated in training, both compared to all OSGs and compared to those who indicated interest in learning handiwork during the MIW assessment. As noted below, this is because no girls in one of the two LGAs in the FCT (Bwari) had been linked.

**Table 7: Number of OSGs provided with vocational training**

	Y2 target	Y2 actual	Y3 target	Y3 actual	Y3 actual by state			
					FCT	KD	KN	LG
# of OSGs provided with 'level 2' vocational training (logframe)	1,500	0	2,350	2,361	113	498	875	875
# of OSGs who participated in vocational training					91	293	530	764
% of OSGs who participated in training (out of all OSGs originally enrolled)					6%	16%	16%	13%
% of OSGs who participated in training (out of OSGs who indicated interest in learning handiwork in MIW assessment)					18%	Not available	129%	64%

<sup>57</sup> 467 girls linked to MAFITA across Kano and Kaduna, and 93 girls linked in the FCT.

By September 2020, 1,102 out of the 1,678 (66%) of girls had completed their training, while for the remaining girls, the training was still ongoing, and in some cases had been disrupted by COVID-19. All girls in the FCT and Kano had completed their training, compared to only 5 out of 293 (2%) girls in Kaduna and 476 out of 764 (62%) of girls in Lagos. **Implementation process**

Findings from the interviews indicated that the SIPs and LCFs were actively involved in sourcing vocational training centres for girls who were interested in learning a skill from within their neighbourhood or centres that these girls had identified. *'We identified skills providers and link them up so they can get some vocational trainings and some financial management training'*, according to an SIP respondent in Kano State. This approach was adopted for both ISGs and OSGs. One ISG LCF in Kano State, when asked how vocational trainers were obtained for the beneficiaries, had this to say:

*We get from among the children, if there is any one of them that knows any hand work, she can teach the rest. We can also get from outside and connect the children with the trainers.*

In addition, an OSG LCF in Lagos gave an insight into how this played out between the girls and their respective LCFs prior to their enrolment at their choice of vocational training centres:

*The other LCF and I went around but also told the girls that are in living in that community that anytime they see some of these people the ones that are very good at that particular skill that they should tell us and we in turn visit them to enrol the girls once they accept to take them in.*

Some of the girls that had been trained by MAFITA or through other skills acquisition platforms sometimes returned to share their skills and experiences with others that did not get the opportunity. In some instances, girl ambassadors were funded with a token payment (5,000 naira) to execute some girl-based activities. They purchased raw materials that other girls could use to learn in the girls fora or life skills session. As one of the SIPs said: *'this was one of the strategies that we used since we could not reach all the girls based on limited budget'*.

### **Identification of OSGs for linkage to VTIs and equity**

**OSGs were eligible for being linked to a VTI if they had expressed an interest in learning a vocational skill during the MIW assessment.** Overall, 47% of OSGs who were enrolled at the start of ENGINE II completed the MIW assessment, although this rate was higher in the FCT (70% in the FCT, 43% in Kaduna, 46% in Kano, 44% in Lagos)<sup>58</sup>. It is not clear why the other girls did not complete the assessment. However, at least in some cases, LCFs reported that some girls had not attended the learning centre on the days that the assessment was carried out but were in fact interested in learning a vocational skill. In addition, some of the girls who had expressed interest during the MIW assessment were reportedly not on the list of eligible girls. One of the OSG LCFs in Kaduna State described that:

*Yes, there were girls that were not linked to businesses and vocational training institute. When they came to take names, so they said some of the girls' names did not come out. So, we went to complain that some of the girls are not in it and they said they will add them to the list. Till today they haven't.*

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<sup>58</sup> MIW assessment reports for each state.

**In addition to expressing interest, each SIP set some of their own criteria to identify girls to be linked to VTIs.** These criteria usually included that the girls who are eligible to be linked should not currently already be learning a vocational skill, and should not be those that are already being supported by the programme to re-join formal education.

**All SIPs also indicated that regular attendance at the learning centres was a criterion.** While the implementation of the attendance criterion appears to have been up to the states to some extent, the Mercy Corps implementation team reported that the attendance requirement was initially 70% but this was later dropped to 50%, presumably because not enough girls were meeting the 70% requirement. Towards the end of the programme implementation period, the attendance requirement appears to have been dropped entirely.

Some SIPs explained that girls were selected in batches. Girls whose attendance rates were not high enough to qualify for the first batch could qualify for a later batch if they maintained a high attendance rate during the period before the selection. In Lagos, it was reported that girls with a disability were given some concession to participate in the vocational training activities even if they did not meet the minimum attendance requirement.

**Some respondents indicated that distance to available VTIs precluded some girls from being linked, particularly in Kaduna.** Based on the data provided, there were two LGAs where no girls had been linked to VTIs: Bwari LGA in the FCT, and Markafi LGA in Kaduna. For Markafi LGA, the SIP reported that the closest VTIs were approximately 15 km from the ENGINE II communities, and girls could not be linked as a result. While some girls in Kaura and Jaba LGA in Kaduna were linked to VTIs, most VTIs were located up to 30 km from the ENGINE II communities in another LGA. ENGINE II's design was to link girls to VTIs in their own communities. However, in practice, this seems to have resulted in girls in the most remote locations being less likely to be linked to VTIs. The Mercy Corps implementation team reported that the programme aimed to secure internships or apprenticeships for these girls. Data was not available to understand to what extent this has been possible.

**In some cases, beneficiaries had not been informed by the programme whether they would be linked to a VTI and continued to ask their LCFs about this.** One of the LCFs interviewed in Kaduna felt that girls should have been given more of an opportunity to choose a different skill if there were no opportunities to learn their chosen skill at a nearby location.

**Information about the girls who have been participating in training sessions indicates that girls across all marginalisation characteristics have been linked to VTIs, and there does not appear to be any particular group of girls who have been excluded from this opportunity based on their characteristics.** There were 1,294 girls who had been participated in training and for whom information on their marginalisation criteria was available. Out of these girls, ENGINE II successfully linked 12 girls with disabilities to VTIs. This means that, out of the girls who were participating in training, 0.9% had a disability. The rate of girls with disabilities amongst the full set of ENGINE II beneficiaries is quite similar, with 1.3% of girls reporting to have a disability. Similarly, 3.7% of the girls who participated in training had not completed primary school, while the rate in the overall beneficiary group is 2.9%. These numbers suggest that girls who participated in training sessions were broadly representative of the overall ENGINE II beneficiary group.

### **Breaking gender stereotypes**

**ENGINE II intended to break gender stereotype on job preferences by providing opportunities for girls in male-dominated sectors. The main strategy to achieve this seemed to be to identify opportunities in these sectors for particular girls who had already expressed an interest in learning a skill in a male-dominated sector, or who**

**already had an active business in such a sector.** SIPs indicated that the primary objective was to ensure that girls were linked to a skill that they were interested in. ENGINE II also included information on breaking gender stereotypes as part of the gender training.

All SIPs were aware of ENGINE II's objective to break gender stereotypes and could provide examples of where they had encouraged girls to pursue opportunities in male-dominated sectors. Industries in which girls had been provided with training included shoemaking, refrigerator repair, AutoCAD design, wall painting, web development, graphical design, digital marketing, engineering, fishing and barbing.

**SIPs also spoke about engaging with girls' families where families were reluctant to allow the girls to pursue careers in their chosen sectors.** In some cases, this engagement was successful. For example, the father of one of the beneficiaries that was trained by MAFITA on digital skills joined a thrift group so he could save enough money to buy a laptop for his daughter. In other cases, parents did not allow girls to pursue their chosen skills despite substantial efforts by the SIPs.

**There were fewer examples of the programme proactively seeking out opportunities in male-dominated sectors.** Progress reports show that in Lagos, the SIP sought out partnerships with organisations in male-dominated sectors. In particular, in Lagos, ENGINE II partnered with the non-profit foundation CODERINA to train OSGs on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), robotics, and coding<sup>59</sup>, and with TORA Africa to train OSGs as bike riders<sup>60</sup>.

### **Challenges and adaptations with attending and completing the VTI courses**

**Some LCFs reported that there were some delays in the programme paying for the girls' training fees.** This raised concerns for the girls, their trainers, and the LCFs. Some training fees were eventually paid, but a few appear to be pending at the time of this research. One of the OSG LCFs in the FCT said:

*One of the challenges is that they have not paid for their vocational learning. The people are disturbing them, there is one person that is learning [skill removed], the person that is taking them told them to stop coming if she did not pay her. It makes them afraid when they are going that they would be sent back home for not paying. Again, the ones that were learning [skill removed], the woman already stopped them. They are not learning again because she said she needs her money.*

**Some of the girls and LCFs added that some girls almost dropped out of training because they had no transport fare.** Some SIPs and LCFs paid for them out of their own pocket, while a few girls reported carrying one another on their laps so they would pay for just one seat on the bus. One OSG LCF in Kaduna described how she and another LCF from the community took the girls to the centre every day, while another OSG LCF in Kaduna said:

*Some of the children like going to the vocational training centre but they always complain of transport fare, so sometimes if we have money, we help them out with the transport.*

**In some cases, LCFs engaged in community sensitisation activities to gather support for the girls to attend the vocational training centres, including overcoming transport problems.** In Kano State, for instance, as a result of community engagement and

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<sup>59</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 10.

<sup>60</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 12.

sensitisation activities, some parents got their children bicycles so they could travel to and from their learning centres easily. In Kaduna, an OSG LCF explained:

*Sometimes the parents do not give the girls permission to go to the vocational training centre, so we go to their houses to talk to the parents to sensitise them to allow their children go to the vocational training centre.*

ENGINE II had no provision for transport fares because girls were intended to be linked to VTIs in their communities. In practice, opportunities were not always available within the communities or within a short commuting distance, and some girls therefore incurred transportation costs if they wanted to take up the opportunity of learning a vocational skill. This meant that the burden to meet these costs fell to the girls and their LCFs.

**At the beginning of the training, the timing of the MAFITA vocational training sessions conflicted with that of the weekly ENGINE II learning centre sessions.** The implementation team investigated this and the issue was resolved with MAFITA, through a centre-/community-specific approach. Girls were able to plan their time and ensure they could attend the learning sessions and also participate fully in their training activities without any negative impact on either.

The SIP in Kaduna also reported that there was a perception in some communities that girls who had previously participated in MAFITA had subsequently divorced their husbands. Some girls chose not to participate in the MAFITA vocational training sessions because of this perception.

### 3.4.4 Business and employment support

#### Original design and targets

Under ENGINE I, girls were integrated into value chains and businesses of their choice. For ENGINE II, the programme aimed to continue to support girls in their businesses while seeking additional value chains within communities where marginalised girls could generate income safely. This was intended to happen both locally through apprenticeships and at higher levels through large private sector organisations.

ENGINE II also aimed to provide business expansion or diversification grants to girls who already had existing businesses.

#### Implementation

##### **Integration in value chains and other income-generating opportunities**

Very limited information is reported on this component of the programme. Early in the programme, ENGINE II formed a partnership with Twinning in the FCT. Twinning distributed more than 1,500 Ovaltine tea products to 315 girls from 29 communities to support them with business diversification and expansion<sup>61</sup> (Q2 quarterly report).

##### **Business expansion grants and adaptation of programme strategy**

As described above, the programme realised that there was limited interest among girls to access loans, and limited opportunities to provide these loans at favourable conditions. **As a result, ENGINE II expanded the group of girls who were eligible to access equipment or a business expansion / diversification grant.** The aim was to support three categories

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<sup>61</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 2.



of beneficiaries to become economically stable and financially secure. These included girls that had an existing business and required additional resources to stabilise their operations and possibly forge ahead in their educational endeavours; girls that were part of a cooperative that ran a business; and girls who had completed a vocational training course and required equipment to start a business<sup>62</sup>.

The programme carried out a business assessment for beneficiaries who fell into one of these three categories. This was aimed at identifying the specific type of support that each girl would benefit from, and what this support would be used for.

At the time of the research, ENGINE II shared with us details of 477 girls who had qualified for a business expansion grant. This included girls who had requested this support individually (380 girls) and girls who requested support as a cooperative (114 girls). Of these 477 girls, 93 had also been linked to a VTI. The distribution of business expansion / diversification grants was ongoing and this therefore likely does not represent the final number of girls who will receive a grant at the end of programme implementation.

### **3.5 Output 3: Enhanced life skills training opportunities for marginalised ENGINE girls in target areas**

Output 3 focuses on the provision of life skills training opportunities for marginalised girls to support girls to make healthy and safe life choices, communicate effectively, and build self-esteem and confidence.

Section 3.5.1 describes the delivery of life skills sessions at the learning centres. Section 3.5.2 describes the implementation of the peer mentoring component through which life skills content as well as other relevant content is shared with girls who are not direct ENGINE II beneficiaries.

#### **3.5.1 Learning centre sessions on life skills for ISGs and OSGs**

##### **Design**

According to the design, LCFs were to deliver life skills sessions to ISGs and OSGs at the learning centres using the ENGINE II life skills manual. Although the content of the manual was the same for ISGs and OSGs, the LCFs were trained to be able to adapt the sessions to the context of the girls they were supporting.

##### **Implementation**

###### **Development of the life skills manual**

**ENGINE II developed a life skills manual, drawing on inputs from, and a review of, a variety of stakeholders.** Initially, ENGINE II received pushback on including topics on sexual and reproductive health, and menstrual hygiene management, from Kano State, but during a meeting where ENGINE II presented its strategy it was agreed that this could be included under the names 'health and hygiene' and 'psychosocial'<sup>63</sup>.

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<sup>62</sup> Standard operating procedure for the distribution of business expansion items.

<sup>63</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 3.

**The life skills manual was distributed to learning centres with a six-month delay**, in February 2019 instead of August 2018<sup>64</sup>. The initial reason for the delay was that ENGINE II received additional feedback on the manual, but it is not clear why the distribution was delayed for so long. Learning centres adopted the AME life skills manual to bridge the delay<sup>65</sup>.

By the end of Year 3 of the programme, the Kano state government had adopted the ENGINE II life skills manual, including the CVAP component, for use in all government schools. Discussions were also underway to formally incorporate life skills sessions in the school timetable. In the FCT and in Kaduna, discussions were also underway for the state governments to adopt the ENGINE II life skills manual.<sup>66</sup>

### **Delivery of the life skills sessions**

LCFs were trained on the delivery of the life skills sessions during the main LCF trainings that have been described under Output 1. Life skills sessions appeared to be held regularly but, like the other subjects, it was not possible to verify whether sessions were held for the expected number of hours. The challenges around the delivery of the life skills sessions were the same as those that have been reported under Output 1 for learning centre sessions generally.

### **Collaboration on the life skills component in the FCT**

In the FCT, ENGINE II entered into an agreement with Proctor & Gamble to deliver the Always Keeping Girls in School (AKGIS) programme in the 29 schools that have ISG learning centres. The AKGIS programme focuses on menstrual hygiene management and therefore complemented the ENGINE II programme. The collaboration included distribution of sanitary pads and the delivery of additional trainings on menstrual hygiene management.

## **3.5.2 Peer mentoring of non-direct beneficiaries through girl fora**

### **Design**

As per the programme design, **girl ambassadors** were selected by ENGINE II as peer mentors, based on the following selection criteria:

- girls who have good leadership skills;
- good learning centre attendance (at least 75% attendance);
- girls who are articulate; and
- girls who have good communication skills.

Girl ambassadors were meant to receive training from ENGINE II **once every quarter** on CVAP, gender, leadership, and life skills.

**According to the programme design, girl ambassadors were to lead girl fora meetings and provide peer-to-peer mentoring on life skills during these meetings.** Girl fora were to consist of girls who were not direct ENGINE II beneficiaries but who were interested in learning about gender, CVAP, and life skills. The fora were established during ENGINE I. Girl fora were expected to meet **once a month**.

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<sup>64</sup> Annual report Year 2.

<sup>65</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 8.

<sup>66</sup> Annual report Year 3.

## Implementation

### **Selection of girl ambassadors**

The SIPs agreed that girl ambassadors were selected based on the criteria above, although respondents mentioned regular attendance as a criterion, rather than 75% attendance specifically. Most girl ambassadors mentioned some of the criteria above but were not always aware of all of them. A girl ambassador in Lagos State said: *'I was selected because I regularly attend all sessions, and my LCF sees me as capable'*. Another girl ambassador in FCT said she believed she was selected because of her *'boldness and outspoken nature during the training and secondly I am always early for meetings'*. Several girl ambassadors felt that they were selected because they would regularly encourage their peers to attend sessions and would follow up when some girls did not attend.

Several girl ambassadors mentioned that their learning centre had both a girl ambassador and an assistant girl ambassador.

### **Training of girl ambassadors**

The first training for girl ambassadors was delivered between October and December 2019 to approximately 375 girl ambassadors<sup>67</sup>. Progress reports do not indicate how frequently girl ambassadors were trained so it is not possible to establish whether girl ambassadors were trained every quarter.

Girl ambassadors interviewed reported having attended training from ENGINE II, with the number of trainings attended ranging between one and five for most girl ambassadors. The two girl ambassadors interviewed in Kaduna reported that they attended a training every month. A few girl ambassadors had not attended all the trainings that were held because there were two ambassadors at their centre (one lead ambassador and one assistant ambassador), and only one ambassador per centre was invited for the training.

Girl ambassadors reported being trained on a variety of topics, including how to carry out their roles, leadership, CVAP, gender issues, and menstrual hygiene management.

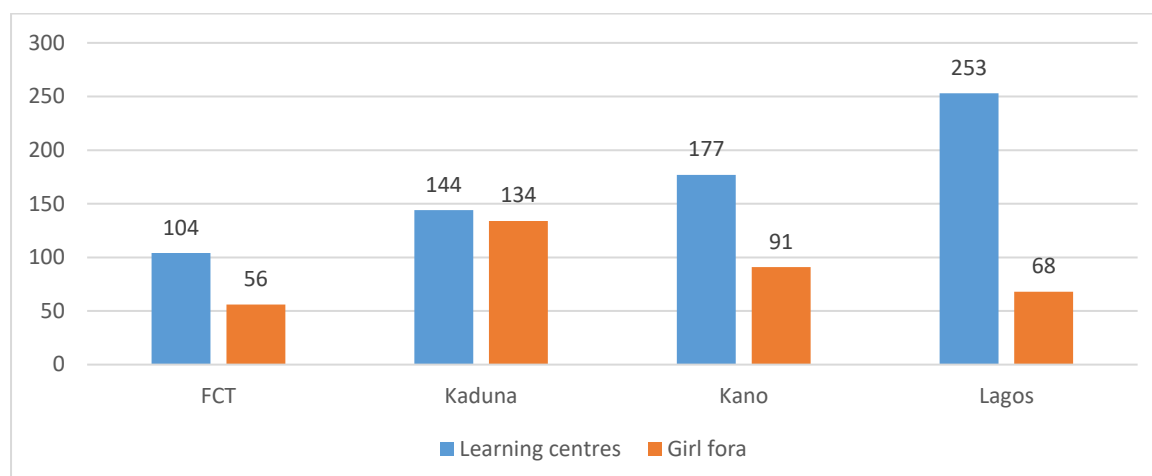
### **Distribution of girl fora**

Girl ambassadors were responsible for mentoring their peers through the girl fora structure. At the end of Year 2 of the programme, 349 girl fora had been established, but were unequally distributed across the states (Figure 4). In particular, in Kaduna, almost all learning centres had associated girl fora, while very few girl fora had been established in Lagos compared to the number of learning centres in the state. By the end of Year 3, the number of girl ambassadors had increased to 534, but the breakdown across the states was not reported<sup>68</sup>.

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<sup>67</sup> Workplan tracker Quarter 7.

<sup>68</sup> Annual report Year 3.

**Figure 4: Number of girl fora compared to number of learning centres at the end of Year 2**

### **Implementation of girl fora**

Girl ambassadors reported that the girl fora that they were responsible for had a membership of between four and 50. The two girl ambassadors in Kano both reported working with larger groups of girls (40 and 50) than the girl ambassadors from the other states.

#### **All girl ambassadors reported that they held girl fora meetings at least once a month.**

Several girl ambassadors reported holding meetings twice a month, and a few ISG girl ambassadors reported meeting weekly. Girls attendance at the girl fora meetings was reported to vary.

Girl fora mostly met at someone's house or in a public place, like a chief's palace or house of a community leader. Some ISGs girl fora met at school. Some girl ambassadors reported that their meeting venues were not conducive because they were noisy, or because other distracting activities would be held at the same time. While meeting places were close to the girl ambassadors, girl ambassadors reported that some of the girl fora members lived far from the meeting venue, which affected their attendance.

Girl ambassadors reported covering a variety of topics during the girl fora meetings, including topics that they were taught at the learning centres. Girl ambassadors reported that financial education and savings, and child protection issues, were popular topics among girl fora members. A girl ambassador in Kaduna reported:

*They find the financial literacy session more useful and interesting because they learn how they can manage, save, and manoeuvre their money so they can get more money and manage their family. And they were also encouraged to start a contribution scheme among themselves and have been able to save a lot of money by doing that.*

Another girl ambassador in Lagos State said those in her girl fora 'were more interested in protection against sexual abuse and [other forms of] abuse' as they seemed to talk about this most of the time. This observation was also shared by another girl ambassador in Kaduna State. A few girl ambassadors had learnt a vocational skill that they could teach during the girl fora meeting. Alternatively, girls taught each other certain skills that they possessed.

## 3.6 Output 4: Improved gatekeeper commitment towards girls' education and empowerment in target areas

Output 4 contributed to creating an enabling environment for girls by engaging with actors at the school- and community-level to gain support for girls' education and empowerment, and remove barriers. This is assumed to contribute to participation of girls in learning centres and economic empowerment activities.

In Section 3.6.1, we describe the engagement of gender champions. In Section 3.6.2, we describe how the programme engaged with SBMCs and community leaders. Finally, in Section 3.6.3, we describe the programme's community sensitisation activities targeted at a household level.

### 3.6.1 Engagement of gender champions

#### Design and implementation

The engagement of gender champions was not part of the original programme design. During the first quarter of the inception phase, a 'SHEro' campaign was added to the programme design. The campaign was intended as a behaviour change initiative to raise awareness about the barriers that marginalised girls and young women face in Nigeria, and to garner support among multi-sectoral stakeholders to address these gender inequality issues<sup>69</sup>.

This was initially defined as a broad campaign, and included activities such as the production of videos, and advocacy events led by girls to raise awareness of the importance of sexual and reproductive health<sup>70</sup>. As part of this campaign, SHEro advocates were identified.

During the course of implementation, Mercy Corps identified that having volunteers in communities who were passionate about and willing to advocate for girls' education and welfare on a daily basis was a more effective strategy for changing attitudes at the community level around girls' education and child protection<sup>71</sup>. As a result, the strategy shifted towards maintaining a database of gender champions across all ENGINE II communities. By the end of Year 3, 698 gender champions had been identified and trained by the programme.

Selection of gender champions targeted opinion leaders and influential persons. In some cases, community members themselves nominated persons they felt were suitable for the role. Some champions also emerged during community sensitisation activities. For the ISGs, gender champions comprised PTA members, principals, LCFs and non-ENGINE II teachers who commanded respect and authority among the student body.

Gender champions viewed their role as advocating for girls' education and raising awareness about the barriers to girls' education. Gender champions also explained that, as they were aware of the CVAP referral protocol, they were able to inform other community members about the channels through which child protection cases could be reported. One gender champion from Lagos described his responsibilities as a gender champion as follows:

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<sup>69</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 1.

<sup>70</sup> Annual report Year 2.

<sup>71</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 10.

*My responsibility as a gender champion includes improving the welfare of the community members, irrespective of their gender, protecting the less privileged and the handicapped, and making sure that both male and female children are given equal opportunity. Being a religious leader, I gather people and talk to them. I also admonish parents on their responsibilities to provide equal privileges to their male and female children.*

Similarly, another gender champion from the FCT talked about sensitising parents and other community members:

*“In my role as gender champion, I speak to community members about gender role, like the danger of allowing girls to be busy, doing too much chores while allowing the boys to be roaming about, doing it. I tell them how this is not helpful. I encourage them to also engage the boys in the chores that girls also do.” Gender champion, FCT.*

SIPs reported that gender champions worked in partnership with girl ambassadors, SBMCs, and other community leaders (SIP interview). For example, this gender champion from Kano spoke about how she worked together with NYSC members to raise awareness about barriers to girls’ education.

*“One activity that I conduct is to work together with the NYSC members working at the school to organise and present dramas and playlets on some pertinent issues like early marriages because most of the girls are involved in such so that we can discourage this. I also serve as role model to the girls”*

### **3.6.2 Engagement of SBMCs and community leaders**

#### **Design**

ENGINE II intended to conduct a functionality assessment of all SBMCs and to deliver training on gender and child protection issues to SBMCs. Specifically, for Year 3 the goal was to support about 50 SBMC/PTA members and other stakeholders to develop gender-friendly School Action Plans (SAP) and to improve enrolment and attendance rates by mitigating barriers to girls’ learning and transition.

#### **Implementation**

SBMCs were included in general community sensitisation activities conducted by ENGINE II. However, formal engagement of SBMCs appeared to start only fairly late in programme implementation. At the end of Year 2 (March 2019), ENGINE II had completed functionality assessments in Kaduna and Kano, while they were only completed in Year 3 in the FCT<sup>72</sup>. Meetings to discuss the findings from the functionality assessment were only held between October and December 2019, and only in Kaduna and Kano. ENGINE II reports that, based on these meetings, 54 SBMCs in Kaduna and Kano developed SAPs<sup>73</sup>.

SBMC/PTAs under the ENGINE II programme have been influential in the achievement of key programme objectives, such as the provision of a safe and enabling environment for learning, effective handling of child and vulnerable adult abuse incidents via their support of the drafting of the school code of conduct and charter document, promoting attendance at

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<sup>72</sup> Workplan tracker Quarter 8.

<sup>73</sup> Workplan tracker Quarter 11.

the schools and learning centres, as well as acting as a key link between the centres and the community leaders<sup>74</sup>.

The majority of the SBMC members interviewed indicated that at least one member of their committee had attended ENGINE II training at least once throughout the programme implementation phase. Training was said to last between two and three days. The focus of the training was on child protection issues and support to establish a gender-friendly learning environment. Only one SBMC chairman from Kaduna, who did not understand the English language, complained of attending a training that was delivered in English which he was not conversant in. Training content was later interpreted for him.

All SBMC members across the states also disclosed that they had cascaded the ENGINE II training received to other members of their committee. In Lagos and Kano, SBMC members reported that other community members outside of the committee were also invited when the training was cascaded. The challenge related to some of this cascaded training was the additional cost incurred to rent a hall for meetings, and refreshment for attendees.

SBMCs/PTAs members in some states reported that they already had an SAP before ENGINE II. However, their collaboration with ENGINE II through the training attended taught them how to set practical and relevant objectives. These procedures helped to increase their sphere of influence in the school and communities, as more relevant programmes have been embarked upon. As put by one SBMC chairman in Kaduna State:

*We had SAP even before ENGINE II, the school was built by the community over 10 years ago. For example, on our own, we wrote down that we were going to increase the number of classrooms in the school and to solicit funds from politicians to actualise our plan about seven years ago. So, this is not new to us. However, the coming of ENGINE II opened our eyes on how to focus on issues that are not obvious but very important. After the training delivered by ENGINE II, we updated the SAP to include programmes that create a girl-friendly environment, e.g. separate toilets for girls and boys.*

Another SBMC member in Kano mentioned the renovation of toilets, the connection of water to the toilets to keep them clean, and the provision of dust bins in the toilets for the disposal of sanitary towels as some of the programmes they had completed as a result of engagement with ENGINE II. He also mentioned that the SBMC supplied two cartons of sanitary towels to girls.

At the November 2019 quarterly meeting it was reported that SBMC members in some schools in Kaduna were successful in constructing additional seats for girls at the learning centres, paying the salaries of part-time teachers, recruiting more volunteer teachers, and paying fees for girls to take transitional exams (JAMB) through contributions made. In Kano State, one of the achievements reported in a similar meeting was the contribution of funds to support orphans and marginalised girls with school costs, such as transportation, medical supplies, and purchase of uniforms.

However, one SBMC member in the FCT was unable to confirm the development of the SAP for his school. However, he did report that some of the plans of the committee had been halted by COVID-19. Another Community Action Committee (CAC) member in Lagos said that there was no community action plan, and no activity to create a girl-friendly environment in the community had been undertaken.

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<sup>74</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 8.

### 3.6.3 Community sensitisation activities

#### Design

ENGINE II intended to establish stakeholders' engagement and to strengthen the existing environment to make it more supportive, by conducting intensified advocacy and sensitisation visits to the relevant gatekeepers and stakeholders that influence decisions, in order to produce the enabling environment required for ENGINE II beneficiaries to thrive.

#### Implementation

In Year 2 and Year 3, several community sensitisation and mobilisation activities took place to address barriers such as low attendance, early pregnancy, preventing and responding to abuse cases etc. Partnerships were established and maintained with various stakeholders, such as CACs, SBMCs, parents, husbands, community leaders, and mothers in law. Information materials were also developed and shared with state teams to provide content for sensitisation activities.

The design evolved to a more direct house-to-house approach. ENGINE II through its LCFs reached out to individual who had direct decision-making responsibilities to influence beneficiaries' actions. Using a house-to-house approach, ENGINE II integrated messages to cover a broad range of topics, including CVAP, the importance of education, and community safety<sup>75</sup>. The Mercy Corps implementation team reported that after Year 2 of the programme, ENGINE II also introduced a particular focus around engaging men in the communities as advocates for girls' education.

Overall, in Year 3, 64 sensitisation exercises were conducted in Kaduna State, 18 in Kano, 35 in Lagos, and only 11 in FCT. As per the indicators, all targets set for the year were achieved.

### 3.7 Output 5: Expanded protection policies and practices benefitting adolescent girls and young women in target areas and nationally

Output 5 focuses on creating an enabling environment for girls' education and their welfare at a government and system level. This includes a general focus on systems strengthening that is implemented across outputs, for example, through the close collaboration with government partners in the selection of learning centre venues, recruitment of LCFs, and recruitment of master trainers as described in Output 1. Another example are the partnerships formed with different agencies to support the registration of cooperatives under Output 2.

For the remainder of this section, we focus on a component that has not been covered under the other outputs. This related to the support that Mercy Corps provided to governments, schools and communities to promote the implementation of policies related to child protection. Section 3.7.1 reports on the development and adoption of the CVAP referral protocol. Section 3.7.2 reports on the development and adoption of school code of conducts that set behavioural standard for teachers and students to adhere to. Finally, Section 3.7.3 reports on the adoption of the life skills manual including the CVAP content at the state level. These activities are implemented within a broader framework of mainstreaming child protection issues. ENGINE II included training on CVAP issues across all its programme

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<sup>75</sup> Annual report Year 2.



activities, and intended to raise awareness amongst a wide range of stakeholders across different levels. It should also be noted that this section of the report links particularly closely to Chapter 8 since there is a particularly close link between the activities initiated by ENGINE II and the subsequent uptake and implementation by governments, schools and communities.

### 3.7.1 Development and adoption of the CVAP referral protocol

#### **Child protection mapping**

The programme conducted a desk review of existing policies and realised that all the policies that account for ENGINE II implementation are in place but there were gaps in implementation. The relevant policies that were identified were: the National Education Policy, the National Gender Policy, the National Adolescent Health Policy, and the Childs Right Act.

Between July and December 2017 (Q2 and Q3), ENGINE II began conducting a child protection mapping exercise to identify existing child protection structures, and to assess the strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in the structures<sup>76</sup>. The child protection mapping exercise revealed that there was no effective referral and reporting system in any of the states, and that cases were often not documented, and were handled informally. Qualitative research with girls during the mapping exercise also showed that girls were not aware of their rights, and that there was a lot of stigma around child protection<sup>77</sup>. There was also no common understanding of how cases of abuse should be handled.

#### **Adoption of CVAP referral protocol**

Because of differences in how CVAP cases were treated, and ambiguities around the responsibilities of different agencies, ENGINE II advocated for the adoption of a common CVAP referral protocol that would present a clear response and reporting system when child abuse occurs.

**Between April and June 2018 (Q5), ENGINE II led a series of meetings in each state, with a broad range of stakeholders, to discuss the development of a referral protocol.** This presented an important step because, as Mercy Corps described, *'For the first time, the states were having a meeting with all the stakeholders sitting in one place discussing the referral system'*. SIPs agreed that these meetings involved a broad range of stakeholders. Based on these meetings, ENGINE II developed a referral protocol document that was submitted to each state for approval. According to Mercy Corps, the protocol mapped out the linkages between different organisations involved in resolving child abuse cases, including health services for sexual assault, psychosocial support services, the police, the judiciary, community-based justice organisations, and government agencies.

**By the end of programme implementation, the CVAP referral protocol had been adopted across all four states, although at different times.** Kaduna and Kano state governments adopted the protocol in September 2018. This resulted in the appointment of a CVAP focal person within the MoEs in both states. MoEs also set up dedicated phone numbers through which community members can report any concerns, and awareness of these numbers was raised on local radio stations.

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<sup>76</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 2.

<sup>77</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 2.

Lagos State government had adopted the referral protocol by March 2019<sup>78</sup>, while in the FCT the protocol was only adopted in June 2020 because the education bodies' review process for the protocol took a long time.

Once the protocols had been approved, ENGINE II supported the printing and distribution of the referral protocol document to schools and communities.

### **Training on CVAP**

**Between April and June 2018 (Q5), ENGINE II also held its first large-scale training on CVAP and referral mechanisms.** After implementing partners in each state were trained on CVAP, they stepped this training down to government, school, and community representatives in each state. Following this, CVAP training was incorporated into any training that the programme delivered to ensure that as many government officials, partner organisations, beneficiaries, and community members were sensitised on CVAP<sup>79</sup>.

### **3.7.2 Adoption or updating of a school code of conduct or a school charter**

ENGINE II also worked with the state governments to ensure a code of conduct was adopted in schools and education centres. The code of conduct aims to set guidelines for the behavioural standards of students and teachers. It includes zero-tolerance policies towards harassment, bullying, and corporal punishment.

**Again, this code of conduct was approved by all state governments for use in all schools by the end of programme implementation, although at different times. In addition, a code of conduct for non-formal learning centres was approved by NMEC at the federal level for national use.** In Lagos, because ENGINE II only works with OSGs, the approval of the code of conduct was limited to non-formal education centres. In the other three states, the code of conduct was approved for use in all schools and non-formal education centres in the state.

### **3.7.3 Adoption of life skills and CVAP manual**

**By the end of Year 3 (March 2020), ENGINE II reported that 50 schools had updated their school policies to include the CVAP content** (all 35 schools in Kano and 15 schools in Kaduna). ENGINE II achieved its target for Year 3, which was set at 50 schools<sup>80</sup> (Y3 AR).

**In Kano and Kaduna, the training manual for guidance and counselling teachers was revised to include ENGINE II life skills and CVAP content**, and this manual will be used to train all guidance and counselling teachers across all schools in the state going forward. Schools in the FCT will also use the CVAP manual.

## **3.8 Conclusion**

We focus our summary on the implementation of Output 1 (activities aimed at improving learning outcomes) and Output 2 (activities aimed at improving access to economic opportunities). These outputs are tied most closely to ENGINE II's final outcomes, learning,

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<sup>78</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 8.

<sup>79</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 5.

<sup>80</sup> Annual report Year 3.

and transition. They are most closely linked to the engagement of ENGINE II's direct beneficiaries, and the most time- and resource-intensive activities fall into these two outputs.

**Output 1 was largely implemented as expected.** ENGINE II established ISG and OSG learning centres and recruited LCFs to facilitate sessions at these centres through a rigorous process. Learning centre sessions started with a two-month delay but this was made up for by a no-cost extension that allowed the learning centre sessions to run for the expected duration. Information on LCFs' attendance at trainings and mentoring sessions, and on the number of hours of learning centre sessions delivered, was not consistently available. While it was reported that learning centre sessions, LCF trainings, and LCF mentoring sessions were delivered regularly, it was not possible to establish whether the expected frequency was delivered, and whether they reached the expected numbers of LCFs.

A key adaptation of the programme was that it adapted its approach to the mentoring of LCFs in response to the slow adoption of the LCTM, and low subject matter competency amongst LCFs. The approach evolved over multiple iterations. The final model included monthly cluster-level mentoring sessions, where small groups of LCFs came together to discuss challenging topics and to learn from each other. These sessions were led by super LCFs who were identified part way through the programme as LCFs who had adopted the LCTM well. In addition, there were quarterly LGA-level meetings with larger groups of LCFs where subject matter experts would deliver sessions on topics that are complicated to teach, to build LCFs' subject matter knowledge. Perceptions from stakeholders suggest that this was a positive adaptation that addressed the challenges that had been observed with the original model and led to an improved use of the LCTM by LCFs.

**Master trainer supervision visits were conducted at a lower frequency than expected.**

Master trainers were not able to visit all learning centres allocated to them each month because of difficulties in combining these visits with other job responsibilities, and because of the long distances to some of the centres. The programme adapted to this by enlisting head teachers to conduct supervision visits. This was an effective strategy where learning centres were located close to or at the schools because it removed both the barriers mentioned. An additional benefit was that head teachers became more engaged in and supportive of the programme generally.

**Output 2 experienced substantial delays, and challenges with the programme design that required substantial revisions in the programme's strategy.** The linking of girls to VTIs was delayed by 10 months, and many girls had not yet completed their training by the end of Year 3. There were also some implementation challenges, with some training providers reportedly not yet having been paid by the programme, and some girls being left out from this component because no training providers were available in the immediate vicinity that offered the skill they were interested in learning.

**In addition, there were challenges with the programme's strategy of providing girls with access to loans and formal savings through bank accounts.** There were few opportunities available for girls to access loans with conditions that were realistic for them to meet, i.e. low single-digit interest rates and a low initial deposit. In addition, most girls were not interested in taking out loans because they re-invested any earnings directly in their businesses. In addition, many girls did not have the required funds to maintain minimum account balances for bank accounts, and banks were often far away, which prevented them from using formal bank accounts as a savings mechanism. As a result of this challenge, the programme adapted its approach in two ways. Firstly, it focused more strongly on supporting girls' access to informal savings groups in their communities, an approach that had worked well during ENGINE I but that the programme had been hoping to expand on by providing access to loans.

Secondly, ENGINE II substantially changed its strategy around business expansion, and decided to provide girls with business expansion grants or with equipment to expand their businesses. Eligible businesses were identified through a business assessment and it was required that there be a clear objective for how the grant or equipment would be used. This strategy was developed relatively late in implementation and the first business grants had just been disbursed when COVID-19 disrupted the programme. Evidence on the delivery and uptake of this strategy is therefore not yet available.

**Output 3, Output 4, and Output 5 were largely delivered as expected, although the reach and duration of some of the activities could not be established from the available data.** ENGINE II was particularly successful in developing a CVAP protocol. This was done based on an identified need during programme implementation and has since been adopted for implementation by all states.

## 4 Attendance

This chapter presents our findings on girls' attendance at the learning centre sessions. Regular attendance at the learning centres is an intermediate outcome of the programme and was considered a prerequisite for achieving some of the programme's final outcomes: improvements in learning outcomes and life skills. Girls were expected to benefit most from the learning centre sessions if they attended them regularly.

Section 4.1 reports on attendance rates at the learning centres based on the monitoring data collected by the programme. The findings show that attendance rates were consistently low throughout the programme's duration for both ISGs and OSGs. In addition, a large percentage of girls who are enrolled as ENGINE II beneficiaries were never recorded as having attended a learning centre session. In Section 4.2, we discuss the barriers to attendance. Amongst OSGs, the main reasons for poor attendance were feeling that the expectations regarding the programme were not met, and a lack of time and interest because of the need to provide financially for themselves and their families. Amongst ISGs, inconvenient timing of the sessions was the main reason for non-attendance. In Section 4.3, we discuss factors that contributed to improved attendance at the learning centre sessions. We discuss explicit mitigation strategies adopted by ENGINE II, as well as individual approaches initiated by some LCFs themselves.

Based on the information available, it is difficult to distinguish between irregular or low attendance and complete attrition from the programme. Attendance rates are calculated compared to the number of beneficiaries that were originally enrolled in the learning centre, and therefore capture both attrition and low attendance. There is also not always a clear distinction between the two. For example, a girl who falls pregnant and gives birth may miss the learning centre sessions for several months but may eventually start attending again. This chapter therefore deals both with attrition and low attendance without always being able to distinguish between the two.

### 4.1 Attendance at the learning centres

In this section, we look at average attendance rates at the learning centre sessions. We also examine data from a beneficiary tracking exercise conducted towards the end of the third year of the programme. Taking the two pieces of information together, we conclude that ENGINE II faced challenges both with irregular attendance and with girls dropping out of the programme completely.

#### 4.1.1 Average attendance rates amongst ISGs and OSGs

**Regular attendance monitoring shows that attendance rates at learning centres were consistently low. This continued to be a challenge throughout the duration of the programme, especially for OSGs.**

The graphs below show the average attendance rate at ISG and OSG learning centres across the four states over the duration of the programme. The graphs are based on monitoring data from the LCFs, who are meant to report on attendance at each learning centre session that they teach using the electronic CommCare platform. It is important to note that ENGINE II reported that the adoption of this attendance reporting tool was slow. As a result, the graphs show attendance rates from April 2019 onwards, from when the MEL team reported that most LCFs were using the tool consistently. However, even after this point, progress reports indicate that there was still some inconsistency in LCFs' use of the

tool. Challenges with using the tool were related to network issues, lack of electricity to charge devices, and LCFs struggling to use the technology.<sup>81</sup> As a result of these challenges, manual attendance registers were also made available at the learning centres but consolidated information from the manual attendance registers was not available for this analysis.

The figures below show average attendance rates in Year 3 of the programme, between April 2019 and March 2020. Attendance for the first seven months of the learning centre sessions is not reported because consistent attendance data for this period was not available.<sup>82</sup>

Figure 5 shows that learning centre attendance in ISG learning centres was highest in Kano, and showed some improvements from September 2019 onwards, from when over 70% of ISGs attended the learning centre sessions on average. In the FCT, approximately 60% of ISGs attended learning centre sessions. Finally, ISG attendance was lowest in Kaduna, where the average attendance rate was only between 40% and 50%.

**Figure 5: Average attendance rate at ISG learning centres**

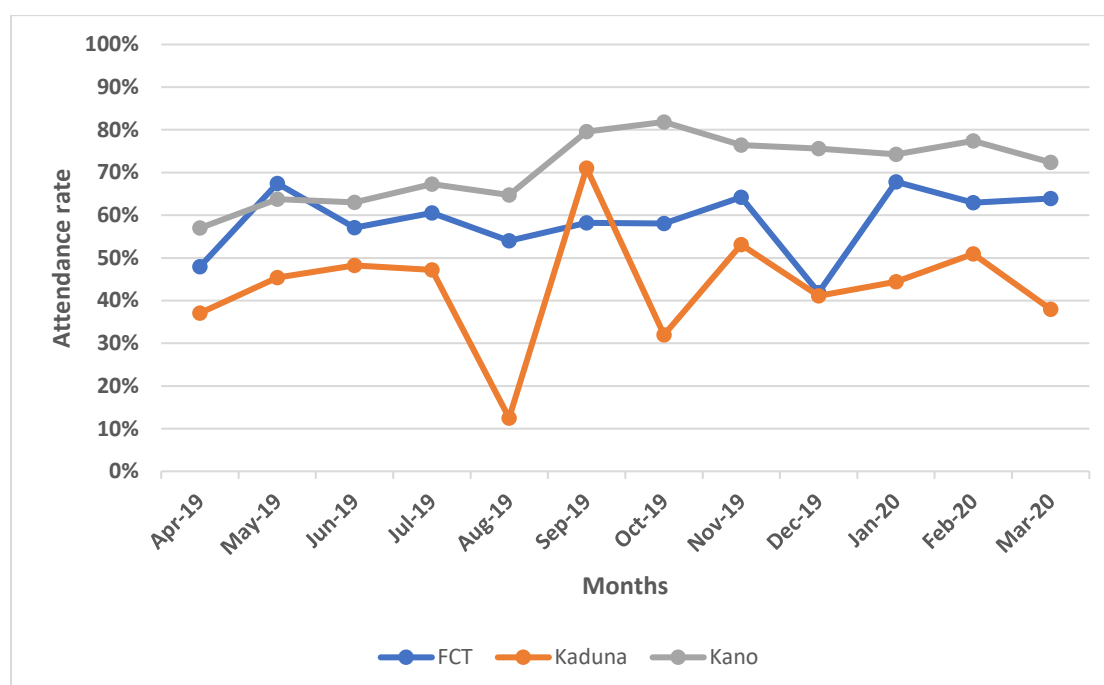
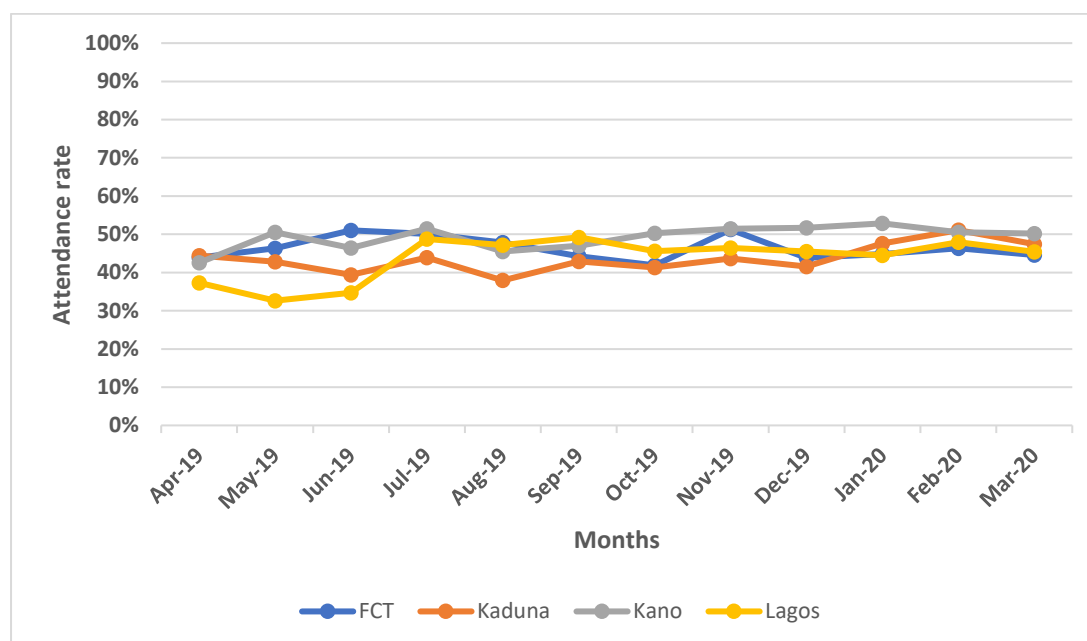


Figure 6 shows the average attendance rate in OSG learning centres. Across all states, the attendance rate was very low, at between 40% and 50%, and showed no improvements over time. The exception is that there was some improvement in Lagos between May and July 2019, when the attendance rate changed from approximately 30% to 50%.

<sup>81</sup> The challenges with tracking attendance through the CommCare application and the implications for the analysis of the data are described in detail in Annex B.

<sup>82</sup> Data collected for the midline evaluation reports on attendance rates during the last five learning centre sessions in June 2019, when the data were collected, so this also does not provide information on attendance before April 2019.

**Figure 6: Average attendance rate at the OSG learning centres**

Programme progress reports identified challenges with attendance since the start of the learning centre sessions in September 2018 but the programme also introduced mitigation strategies. For example in the report for the period from October to December 2018, the programme noted that the farming season posed challenges to attendance, and some learning centres adjusted their schedules as a result. The programme also noted that girls were motivated particularly by economic opportunities and increased their sensitisation efforts as a result<sup>83</sup>. The SIPs also noted that attendance at the learning centres had been challenging throughout the programme duration.

For both ISGs and OSGs, there were no consistent differences in attendance rates across the different subjects taught at the learning centres.

#### 4.1.2 Low attendance and attrition

**It is important to note that attendance rates are calculated against the original number of beneficiaries enrolled in each learning centre. Low attendance rates therefore present a combination of girls who have dropped out of the programme completely and those who attend learning centre sessions irregularly.** The data also include ISGs who have completed secondary school. As mentioned in Section 3.2, these girls were not necessarily expected to attend learning centre sessions.

The attendance monitoring data were not considered to be reliable enough to analyse girls' attendance rates at an individual level (see Annex B). In the absence of this data, we looked at three other pieces of information. Firstly, we looked at the number of girls who had not attended a learning centre session at all between April 2019 and March 2020.

**This shows that 3,193 (56%) of the 5,600 enrolled ISGs were never recorded as having attended any learning centre session between April 2019 and March 2020. Amongst OSGs, 3,074 (25%) were never recorded as having attended a learning centre session between April 2019 and March 2020.**

<sup>83</sup> Quarterly report Quarter 7.

Most of the ISGs who were never recorded as having attended a learning centre session were from Kaduna and Kano, with a much smaller number from the FCT. Looking at their grade at enrolment, a large proportion of the ISGs who never attended a session had completed school by the time the learning centre sessions started.

	# of ISGs who never attended	% of ISGs who never attended and had completed secondary education
<b>FCT</b>	285	25%
<b>Kaduna</b>	1,458	45%
<b>Kano</b>	1,450	68%

Secondly, we looked at information from when ENGINE II tracked its beneficiaries towards the end of the third year of the programme. Beneficiaries who cannot be tracked could be considered to have dropped out of the programme, although there are likely to be some inconsistencies. Some of the SIPs reported that some of the beneficiaries who were successfully tracked had never attended a learning centre session. Similarly, it is likely that some beneficiaries who attend sessions irregularly might not have been found during the tracking exercise.

**As shown in Table 8, ENGINE II was able to track 62% of OSG beneficiaries and 64% of ISG beneficiaries**, but there were differences across the states. In the FCT, the percentage of ISGs who could be successfully tracked was very low, in Kano it was moderate, and in Kaduna it was relatively high. The percentage of OSGs who were successfully tracked was similar in the FCT, Kaduna and Kano, but much lower in Lagos. The findings for Lagos are in line with the initial beneficiary enrolment exercise, where a low percentage of ENGINE I beneficiaries in Lagos could be successfully re-enrolled into the programme. The implementation team reported that this was due to the high mobility of young women in Lagos.

**Table 8: Number of ISGs and OSGs successfully tracked in Year 3**

	Start of ENGINE II	Successfully tracked in Year 3	Successfully tracked as % of start of ENGINE II
<b>ISGs total</b>	5699	3646	64.0%
FCT	509	161	31.6%
Kaduna	2301	1824	79.3%
Kano	2889	1661	57.5%
<b>OSGs total</b>	12348	7622	61.7%
FCT	1373	1067	77.7%
Kaduna	1849	1396	75.5%
Kano	3264	2487	76.2%



	Start of ENGINE II	Successfully tracked in Year 3	Successfully tracked as % of start of ENGINE II
Lagos	5862	2672	45.6%

Thirdly, we consider findings from the midline evaluation based on data collected in June 2019. The midline evaluation found that 41% of ISGs and 59% of OSGs had attended the learning centre at least four out of the last five times that there was a learning centre session. It is important to note that based on the cohort tracking protocol for the evaluation, the evaluation did not track a) ISGs who have completed secondary school, and b) ISGs or OSGs who have migrated to other locations. The evaluation data also only captures girls for whom learning centre attendance records were available for the last five days. Therefore, girls who have completely dropped out of the learning centre sessions are unlikely to be included in the evaluation data. The findings from the midline evaluation therefore suggest that, amongst girls who attend the learning centre at least some of the time, some girls are attending the learning centre regularly, while others are attending less regularly.

**Overall, the available information therefore suggests that the low attendance rates observed in the monitoring data are a combination of factors.** Firstly, some girls have completely dropped out of the programme, and have not attended the learning centre at all during Year 3 of the programme. This includes larger proportions of ISGs who have completed secondary school and are therefore no longer expected to attend the learning centre sessions, but also includes 25% of OSGs and other ISGs who seem to have stopped attending the learning centre for other reasons. Secondly, data from the midline evaluation also shows that some girls are attending the learning centre irregularly. ENGINE II's monitoring system was generally set up in a way that could have allowed for more individualised attendance monitoring and a clearer distinction between these groups. However, the irregular use of the electronic attendance monitoring system meant that reliable data on this was not available. In addition, each girl's status would need to be recorded more regularly. For example, the system would need to allow LCFs to record which girls have successfully completed secondary school and are no longer attending the learning centre sessions.

### 4.1.3 Characteristics of tracked girls

In addition to considering differences between attrition and attendance, we wanted to understand whether certain marginalisation characteristics are associated with lower attendance or attrition. Because the attendance data was not considered to be reliable enough to calculate girl-level attendance rates, it was not possible to compare attendance rates across marginalisation characteristics. Instead, we looked at the characteristics of girls who were successfully tracked in Year 3 of the programme compared to girls who were not tracked.

Table 9 shows the characteristics of beneficiaries who were tracked and not tracked along the different marginalisation characteristics targeted by ENGINE II. This shows that **there were no major differences in marginalisation amongst girls who were successfully tracked and those who could not be tracked.** The reasons why some girls stopped attending the learning centres therefore did not seem to be related to any particular marginalisation characteristics.

**Table 9: Characteristics of beneficiaries who were tracked and not tracked**

	Tracked (N, %)	Not tracked (N, %)
<b>Total</b>	9694 (100%)	5242 (100%)
<b>Married &lt; 18</b>	1027 (10.6%)	276 (5.3%)
<b>Girl pregnant/has a child &lt;18</b>	580 (6.0%)	215 (4.1%)
<b>Divorced/widowed</b>	557 (5.8%)	237 (4.5%)
<b>Has a sick parent/husband</b>	68 (0.7%)	34 (0.7%)
<b>Disabled</b>	113 (1.2%)	72 (1.4%)
<b>Orphan</b>	1403 (14.5%)	535 (10.2%)
<b>Single head of household</b>	1686 (17.4%)	1043 (19.9%)
<b>Attends a faith-based school</b>	317 (3.3%)	290 (5.5%)
<b>Did not attend primary school</b>	308 (3.2%)	131 (2.5%)
<b>Cannot pay school fees</b>	2908 (30.0%)	1616 (30.8%)
<b>Identified as marginalised by school</b>	1096 (11.3%)	818 (15.6%)
<b>Did not complete JSS</b>	1248 (12.9%)	665 (12.7%)

## 4.2 Barriers to attendance

In this section, we discuss the barriers to attendance faced by ISGs and OSGs. For OSGs, delays or failure to be linked to any economic empowerment programme, and the lack of financial incentives, was the most important barrier to attendance at the learning centre. Needing to earn an income or take care of one's family was another reason why many OSGs struggled to attend the learning centres regularly. For ISGs, the most important barrier was the timing of the learning centre sessions, which prevented them from taking part in other activities, meant they were hungry and tired, or meant they could not travel home safely.

### 4.2.1 Unmet expectations of the programme

**A major reason for absenteeism reported was reduced enthusiasm because of unmet financial and employment expectations through ENGINE II.** This was especially pronounced among OSGs. Almost all OSG LCFs listed this as a reason why some of the registered girls at their learning centres did not attend the learning centre sessions, and for many LCFs it was the key reason for non-attendance. Many girls were beneficiaries since ENGINE I and they received or knew of other girls who received financial and material gain from ENGINE I, so they had similar expectations from ENGINE II. However, after realising ENGINE II had a different focus, they began to lose interest in the programme, and some stopped attending regularly, while some dropped out altogether. A master trainer from Kaduna explained:

*ENGINE have really tried; they have helped our girls. But the problem is that during ENGINE I there were many benefits the students enjoyed but, in this ENGINE II, the students are expecting those benefits, but they did not see them. That also affected the presence of the ENGINE girls. We always tell them that ENGINE II has many packages for them, but it will be given to them at the end of the programme.*

**Some of the girls felt that financial empowerment was more important than learning English and maths, and hence did not see the need to continue attending the learning centre.** According to this OSG from Lagos:

*I did not benefit anything from ENGINE II. Truly, they were teaching us maths, English, and how to save money but is that what I will eat? I stopped attending because they did not give me a job, it looked like I was wasting my time at the centre.*

An LCF in Lagos corroborated this, saying:

*When we first started the learning centre in 2018, the girls were very interested because they thought that ENGINE II will give them allowances and materials but over time they realised ENGINE II only wanted to train them and they started dropping out and now, out of 25, only 14 were attending regularly before the COVID break.*

As one SIP put it:

*The girls selected for ENGINE II were already saddled with the responsibility of taking care of their family. They were more interested in securing a source of livelihood for themselves than any teaching and learning activities. A lot of them could no longer concentrate during sessions, they were only hanging on to see if they could benefit from the economic empowerment aspect. A lot of the time, they are not motivated to attend.*

A master trainer from Lagos expressed his displeasure with what he termed ‘failed promises’. He suggested that some of the girls did not get the support (financial and materials) they felt was promised them, as they kept calling him to register their grievances.

**In addition, the instruction for girls to open bank accounts seemed to give some of them the false impression that they were all going to receive grants.** For example, an OSG LCF from Kano said:

*Some of them do complain that they were told to create a bank account [and assumed] that they will be given some token amounts to start up a business, and up until now, they have not heard from anyone. We always tell them to be patient because we are just teachers, but we are very sure maybe at the end of it, they will be given some token amount to start up something.*

Some of the SIPs also mentioned that ENGINE II’s support to girls to set up bank accounts led girls to assume that they would receive a financial incentive or grant.

**While many girls were hoping for the financial benefits that they had received during ENGINE I, girls were also interested in skills acquisition.** As an SIP described:

*There were also instances where some girls will only come to the centre if hard skills (vocational skills) were being taught but will readily stay away during literacy and numeracy sessions.*

A different SIP also reported a similar view:

*For most of the girls, their priority on the programme was to be linked to economic opportunities. Their need for immediate financial support prevented them from placing value on numeracy, literacy, and other lessons. Along the way, when this was not forthcoming, a lot of them got discouraged and as such were not attending sessions regularly. They were sceptical about the promised financial linkages.*

It is therefore possible that ENGINE II would have had higher levels of attendance if there had been no delays in linking girls to the VTIs, and if girls had started their skills training at the same time as their learning centre sessions, as was originally planned.

It is interesting to note that several master trainers and LCFs mentioned that they told the girls that there would be some form of financial incentive at the end of the programme. ENGINE II's design only had provision for a relatively small percentage of girls to access business expansion grants based on specific criteria that needed to be met, so the intention was not that all ENGINE II girls would be receiving a grant. It seems that some LCFs and master trainers were either not aware of this or were hoping that there might be some financial support that they had not been told about yet. In the process, they may have created further false hopes among some of the ENGINE II beneficiaries.

## 4.2.2 Conflicting household and economic activities

**For OSGs, their economic realities meant that many of them were either in paid employment, learning a trade, supporting the family on the farm, or running their own businesses.** As mentioned in the section above, the reason why many OSGs were interested in the financial benefits and economic empowerment aspects of ENGINE II is because they had to think about the welfare of their families. As one SIP explained:

*I understand the place of adult education, but the reality of the issue here is that what we inherited from ENGINE I had a lot of older girls and girls who were married. Topmost on their mind is how to contribute to the welfare of their family, and not necessarily education. All through the programme lifecycle, it was a struggle to keep some of them motivated to continue to attend.*

For those in paid employment, getting time off work to attend learning centre sessions was a challenge and they were often not able to get time off. OSGs who were business owners also sometimes found it difficult to close their businesses for a few hours to attend learning sessions, especially during peak sales periods. This OSG from Lagos opined: *'I would like to attend the learning centre more often but there is nobody to help me to stay in my drinks shop'*.

**In Kano and Kaduna, attendance seemed to dwindle during the planting season because the major source of livelihood in these communities is farming.** According to this OSG LCF from Kaduna:

*When it is farming season, from June to August, there is low attendance. You know most of them are predominantly rice farmers. During this period, sometimes only 10 girls will come to the learning centre. Others have to help their family on the farm.*

An OSG from Kaduna reported that she tried to attend learning centre sessions during the farming season, but this was difficult. She said:

*I attend regularly but on days when I have to go to the farm, mostly on Fridays, I sometimes miss. I try to go early to the farm to finish up my farm work and then rush for the classes but whenever I go for classes from the farm, I am always late.*

Girls who were able to make it to the learning centre after farm work ended up coming late and missing parts of the lessons.

In many African societies, caring responsibilities and household chores often fall on women.<sup>84</sup> Girls within the socio-economic strata that ENGINE II targets are often saddled with responsibility for caring for younger ones, tending to household chores, and sometimes even helping their parents with their businesses. Particularly in Lagos and the FCT, the SIPs also reported that many beneficiaries are household helps who might have less say about how they spend their time and who might find less support towards their education from their employers. **This means that oftentimes learning takes a back seat in the lives of many girls and this was a crosscutting issue among both ISGs and OSGs.** Some ISGs were expected to attend to household responsibilities after school. Therefore, waiting behind after school to attend the learning centre interfered with these responsibilities and sometimes even attracted reprimand or punishment (as reported below by an ISG parent from the FCT), and thus prevented some of them from attending the learning centre regularly.

*I know my daughter attends ENGINE classes, but I do not think she attends regularly because I scold her when she comes home late. If she comes late, who will look after her younger ones when I go to the market?*

An OSG in FCT corroborated this, saying:

*I cannot attend learning centre on Sunday because I have many things to do at home. I have to attend church, cook, clean, and tend to my family.*

### 4.2.3 Inconvenient timing, hunger, and security

**For ISGs, the main barrier to attendance centred around the timing of the learning centre sessions. It was challenging for the programme to find suitable times to hold the learning centre sessions, because they either conflicted with regular classes or conflicted with lunch breaks or extra-curricular periods. Alternatively, sessions were held late in the day, but this meant that girls were hungry and tired, and could not always travel home safely.** It should be noted that the programme allowed each learning centre to choose the timing of their sessions. As noted in the following section, most respondents reported that schools and communities actively tried to find convenient times for the learning centre sessions, and difficulties with the timing could often be resolved.

Many ISG learning centres utilised school break periods to host learning centre sessions. School break time, which is meant to be utilised for eating lunch and unwinding, was then forfeited for more learning activities. Girls complained of having to forgo break periods for ENGINE II sessions. As reported by this ISG from Kano: *'during break time, we attend the learning centre, and sometimes we will only have few minutes to eat lunch'*.

Some learning centre sessions were scheduled for the same time as extra-curricular activities, such as sports and school club meetings. The implication of this was that girls had

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<sup>84</sup> Ferrant, G., Pesando, L.M. and Nowacka, K. (2014) 'Unpaid care work: The missing link in the analysis of gender gaps in labour outcomes', 12.

to choose between attending the learning centre or participating in these activities. An ISG in the FCT said: *'I miss sports on Wednesdays to attend ENGINE sessions'*.

In some cases, ENGINE classes also seemed to take place during regular school hours. For example, an ISG in Kano said: *'ENGINE sessions are held between 9 am and 11 am on Thursday and Friday in the school, but we spare time to attend the sessions'*.

Sometimes, learning centres held sessions after school, for an hour or two, to avoid clashing with other school activities. However, some girls complained of being tired and hungry, or still having to catch up on schoolwork at this time, thus finding it difficult to concentrate. As explained below by an ISG from the FCT, some girls did not attend learning centre sessions as a result of this. She said:

*The time for the safe space is immediately after school and sometimes I still have notes to copy from school but the LCF will tell me to just leave it and come and join the learning centre, which I do not like so sometimes I don't attend.*

This thought was also shared by an ISG LCF from Kaduna. He opined that, because girls get hungry and tired after school, a few of them do not attend sessions regularly:

*Sometimes the girls are tired after school and do not pay full attention. It will be better if they can go home first and rest for an hour or so before coming to the learning centre, but the community is far from the school.*

Mercy Corps reported that the programme tried to address issues of hunger in some cases through engaging SBMCs and PTAs to provide food for the girls<sup>85</sup>, but some respondents at endline still note hunger as a reason for poor attendance.

In line with what the LCF mentions above, a few girls also complained that learning centre sessions after school were inconvenient because the schools are far from their homes, and they have to travel home alone afterwards. For example, an ISG in the FCT said:

*I have a problem with attending the learning centre on Mondays because it holds after school and our house is very far from the school so if I wait it will be late by the time I get home.*

Furthermore, as reported below by an SBMC member from Kaduna, some parents also expressed concerns about their girls staying behind after school, which they felt posed certain security risks, especially in Kaduna, where security incidents have increased in number. The SBMC member explained:

*Some parents complained to us that they do not like their children waiting after school for the classes because of all this insecurity, so we were looking at fixing another time for the ENGINE classes.*

To ensure girls do not stay at school for too long, some learning centres reduced the number of hours of teaching after school. For instance, an SBMC member in the FCT said: *'Many parents expect their children to be back immediately after school, so we had to restrict the ENGINE class to only an hour because of that and for security reasons. This one hour is small for them, if they had more time, it would have been better'*.

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<sup>85</sup> Mercy Corps quarterly report quarter 8.

#### 4.2.4 Marriage, pregnancy, and lack of support from husbands

**Marriage, pregnancy, and childbirth were also factors that affected the attendance of OSGs at the centre.** This was more common in Kano and Kaduna. Often, when girls got married, they migrated to a different community and stopped attending the learning centre. Pregnancy and childbirth also prevented some girls from attending the learning centre for a period of time. According to this OSG from Kano: *'I attend the centre regularly and other girls too attend, except when they get pregnant or have a baby'*.

**In other instances, girls could not get approval from their spouses to continue to attend the centre and therefore had to stop attending.** Efforts were made to sensitise men within communities, especially in the FCT and Kano State. One LCF in the FCT said:

*The attendance last year was not regular because most of them are now married and tasked with domestic chores but with the support of school management and community, husbands were invited to discuss the importance of their wives being educated.*

#### 4.2.5 Preparation for exams

**The girls also reported that a drastic decline in learning centre attendance was always recorded when the certificate exams drew near.** This they attributed to the need to attend examination preparatory classes, which promise candidates good grade results. An OSG in the FCT confirmed this, saying: *'I stopped attending the learning centre towards the end of last year because I joined a different centre to prepare for my NECO exams'*.

ENGINE II also organised its own intensive coaching classes in preparation for exams, and some girls mentioned that the classes organised by ENGINE II sometimes took place at the same time as the learning centre session. According to this OSG from Lagos: *'I could not attend the learning centre for about two months when I was going for my WAEC coaching classes'*.

#### 4.2.6 Clashes with other ENGINE II activities

**Learning centre sessions sometimes clashed with the vocational training courses.** A few girls mentioned attending privately organised vocational skills training and having to choose between that and the ENGINE sessions. According to this ISG from FCT:

*The time for the learning centre is the same as my tailoring lesson, so I only attend the learning centre two times in a week instead of five times, so I go to my tailoring place on the other days.*

Another OSG in Kano explained:

*I have been having issues with attendance in the last one year because the time for the learning centre activities conflicts with my vocational skills training so I attend the learning centre sometimes and dedicate other days for skills acquisition.*

In Kaduna and Kano, most girls were linked to vocational skills training through ENGINE II's partnership with MAFITA. When ENGINE II beneficiaries first started attending vocational training through MAFITA, the timing of the MAFITA vocational training sessions conflicted with that of the weekly ENGINE II learning centre sessions. The implementation team reported that they investigated this and resolved it with MAFITA. Each community identified

suitable times that allowed ENGINE II girls to attend both learning centre sessions and the vocational skills training.

## 4.2.7 Illness and bereavement

**Illness and bereavement were frequently cited reasons for missing the learning centre sessions, and school generally.** Many beneficiaries reported that whenever they or some other family members were ill, they could neither attend school nor the learning centre. This OSG parent from Lagos reported: '*She [my daughter] does not miss attending the learning centre except when she is sick*'.

Corroborating this point, this ISG from Kaduna said:

*Sometimes, when I am sick I do not go to school and when I don't go to school I can't attend the learning centre. This happens two to three times a year.*

Another ISG from FCT added:

*There was a time my sister was seriously sick, and she was admitted in the hospital for about a week and I had to stay with her. Also, my uncle who is my guardian died and when he was taken to the village for burial I had to go, so I missed two weeks of lessons.*

## 4.3 Contributors to improved attendance

### 4.3.1 Changing schedules of learning centre sessions

**Respondents agreed that the programme staff, principals, and LCFs found ways to incorporate the learning centre sessions into the school timetables and to allow for more convenient schedules.** ISGs reported that their attendance at the learning centres improved when the timing was more convenient. For example, an ISG LCF said:

*Some girls try their best to attend but others miss the lessons or sometimes come late due to responsibilities given by parents during lesson times. One way or the other, they have to go home to help with these chores. This was sorted and the school timetable was adjusted to accommodate the sessions.*

It seems that different approaches worked for different centres, and the programme therefore had to be flexible and had to work with girls and LCFs to identify a time that would work. Despite some challenges (described above) with holding learning centre sessions over lunch or during extra-curricular periods, some centres determined that this was the most suitable timing for them. For example, one ISG in FCT explained this, saying:

*Girls sometimes miss the sessions due to conflicting time between regular classes and learning centre sessions and some of the girls miss on Fridays because they have to pick their siblings from school but now the sessions hold during break time on Mondays and during game time on Wednesdays.*

Similarly, while some girls could not attend sessions on the weekend because of Islamic classes or responsibilities in the home, others found the weekend to be a convenient time. According to this ISG from Kano:



*They have changed the time to Saturday and Sunday morning, and I do not have any challenge with attending at that time, unlike before when the ENGINE sessions used to clash with some school classes.*

Overall, respondents felt that the programme had tried to identify the most suitable times for ISG learning centre sessions, and had been flexible with rescheduling sessions when there were conflicts.

In addition to this, respondents also reported that the timing of the learning centre sessions was adjusted to fit in with the schedules of girls who had to work on the farms.

### 4.3.2 Household and community sensitisation

Stimulating attendance for the OSGs was different, as a more nuanced approach had to be followed to boost attendance at the learning centres. To improve attendance, the LCFs, with the help of the girl ambassadors, tried to sensitise the girls on the benefits of education and to encourage them to come to the learning centre. Respondents reported that sensitisation activities were effective for some girls, but not others. According to this OSG LCF from Kano:

*When the attendance dropped drastically, we had to go to visit some girls in the community and explain to them why learning was also important. Some said they will come back, and they did, others did not come back.*

Other LCFs reported similar experiences, saying that attendance for some respondents improved after sensitisation efforts but others were not willing to come back, or were prevented from doing so by their husbands.

### 4.3.3 Additional effort invested by the LCFs

**Despite the challenges mentioned above, one crosscutting message from the girls was the care and support given by their LCFs.** LCFs were reported to check on the girls whenever they were absent, and some even visited the girls in their homes. According to this OSG from Lagos: *'even when I don't go to the learning centre, the LCF will call me to ask why'*.

LCFs were also reported to sometimes fix extra sessions for beneficiaries, and to visit girls at their workplace or homes to give them assignments, which they completed and sent across to the LCFs, to help make up for missed sessions. One OSG LCF described this:

*At the end of two weeks, I check my record to ascertain girls who have missed sessions, I pay them a visit to check what held them back, I give them assignment as well. When I can, I set extra time to break them up to speed on what they missed.*

Another LCF in the same state explained how he encouraged OSGs who had opted out of the programme because they did not benefit from the economic empowerment selection, despite having been on the programme since ENGINE I:

*I have been able to get some of the girls to continue attending sessions who left because they were not part of those selected to learn a skill. Some of them told me that they have been following the programme since it started about five years ago but had never been given any incentives. I set aside some time during my session to motivate them that learning how to read and write is an important requirement in life.*

*When I can, I give them money out of my pocket to enable them to take care of some needs.*

In addition to this, SIPs reported that LCFs would teach vocational skills during or after the learning centre sessions, and this led to improved attendance. LCFs asked girls to contribute money towards buying the materials or provided the materials themselves.

#### 4.3.4 Excellence awards

ENGINE II introduced excellence awards in March 2019, which provided small incentives to girls who had very good attendance at the learning centres. However, respondents did not mention the excellence awards as a factor that contributed to girls' attendance.

### 4.4 Conclusion

**Attendance at the learning centre sessions was poor throughout the programme duration, particularly for OSGs.** Programme monitoring data show that between April 2019 and March 2020, about 40% – 50% of registered OSGs were attending learning centre sessions, and attendance rates did not improve throughout this period.

**The key reasons for poor attendance among OSGs were that girls were expecting to receive financial benefits or economic empowerment through ENGINE II, and were less interested in the literacy and numeracy sessions.** There were two key underlying themes in this regard. The first was that, in many cases, the financial benefits provided during ENGINE I had set specific expectations, and the girls assumed that the same model would continue. Better communication to beneficiaries about the purpose and design of ENGINE II might have addressed this somewhat.

**Secondly, many girls had pressing economic needs and needed to look after the welfare of their families.** Therefore, irrespective of any expectations that had been created, what was important for these girls was that they were learning something that would translate into the ability to earn an income for their family within a short period of time. For them, learning a vocational skill was most relevant. The delays in linking girls to VTIs are therefore likely to have contributed to some girls not attending the learning centre sessions because they might have been motivated to attend if they had been learning a vocational skill that they felt was useful to them at the same time.

**In general, OSGs were a mobile population, with competing interests for their time, so even OSGs who were interested in attending the learning centre sessions found it difficult to attend them regularly.** OSGs were not able to get time off work to attend sessions, had to look after their businesses, had to work on farms during the farming season, or had childcare responsibilities, which all led to irregular attendance. In addition, many OSGs had a child during the course of programme implementation, which necessarily meant that they could not attend the learning centre for at least several weeks. While household sensitisations were effective at improving attendance for some cases where support from parents or a husband was lacking, sensitisation efforts were generally not able to overcome these barriers as attendance rates remained low. Overall, the findings show that the current learning centre model is not accessible to many OSGs.

**ISGs had higher rates of attendance at the learning centres but this differed by state.** In Kano, approximately 70% of registered girls attended learning centre sessions on average between April 2019 and March 2020, compared to 60% in the FCT and only 40% – 50% in Kaduna.

**For ISGs, the main barrier to attendance was the timing of the learning centre sessions, as well as hunger, tiredness and security concerns.** Girls missed learning

centre sessions because they clashed with other school activities, or because they had to help out in the household. Where learning centre sessions were held after school, this meant that girls were hungry and tired, and potentially faced an insecure journey home. In many cases, **these challenges were resolved by moving the learning centre sessions to a more convenient time.**

## 5 Learning

This chapter presents our findings on perceptions of changes in ENGINE II girls' learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy. Section 5.1 describes the perceptions of changes in learning, including how performance has changed and what factors have been responsible for these changes. The key finding from this section is that the majority of respondents reported having observed an overall improvement in girls' performance within the past year. Most respondents attributed this improvement to the teaching efforts of the ENGINE II LCFs, although some felt that personal commitment, paid private tutorials, and family support also contributed. However, some respondents did not observe any improvements in their learning, and a few OSGs did not find learning maths and English useful. In Section 5.2, we discuss changes in girls' confidence in learning, and the identified reasons for the changes. Most beneficiaries reported that their confidence had increased, and most attributed this to the LCFs' efforts. We then describe the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on learning, in Section 5.3. We find that learning for most girls is self-driven, although some girls in Lagos and in the FCT have been participating in the ENGINE II WhatsApp groups that have been set up. Finally, we conclude on our findings in Section 5.4.

### 5.1 Changes in learning

In this section, we discuss the specific changes observed by the beneficiaries and other stakeholders (principals, LCFs, and parents) in literacy and numeracy. We then describe how ENGINE II has contributed to these improvements, as well as some factors that could have been improved. Thereafter, we discuss other contributing factors to changes in learning.

#### 5.1.1 Changes in literacy and numeracy

**There was a consensus across all stakeholders that girls' learning has improved over the past year.** According to the respondents, this improvement was demonstrated by the girls' ability to read more fluently, write better, and apply previously challenging mathematical formulas in solving questions. ISGs reported improvement in grades for continuous assessment and termly examinations compared to previous years. Many of the OSGs attested to noticing improvements in being able to read complex words, write letters, and do simple calculations. Changes were also demonstrated in being able to help children and siblings with homework, a task that some of the girls could not previously do. Parents and school principals also attested to some of these changes.

**For literacy, girls noticed an improvement in their reading, writing, and comprehension skills.** These improvements included being able to pronounce complex words, construct simple sentences, compose text (such as writing a letter), and speak English more fluently – feats many of them could not achieve previously. According to an OSG in Kaduna:

*My speaking of English language has improved. Before, I could not speak English at all, but now, I can speak some sentences like 'I am coming'.*

Another OSG in Kano also described her improvement:

*I learnt how to pronounce words, how to recognise the alphabets, and how to utter sounds. Before, most students could not recognise the alphabets to the end, but*

*now, we all know them. I can also pronounce four- to five-letter words, which used to be hard for me but now I find it easy.*

Amongst ISGs, some beneficiaries also reported better understanding of oral English. For instance, an ISG in FCT said: *'Before, I struggled with understanding oral English, but this year, after our teacher explained it, I now understand it better'*. Others noted improvements in writing skills. For example, an ISG in the FCT explained:

*Letter writing used to be very difficult for me but in the past year I have improved a lot, I can now write formal and informal letters.*

Another ISG in Kaduna also reported improvements in this domain:

*The thing is that now I can use full stop, comma, question mark, and all those other punctuation marks which used to confuse me before, I can also write letters very well.*

As described in the quotes above, OSGs mostly reported improvements in fairly basic aspects of English language, such as being able to recognise the alphabet or speak simple sentences, while ISGs reported being able to perform more complex tasks, such as letter writing.

**Many girls felt that their numeracy skills had improved, especially in basic calculations, algebra, and geometry.** Girls no longer feared the subject and performed better in assessments. Many OSGs reported being able to do simple calculations that they could not previously do, such as addition, subtraction, and multiplication. For instance, an OSG in Kano reported:

*Truly, I did not understand how to do addition, subtraction, multiplication before. Then the teacher started with one plus one and gradually I started getting it. Before, I used to get confused with roman numerals because they are not normal numbers, but now I can identify them and write them down. Also, I was taught how to tell the time, especially on clocks that have roman numerals or no figures. Before, I could only count 1 to 100 but now I can count to 200.*

Other OSGs explained how they have applied what they have learnt in their businesses and other daily activities. For example, one OSG in Kaduna explained:

*I have improved in the area of calculating profit and loss. You see, I am an egg seller and before I just used to sell without really analysing if I was making profit but after we were taught profit and loss, I learnt that one must calculate everything spent before you start selling, so that you are sure of what you are doing.*

ISGs also reported how they have improved. They reported being able to solve problems in areas such as algebra, geometry, and logarithms. An ISG in Kaduna said:

*Before, when they say we should find x, I will just be confused but since first term, after they explained it again, I can now find x. It is only those difficult ones I used to miss.*

Although the beneficiary quoted above has not gained complete mastery of the topic, her report shows that she has made some improvement. An ISG in FCT also buttressed this point. She explained that her dislike for maths had waned and she can better attempt questions:

*I know that I have really improved because I did not used to like maths, especially logarithm and geometry, but since they changed our maths teacher I no longer have that dislike for the subject, and I can solve the questions. I even passed my last exam, I scored 62%, unlike before that I used to score like 40–50%.*

**The improved understanding of concepts in literacy and numeracy translated to better grades in assessments for some of the girls, particularly for ISGs.** For example, an ISG in Kano said: *‘In the last year I was scoring between 75% and 80% in my English, compared to the other years that I was scoring 50%,60%.’* Another ISG in the FCT said: *‘Before, the highest I could score was 50% but since last year, there has been a lot of changes. Last year, I got a B in math and A in English.’*

Some girls also reported passing English and maths in their end of secondary school examinations. According to an ISG in Kano:

*I can really say I improved. I was even able to have C in maths and B in English in WAEC. So, I can go to the university.*

A school principal in Kano also attested to this. He said: *‘ENGINE II girls are among the top performers in the school. Last year, the second and third position in SS3 were ENGINE II girls’.*

Some parents also noticed improvements in their daughters’ performance. An ISG parent in FCT said:

*My daughter could not compose good grammar using the right verbs, she could not speak good English and was shy to speak among her peers. But she has been gradually improving in the last one and half to two years, and in the last exam she was the best in maths and scored 75% in English.*

**Respondents identified that girls’ learning had improved not just based on their grades, but also based on how the girls were able to utilise the knowledge gained within the family and community.** ENGINE II beneficiaries were able to help their younger siblings or their own children because of the knowledge that they gained. Two OSG parents in Kaduna reported that their daughters had improved because they now help their younger siblings with homework, which they could not do previously because they did not have the knowledge to do so. One of them said: *‘She can speak English confidently in public and even helps her younger ones with their schoolwork at home’.* Similarly, an OSG in Lagos said:

*I could not read nor write before, but now, I can speak some simple sentences to my children in English like ‘Bring your hand.’, ‘Where are you?’. Before that, I was only speaking to them in Yoruba.*

LCFs reported that girls had shared similar experiences with them. For example, according to an OSG LCF in Kaduna:

*One of the girls told me that these ENGINE II classes have helped to cover her shame when it comes to helping her children with homework. She could not understand their homework before, now she can, and she is able to help them.*

A few girls also described being able to help members of the community, using their improved knowledge. For example, an OSG in Kano said:

*Sometimes, when people in my compound want to go to the market, they will ask me to help them to write the list because they know that I can now write. This makes me very happy. I also gather about eight small children in the community and teach them English and maths.*

This suggests that girls have not only learnt but have also been able to apply learning outside the classroom.

**Although most respondents reported improvements in girls' learning, a few had not noticed any improvements.** In many of these cases, this was because the girl's performance had always been strong, and so the lack of change in performance was not considered a problem. For example, one ISG parent in Kaduna said: *'Her performance has been the same through the years, she is always first or second in the class'*.

However, a small number of respondents reported that girls who were performing poorly had not improved. For example, an ISG in the FCT said: *'I scored 35% in English in the last term exam that we did and the exam before that, I scored 52%. I did not understand some of the passages we were given in the exam.'* Similarly, one ISG parent in the FCT said: *'Her performance was very bad. In fact, if WAEC was not postponed due to COVID-19, she would have failed, I had to start coaching her myself.'*

In addition, some girls felt that they had improved but there were certain concepts that they were still struggling with, especially in numeracy. According to an OSG in Kano: *'Although I have improved in some respects, like converting numbers to words, I still find multiplication and roman numerals difficult.'* Another ISG in the FCT said: *'I feel sad that I cannot solve geometric progression. Even though I try to read it on my own, I still find it difficult.'* A few parents echoed this. For example, an ISG parent in the FCT said: *'Even though my daughter's score in English is improving very slowly, she is still struggling with the subject.'*

In summary, most respondents reported improvements in learning for ISGs and OSGs. Improvement was reported in subject competency, grades, and being able to translate learning to everyday life. OSGs reported improvement in simpler tasks for numeracy and literacy compared to ISGs, who reported being able to solve more complex problems. However, some beneficiaries reported still struggling with learning, especially with numeracy, and a few respondents had not noticed any improvements in the past year.

### 5.1.2 ENGINE II's contribution to learning

At midline, the evaluation found evidence of positive impact of ENGINE II on learning outcomes. For OSGs, participating in ENGINE II led to a statistically significant improvement in their literacy (English) and numeracy (mathematics) scores at midline. For ISGs, there was a significant impact of ENGINE II on their numeracy scores but not on their literacy scores. Because the midline evaluation involved a robust quasi-experimental design, the evaluation could clearly show that this impact was attributable to ENGINE II. At endline, we find further qualitative evidence to show how ENGINE II has contributed to improvements in learning.

#### How ENGINE II contributed to improved learning

**The majority of girls were able to identify ways in which the ENGINE II LCFs had contributed to improvements in their learning.** Girls reported that LCFs used teaching techniques which instilled knowledge and confidence in them, and this helped to improve their performance.

**A strategy that girls particularly felt helped them to learn was that LCFs would explain a topic multiple times.** For example, an ISG in Kano said:

*Honestly, ENGINE II teachers are more persistent. They will break down the topic and make sure you understand it, unlike the other teachers in the school.*

An OSG in Lagos shared a similar opinion, explaining: ‘If our teacher sees that some people do not understand a particular topic, they will go over the topic again’. An ISG in the FCT shared a similar experience: ‘My English teacher is very kind. Even if you ask questions 20 times, she doesn’t get annoyed. So, she really makes sure that we understand what she is teaching’. This method ensures that every girl is carried along and no one is left behind.

**In addition to explaining the topic clearly, when students gave incorrect answers, the LCFs would work with the students to help them arrive at the correct answer.** For example, an OSG in Kano said:

*Our ENGINE teacher calls each of us out to read, if you don’t know it or you get it wrong, she will correct you nicely and ask you to repeat it. So that way, we can grasp what she is teaching.*

An ISG in the FCT shared a similar opinion:

*I could not calculate before the ENGINE programme, but now I can do that because the numeracy teacher makes sure we understand. He will give an example, then call you to the board to solve a question. If you don’t know it, he will help you.*

As we describe in the next section, girls felt confident to ask their LCFs questions when they did not understand something because the LCFs did not reprimand girls nor make them feel embarrassed for making a mistake. In that way, girls felt confident to speak up when they did not understand something, and LCFs then either worked with individual students to help them arrive at the correct answer or explained the topic to the whole class again.

**In addition to the techniques described above, another teaching method that LCFs and girls felt contributed to improved performance was giving girls an opportunity to learn from each other. This was achieved through group work and peer-to-peer learning.** The LCFs used group work by giving the girls classwork and programmes in groups, going round each group to offer help, and asking the girls to present their assignments as a group. An ISG in FCT attested to this:

*Our English LCF divides us into like four or five groups during the class. She will tell us to read a passage and write what we understand in the passage. She will then come to meet each group to help us. She also tells those of us in the group who are good with reading to help the other people in the group who are not very good with reading and this has really helped me because as I am helping others, I am also helping myself.*

A principal in Kaduna mentioned a similar point, saying:

*There have been changes in the girls’ performance in the last one year, those that could not read can now read and I think this is due to the new teaching methods the ENGINE teachers now use. They normally group them and give them classwork so that the girls that are better will help those that are weak.*

These quotes show how this type of method is beneficial for both weaker and stronger students. Weaker students benefit because they are able to learn from their stronger peers.



Stronger peers benefit too because the process of explaining the content to their peers helps them to internalise what they have learnt. In Chapter 6, we discuss in more detail how LCFs and girls felt that group work and a peer-to-peer learning approach were effective teaching methods that encouraged girls to actively participate in the learning centre sessions.

The smaller class sizes during the learning centre sessions, compared to normal classes in school, were helpful because the LCFs could pay more attention to individual girls and take more time to explain. According to an ISG in the FCT:

*It is the same teacher that teaches us maths in school that teaches us in the learning centre but because we are fewer in the ENGINE II class, he takes his time to explain.*

**Girls, as well as parents and principals, felt that the LCFs' dedication to teaching and their genuine interest in the girls contributed to the improvement in performance of ENGINE girls.** A school principal in Kano said: '*The ENGINE II girls are among the best in the school because their teachers are very dedicated, they take more time to teach the ENGINE II girls*'. Similarly, an ISG parent in the FCT said:

*My daughter has really improved, and it is because of the dedication of the ENGINE II teachers. The teachers are not in it for the money but with a genuine interest in ensuring the girls understand and I am grateful for this.*

Girls also described that the LCFs were dedicated to improving the girls' educational outcomes in the long term, and always encouraged girls to take their studies seriously. An OSG in Kano said: '*Our teacher always tells us that education is the only way to be something in life, and that made me become very serious with my studies and I started to perform better*'. Similarly, an OSG in Lagos reported that:

*She [the LCF] takes us like we are her children, she brings us together, talk to us, advises us about life, how to relate with people, how to behave in the society and whenever she talks to us, it always motivates me. I like the methods used in teaching me, so I always look forward to the sessions. I was not that good in mathematics before joining the class, but now I have really improved in calculation.*

This commitment from the LCFs to the girls, and interest in their lives, instilled a willingness to learn in the girls, also contributing to their improved performance.

**In terms of parents' knowledge of their daughters' involvement in ENGINE II, it was observed that the OSG parents had more knowledge of what ENGINE II activities entailed compared to ISG parents, and could thus tie their daughters' improvements to ENGINE.** This is because, oftentimes, attending the learning centre was the only form of learning that OSGs were involved with, unlike ISGs. Thus, it was easier for the parents to relate any improvements to this sole learning activity they were involved in. For example, an OSG parent in Kano reported: '*She does well now, I get very fascinated with what she is able to do, she is reading now. I know they teach them very well, the way they can really understand*'.

Nonetheless, most parents could not expressly state what part of the ENGINE II programme led to this improvement. For instance, an OSG parent in Lagos said: '*Since my daughter started attending ENGINE, her English is now better*'. When asked what ENGINE activity may have led to this improvement, she said: '*I don't know*'.

**A few parents were not aware of their daughter's participation in ENGINE.** One FCT parent said: '*I don't know of any ENGINE*'. Parents who had good knowledge of the programme were either educated or were members of the PTA or SBMC, or were community leaders who were already exposed to the mandate of the programme.

## What could have been improved

**Some OSGs raised concerns about the level of learning activities that they were taught at the learning centre.** Some OSGs in Lagos and the FCT reported being taught at an elementary level, even though they had advanced beyond that. An OSG in the FCT said:

*Some of us have stayed long in the ENGINE II programme and they are still teaching us elementary maths. At least they should take us to the level of SS1 students and not just be limited to one plus one.*

The affected girls therefore did not find the ENGINE II sessions stimulating. As described earlier in the report, ENGINE II conducted a learner needs assessment that was used to place OSGs in learning centres based on their learning levels. However, it seems that some girls were not placed in the appropriate level, or they might have progressed faster than their peers during the course of the programme.

LCFs also felt that the reasons some girls struggled, especially with numeracy, was because of poor foundational knowledge in the subject. An ISG LCF in Kano said: *'some of these girls have a very, very poor background. They cannot even do simple arithmetic, yet they are in SSS. Definitely, they will struggle'*.

**Another challenge identified was the inadequacy of learning materials, such as textbooks.** The girls reported being provided with textbooks by the LCFs at the beginning of each class and returning them to the LCFs at the end of each class, as they were not allowed to take them home. An OSG in FCT said:

*We do not have textbooks, apart from the single one we were given when we started. If they can give everyone more textbooks, it will improve the standard of learning of the students that are ready to learn.*

An LCF in Lagos also corroborated this, saying: *'We collect the textbooks at the end of every class so that they don't damage the books or misplace them'*. Hence, girls were not able to revise with them when they get home.

Overall, most beneficiaries were happy about the progress they had made with learning and expressed gratitude to ENGINE II. They felt that the knowledge gained was useful. This was exemplified by one OSG in Lagos:

*I never imagined that I could go back to study. I did not have any hope of going back to school. But ENGINE II has given me hope, that I should fight illiteracy. In ENGINE II, my teacher makes sure we understand every topic taught, she also tutors me privately, so I think if we get back to learning, if God helps me, I will try to write my WAEC, so that I can continue with my education. I never thought of doing so before.*

**However, a few OSGs did not agree that the progress they had made was useful.** They did not see how learning maths and English translated to an increased income and reduced hardship. For example, an OSG in Lagos noted that:

*Well, they teach us maths, English, how to carry ourselves and all that. I learnt multiplication tables, how to pronounce words, and some other things but is that what I will eat?*

Not everyone felt that the improvements they had made in maths and English were relevant to their lives. In the face of economic hardship, some girls felt that business support or getting a job would have been more beneficial than learning maths and English.

### 5.1.3 Other contributors to learning

#### Increased commitment of the girls to learning

**Some girls attributed their improved performance to increased commitment on their part.** This was demonstrated by increased participation in class, personal studying, asking teachers questions, and meeting other peers who had more understanding of the subject matter, to ask them to offer explanations.

For some girls, their commitment to learning increased around examination periods, especially for those in SS3. They studied more during this period so that they could perform well in their exams. An ISG in Kano said: *'Truly, I worked harder. When it is time for exam, I don't usually sleep, I read a lot'*.

A desire to go further in their education, beyond secondary level, also motivated some girls to increase their commitment to studying, so that they can pass the qualifying exams. For example, an ISG parent in FCT said:

*When she comes back home from school, she will carry her books and be reading. I am even scared that she is reading too much. When I asked why she reads so much, she said it is because she wants to go to Ahmadu Bello University.*

For others, the increased commitment was just borne out of a desire to learn. Hence, they decided to take studying more seriously and pay more attention. An OSG in Kano said:

*The changes are as a result of intensive focus. I have it in my mind that I want to learn, so I pay attention and do my assignments and if I don't understand something, I will ask the teacher.*

Thus, possessing the desire to learn and advance in education improved some girls' commitment to studying, which translated into improvements.

Some girls were able to concentrate more on their studies because they now had additional time to do so. For instance, an ISG in Kano said:

*I now pay more attention to my maths and English than I used to. Before, I was attending Islamiyah and I was distracted, trying to memorise the whole Quran, and now that I am paying more attention to my studies, I realised that it is not as difficult as I thought it was.*

Another ISG in FCT said: *'My mummy now only lets me help her with the housework after I have finished my assignment'*.

#### Paid private tutorials and other family support

**Paid private tutorials, either as a group or individually, are commonplace for secondary school students in Nigeria. A few respondents highlighted such tutorials as contributing to their improved performance.** This was majorly skewed towards ISGs in the FCT as girls in the other states rarely mentioned engaging in private tutorials. These lessons were reported to provide girls with revisions and further explanations for topics not well understood in school. An ISG in the FCT said:

*I attend a private lesson at my house where they teach me maths and English, and because I am the only one in the lesson, I understand better.*

The above quote shows that being given one-on-one attention by a teacher was beneficial to the above respondent. An ISG parent in FCT also shared a similar opinion:

*I think her improvement in the subjects is because I got a lesson teacher for her and together they were able to sort a lot of things. The lesson teacher was assisting her with assignment, homework, and anything she does not understand.*

**In addition, some girls identified family support as a key factor in their improvement.**

This included having siblings or other family members who helped them with assignments or offered explanations of topics that were not well understood. An ISG in FCT said: *'My brother is very good in maths and he always puts me through anything that I do not understand'*. An ISG parent in Kano said: *'she has elder ones that puts her through some of these things in maths and English and they help her a lot'*.

## **Factors that hindered improvements in learning**

Some girls felt that their learning had not improved due to issues with the availability of teachers. For example, an ISG in FCT identified that the constant change of maths teachers who had different methods of teaching was responsible for her confusion in the subject: *'We have different teachers and one teacher will use his own formula and another will use a different formula, so it is just confusing'*.

A few parents felt that overcrowded classrooms in schools during regular classes made it difficult for their daughters' learning to improve.

## **5.2 Changes in confidence in the learning process**

This section starts by providing details on changes that girls have noticed in their confidence in the learning process. Next, we describe how ENGINE II has contributed to improving girls' confidence in their ability to learn.

### **5.2.1 Changes in confidence in the learning process**

**Most girls reported having increased confidence in the classroom. They reported being able to ask and answer questions in class without fear, to speak their mind, and to contribute to discussions within and outside of classrooms.** Some girls were even confident enough to teach their peers and other members of the community. For instance, an OSG in Kano said:

*Before, I used to be afraid, I feel as if I will be laughed at, but in the last year that I realised it is not so then I continued to ask questions on things I do not understand.*

Another OSG in Kaduna described being able to volunteer for tasks in class. She said:

*I am very confident in class. There was a time that the class teacher wrote something on the board, and asked, 'Who can read this?' and I came out and read it and because I did, they clapped for me and I felt very happy.*

An ISG in the FCT described her increase in confidence by reference to her ability to teach her friends things they did not know. She said:

*Sometimes, when my friends do not understand some things in maths, I teach them what I know. It is not something I would have been able to do before but because my confidence has increased, I can now teach them.*

**A few girls reported that they did not notice any improvement as confidence in learning was something they had always had.** For instance, one ISG from the FCT explained: *'I have always been confident. I can ask questions whenever I am not clear on anything, my parents taught me to be confident'*. An ISG parent in the FCT provided a similar opinion, stating: *'I taught my children to always be confident, because if you don't talk, people will not help you'*.

## **5.2.2 ENGINE II's contribution to changes in confidence, and other contributors**

**For girls who reported that their confidence in the classroom had increased, most girls attributed this to the ENGINE II learning centre sessions. The learning centre sessions helped to improve girls' confidence because LCFs created an environment where girls felt comfortable.** An ISG LCF in the FCT explained that he created a relaxed atmosphere to encourage girls to participate in the lessons. In his words:

*Most of them that are timid are not timid anymore. Before now, they were shy and felt cut off from the life of mathematics, but I try to make them feel at ease by cracking jokes in class so that they will not be tense. With this method, it was easier to get their attention, and we re-tailored their brain to love mathematics. Now in class they are all eager to participate and attempt our questions.*

Several respondents, including parents and girls themselves, expressed that girls were no longer afraid of mathematics as a result of the approach taken by the LCFs. For example, an ISG parent in the FCT explained:

*I have a daughter who is part of the ENGINE II programme and I can attest to her improvement in maths and English. She can also attempt questions in math with greater confidence, unlike before that she will be scared.*

**A key component of this comfortable atmosphere was that girls felt able to make mistakes without being reprimanded, punished, or embarrassed.** For example, an OSG in Kano said:

*I used to be very scared to stand up but now I can boldly stand up to answer or ask any question in class even when I'm not very sure so that they can correct me when I get it wrong because our LCF makes us feel very comfortable.*

Girls felt confident to ask questions because they knew that the LCFs would take the time to explain the topic to them again. According to an ISG from Kano:

*Whenever I ask questions, the teacher does not show disappointment, or embarrass me because of the questions that I asked. The teacher is jovial and explains to me until I understand it.*

**LCFs and girls also attributed girls' increased confidence to the teaching methods that LCFs were using, which encouraged girls to participate in the lesson.** LCFs felt that a peer-to-peer learning approach gives girls confidence because they see their peers actively participating in the classroom. According to this OSG LCF from Lagos:

*Yes, it has improved their learning, because what I noticed is that when one of the girls comes out to teach, it gives the others confidence. The ones who have more experience in the topic comes out to impact knowledge to the other girls, this gives them boldness and increases their self-esteem.*

**Some girls felt that their confidence had improved because of personal attributes.** For instance, an ISG in Kano reported: *'My confidence changed because I do not like seeing my colleagues going ahead of me, so I increased my dedication'*.

### 5.3 How learning has been affected by COVID-19

**In-person learning has stopped since schools closed in March 2020. This has led to a disruption in learning activities. However, some girls reported still engaging in learning activities in different ways.** Some attend the WhatsApp classes organised by ENGINE II, though this is more common in Lagos and the FCT. Most respondents in Kano and Kaduna did not mention online or remote classes. For instance, an ISG in the FCT said:

*They created a WhatsApp group and added everyone in the group to it. There is time for every teacher to teach their subject. That is how we do it every day.*

An ISG LCF in the FCT also corroborated this, saying: *'We cannot physically meet the student, so we take advantage of online platforms'*.

A common challenge mentioned with the WhatsApp classes is the lack of smartphones, and funds for data and electricity to charge phones, which prevents some girls from attending. An OSG in Lagos said: *'they do WhatsApp classes, but I don't attend because I don't have an Android phone'*. Similarly, an OSG parent in Lagos reported:

*They have been attending class online. Every Tuesday and Thursday where they do English and maths. But my daughter has stopped attending because there is no money to buy data to subscribe.*

Thus, some girls have been excluded from learning via this platform.

**A few respondents mentioned learning English and maths via radio broadcasts. This is through a federal government education programme launched on the radio for students. In the FCT, a literacy radio broadcast was also funded by ENGINE II.** Those who have radios and are aware of this programme have sometimes taken advantage of the opportunity to learn during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to one OSG parent from the FCT:

*There is a radio programme that they are participating in that they teach them maths and English. They gather, like six of them, with their books because not everyone has a radio. So, they gather on Saturday, with their books, to listen to this programme.*

However, information on the programme is very limited as only very few respondents utilise this platform. Amongst those who are aware of the programme, a challenge that was reported is that the girls are not always sure of the time the programme will air. Hence, their utilisation of this medium is inconsistent.

**A vast majority of the girls reported not accessing any formal learning during this time, but said they are trying to revise what they have learnt previously, sometimes with help from family or private tutors.** Most girls only do revisions on their own, using

whatever books they have, as they do not have access to any platform for online learning. An OSG in Kaduna said:

*This COVID has really affected me, honestly. We cannot gather to learn. Sometimes, I pick my books to read and what I do not understand, I note it so that when we resume, I can ask my teacher.*

Some girls receive help from neighbours and family members. According to an ISG parent in Kano: *'She has a brother who is doing his best to teach her something so that she will not forget most of the things that were learnt before school closed'*. A few girls are receiving help through private tutorials, such as this OSG from Kano: *'I still read my books, the one I don't understand, I go to meet this schoolteacher in my area to explain and he puts me through'*.

A few girls lamented that they have already started forgetting things that they had previously learnt, and they wished that learning activities would resume quickly. For example, an ISG in the FCT said: *'We are not going to school, so some of the things we learnt, we have forgotten them'*.

**Some girls have been able to continue with their vocational skills training, while a few other girls have started learning a skill since the pandemic started.** An ISG parent in FCT said: *'Since she cannot go to school, I enrolled her in one tailoring place and she also bakes cake'*. An OSG in the FCT said: *'I have continued to attend my tailoring classes. That is the only thing I do now since we cannot attend the learning centre'*.

In summary, the COVID-19 pandemic has halted learning for many beneficiaries as all schools have closed nationwide, and had not resumed as at the time of writing this report. Only a few girls were taking part in ENGINE II's remote learning platforms at the time that the research was conducted. A lack of smartphones or funds for data are limitations to using this platform. A few other girls are learning via a federal government broadcast on the radio but information on this is limited. Most girls are trying to learn on their own, using their books, sometimes relying on the help of family and community members. A few girls have been able to learn a vocational skill during this period.

## 5.4 Conclusion

The provision of targeted support in literacy and numeracy to improve the learning outcomes of marginalised girls is a key objective of the ENGINE II programme. **At midline, the evaluation found evidence of positive impact of ENGINE II on learning outcomes.** For OSGs, participating in ENGINE II led to a statistically significant improvement in their literacy (English) and numeracy (mathematics) scores at midline. For ISGs, there was a significant impact of ENGINE II on their numeracy scores but not on their literacy scores. Because the midline evaluation involved a robust quasi-experimental design, the evaluation could clearly show that this impact was attributable to ENGINE II. At endline, we find further qualitative evidence to show how ENGINE II has contributed to improvements in learning.

**Findings from this qualitative research demonstrate that, overall, respondents observed improvements in girls' performance in literacy and numeracy within the past year.** This was demonstrated by improved scores in continuous assessments, passing WAEC exams, and being able to pass on knowledge to peers and family. In literacy, girls reported being able to speak better, construct sentences, write letters, and read words, while for numeracy, girls' understanding of basic calculations, algebra, logarithm, and geometry, among others, were said to have improved.

**These improvements were largely attributed to the teaching methods of the LCFs at the ENGINE II learning centres.** LCFs were said to be patient and thorough in their

explanations to the girls. Some girls also reported increased commitment to learning and receiving extra help through paid tutorials as contributing to their improvement. Nonetheless, they still reported some challenges faced with learning, which included inadequate learning materials, unavailability of some LCFs, and improper grouping, leading to some girls being taught at a level below that of their capability.

**Girls also reported having increased confidence in learning.** Certain subjects and topics which were previously approached with fear are now better understood and thus approached with confidence. Girls feel confident to ask and answer questions in class. Again, the LCFs' approach to teaching was identified as the major reason for this. LCFs created a classroom environment where girls felt comfortable. Girls felt that they could participate in the sessions without fear, because LCFs did not reprimand, punish, or embarrass girls who made mistakes.

At midline, while the evaluation found some evidence of ENGINE II having an impact on the learning outcomes of ISGs, it also showed that most ISGs (across both treatment and control groups) lagged far behind curriculum expectations. In an assessment that was designed to be aligned to the school curriculum, ISGs scored an average of 23% (out of 100%) on literacy and 12% on numeracy. ENGINE II had led to a 3.5 percentage point improvement in girls' numeracy scores, and to a 2.5 percentage point improvement in literacy, although this was not statistically significant. It is encouraging that at endline, some girls are reporting achieving high marks and passing grades in examinations, which suggests that these girls may be meeting the standards set by the curriculum (although we do not know whether teachers set tests that actually measure the skills expected by the curriculum). However, **given the very low performance observed at midline, it is expected that even if the programme has had further impact between midline and endline, most ISGs will continue to perform well below curriculum expectations.** This is a reflection of the general context that the programme is working in, and indicates how challenging it is for any intervention to overcome foundational skills gaps particularly where teachers may be lacking subject matter knowledge themselves.

**There is insufficient evidence to tell whether the impact on learning that was observed at midline, and the improvements that respondents are reporting at endline, also translate into better educational outcomes for ISGs.** At midline, the evaluation found no impact on transition (which refers to grade promotion or completion of secondary school) for ISGs. However, this is not surprising given that schools in Nigeria have a policy of automatic promotion, where students are promoted to the next grade irrespective of their academic performance. No transition data could be collected at endline, and no information on pass rates in end-of-school examinations is available.

At midline, OSGs were given an easier assessment than ISGs, which tested their foundational literacy and numeracy skills. The evaluation found that between baseline and midline, OSGs were improving on the substantive skills that would likely be useful in day-to-day activities. This included the ability to read and understand simple passages, addition, subtraction and solving word problems. At endline, OSGs often particularly remembered learning skills that are applicable to their everyday lives, such as calculating profit and loss or writing shopping lists for going to the market.

**Despite respondents reporting improvements in learning, as reported in section 3.3.7, the first group of OSGs who were supported by ENGINE II to write transitional examinations achieved a low pass rate.** From the first group of OSGs who were supported to write their exams by the end of Year 2 of the programme, only 14% of girls in the FCT and 50% of girls in Lagos achieved a pass mark in their exams. It is not known how many girls would have achieved pass marks without support from ENGINE II, but these rates are nevertheless low given that ENGINE II screened these girls to ensure they have



minimum levels of knowledge and then provided them with specific support to prepare them for the examinations. Information on pass rates for girls who were supported to take their examinations later on in the programme was not available, and neither is information on how girls who have re-enrolled into secondary education are performing in school. **There is therefore not sufficient evidence to tell whether the impact on learning that was observed at midline, and the improvements that respondents are reporting at endline, also translate into better educational outcomes.** The limited evidence that is available from Year 2 of the programme suggests that many girls continued to lack important knowledge and skills to progress on their educational journeys, but since we do not have evidence from a control group, we cannot compare this to what would have happened in the absence of the ENGINE II intervention.

**Learning for the girls during the pandemic has been mostly self-driven.** Some girls reported participating in online classes organised by ENGINE II, but this was mostly reported in Lagos and the FCT, and is only accessible to girls who have smartphones and can afford data charges. While the programme has adapted quickly to ensure that some girls can continue to access learning sessions, it is clear that not all girls can be reached through such sessions. The girls interviewed in Kaduna and Kano were not aware of the online classes organised by ENGINE II. A few girls also reported learning literacy and numeracy from government programmes broadcast on the radio. Most girls are trying to learn on their own, using their books, sometimes relying on the help of family and community members. A few girls have been able to learn a vocational skill during this period.

## 6 Teaching quality

This chapter starts off with a discussion of the key changes in the way teaching is delivered and disciplinary methods are administered, and the effect this has had on beneficiaries' participation, and improvements in their learning. Section 6.2 looks at how ENGINE has contributed to these changes. Thereafter, Section 6.3 provides an assessment of whether the impact of these improvements has been transferred to other non-ENGINE II classes through cascaded training from ENGINE II LCFs to non-ENGINE II teachers. Findings from LCFs and beneficiaries indicate that improvement in teaching quality has led to a widespread application of the LCTM within schools.

### 6.1 LCFs' teaching methods

Across the states, several respondents noted that more effective teaching methods had been introduced within learning centres, which had led to improved learning for students. As a result of training received to strengthen LCFs' capacity, the LCTM was said to have been actively practised across the states. In addition to trainings received, LCFs reported that supervision visits and mentorship from master trainers contributed to their effective and continuous application of the LCTM in the delivery of sessions.

#### 6.1.1 Changes in teaching methods

##### Findings from monitoring data

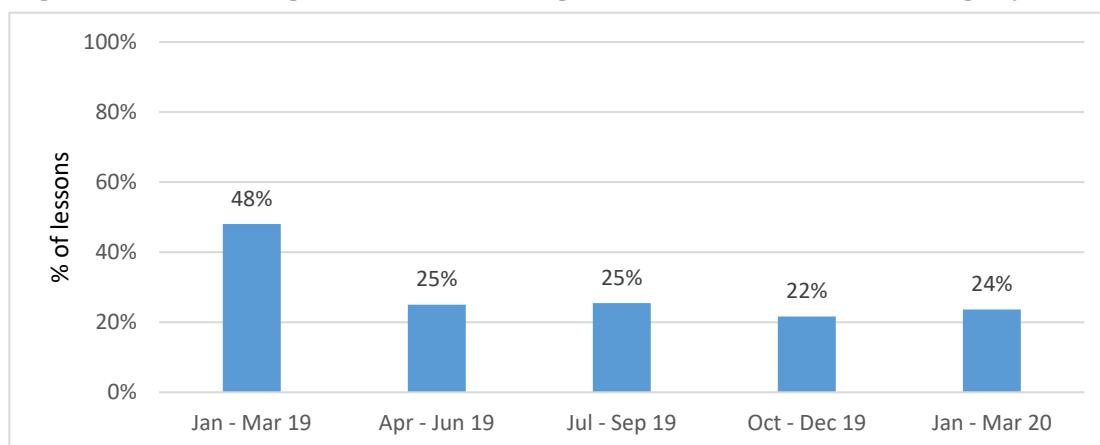
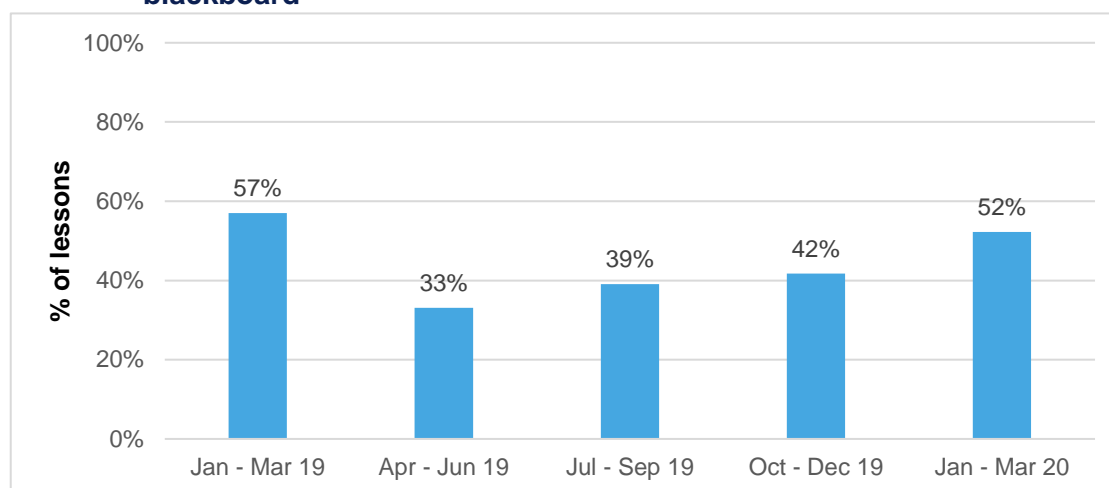
This section begins by looking at the use of certain teaching methods during the lesson, based on lesson observations conducted by master trainers during their supervision visits. The data show the use of certain teaching methods over the course of programme implementation, from January 2019 until March 2020.<sup>86</sup> It is important to note that this type of monitoring data is likely to be of variable reliability, depending on the capacity and motivation of each master trainer.

Figure 6 shows the percentage of lessons where the LCF was using a lecturing style at some point during the lesson. A lecturing style was used in more lessons in the first quarter; after this, it was used in about a quarter of lessons. LCFs were observed writing on the blackboard more frequently during the first and last quarters observed.

A lecturing style and writing on the blackboard are teaching methods that are associated more with a teacher-centred style of teaching. However, using these methods for some parts of a lesson is not in contradiction with using an LCTM. For example, LCFs may use a lecturing style to introduce a new topic before they move on to a discussion of the topic. Similarly, an LCF may write instructions for group work on the blackboard, or may write up an exercise to call a student up to the blackboard to demonstrate.

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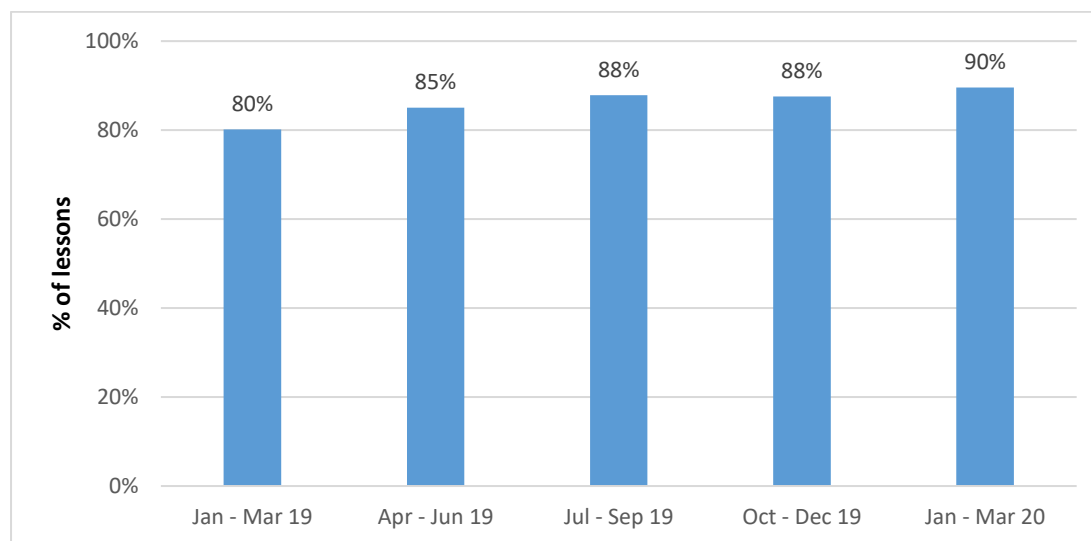
<sup>86</sup> Lesson observations from the first quarter when the learning centre sessions were operational (September – December 2019) were not used in the analysis because the data were found to be noisy. For example, a fairly large number of lesson observations included contradictory answers.

**Figure 7: Percentage of lessons during which LCFs used a lecturing style****Figure 8: Percentage of lessons during which the LCF wrote on the blackboard**

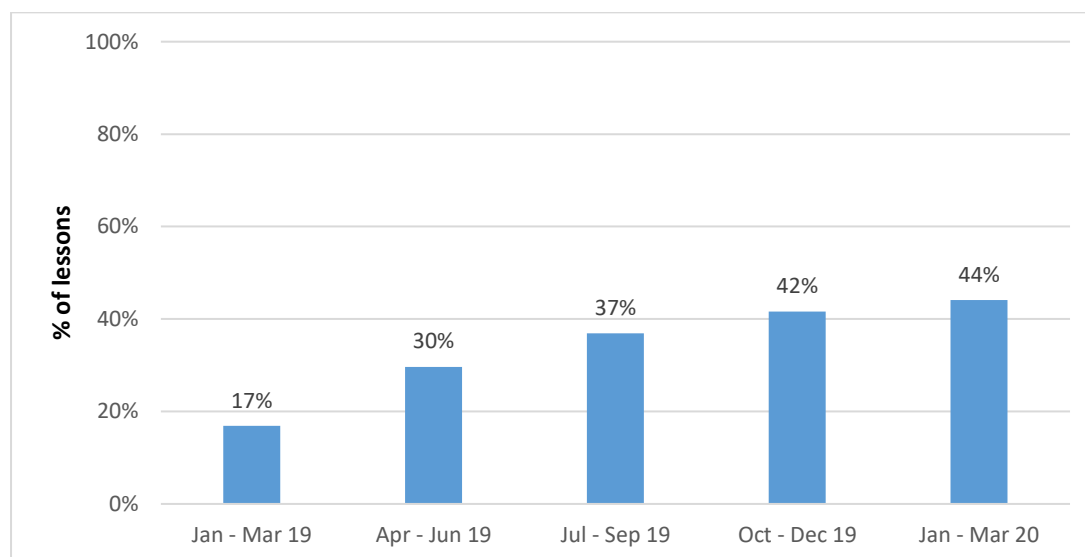
Students participated and volunteered answers in the vast majority of observed lessons in all quarters. In addition, the percentage of lessons during which students participated and volunteered answers increased over time. In the last quarter observed, students were participating and volunteering answers in 90% of lessons.

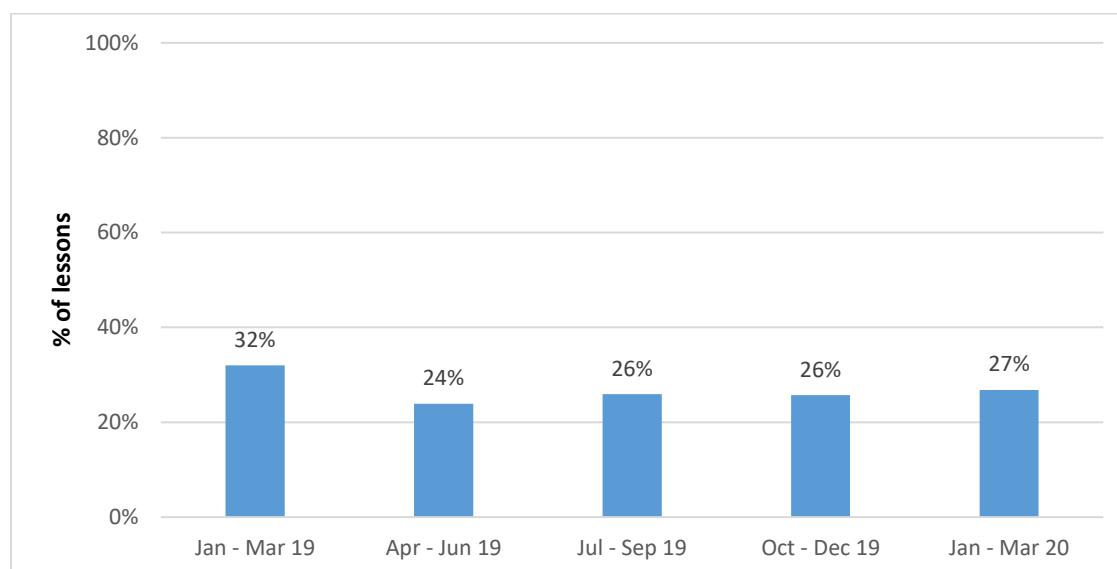
The percentage of lessons during which LCFs used group work also increased over time, from 17% in the first quarter to 44% in the last quarter. Role play was used in about a quarter of lessons.

**Figure 9: Percentage of lessons during which students participated and volunteered**



**Figure 10: Percentage of lessons during which the LCF divided the class into groups**



**Figure 11: Percentage of lessons during which the LCF used role play or dramatisation**

Overall, the monitoring data show good evidence that students were participating and volunteering in the vast majority of lessons, and techniques such as group work and role play were being fairly frequently used.

### Findings from the qualitative research

**Across the states, various respondents reported that learning centre sessions are now primarily centred on the students, rather than on their teachers. LCFs reported that they used to use a teacher-centred approach.** Through the ENGINE II trainings, they realised that the teacher-centred method of teaching does not allow the teacher to receive adequate feedback from their students on their learning needs. For example, an OSG LCF from Kaduna explained:

*I have changed my approach of teaching. Initially I do assume that teaching lies within the facilitator or teachers but after some trainings, I now realised that you will not really understand the needs of the student using this approach because you will only talk and go without hearing from the students and interacting with their needs, leaving them unsatisfied so I now realised that the best thing to do is to follow the approach of LCTM and that is what I have been using since my training.*

An SBMC member from Kano provided a similar opinion:

*On the teachers' teaching style, ENGINE II facilitators have completely changed their method of teaching from the previous style which never encouraged student-teacher relationship, with no good classroom management, no good introduction of lesson, no good evaluation method during lessons, and no good conclusion method. But ENGINE II has now filled all this gap by training the facilitators on how to make learning more interactive. So they are now experts in having a good relationship between themselves and the student, interacting with them during the lesson, becoming friendly with students, which makes the student relax and contribute to the lesson.*

Similarly, a principal from the FCT reported that teaching used to be teacher-centred, relying heavily on the use of experiments, before her teachers received training; thereafter they made the switch to a learner-centred approach. She said:

*There is a change, you know before it was just teacher-oriented style, they lecture then sometimes the teacher gives assignment and also they did lots of experiments but now I noticed that students are the focus because the students are now allowed to express themselves to let the teachers know what they understand and what they really need.*

**LCFs and girls were able to give numerous examples of learner-centred teaching techniques that LCFs now use in the learning centres to encourage the active participation of girls.** With the change in teaching methods, the techniques reported as most frequently used were: group work; research and presentations; role plays; peer-to-peer learning; and the use of teaching aids. Several ISGs and OSGs reported that the LCFs used group work, which involved some form of research and discussion as a group, followed by a presentation of the findings, with the winning group being awarded a prize in some cases. An ISG from Kano described this teaching method as follows:

*They group us whenever we are having a discussion. Also, when it comes to English language or life skills, we do debates. The class will be divided into two groups, one group on each side. They do so because they want to see which group will get the highest score. At the end of the lesson they give out prizes. Truly, even if you do not understand in the group, you will see a friend who understands better, who can explain to you.*

An OSG from Kaduna shared a similar experience from her learning centre sessions, highlighting how girls were both given opportunities to share their opinions with each other and to speak in front of the class. She said: *'We are divided into five groups. She will tell us we should do the lesson in groups, discussing among ourselves, then she will ask us to do our presentation individually, one after the other.'*

In addition to group work, presentations, and debates, LCFs also reported using role play to encourage girls to actively participate in the learning centre sessions. Describing how she used role play in her classroom, an OSG LCF in the FCT stated:

*For instance, if we were treating how schools keep records, I will choose two girls to act a drama, one will dramatise keeping record by writing the quantity while the other will only observe without recording. Then after the drama, I will tell each of them to tell me the correct quantity so only the girl that recorded can give correct answer. This role play works well because they understand more as they participate in it.*

LCFs and girls also spoke about LCFs providing girls with assignments or sharing the topic of the next session ahead of time, so that girls would be able to prepare for contributing during the session. An ISG from the FCT explained:

*If there is any assignment for us especially in English, they can tell us to go and research it, bring ideas that we will contribute to each other then we do debate it in the class.*

An ISG LCF in the FCT reported that she encouraged active participation in her learning centre by sharing the scheme of work before each session. She said:

*I involve the student by giving them the topic to enable them read ahead then before I start the lesson properly, I call them to present by asking them to tell me what they*

*learnt about it. Since I gave them the topic ahead of time with the scheme of work, I can call randomly and the person will come out and tell us what she has learnt, discussing briefly with the other students before I take over the lesson.*

An OSG LCF in Lagos described how she actively engaged girls using peer-to-peer learning while teaching life skill sessions, explaining that it provided an opportunity for girls with certain experiences to teach their peers.

*Like in life skills, now we have some students who have experienced some things while the other ones haven't, we write the topic on the board and then allow the ones who have more experience in the topic to come out to impart knowledge to other girls by sharing their experiences and using this experience to teach their mates.*

**Whilst several master trainers reported that the teaching style had changed from a teacher-centred to an LCTM over the last year, there were still instances where facilitators used a teacher-centred approach.** A master trainer in Kano reported that teaching methods had changed among schools he supervised; however, he estimated that a quarter of LCFs from the 11 communities he supervised were still using the lecturing style. He attributed this to the LCFs being used to this teaching style from their schools, and being unwilling to make a change. In his words:

*They [LCFs] now understand how learner-centred methodology is done, they have even adopted it at the learning centres and in their public schools where they teach. Those that do not use this method are about 25%, they use the lecturing method, they will tell you that this is how they also do it in their schools where they currently teach even though the learner method is flexible, they prefer the one they are already used to.*

Whilst reporting that LCFs now use the LCTM approach, this master trainer from Kaduna reported that some LCFs were still not using teaching aids and were struggling with grouping students. However, he acknowledged that this was due to the unavailability of teaching aids provided by the programme, and irregular attendance by students already grouped together, which often led to the dissolution of such groups during a particular session

*Sometimes they do not have the teaching aid and if it is not available, then they should improvise but sometimes even the improvised one will not be available. They were also shown how to group the class but, in some cases, they do not follow it because according to them, some students who were put in a group today may not be in school tomorrow.*

**None of the parents interviewed could clearly describe the type of teaching methods that were used at the learning centre, or whether they had changed. They had, however, noticed changes in their girls' performance and in their confidence, and they expected that this meant that the LCFs at the learning centres were teaching their daughters well.** For instance, a parent of an ISG in the FCT said:

*I do not know any new teaching method; I am only seeing some changes. I do not know the ones they used before and the ones they are using now but it may be from the way the teachers interact with them, maybe as they are friendly with them and also know how to teach them, they improve.*

An OSG parent from Kano reported that her child had started doing better in school since she started attending the learning centre, and had developed her reading skills: 'She does

*well now, I get very fascinated with what she is able to do, she is reading now. I know they teach them very well, the way they can really understand’.*

### 6.1.2 Changes in girls’ active participation

A key aspect of an LCTM is that students actively participate in the lesson. **Some LCFs reported that it was challenging to encourage participation from students in the beginning.** According to one OSG LCF from Kaduna, she used to find it difficult to encourage her students to participate but had since developed methods to overcome this challenge:

*Yes, the challenging thing about the LCTM is that, at first it was so difficult for the student to come out and participate because they were shy, but we encourage them by clapping and also giving gifts like sharpener, erasers, and pencils. We agreed that the first three persons that will answer each question correctly will be given those items, so this makes them eager to participate now.*

**Overall, girls and LCFs indicated that girls’ active participation in the learning centre sessions had increased because of the teaching methods that LCFs used.** For example, an ISG from the FCT said: *‘it is just like an interactive class. If we have any topic, we talk and get opinions from different angles’.* Different master trainers also corroborated this fact, reporting that students’ confidence in their ability to learn and in their performance had greatly improved due to the switch in teaching methodology. According to this master trainer from the FCT:

*Before, the girls were not the type that open up, you’ll see that less than half of them volunteer to answer questions, but with the training we have had and the introduction of the grouping method, the students are given work in groups which the students work on and present. So, the students are now vocal and work together to think through problems and how to solve these problems and then they actually solve the problem. So, I see that this teaching style has helped the students’ confidence to speak up in class and improved their performance.*

As we have illustrated in the previous chapter, one of the key reasons why girls felt that their learning had improved was because LCFs created an environment where they were able to make mistakes without fear of being reprimanded, punished, or embarrassed. Because girls were not afraid of making mistakes, they participated more actively in the lessons, and this in turn provided LCFs with feedback on areas where girls needed additional support.

**LCFs and girls reported that group work and a peer-to-peer learning approach particularly encourages weaker students to participate, because they learn from their stronger peers, and have the space to ask their peers questions when they do not understand something.** An ISG LCF in Kano explained that the benefit of the peer-to-peer approach is: *‘mixing the weak and the sharp learners so that the weak ones will also participate’.* An ISG LCF in Kaduna reported a similar experience:

*The grouping method ensures that the fast learners carry their counterparts along. Working in group keeps them focused and captivates their attention because those that know explain to others.*

Girls reported a cycle of learning, where, once they had understood something, they would pass that knowledge on to other girls. According to an ISG in Kaduna:



*I do participate very well because I am paired with the ENGINE II girl ambassador. I am paired with her because she knows more than me. Each time I do not understand, I ask her, and she explains to me. Once I understand, I also teach others.*

### 6.1.3 Changes in disciplinary practices within the learning centre

**ISGs and OSGs reported that they were not subjected to corporal punishment, such as being insulted, flogged, or beaten at their learning centres.** LCFs reported that the disciplinary measures they used in the past at either the schools or the learning centres included insulting students, asking them to clean toilets and the surroundings, and flogging persistent defaulters. For instance, this ISG LCF from Kano reported: *'Personally I never beat students but those facilitators that used to beat the children during normal class later changed because they do not beat during the ENGINE II class since we were taught that it is not right'*.

**The most frequently used disciplinary practice reported by the girls across the states was making students carry out more learning activities, such as making the student repeat what the LCF just taught to the class and giving presentation tasks or additional homework as punishment for being disruptive in class.** LCFs would also caution students to focus on their studies. According to an OSG from Lagos:

*The teacher might scold the person, but they do not beat. When she is teaching, and someone is saying another thing or discussing with another person she will just caution the person by asking the person a question, like she can just say what did I just say, or what did I just finish saying, or come and solve this particular work for us.*

An OSG from Kaduna also described that her LCF cautioned disruptive students to be more focused. She said: *'Truly they caution someone to be more focused and to stop making noise because if you are making noise you will not understand the lesson'*.

**Another disciplinary measure reported, focusing on the use of positive discipline, was providing a structure for students by explaining the reasons for rules and involving students in setting those rules.** For instance, one OSG LCF from Kaduna involved her students in setting rules:

*Basically, we set rules and the rules are suggested by the girls, they suggested that anyone who breaks the rule be punished. The girls suggested that, if anyone commit offence three times, offence like coming to class late three times or making noise after three warnings then you will pay a fine of 20 naira. And they agreed that the 20 naira will be collected by the girl ambassador and they decide on what to use it for.*

Other LCFs reported that students were asked to pay small fines for being disruptive but did not mention whether there was a collaborative process for establishing this rule. The money collected was used to buy gifts for any student who was hospitalised, or to reward good behaviour as a means of motivating other students. However, LCFs and girls reported that paying fines was not frequently used as a disciplinary measure. According to an OSG from Kano fining was hardly practised because *'girls are usually obedient since they cannot afford to pay the fined amount'*.

**However, some LCFs also described the use of disciplinary measures that would not be considered to be positive discipline, because they focus on taking away privileges or causing embarrassment.** Some girls and LCFs mentioned the use of disciplinary measures aimed at embarrassing students. In such instances, students could be asked to stand or kneel if they were found to be disrupting the class. Both LCFs and girls reported

that the allotted time could range from five minutes to the entire duration of the period for that subject. According to an ISG LCF in Kano:

*When I catch a child making noise or disturbing one or more people in the class, while I am teaching, I will bring such child out, tell the child the offence he or she committed and ask the child to face the class, sometimes tell them to go on their knees to serve punishment or keep them standing.*

Similarly, the OSG LCF from Kaduna said:

*I do ask any offender especially those making noise while I am teaching in the class to stand up. I use this method because I am dealing with adults.*

Whilst speaking on this the traditional leader from Lagos added:

*Sometimes she [the LCF] tells them to kneel down, other times she will say to stand for some minutes like up to 30 minutes, but it does not take up to complete one hour and then they sit down. Sometimes she will tell the student to go outside the class then later the student will be called back to the class.*

In some cases, these different disciplinary approaches are combined. For example, an ISG from Kaduna described:

*He [the LCF] will make them stay outside and listen through the window for like five minutes while he continues his lessons, after a while he will tell them to come into the classroom then he will warn them not to do it again and then he will ask them questions about the lesson that was taught if they do not give an answer he will tell them to keep standing, while he gives them explanation about the lesson.*

As explained in Section 6.1.4, the girls reported that they found this punishment embarrassing, so they avoided being disruptive in class. In some cases, disruptive students were asked to stand because there were insufficient seats in the classroom. This meant that several students had to stand, and disruptive students were asked to give up their privilege of a seat to another student.

**It is important to note that most girls and LCFs spoke about these disciplinary measures being used when students were being disruptive. Girls generally did not report that they were punished for getting answers wrong.** In fact, as has been discussed in previous sections, LCFs created an environment where girls no longer felt afraid of making mistakes in class because they knew that they would not be punished or embarrassed because of them.

### **6.1.4 Effect of changes in disciplinary practices**

Both ISGs and OSGs were happy with the disciplinary measures used over the last year at their learning centres. **Several of them noted that these disciplinary measures had helped them become more focused for two reasons: either because they were avoiding embarrassment or because they were motivated to get a reward.**

For the OSG respondent from Kano quoted below, she was motivated to perform better in class because her teacher rewarded good behaviour. It was the fact that another student could get a reward for good performance rather than her that made her pay attention in class, signalling that the use of positive discipline, such as rewarding good behaviour, stimulated competition among the students. The OSG said:

*When you are unable to read and they ask someone else to read, if the person does it, they present a gift to that person so you will not be happy if you do not get the gift and it will make you to tighten your belt [do better].*

**Other students reported being motivated to behave better during their learning centre sessions to avoid the negative consequences of discipline.** The fear of being embarrassed before the class made them pay attention in class. An ISG respondent from Kano reported that students in her class behaved better because they did not want to be embarrassed in front of the class. She said:

*When a student keeps making noise the teacher will tell the student to stand, while the class is ongoing, so for such student not to be embarrassed they make sure they keep quiet and concentrate on what is being taught.*

Several girls reported that they felt that fear of embarrassment is an effective way of preventing disruptive behaviour, and is better than corporal punishment. For instance, this ISG from the FCT reported:

*I think it is better than flogging because telling the child to stand up for some minutes makes her feel embarrassed so she will not make noise or disturb the class in future.*

Mixed views were presented by LCFs with regard to the effect of the disciplinary practices applied on students. According to an OSG LCF from the FCT who used fines in her classroom to correct errant behaviour, this method of discipline was working because: 'Now when they come to class, they do keep quiet because no one wants to pay a fine'.

However, for an OSG LCF from Lagos who only used cautioning the students as a disciplinary style in her learning centre, she reported that the students did not respect her as a result of the disciplinary measures she applied. According to her: 'Most times the girls feel like all I will do is talk so they do what they feel like doing and that is not really helping'.

### **6.1.5 Disciplinary practices in the general school community**

Disciplinary practices in the school community outside of the learning centre sessions varied. Some schools frowned on practising corporal punishment, as reported by this SBMC member from Kaduna: 'We totally discourage corporal punishment'. Others still reported practising it, though according to an SBMC member from Kano, only the principal was allowed to administer corporal punishment, following strict protocols that acted as a check against abuse:

*Anything that requires discipline is taken with utmost care because of its dangerous nature. The school head is the only person responsible for corporal punishment, and this does not exceed two to three strokes and it must be recorded in the punishment logbook. If the habit persists, we invite the parent and sit in a committee to resolve it.*

For those school that frowned on flogging students, disciplinary practices ranged from asking students to clean the school environment and toilets, to performing other tasks before or after school, in order not to hamper academic activities. For instance, one SBMC member from Kaduna reported:

*If a child commits an offence there are ways that we discipline them. They can be asked to sweep or wash toilets or to fetch water and if their bad behaviour escalates, we then invite the students' parents for a meeting to inform them of the child's behaviour.*

## 6.2 ENGINE II's contribution to changes in teaching methods

All respondents attributed the changes in the teaching methods to ENGINE II. LCFs indicated that they had changed their teaching styles based on the trainings provided by ENGINE II, such as training on improvising teaching aids, drawing up lesson plans, active participation. The ENGINE II teaching manuals and training on the use of those manuals also contributed. Several teachers attested to the use of the 'Teaching Menu Manual' and 'ENGINE II Teachers' Guide', which helped them break down learning to the students. According to one ISG LCF from the FCT, he changed his old teaching approach as a result of attending trainings with ENGINE II, where he was exposed to the LCTM:

*I changed the old approach, I mean the old method of teaching, because of the ENGINE teacher development trainings we attended, where we were exposed to different ways to teaching, such as the learner-centred method.*

For the OSG LCF from Lagos quoted below, the programme training content aimed to develop the teacher's ability to centre their classes around their students:

*I was trained on how to start the class, how to increase the girls' interest, in any subject we want to teach, and to hold their attention from the beginning to the end of the class. How to make the girls active learners and how to make them participate, because we were taught that everything we do in the classroom should be focused on the girls and in the interest of the girls.*

An SBMC member from Kano shared how he felt that ENGINE II had led to improvements in LCFs' teaching methods:

*ENGINE equipped teachers with the skills to use instructional materials, how to build student relationship, as well as how they should perfectly introduce their lesson from the start, that is moving from simple to complex ideas or using previous experience to start new topic so there is linkage between topics. In a nutshell, these trainings helped in making teachers up to date and ensuring they are fully prepared to interact with the students, leading to an improvement in performance.*

In addition, the ISG LCF from Kano quoted below reported that ENGINE II provided books to the teachers that provided guidelines on simplifying teaching so the students can understand:

*Since the training, I got to understand some new teaching techniques like grouping the students, which I apply during teaching. Also, they gave us books at the training. I got books that I use for my teachings. There is this book, 'Teaching Menu' and 'ENGINE II Teachers' Guide'. Honestly, I use both books a lot. In the books, there are guidelines to teaching and how the children can understand what you teach. I go through them and apply those guidelines in my class.*

For other LCFs, the provision of teaching aids also paved the way for a change in teaching methods. An OSG LCF from Kaduna also reported that he was taught how to improvise teaching aids:

*ENGINE has tried in supporting my teaching. One is the training I receive on monthly basis, then they provide materials such as the numeracy textbook for students, the chalk and marker I use to write on the board, and teaching aids like calendar of numbers. The training was helpful. It has changed my perspective and my method of*

*approach to the student. I learnt how to develop the lesson plan and even how to improvise teaching aids.*

Some master trainers attributed the improvement in teaching to constant supervision of the LCFs. According to a master trainer from Kaduna, this supervision '*makes the teachers do what is right*' by keeping the LCFs on high alert, ensuring they are focused on following the instructions provided during training. Another master trainer from Kano said:

*I could remember the time I went for the supervision, you will see a teacher discussing something and instead of completing it he will jump to another thing and you have to call her aside and talk to her and then she will do it well. There are some that know how to do it but they just don't want to do it but with our supervision now they will do it because we inspect their lesson plan, we inspect their attendance and we do not tell them the time we are coming we just surprise them, by doing that actually they have improved and their students too have improved.*

**Whilst master trainers agreed that teaching quality had improved as a result of the various trainings they provided and the continuous reinforcement provided through supervision, a master trainer from Kaduna felt that there was room for further improvement because not all LCFs were using the methods from the training, particularly around grouping students.** He added that the LCFs reported to him that grouping the students was a challenge because students did not attend consistently, so they constantly had to be re-grouped.

*What I am trying to let you know, we actually trained them on how to carry the learners along. For example, some training topics focus on how to group students, but you know in our supervision, I discovered that they find it difficult practicalising it in the class. According to them when I asked them why, they say students are not normally coming, sometimes if they have given them a group today, they will not come to school tomorrow.*

The LCFs felt that for the most part they faced no challenges in implementing the trainings they had received, but some mentioned minor challenges. These included striking a balance between outspoken and shy students, as reported by this OSG LCF from Lagos:

*In the case of dramatisation, when you ask them to come out to act, some of the girls will be like they do not want to act, so that has been a challenge. It is only when you talk to them and encourage them then they will decide to participate, though we have some that are also overly excited to participate.*

**Also, various respondents mentioned that implementing the new teaching methods in the classes was challenging because several girls had to share one textbook as** ENGINE II did not provide textbooks to each student. According to an ISG LCF from Kano, each student having their own textbook would encourage the continuation of learning at home:

*Textbooks will be helpful, each child should be given a textbook because after teaching them in class, they go back home to learn more, especially when we give them homework to do.*

**LCFs in Kaduna and Lagos reported that insufficient classroom space and insufficient seats often led to their students getting tired and losing concentration before classes were over.** Another consequence of this was the challenge it posed to grouping students. An OSG LCF from Lagos, whilst discussing the challenge she faced in implementing her training, explained:

*I have a challenge with grouping the girls because the classroom space is not enough. Some students do not get chairs to sit, so they have to stand and write while standing, while some people will sit on the window and write from there which makes them uncomfortable and easily distracted.*

**Lastly, LCFs pointed out that for some girls, the challenge in teaching them had been a general lack of interest in some of the classes.** As has been illustrated in Chapter 4, a preference for learning vocational and business skills led to poor attendance at the learning centres. It also meant that some girls lacked interest in the literacy and numeracy sessions when they did attend.

### **6.3 Cascading of ENGINE II training to other teachers in ENGINE schools**

Interviews were held with master trainers, teachers not directly trained by ENGINE II, principals, and LCFs, to ascertain whether ENGINE II LCFs carried out step-down training within their schools. Reports from these respondents indicate that ENGINE II training had been cascaded to teachers not directly trained by ENGINE II across the states. However, one of the schools in the FCT was yet to hold this training because, according to the teacher (who had not been directly trained by ENGINE II): *'the training was planned for April 2020 but cancelled because schools closed suddenly as a result of COVID-19 lockdown'*. However, the ENGINE II LCF for this school reported that all plans for the training were in place, and the training would be held as soon as schools resume. According to him, the training will focus on the LCTM because of the progress shown by ENGINE girls within the school, and the training content will cover *'effective classroom management, child-centred method of teaching, and also learning benchmarks'*.

These step-down trainings were usually held immediately after the ENGINE II training with the master trainers and were open to all teachers within the schools, but participation was optional. As a result, a teacher (not directly trained by ENGINE II) from Kano reported: *'the training that held in the early hours of the day was more widely attended while the one that held after school hours had poor attendance'*. He further reported that, though training was organised centrally by ENGINE II, the sessions were held within the school premises and were administered by ENGINE II LCFs. The principal from one of the schools in the FCT also reported that the step-down training was organised by the LCFs within the school, with a couple of ENGINE II staff in attendance. However, the step-down training seems to have been done informally, between the literacy tutor and other English tutors in the school:

*The facilitator teaches English, so she sometimes trains the other English teachers on the teaching methods she has learnt.*

According to a teacher (not directly trained by ENGINE II) from Kaduna, the major focus of training was the LCTM, including grouping students:

*The major content of the training was the learner-centred method of teaching and they taught us about clustering students.*

Similarly, a teacher (not directly trained by ENGINE II) from Kano listed the same training topics, and also included the use of teaching aids and how to develop lesson plans:

*Four months ago, I received training from the ENGINE II teacher in my school and the NGO staff. They presented a lecture about teaching methods, lesson planning, and then about the materials, that is the teaching aids.*

Teachers (not directly trained by ENGINE II) who attended these trainings described the trainings as useful and reported that they had incorporated the LCTM in their classes, mostly by using dramatisation, role play, and peer-to-peer mentoring, ascribing improvement in student academic performance in their subjects over the last year to their use of LCTM. A teacher (not directly trained by ENGINE II) from Kaduna reported:

*In my school here, there is a forum, organised by ENGINE teachers. It started with the English teachers. A room was given to teachers to participate. So, I participate in the workshop and it was useful. Since then, I personally use the dramatisation method and interactive method to teach, that is where you engage the student in what you teach. Allowing them to participate freely, allowing them to contribute right from the beginning of the class, and once I introduce the lesson, I let the student who have more knowledge to teach others so they can understand easily. I think, that is why there is improvement.*

The timing of the training (after school hours) and the fact that attendance was not mandated may have impacted attendance in Kano, as reported above.

Respondents further reported that a major challenge in applying the LCTM was the lack of teaching aids and the unavailability of textbooks in subjects that were not funded by the programme.

## 6.4 Conclusion

At midline, the evaluation found no evidence of impact of the intervention on teaching quality based on LCFs' self-reported use of learner-centred methods on the Principles of Adult Learner Scale (PALS). As reported in section 3.3.6, early monitoring visits conducted by the programme also showed a slow adoption of the LCTM, and that it took a while for LCFs to make the shift from their regular classroom teacher-centred approach of teaching to the ENGINE II LCTM. Despite this, the midline evaluation provided evidence that ISGs perceived an improvement in the quality of teaching that they were provided with, and in the qualitative research, there were already some indications of LCFs using learner-centred approaches.

**At endline, LCFs and girls strongly felt that LCFs at the learning centre were now teaching using a learner-centred approach.** Common methods used during the learning centre sessions included group work, role play, research and presentations, and peer-to-peer learning. While the endline evaluation is not able to robustly measure the impact of the programme on teaching quality, in the qualitative research at endline, all respondents were able to provide detailed examples of how LCFs are using learner-centred approaches during the learning centre sessions. This is also in line with the programme's own monitoring reports, which noted improved adoption of the LCTM in the last year of the programme.

**Girls and LCFs indicated that girls' active participation in the learning centre sessions had increased because of the teaching methods that LCFs used.** Programme monitoring data also show that girls participated in the sessions and volunteered answers in most observed lessons. Respondents were able to provide detailed examples of how the teaching methods mentioned above encourage girls to actively participate during the sessions. In particular, LCFs and girls felt that group work and peer-to-peer learning approaches were particularly helpful for encouraging weaker pupils to participate, because they learn from their stronger peers, and have the space to ask their peers questions when they do not understand something.

**One aspect that girls found important was that LCFs created an environment where girls could make mistakes without fear of punishment or embarrassment.** Girls

reported that they were punished only for being disruptive, but not for answering questions incorrectly. When they made a mistake, the LCF would explain the concept again or would patiently work together with the student to help them arrive at the correct answer. As noted above, this approach gave the girls confidence in their ability to learn, as well as confidence in their ability to communicate effectively.

**LCFs did not use corporal punishment at the learning centre sessions. Most LCFs made use of at least some positive discipline practices, such as giving additional learning activities to disruptive students and rewarding good behaviour.** However, many reported that they asked students to stand or kneel as punishment for being disruptive, in some cases for up to 30 minutes. Girls were motivated not to be disruptive both by the rewards for their good behaviour, but also because they wanted to avoid embarrassment.

All respondents indicated that LCFs had changed their teaching methods because of ENGINE II. This was mostly attributed to attendance at the trainings, as well as to the teacher guides that were distributed.

**Despite these improvements, some master trainers noted that some LCFs were still using teacher-centred approaches, and that there was further room for improvement in the use of some learner-centred techniques,** such as the use of group work. This is in line with the programme progress reports, which indicate that LCFs were slow to adopt the LCTM, and continued to struggle with some aspects of the LCTM, including the use of group work and the use of improvised materials later on in the programme. In addition, as reported in section 3.3.6, programme monitoring identified that some LCFs had low subject matter competency, with OSG LCFs particularly lacking sufficient numeracy content knowledge, and all LCFs struggling with phonological awareness. These challenges were not identified by LCFs themselves or by master trainers interviewed in the qualitative research. However, the qualitative research focused on the use of the LCTM and this might be the reason that challenges with subject matter competency did not come up. The challenges with subject matter competency were only identified during the completion of the implementation review and due to time constraints in the evaluation timeline, the qualitative research had already been completed at this point.

For LCFs, the main challenges in applying the LCTM centred around a lack of textbooks and teaching aids, and a lack of sufficient space at the learning centre.



## 7 Life skills

This chapter presents our findings on perceptions of changes in girls' life skills, with a focus on goal setting, and assertiveness and communication skills. Starting with goal setting skills, in Section 7.1.1, we first discuss the types of goals that girls had set and the steps they had put in place towards achieving these goals. In Section 7.1.2, we discuss how ENGINE II's life skills sessions on goal setting contributed towards building girls' goal setting skills, while in Section 7.1.3, we mention other factors that contributed to girls' ability to set goals. In Section 7.2.1, we discuss changes in girls' communication and assertiveness, including communicating more respectfully, having greater confidence in their opinions, and being more assertive in their communication. In Section 7.2.2, we discuss how ENGINE II contributed to improvements in girls' assertiveness and communication, including through life skills' sessions and through the use of learner-centred teaching methods that encourage active participation. Next, we examine other life skills that girls learnt from the life skills sessions (Section 7.3), and, subsequently, how girls have been using their life skills to cope during the COVID-19 pandemic (Section 7.4).

The midline evaluation found a statistically significant and attributable impact of ENGINE II on life skills, measured using a life skills index that captures general life skills. This finding was supported by the qualitative research which demonstrated the different channels in how life skills have improved for ISGs and OSGs. For ISGs improved life skills had enabled them to better engage with their teachers and peers in class, to communicate more clearly and to make more informed decisions. OSGs had improved their confidence to interact with their customers as well as be more assertive. At endline, we built on the findings of the midline evaluation by examining two life skills (goal setting, and assertiveness and communication) in more detail. This allowed us to focus in more detail on understanding how and why certain life skills have changed as a result of the ENGINE II programme.

As has been noted in Chapter 2, the programme aims to improve a broader range of life skills but not all of these could be assessed at endline. In particular, the endline evaluation as originally designed intended to provide evidence on the impact that ENGINE II has had on girls' menstrual hygiene management and knowledge but this topic was too sensitive to be covered during phone interviews.

### 7.1 Goal setting skills

In this section, we report on how ENGINE II contributed to developing girls' goal setting skills. First, we describe the types of goals that girls set for themselves and the steps that they put in place to achieve them. Next, we discuss the contribution of the ENGINE II life skills' sessions, as well as the support provided by LCFs. Lastly, we discuss other contributors to girls' goal setting skills.

#### 7.1.1 Types of goals and steps to achieve them

**When asked about the types of goals girls had set for themselves, most girls mentioned big, long-term goals focused on their education, career, or businesses.**

The most frequently reported goal was related to girls' education. Many OSGs had set a goal to return to school, while many ISGs had set goals of starting tertiary education. Girls also had goals of pursuing various professional careers, such as becoming doctors, lawyers, and teachers. Other girls set goals to learn vocational skills, such as tailoring, hairdressing, make-up, and bag-making skills. The time horizon for most girls was between two and five years from deciding what to aim for and reaching that goal.

**Many girls described specific steps that they had taken that would bring them closer to accomplishing their goals.** For example, ISGs reported registering for university entrance examinations as a step taken to achieve their goal of starting tertiary education. Girls were also focusing on their studies to support their educational goals. An ISG in Kano said: *'I am working hard to achieve my dream of becoming a doctor by studying hard. I get medical books to read from my neighbour who is currently studying medicine'*.

A parent from Kano had this to say about the effort her daughter had put into achieving her goal to be a tailor:

*She wanted to be a tailor, so she is currently training to be a tailor and plans to start her business in the next three months. She practices her skill by mending our clothes and also when she goes to her sister's house, she uses the sewing machine there to practise. She sewed her last Sallah outfit by herself.*

Similarly, another parent from Lagos described how the ENGINE II vocational training had brought her daughter closer to achieving her goal:

*My daughter's goal is to get into the university and also to own a shop where she can sell fabrics, tailoring materials, and sew. She has always wanted to learn how to sew and thanks to the ENGINE vocational training, she achieved that training and is currently making money from sewing at home.*

**For many girls, however, financial constraints meant that they were not able to immediately pursue their goals.** Rather, they had to try to find ways to earn and save money, so that they could invest this money in the training or education they needed to achieve their goals. A few girls indicated that they had been able to go into different forms of petty trading to save, until they were able to fund their goals. For example, an OSG in the FCT said:

*My goal was to learn make-up and start a business. I have been working for someone to earn some money and enrolled for make-up classes with the money saved. I have now graduated from the make-up classes and I am currently saving money towards purchasing products so that I can start my own business.*

Another OSG from the FCT reported that she was currently selling vegetables to save for her WASSCE and NECO examination fees.

The difficulty of overcoming these financial constraints also meant that it was difficult for some girls to plan in detail how they would achieve their goals. For example, an OSG in Kaduna said:

*I set a goal to continue schooling three years ago, but I have not achieved that. I simply pray to God and find petty jobs around to do. I do farm work and save what I can. I am trying really hard and hope I can put things in place someday.*

### **7.1.2 ENGINE II's contribution to goal setting**

**Among respondents who attended the learning centres regularly, most ISGs and OSGs remembered that they had attended life skills sessions on goal setting and had found them helpful.** For some, ENGINE II had introduced them to the concept of setting goals. For example, an OSG in Kaduna said: *'I never thought of setting goals but since I joined ENGINE II, I have set goals to continue with my education and start a business'*. Most

girls reported that they had had goals for themselves before ENGINE II but that the life skills sessions helped them to think about how to go about achieving those goals.

**The majority of girls were unable to specify what they were taught concerning goal setting during the life skills sessions.** Some girls mentioned that what they learnt from the life skills sessions was the need to **put in place a plan that sets out steps or smaller tasks** that contribute towards the bigger goal. For example, an OSG in Kaduna said:

*I have had this goal ever since but I did not know how to go about it. It was when I started attending ENGINE II and learned that there are steps then I started planning and setting my goals in proper order, bit by bit.*

The idea of starting small was also something that girls with business goals spoke about. They mentioned that the ENGINE II sessions taught them about saving and reinvesting in one's business in order to become profitable. An OSG in Kaduna explained:

*Before now I had only dreamt of just getting a large sum of money to start a business but ENGINE II exposed me to how I could start little and be able to save with time. I can then in return put in what I have saved back to the business.*

Some girls learnt that it is important to **focus on one goal at a time**. According to an ISG in Kano:

*ENGINE has helped me to focus on one dream at a time. I did that and I am now working hard to achieve it by studying my books and reading some medical books that can help me to become a doctor in the future.*

Breaking their goals down into smaller steps, or focusing in on specific goals, made these goals feel more achievable to the girls. For example, an OSG in Kano said:

*I had some goal before I joined but ENGINE II gave me the required push and in the last year, I have achieved one of my goals. My LCF made me realise that I can make something tangible out of the small opportunities and things around me. I was not previously conscious of that.*

Some girls reported having become more confident that they can achieve their goals. According to one OSG from Kaduna: *'The programme made me believe in my abilities and made me more proactive in achieving my goals'*.

In addition to the specific life skills sessions, girls also mentioned that the LCFs played an important role in encouraging and advising the girls through the process of pursuing their goals. Most girls interviewed attested to the fact that the LCFs went beyond teaching them about goal setting and how to achieve such goals, to personally following up with them individually to encourage and guide them towards achieving these goals.

On the other hand, most parents were not aware of whether ENGINE II had contributed to their daughters' goal setting skills. The majority of parents said they were aware of their daughters' goals, but few could say whether the goals were inspired by ENGINE II because they had not spoken to their daughters about it.

While the focus of the research was on understanding how ENGINE II had contributed towards building this life skill, many girls also spoke about whether ENGINE II had provided them with direct, tangible support to achieve their goals.

**Many girls, particularly OSGs, stated that they would appreciate – and in many cases had expected to receive – direct financial support from ENGINE II to help them**

**achieve their goals.** Most OSGs confirmed that the programme supported their goals by helping them learn various skills, but they had also expected to receive direct financial support from the programme. In the words of an OSG in Lagos: *'I thought we would get support for our business like the girls in ENGINE I did, but I was disappointed, so I stopped attending'*.

Some parents and girls reported that they had received direct support from ENGINE II to achieve their goals through the payment of examination fees or linkages to vocational training. For example, an ISG from the FCT said: *'When I wrote the first qualifying exams I failed, so ENGINE II stepped up and paid my registration fees for the next one. I wrote NECO because of their support'*.

### 7.1.3 Other contributors to goal setting

Many girls received encouragement from their parent to set and pursue their goals. For example, an OSG in Kaduna said: *'My parents have been encouraging and supporting me through constant advice'*. Family support was an important source of motivation for the girls to pursue their dreams and set realistic goals.

A few OSGs mentioned that seeing their peers progress academically while leaving them behind had motivated them to do better in their lives. This contributed to a few of them setting goals to return to school. According to an OSG in Kaduna:

*Seeing my friends ahead of me in life contributed to pushing me to set goals to go back to school and start a business. My friends have progressed educationally while I am a school dropout and that has been a source of concern to me.*

## 7.2 Changes in assertiveness and communication

In this section, we consider how girls' assertiveness and communication skills changed, including the fact that girls began communicating more respectfully, had greater confidence to communicate their opinions, and were more assertive. Then we examine how ENGINE II contributed to this through the life skills sessions and using learner-centred teaching methods that encouraged girls' active participation.

### 7.2.1 Types of changes in assertiveness and communication

Respondents noticed major changes in girls' ability to communicate effectively, and in their confidence in communicating and using their voice to tackle difficult situations.

#### Communicating more respectfully

**Girls reported that through ENGINE II they had learnt to communicate with other people respectfully and politely, and that they now take other people's feelings into account.** Several girls mentioned that, while they had previously not been scared to talk to other people, they used to speak *'without control'* and therefore came across as being disrespectful. According to an ISG in Lagos: *'I did not care who I was talking to before ENGINE II, I would just say whatever comes to my at the point but ENGINE II taught me to respect people's feelings when I talk to them'*.

Parents and other community members had also noticed these changes. An SBMC representative in Lagos said: *'Most of these girls were ill-mannered but now there is a*

*positive change. They now know how to communicate with elders*'. A parent from the FCT held a similar opinion, saying:

*The programme has helped my daughter to respect her customers and not to be rude to them. She used to be a very rude girl, but she has changed since she joined them.*

According to this parent, her daughter's change in communication style had helped her to gain more customers at her shop.

## **Having greater confidence to communicate**

**Girls also reported that their confidence to communicate with others, and particularly to voice their own opinions, had increased. Many girls reported that they would previously stay quiet because they were afraid of what other people would think of them. Through ENGINE II, they overcame this fear.** According to an ISG in Kaduna:

*Before I got enrolled in the ENGINE II programme I could not communicate with people because I was always afraid, but we were taught that when we are talking among people we should not be afraid because if we make any mistake we will be corrected and everything will be fine. I noticed that when I started speaking to people around, everything was just fine.*

These changes in confidence were also observed by LCFs and girls' parents. An LCF in Lagos said:

*Girls now communicate better. Some girls that could not communicate before due to lack of confidence have now come out of their shell and can now easily relate how they feel.*

A parent from Kano had also noticed a change in her daughter's confidence to express her own opinion:

*My daughter goes for what she wants and even when she shares her opinion with people and they disagree, she does not go back to change it just to fit in. She would rather be alone on her opinion.*

Being afraid of what other people would think of them was also a reason why some girls did not previously feel confident about communicating in English. However, through the learning centre sessions, girls learnt that they would only be able to learn and improve if they started speaking in English. An OSG from Lagos said:

*I was previously not good at speaking English at all so in class we were told not to be shy to speak what we can, and anything we do not understand, we should ask about so that we can learn.*

## **Being more assertive in their communication**

Assertiveness is usually defined as a combination of the two skills that have been described above: being confident and self-assured in what you want to communicate and being able to do this in a respectful manner. Assertiveness is also usually associated with being able to achieve something (for yourself or for others) through this means of communication.

**LCFs, parents, and community members expressed how they had observed girls becoming more assertive in their communication. As a result, girls were able to effectively communicate with their elders or in formal situations.** An OSG parent from

Lagos spoke about the remarkable change she had observed in her daughter because of ENGINE II. The improvements in her daughter's confidence and ability to communicate had enabled her daughter to effectively address an issue that her sibling was facing at school. The parent explained:

*Her self-esteem has grown tremendously, and she is more outspoken because in the past, when she is asked a question, she takes time to respond but recently, when she is asked a question she responds swiftly. Even when there are issues with her younger ones at their school, she always insists to go address the issue. Before I knew what was going on, she had already followed him to school. And then came back to give me feedback. I then asked where she got all the courage from and she told me it is what she is being taught at the ENGINE II learning centre. She said she was taught how to respectfully express herself.*

A parent from Kano shared how her daughter was able to communicate effectively with someone whom others found it difficult to communicate with. She explained:

*My daughter is the shy type but she can now stand where so many people are in attendance without any fear. She also confronted her aunty when they both had an altercation. Other members of the family could not approach the aunty, but they were surprised at the way she stood her ground and spoke to the aunty.*

**In addition, girls were now able to stand up for themselves and for others, even in very difficult circumstances.** A girl ambassador from Lagos spoke about how she confronted a teacher at her school who was molesting girls. In her words: *'I decided to approach the teacher and told him to stop what he was doing and later also reported him to the school management'*. An OSG in Lagos shared that she had become more self-confident to speak up and defend herself from abuse. According to her, she was maltreated by her family and was scared to react but the assertiveness lessons helped her gain confidence to speak up against the maltreatment: she found that her family stopped mistreating her after she spoke up.

A parent in Kano also supported this view, saying: *'ENGINE II has taught the girls how to be bold and to have confidence in public, especially when someone has infringed on their rights'*.

### **Remaining challenges with communication**

A small number of girls expressed a desire to be more confident but said that they still felt shy and fearful. One ISG in Kano stated:

*My LCF has advised me about talking to people and told me not to be afraid or shy but I don't know why I am still uncomfortable talking in public. I also don't like to share my opinions because I am scared of what people would say.*

A few girls expressed that they still had difficulty communicating with certain people or about certain topics. Some girls found it difficult to communicate with their fathers because they were stern and unavailable, while some girls said that they found it difficult to communicate about sensitive topics.

## **7.2.2 ENGINE II's contribution to changes in assertiveness and communication**

**Girls, LCFs, parents, and community members all strongly felt that girls' communication and assertiveness had improved because of ENGINE II, as has been**

**illustrated by the quotes in the previous section.** In this section, we discuss how ENGINE II contributed to these changes.

In Section 5.2.2, we discussed the fact that girls' confidence in their ability to learn increased because the LCFs created an environment at the learning centre where **girls felt able to make mistakes** without being reprimanded, punished, or embarrassed. Girls reported that LCFs also taught them to apply this lesson outside of the classroom. Girls learnt that it is normal to make mistakes, and that there is nothing wrong with being corrected when you do make a mistake. As we have illustrated in the section above, girls found that when they overcame their fear and tried speaking up about something, they realised that *'everything is just fine'*.

Girls also mentioned that they had **learnt from the life skills sessions that problems can be resolved through communication**. An ISG in Kaduna said:

*I can now open up to others and discuss my opinions because I learnt from ENGINE II that issues are only resolved and addressed when discussed with others.*

**Teaching methods that encouraged girls to actively participate and to express their opinions also contributed to girls' improvements in communication.** One LCF from Lagos explained how the use of role plays improved girls' ability to communicate:

*Great communication was achieved through the role play sessions in the class where girls were asked to think on what they want to become and present their ideas to the class. Girls now understand that there is verbal and non-verbal communication, and can effectively communicate.*

In Sections 5.2.2 and 6.1.2 we showed that the peer-to-peer learning approach and group work were two teaching methods that actively encouraged active participation. Girls reported that the overall high levels of active participation during the learning centre sessions improved their communication.

Respondents did not identify other factors that they felt contributed to the changes in assertiveness and communication that they had observed. However, a small number of parents noted that their daughters had always been confident communicators, and they therefore felt that ENGINE II had not contributed further to this.

### **7.3 Other life skills learnt at the learning centre sessions**

The primary focus for the endline evaluation is on understanding perceptions of changes in goal setting, and in assertiveness and communication, and ENGINE II's contribution to these changes. During the interviews, girls also mentioned other life skills that they had learnt at the learning centre sessions and found useful, and these are discussed briefly here.

Other life skills that were taught, which girls found particularly memorable, included menstrual health and personal hygiene, decision-making, self-esteem, and self-control. An ISG in Kano said: *'They usually coach us on how we can protect ourselves, and how we should not have any doubts on ourselves and how to run our business'*.

Girls reported that they were able to make better decisions and that they believed in themselves more than they did a year ago, because of the constant encouragement and support they received from the learning centre.

Girls also spoke about having learnt vocational skills, including baking, making soap, and making beads, from their LCFs, and that these skills have been especially beneficial to their ability to cope economically during the pandemic.

## 7.4 Using life skills to cope during COVID-19

COVID-19 has not affected the girls' ability to apply the life skills they have been taught. Most girls reported that they are not necessarily consciously applying the soft life skills learned during the pandemic but the hard life skills like savings and entrepreneurship are proving to be very useful in this period. In the words of a girl ambassador in Kaduna: *'I learned to keep savings before the pandemic and that money is what I relied on to survive during the pandemic instead of always asking my mother for little money all the time'*. Girls have learned from the learning centres to save and these savings have served as a fall back for them as all economic activities for income have been crippled by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many girls stated that the personal hygiene lessons they received during life skill sessions have been immensely useful. Most of the girls stated that they especially remember lessons on handwashing now, and have taught their families what they know so that they can all keep safe. An ISG from Kano said:

*Immediately when I heard about COVID-19 and we were told to be careful what we touch and always wash our hands, the lessons on personal hygiene flashed into my mind and it was like I was just being taught.*

Many girls were able to relate what they had been taught in personal hygiene to the COVID-19 preventative guidelines, hence it was easier for them to adjust to the protective measures. An OSG in the FCT said: *'When COVID-19 came, we were told to wash our hands, use the hand sanitiser and wear nose mask. It was not difficult to adjust because I already knew the benefit of washing my hands'*. Considering that guidelines for self-protection from the COVID-19 infection include personal hygiene, the girls mostly adopted the knowledge from the learning centres to protect themselves from getting infected.

Girls also indicated that during the lockdown, self-control was necessary in relating with their parents and siblings. While they avoided unnecessary proximity and contact, they had to be in the same space with family and could not avoid misunderstandings and conflicts, and they often had to hold back from reacting. According to an ISG in the FCT: *'In my relationship with parents and friends during the lockdown, I had to be strong and no matter what happened I had to have self-control not to react negatively'*. The girl said she believes many other girls similarly had to exhibit this patience and attributed their ability to do it to lessons at the learning centre, saying they had an entire session on self-control.

Some girls are applying knowledge gained from the learning sessions to set up businesses and consequently save money to support their families. An ISG in Kano said: *'I learned petty business, like making perfumes, liquid soap, from ENGINE, which I am currently making and selling during the COVID-19 break'*.

## 7.5 Conclusion

The girls interviewed have generally set ambitious, long-term goals related to their education, careers, and business. Many girls have put in place steps to achieve their goals. These focused on studying hard, registering for tertiary entrance examinations, enrolling in training courses to learn a skill, and saving money to contribute towards the achievement of their goals. Many girls have faced financial constraints to pursuing their goals, which means that they have had to try to find ways to earn and save money, which they can then invest in the achievement of their goals.



Girls found the goal setting sessions during the ENGINE II life skills classes useful, but most girls were not able to recall specifically what they had learnt. Some girls reported having learnt that it is important to put in place a plan for achieving your goal that breaks the goal down into smaller tasks.

Many girls, particularly OSGs, had expected that they would receive direct financial support from ENGINE II to support them with achieving their goals. The fact that this support was not available discouraged girls from attending the learning centre sessions.

Respondents strongly felt that ENGINE II had contributed to girls' communication and assertiveness skills. They expressed that girls had learned to communicate with others respectfully and had become more confident in expressing their own opinions. Increased confidence was the change that parents noticed most in their daughters because of them attending the ENGINE II learning sessions.

Confidence and respectful communication are the key qualities of an assertive communication style. Because the girls became more assertive communicators, they found that they were able to stand up for themselves and others, even in challenging circumstances.

ENGINE II built girls' communication and assertiveness skills using teaching methods at the learning centre that encouraged the active participation of the girls, such as role play, peer-to-peer learning, and group work. LCFs also created an atmosphere where girls felt able to make mistakes, and taught them that making mistakes is normal. Some girls learnt that communicating is necessary to resolve challenging issues.

## 8 System and community changes in child protection policies and practices

This chapter details the changes in the implementation of child protection policies and practices due to ENGINE II activities. Section 8.1 details the changes at the state level, while Section 8.2 outlines changes at the community and school levels. Section 8.3 presents a discussion of the key challenges that exist in this process. As noted in Chapter 2, Mercy Corps and the FM were particularly interested in having a research question exploring system-level change, including at the state level. This was not a focus of the baseline and midline evaluation rounds.

### 8.1 Changes in child protection policies and practices at the state level

At the state level, there have been several changes with regards to child protection policies and practice over the last two years. While Lagos already had child protection policies in place, Kano and Kaduna have seen improvements in the ministerial commitment towards child protection, and in the communication between the MoE and the schools in relation to this. In addition, each state has produced a child and vulnerable adults' referral protocol as part of ENGINE II, which has been disseminated. These developments are discussed in detail below.

#### 8.1.1 Increased awareness and communication about child protection issues

**Respondents felt that the reporting and redressal of complaints related to child protection had improved due to the partnership established with ENGINE II.** The Lagos State focal person communicated that more cases of child abuse were coming forward due to increased awareness of and lack of tolerance towards abuse:

*There have been changes and improvements on child protection and gender inclusion at school. Through our collaboration with ENGINE II, we have had more results of cases reported and handled in some areas in the state. People have become aware that there is no hiding place for incidents of abuse in the state.*

Similarly, the Kaduna State focal person explained how due to ENGINE, the state child protection framework and case processing systems had improved, because of which several cases of child abuse had been addressed:

*Actually in Kaduna State in the last three years there is not something like child protection, child protection was very weak, but coming into ENGINE II programme now, there is a gender champion formed through the ENGINE II, that programme is very, very exciting. With ENGINE II, the members are very hardworking and working based on child protection actually. So there is a positive way of proceeding with child protection cases because they are seeing the work is now functioning well. Serious action is being taken, several cases of child abuse, rape, and other things have been handled well in Kaduna now.*

This view was not held unanimously, however. The Lagos State focal person reported that Lagos already had two categories of policies – one related to child protection which covers physical abuse, mental abuse, and verbal abuse, and a second policy related to gender

violence, which covers issues of rape. As a result, she had not noticed a marked change in the implementation of state child protection policies due to ENGINE II.

### 8.1.2 Development and distribution of the CVAP protocol

**Another key contribution of ENGINE II was the development and distribution of the CVAP protocol.** This protocol provides guidance on what to do if a child protection issue comes to light and is accompanied by a tailored CVAP referral pathway map for each state, which has contact details for CVAP case management agencies and additional support services, such as health services, legal support, and mental health and psychosocial support. The process for developing the CVAP across the four state was described in Section 3.7.1.

State-level respondents described how ENGINE II had supported the distribution of the protocol to schools and communities. The state focal person in Kano summarised the support provided by ENGINE II in relation to the CVAP:

*ENGINE support in printing copies of the document for distribution to school, support with teachers training and facilitation of adopting the document in the state, they also facilitate pasting of referral pathway at all centres.*

The printing, translating, and sharing of the referral protocol was also supported by school- and community-level respondents.

While almost all respondents at the state level commended the progress made with regards to the CVAP protocol, **the Kaduna State focal person reported that the document had so far only been distributed to programme schools in Kaduna.** The Kaduna State focal person highlighted how programme schools are a small share of the total schools, so the awareness of the CVAP is far from universal in the state:

*Although there is an implementation of CVAP in schools, this is still only within ENGINE II schools, which constitute a small fraction of the schools in the state.*

However, he disclosed that ENGINE II had been liaising with the MoE to adopt and implement the CVAP protocol across all schools in the state.

### 8.1.3 Other developments in child protection

**There have also been recent developments in child protection policy and practice at the state level due to the collaboration of multiple actors, including ENGINE II.** School- and state-level respondents highlighted the fact that the MoE in Kaduna and Kano produced a memorandum for schools detailing how corporal punishment is to be abolished across all the schools in the state. As reported by an SBMC member in Kano:

*The school has a zero tolerance on corporal punishment, such as the beating or flogging of students. The Ministry of Education has also written a memo to all heads of schools in the 18 zones of the state to adhere strictly to the policy [of zero corporal punishment].*

This memo was developed with involvement from various stakeholders, such as ministerial representatives, ENGINE II staff, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

In Kaduna, the state focal person indicated that a child protection bill was drafted with involvement from various stakeholders, including ENGINE II, and that there were hopes that

this would soon be passed by the State House of Assembly and endorsed by the State Governor.

This shows that, in addition to Lagos, where the state government has long been supportive of abolishing child abuse in its many forms, **the state leadership in Kano and Kaduna are also now communicating their support of such child protection policies.**

## **8.2 Changes in child protection policies and practices at the school and community level**

At the school level and community level, changes in child protection policies and practice in recent years include an increased awareness about child protection, the development of a code of conduct for teachers which includes issues of child protection, and updated case referral protocols stemming from the CVAP. While there was increased awareness from students to teachers, principals, and SBMC members at the school level, there were almost no reports of using the referral protocols to register a new case. This suggests that further support is needed at the local levels to encourage case reporting. The subsections that follow discuss these themes in turn.

### **8.2.1 Improved understanding about child protection**

**Across schools and communities, there were reports of improvements in understanding of child protection and the avenues of support in the event of an abuse case.**

School-level respondents, including **the principal and SBMC members, reported an improvement in their understanding of child protection due to ENGINE II.** Most of the respondents attributed this change to the training provided by the programme. An SBMC member in Kaduna recalled the content of the ENGINE II training and how it helped him understand child protection, and how generally to make the school a safe and child-friendly space:

*During the ENGINE training, we were made to understand what abuse is, how to prevent it, and how to report it. We were taught things like making the school environment conducive for both boys and girls. So when we returned to the school, we told the other SBMC members what we learnt and contributed some money to make separate toilets for girls. We also added some things to the code of conduct like no male teacher should be alone with a female student.*

The SBMC member identified changes at the school as a direct result of the training, including the construction of separate toilets to make female students more comfortable, as well as an updating of the school's code of conduct for teachers (see Section 8.2.2 for further discussion).

**All community leaders confirmed that there had been positive changes in their community with regards to the protection and support available for children and vulnerable people and the reporting process for cases.** An interview with a community leader in Kaduna revealed this change. He explained:

*There has been a significant change and improvement in the child protection and gender inclusion policies at the community level. We have a law that every child of school-going age must go to school and must be well taken care of.*

Respondents largely perceived child protection and gender inclusion practices as being interlinked and made efforts to ensure that schools are places that are safe and inclusive for all children. Vulnerable groups, such as children from poor economic backgrounds and orphans, were often highlighted as priority categories for additional support and protection, in addition to children who are victims of abuse.

The community leader from Kaduna further explained that he had set up several committees – security, elders, disciplinary, education, health, welfare, finance, and professionals – to oversee issues of child abuse and also to assist the vulnerable children within the community by sponsoring their education and providing them with other forms of support. The security committee ensures that the community is safe from any internal threats to their security while the professionals committee, which largely consists of lawyers, helps in pursuing cases of child abuse, and offers advice.

Other community leaders embarked on **sensitisation and awareness raising campaigns** on child abuse, sexual assault, and other crimes. A traditional leader in Kano explained that they offer support to vulnerable adults as well as children, and have events to increase awareness as a means of preventing further cases of abuse:

*We have a protection policy in the community that is for all, not just the children but also for the vulnerable adults. We have a forum in the community that sensitises the youths, elders, adults, and married women against indulging in the societal ills.*

**ISGs and OSGs commented on how the ENGINE II training, life skills sessions, and school assemblies had helped increase their knowledge of child protection and their own rights and responsibilities in this regard.** OSGs demonstrated knowledge about reporting cases of assault, and attributed this knowledge to the programme, as conveyed by an OSG in Lagos:

*We were taught about rape and sexual harassment and how we should report if we know anyone who falls victim.*

Similarly, an OSG parent in Kano explained the contents of the support her daughter had received:

*They have been trained at the learning centre on how to be open and speak up in public and also how to stand and protect their rights by being outspoken and to report any case of abuse.*

This shows that **ENGINE II activities have increased general awareness among girls around issues of child protection, and associated reporting protocols**, and that this knowledge has reached OSGs as well as ISGs.

Following trainings, ENGINE II facilitators also visited schools to continue discussions of child protection at the school level, and to offer additional support in case reporting, as communicated by a girl ambassador in the FCT:

*The ENGINE II facilitators also come around to give a pep talk at the school's assembly. ENGINE II programme officers also support me in addressing cases of child abuse.*

As a result of increased sensitisation to the issues of child protection, girl ambassadors, in particular, were very aware of their responsibilities, and were also able to communicate what they would do if they came across any instances of violence against children in their community. Girl ambassadors actively play the role of mentors and also sometimes reach

out to parents when they notice the prolonged absence of their peers. A girl ambassador from Kano explained how she felt empowered to support her peers:

*If someone has a problem, the person can come directly to me to relay their problem and if I notice one of the students are no more punctual in school, then I will go to their houses and also try to tackle the reason for their inability to come to school.*

**There was some variation in the depth of the knowledge respondents at this level had about changes to child protection policies at the community level.** For example, a girl ambassador from Kano reported being aware of child protection law but not of protocols within her community in particular. She said:

*In my community there are no such rules [to protect children]. I don't know if there is in other communities but there are none in my community. [However] the state has rules which state that anyone who has been caught with a case of maltreatment or rape of the girl child will be sent to prison for 14 years.*

Similarly, a parent from Kano was not aware of any changes around child abuse in her community. She said:

*I have not noticed any change in how issues of abuse and molestation are handled in the community because such cases have been rampant recently and there has not been any intervention at community level.*

This shows that while marked progress has been made, **there is still room for further sensitisation and awareness raising activities.**

### **Other contributing factors towards improved understanding of child protection**

**Not all respondents credited ENGINE with changes to child protection in the community.** Some parents recalled groups who came into their communities to talk about issues related to child abuse, but the parents did not know whether this was in relation to ENGINE II.

In addition, some community leaders attributed the change to pre-existing laws within the communities, while others attributed the change to **mass media activities, efforts by other private organisations, and increased political will at community level.** An ISG from Kano communicated the different forms of communication parents – particularly mothers – engaged in in her community around issues of child protection:

*Through the media house people are enlightened on issues that deal with the maltreatment of the girl child. Women are being [communicated with] through the various schools, Islamic school, community level, by some resource person concerning the issues that deal with the girl child and how they can discipline their children in different ways [other than physical punishment]. [They also discuss topics] such as refusal to answer calls from strangers, [preventing children from] going on errand [at unusual hours of the day or night].*

Thus the overall improvement in the awareness related to child protection is likely to be the combined effect of multiple actors, with ENGINE II playing a large role. However, this knowledge has been further strengthened by other proponents of child protection at the national, state, and local levels.

## 8.2.2 Development of a code of conduct

A key change following ENGINE activities was that **most schools either developed new codes of conduct for teachers or updated existing ones** to include aspects of child protection. These code of conducts define acceptable behavioural standards aimed at reinforcing the school-level commitment to CVAP and to gender-friendly schools. An SBMC member in Kaduna explained that because of the ENGINE II training, the school and SBMC gained an understanding of what they should do to further ensure the safety of students at their school. He explained:

*There is improvement in child protection in the school because of the training we attended. ENGINE II organised training on child protection and safeguarding which has exposed us to what to do. Because ENGINE II trained us on how to identify gaps in our school code of conduct policies, we have been able to tease out rules specific to students and teachers that will ensure the protection and safety of students at the school.*

Another SBMC member from Kaduna explained how their school's code of conduct had been updated to include the topics of molestation and bullying:

*We have updated our code of conduct to include things that were not in the code of conduct: no molestation and bullying is allowed in the school, students are given equal opportunity to compete with each other in the school, teachers should not have any friendly interrelationship with their student, especially the girl, parents and the community at large are admonished to protect the interest of the girl child. The updated code of conduct is printed and pasted at the entrance to the principal's office and in the staff room for everybody to see. Therefore, there is no excuse for negligence.*

Several school-level respondents indicated that they had made attempts to place the code of conduct in a location where it would be visible to staff and students, as well as to distribute it to students. An SBMC member from Kano also reported efforts taken by the school to ensure that all teachers were aware of the code:

*All new teachers are given the code of conduct to proclaim in the presence of other teachers. This is our method of indoctrinating the code of conduct so that teachers will not claim ignorance of it.*

Many schools had a code of conduct for students as well, though this was not always in written form. An SBMC member from Kano summarised how school assemblies were used as a means of communicating the code of conduct to the students:

*I visit the school frequently and give lectures during the assembly on child protection, bullying, corporal punishment, and the need for both teachers and students to ensure that they respect each other. Teachers are to see the students as their children, brothers, and sisters.*

Schools and communities also used the code of conduct to institute preventative measures for child abuse. For example, a traditional leader from Kano explained how they hope to reduce harassment of girls by making sure that no girl is travelling to or from school alone:

*Going by the code of conduct policy that we have in the school, we have set up some community guide that ensures that no girl travels alone to school without being accompanied, to minimise issues of harassment and to [make it known to the] community members that we are watching.*

**Students are frequently reminded of rules and penalties related to bullying, fighting, child abuse, and molestation during school assemblies.** Thus, schools take measures to ensure students feel safe in school, not only with regards to adults such as teachers, but also with regards to fellow peers.

Further discussions with school-level respondents revealed that the school principals play a lead role in ensuring that schools are safe spaces for children, where the importance of child protection is communicated, and issues are addressed.

**While school and community leadership all mentioned the teachers' code of conduct, most girl students did not refer to the teacher or the student codes of conduct during the research.** This indicates that there may not be widespread, formal knowledge about these at the student level. However, while ISGs did not report the specifics of the teachers' code of conduct, they did have an understanding of the fact that if a teacher did not behave in an appropriate manner, there were steps that they could take to address the situation. An ISG from the FCT explained:

*I'm aware now, when a teacher is harassing a student, then you can go and report to the school authority or can even write as messages to the guidance counsellor.*

### 8.2.3 Awareness of the CVAP reporting protocol

**Most respondents at the school and community level were aware of the CVAP protocol, its contents, and the reporting process, though only some referred to the protocol by name.** Most respondents signalled that there had been changes to this system in recent years due to ENGINE II.

One of the school principals from Kaduna recalled the contents of the CVAP given to him by ENGINE II during one of the trainings that he attended, and summarised the referral protocol as follows:

*We were given a chart concerning that; starting from the school, we [should] call the [school] management and after the management is local community leader, the zonal office, and from the zonal office to the ministry, it is a broad chart.*

Similarly, an SBMC member from Lagos outlined the referral pathway, from the community leaders to the relevant authorities:

*Cases of child abuse are first reported to the community leaders then to community head that is at the palace, then to the Lagos State neighbourhood security corps.*

Principals have raised awareness about the protocol and the importance of reporting child abuse cases. A school principal in Kaduna outlined how he ensures that the content of the child protection training he received from ENGINE II is communicated to the teachers and pupils so that knowledge is translated into action:

*I passed the information that I got from the training to my teachers and I also inform the students to open up and report any case of child abuse. They should not fear anybody and that my doors are open always for them to come and report any teacher.*

**Some school principals with support from SBMC members have developed disciplinary committees with diverse membership to implement the child protection policies** and to ensure there is an unbiased, inclusive platform to rapidly investigate any child protection issue if it occurs. A school principal in Kaduna detailed the structure of the new committee, which involves five members:



*Cases used to be reported to the discipline master who investigates and makes a decision on what type of punishment is to be given, but this was changed by the setting up of a committee comprising of five people: the discipline master, the guidance and counselling mistress, the health mistress, the bursar, and a senior mistress.*

This is not the case across all the schools, and in some cases the reporting pathway is quite hierarchical. The state focal person in the FCT described the reporting pathway for incidences at school as follows:

*If an incident occurs in the school, the incident is reported to a teacher, and the teacher reports to the guidance and counselling officer of the school.*

Thus there **appears to be some level of autonomy at the school level with regards to how the referral protocol is implemented and enacted**, and the form the implementation takes is usually influenced by the school principal and the SBMC.

**Girl ambassadors play a vital role in forming the link between girls and the school and community leaders on issues relating to child protection.** Across the states, they reported a clear understanding of their roles. They perform the first level of ‘trouble shooting’ for all their peers on issues ranging from identifying abuse to where to seek help because they have been trained on child protection.

According to one girl ambassador in Lagos, she became aware of the referral protocol through a sensitisation campaign organised by ENGINE II in her community. During this event, she learnt what the protocol entails, her role as a girl ambassador, and the reporting channels available. She reported having access to phone numbers to call in the event of any child abuse cases:

*I attended an event by ENGINE II in my community on child protection which enlightened a lot of people in the community on knowledge and understanding of child protection. I was provided with phone numbers that I could report incidents of abuse, neglect, and violence to. Although, I have not had the need to call them. I was also told that I could report to my LCF.*

**However, all respondents did not have this level of understanding of the referral pathways.** A girl ambassador from Lagos reported that she was not aware of any protocol at the school or community level that addresses issues on child protection. She said:

*Since I became a girl ambassador in 2019, I’m not aware of any rule or protocol existing in the community on child protection.*

This shows that even within the same state, respondents had varying levels of knowledge and understanding, highlighting the need for further sensitisation and community engagement.

Some respondents recalled reporting protocols that had existed in their communities for a while, presumably since before ENGINE II. In such cases, the focus of the reporting process appears to be on involving the community leader and the police, without attention to the physical and socio-emotional needs of the victim. For example, an OSG from the FCT explained that in her community, child abuse in any form is not tolerable and the community leadership is responsible for tackling this issue:

*[In our community] rape, child molestation, and child abuse are not acceptable, they make sure that once one is caught in the act, the person must be punished according to the law. We have police outpost in our place, the police do everything and charge the suspects to courts of law. All the credit goes to the community, it has been long*

*they are addressing such issues, they help in reducing the rate of the crime, reduce unwanted pregnancies, and provide sanity in the community.*

While it is encouraging that at the community level child abuse in any form was being identified as a very serious issue, punishable by the legal system, and that this had been the case since before the programme, it is important to update these approaches to ensure they offer more holistic support for the victim.

## 8.2.4 Other developments in child protection

In line with the increased efforts reported at the state level in Kaduna and Kano to institute a ban on corporal punishment in schools, school leadership reported recently taking action to ban corporal punishment and promote alternate forms of discipline. **Most of the principals and SBMC members interviewed reported that they discourage corporal punishment, and they advocate for a better method to discipline students.** Examples of alternative forms of discipline include asking students to wash the toilets, cut the grass, or purchase materials for the school, such as chalk or brooms.

**Changes in the use of corporal punishment were also reported by students.** For example, the girl ambassador in Kano cited examples of alternate punishment methods being adopted by her school. She said:

*Teachers are not allowed to beat/flog students any longer in my school, students are only asked to go and wash the toilets, cut grass, or sweep the school surrounding.*

Thus, an improved commitment towards banning corporal punishment was confirmed by respondents at all levels. However, as reported in Section 6.1.5, some schools reported continuing to use corporal punishment under a strict protocol.

## 8.3 Challenges

### Likely underreporting of abuse cases

Although respondents across the board communicated a broad understanding of the reporting protocol, only one respondent, an SBMC member in Kaduna, mentioned using the protocol in the aftermath of a sexual assault case. **None of the other respondents had used the protocol themselves to report a case or could convey an instance of when the protocol had been used by someone else in their community.**

On the one hand, this could be due to the number of child abuse cases having been reduced due to increased awareness about children's rights and the punishment for offenders. This view was expressed by an SBMC member from Kaduna, who suggested that the preventative measures taken by the school and SBMC meant that there had not been any child abuse cases:

*There has never been any report of child abuse in the school because we the SBMC and the principal usually go to the assembly try to raise awareness and enlighten students and staff and we warn them to desist from such vices.*

A state focal person from the FCT also felt that people are in 'check' due to the child protection measures being introduced:

*Well, I think so far the measures that have been put in place have been effective because everybody is now aware that if you commit any crime or offence connecting with child labour, child maltreatment and such, we will forward it to the authority. So, I*

*think to a considerable extent, people in this community are ahead and they are on check.*

On the other hand, **this could signal the fact that while these case reporting protocols exist and respondents are aware of them, they are not yet being used.**

One reason why community members may not feel comfortable using the referral protocols and reporting abuse cases is because there is a mistrust in the police and a common perception that the police will not support the victim unless a bribe is paid. A parent of an OSG from the FCT stated:

*The major challenge in child protection or reporting is the demand by the police to be given money and since people do not have money to bribe, they do not want to report cases.*

Another parent confirmed this, saying: 'if you want to report any case to the police you have to go with money, so it is difficult to report'. Multiple respondents expressed the above viewpoint, that the police will ask for a bribe to open a case file related to sexual assault.

Challenges were not only observed with the reporting of cases but also with the prosecution. A girl ambassador from Kano stated:

*Such [abuse] cases are reported to the police then taken to the court, after the verdict has been passed the suspect will be taken to the jail...[However] those who are influential, even if they commit such crimes, [they] are not usually prosecuted because they usually bribe their way out even if they commit such crimes.*

Reporting challenges were also observed for cases handled within the MoE. One SBMC member in Kano reported:

*The major problem is when cases are referred to the MoE, it usually takes time for the culprit to be sanctioned. Culprits are not suspended and can be seen going about their normal duties in the school and therefore victims and members of the community will always think that the case is swept under the carpet because it is a normal norm when cases of child abuse involves the high and mighty in the community.*

Parents also reported the cost of transport for visits to the police station and the court as additional obstacles in pursuing a case. This could help explain why some cases are not taken to the police or the courts.

However, this does not explain why cases are not being reported to the community and traditional leadership as a first point of referral either. A traditional leader from the FCT explained that some parents choose not to escalate cases of abuse and that the community leaders cannot do much to change that:

*At times, the parents don't really support the [rape or child abuse] issue. I mean to escalate the issue. That is why I told you that at times there is room for conciliation but mainly if it is not up to damaging the image of the child. If it damages the image of the child, we don't take any compromise we will go directly to the police or appropriate [authorities], sometimes some parents will hide, they will not talk, they will not even be a witness to the issue. At times they will even take the child out of the environment, what would you say? Will you arrest the parent?*

This suggests that **there is likely to be a systematic underreporting of child abuse cases, including physical violence and sexual assault.** Part of the reason for this is that parents prefer not to pursue such cases. However, this is unlikely to be the full story. Not

enough respondents commented on this issue for us to triangulate the evidence, but it is likely that community and societal perceptions of the victims, as well as the difficulties of pursuing these cases, affect parental decisions in this regard.

### **Accountability of government-appointed staff in private schools**

One SBMC vice chairman in Kano mentioned the perceived interference of the state MoE in the implementation of their school's code of conduct related to child protection, especially if they want to escalate any case to the police authority. He stated that their school finds it difficult to enforce the code of conduct on government-employed teachers as that may affect the school's relationship with the MoE:

*The school does not have the right to punish any government employee without first writing to the ministry intimating them of the offence committed, therefore schools are cautious not to tarnish the relationship between the school and the MoE.*

This was a private school where the government supports the school by providing teachers, and therefore when issues arise with the government-employed staff the school administration needs to communicate via the MoE: if they do not go through the proper hierarchy, there is a fear that the government may withdraw its support for the school. This dissociation between the employer (the government) and the place of employment (a private school) leads to some challenges in implementing the code of conduct. This is less of an issue in government schools where the channel of reporting teacher malpractice is directly via the civil services rules for government employees.

## **8.4 Conclusion**

State-, community-, and school-level respondents reported having an increased awareness and understanding of child protection issues, and many were able to link this to engagements with ENGINE II and trainings received from the programme.

The CVAP protocol has been shared with schools and communities, although at least in one state this is limited to ENGINE II schools and communities for now. School- and community-level respondents in turn were aware of the protocol, and some school management had taken supportive actions, including the establishment of school-level committees to deal with cases of abuse inclusively. However, awareness of how to report child protection concerns, and the CVAP reporting protocol in particular, was not yet universal.

Some state-level respondents reported that through ENGINE II's efforts and the introduction of the CVAP referral protocol, reporting of abuse cases had increased. At the community level, however, while respondents were aware of the protocol, it has generally not yet been used. This might in part be due to reductions in such cases where awareness raising has led to preventative actions being taken. However, it is also likely that systemic issues around the reporting and prosecution of abuse cases continue to dissuade people from reporting cases of abuse when they occur.

Schools have also developed or updated their code of conducts to include zero-tolerance policies on bullying, harassment, and abuse. Students, however, seemed to be less aware of these developments than the school leadership.

## 9 Conclusions and lessons learnt

### 9.1 Conclusions on the research questions

In this section, we present a summary of the endline findings for the evaluation of the ENGINE II programme. The section is structured along the six research questions that the evaluation set out to answer. It is important to keep in mind that these questions have been answered predominantly through qualitative research, which was conducted only with respondents who were part of the intervention group. This means that we can neither objectively observe whether there have been improvements, nor robustly identify that ENGINE II has had an impact on its outcomes and intermediate outcomes. We are reporting on whether respondents perceived that ENGINE II had led to any changes, and, in particular, we aim to identify how ENGINE II has led to changes.

#### 9.1.1 Programme implementation

*Research question 1: Were the activities implemented in the expected format and for the expected duration, and did they reach the expected people? Were adaptations made to the planned activities, and why?*

We focus our summary on the implementation of Output 1 (activities aimed at improving learning outcomes) and Output 2 (activities aimed at improving access to economic opportunities). These outputs are tied most closely to ENGINE II's final outcomes, learning, and transition. They are most closely linked to the engagement of ENGINE II's direct beneficiaries, and the most time- and resource-intensive activities fall into these two outputs.

**Output 1 was largely implemented as expected.** ENGINE II established ISG and OSG learning centres and recruited LCFs to facilitate sessions at these centres through a rigorous process. Learning centre sessions started with a two-month delay but this was made up for by a no-cost extension that allowed the learning centre sessions to run for the expected duration. Information on LCFs' attendance at trainings and mentoring sessions, and on the number of hours of learning centre sessions delivered, was not consistently available. While it was reported that learning centre sessions, LCF trainings, and LCF mentoring sessions were delivered regularly, it was not possible to establish whether the expected frequency was delivered, and whether they reached the expected numbers of LCFs.

A key adaptation of the programme was that it adapted its approach to the mentoring of LCFs in response to the slow adoption of the LCTM, and low subject matter competency amongst LCFs. The approach evolved over multiple iterations. The final model included monthly cluster-level mentoring sessions, where small groups of LCFs came together to discuss challenging topics and to learn from each other. These sessions were led by super LCFs who were identified part way through the programme as LCFs who had adopted the LCTM well. In addition, there were quarterly LGA-level meetings with larger groups of LCFs where subject matter experts would deliver sessions on topics that are complicated to teach, to build LCFs' subject matter knowledge. Perceptions from stakeholders suggest that this was a positive adaptation that addressed the challenges that had been observed with the original model and led to an improved use of the LCTM by LCFs.

**Master trainer supervision visits were conducted at a lower frequency than expected.** Master trainers were not able to visit all learning centres allocated to them each month because of difficulties in combining these visits with other job responsibilities, and because of the long distances to some of the centres. The programme adapted to this by enlisting

head teachers to conduct supervision visits. This was an effective strategy where learning centres were located close to or at the schools because it removed both the barriers mentioned. An additional benefit was that head teachers became more engaged in and supportive of the programme generally.

**Output 2 experienced substantial delays, and challenges with the programme design that required substantial revisions in the programme's strategy.** The linking of girls to VTIs was delayed by 10 months, and many girls had not yet completed their training by the end of Year 3. There were also some implementation challenges, with some training providers reportedly not yet having been paid by the programme, and some girls being left out from this component because no training providers were available in the immediate vicinity that offered the skill they were interested in learning.

**In addition, there were challenges with the programme's strategy of providing girls with access to loans and formal savings through bank accounts.** There were few opportunities available for girls to access loans with conditions that were realistic for them to meet, i.e. low single-digit interest rates and a low initial deposit. In addition, most girls were not interested in taking out loans because they re-invested any earnings directly in their businesses. In addition, many girls did not have the required funds to maintain minimum account balances for bank accounts, and banks were often far away, which prevented them from using formal bank accounts as a savings mechanism. As a result of this challenge, the programme adapted its approach in two ways. Firstly, it focused more strongly on supporting girls' access to informal savings groups in their communities, an approach that had worked well during ENGINE I but that the programme had been hoping to expand on by providing access to loans.

Secondly, ENGINE II substantially changed its strategy around business expansion, and decided to provide girls with business expansion grants or with equipment to expand their businesses. Eligible businesses were identified through a business assessment and it was required that there be a clear objective for how the grant or equipment would be used. This strategy was developed relatively late in implementation and the first business grants had just been disbursed when COVID-19 disrupted the programme. Evidence on the delivery and uptake of this strategy is therefore not yet available.

## 9.1.2 Attendance

*Research question 2: Did ISGs and OSGs attend the learning centre sessions regularly?*

**Attendance at the learning centre sessions was poor throughout the programme duration, particularly for OSGs.** Programme monitoring data show that between April 2019 and March 2020, about 40% – 50% of registered OSGs were attending learning centre sessions, and attendance rates did not improve throughout the programme.

**The key reason for poor attendance among OSGs was that girls were expecting to receive financial benefits or economic empowerment through ENGINE II, and were less interested in the educational aspects of the programme.** There were two key underlying themes in this regard. The first was that, in many cases, the financial benefits provided during ENGINE I had set specific expectations, and the girls assumed that the same model would continue. Better communication to beneficiaries about the purpose and design of ENGINE II might have addressed this somewhat. However, the delays in linking girls to VTIs are also likely to have contributed to girls thinking that they would not receive any benefits in terms of economic empowerment from the programme.

**Secondly, many girls had pressing economic needs and needed to look after the welfare of their families.** Therefore, irrespective of any expectations that had been created, what was important for these girls was that they were learning something that would

translate into the ability to earn an income for their family within a short period of time. For them, learning a vocational skill was most relevant. The delays in linking girls to VTIs are therefore likely to have contributed to some girls not attending the learning centre sessions because they might have been motivated to attend if they had been learning a vocational skill that they felt was useful to them at the same time.

**In general, OSGs were a mobile population, with competing interests for their time, so even OSGs who were interested in attending the learning centre sessions found it difficult to attend them regularly.** OSGs were not able to get time off work to attend sessions, had to look after their businesses, had to work on farms during the farming season, or had childcare responsibilities, which all led to irregular attendance. In addition, many OSGs had a child during the course of programme implementation, which necessarily meant that they could not attend the learning centre for at least several weeks. While household sensitisations were effective at improving attendance for some cases where support from parents or a husband was lacking, sensitisation efforts were generally not able to overcome these barriers.

**ISGs had higher rates of attendance at the learning centres but this differed by state.** In Kano, approximately 70% of registered girls attended learning centre sessions, compared to 60% in the FCT and only 40% – 50% in Kaduna.

**For ISGs, the main barrier to attendance was the timing of the learning centre sessions.** Girls missed learning centre sessions because they clashed with other school activities, or because they had to help out in the household. Where learning centre sessions were held after school, this meant that girls were hungry and tired, and potentially faced an insecure journey home. In many cases, **these challenges could be resolved by moving the learning centre sessions to a more convenient time.**

### 9.1.3 Learning

Research question 3: Has ENGINE II contributed to improvements in learning for ISGs and OSGs?

**At midline, the evaluation found evidence of positive impact of ENGINE II on learning outcomes.** For OSGs, participating in ENGINE II led to a statistically significant improvement in their literacy (English) and numeracy (mathematics) scores at midline. For ISGs, there was a significant impact of ENGINE II on their numeracy scores but not on their literacy scores. Because the midline evaluation involved a robust quasi-experimental design, the evaluation could clearly show that this impact was attributable to ENGINE II. At endline, we find further qualitative evidence to show how ENGINE II has contributed to improvements in learning.

**Overall, respondents reported that they had observed improvements in girls' performance in literacy and numeracy within the past year.** This was demonstrated by improved scores in continuous assessments, passing WAEC exams, and being able to pass on knowledge to peers and family. In literacy, girls reported being able to speak better, construct sentences, write letters, and read words. In numeracy, girls reported that their understanding of basic calculations, algebra, logarithm, and geometry, among others, had improved.

**These improvements were largely attributed to the teaching methods of the LCFs at the ENGINE II learning centres.** Girls and LCFs were able to identify aspects of the learning centre sessions that contributed to girls' improvement in learning. LCFs explained topics multiple times and worked with students who got answers wrong to help them arrive at the correct answer. By using group work and a peer-to-peer learning approach, girls were encouraged to learn from each other. Some girls also reported their own increased

commitment to learning and receiving extra help through paid tutorials as contributing to their improvement.

**Girls also reported having increased confidence in learning.** Certain subjects and topics which were previously approached with fear were now better understood and thus approached with confidence. Girls felt confident to ask and answer questions in class. Again, the LCFs' approach to teaching was identified as the major reason for this. LCFs created a classroom environment where girls felt comfortable. Girls felt that they could participate in the sessions without fear, because LCFs did not reprimand, punish, or embarrass girls who made mistakes.

Some girls reported that they felt that they were not being taught at the right level of ability because the learning centre sessions were too easy for them. Both LCFs and girls felt that learning could have improved more if girls had their own textbooks to take home with them and use to revise.

At midline, while the evaluation found some evidence of ENGINE II having an impact on the learning outcomes of ISGs, it also showed that most ISGs (across both treatment and control groups) lagged far behind curriculum expectations. In an assessment that was designed to be aligned to the school curriculum, ISGs scored an average of 23% (out of 100%) on literacy and 12% on numeracy. ENGINE II had led to a 3.5 percentage point improvement in girls' numeracy scores, and to a 2.5 percentage point improvement in literacy, although this was not statistically significant. It is encouraging that at endline, some girls are reporting achieving high marks and passing grades in examinations, which suggests that these girls may be meeting the standards set by the curriculum (although we do not know whether teachers set tests that actually measure the skills expected by the curriculum). However, **given the very low performance observed at midline, it is expected that even if the programme has had further impact between midline and endline, most ISGs will continue to perform well below curriculum expectations.** This is a reflection of the general context that the programme is working in, and indicates how challenging it is for any intervention to overcome foundational skills gaps particularly where teachers may be lacking subject matter knowledge themselves.

**There is insufficient evidence to tell whether the impact on learning that was observed at midline, and the improvements that respondents are reporting at endline, also translate into better educational outcomes for ISGs.** At midline, the evaluation found no impact on transition (which refers to grade promotion or completion of secondary school) for ISGs. However, this is not surprising given that schools in Nigeria have a policy of automatic promotion, where students are promoted to the next grade irrespective of their academic performance. No transition data could be collected at endline, and no information on pass rates in end-of-school examinations is available.

At midline, OSGs were given an easier assessment than ISGs, which tested their foundational literacy and numeracy skills. The evaluation found that between baseline and midline, OSGs were improving on the substantive skills that would likely be useful in day-to-day activities. This included the ability to read and understand simple passages, addition, subtraction and solving word problems. At endline, OSGs often particularly remembered learning skills that are applicable to their everyday lives, such as calculating profit and loss or writing shopping lists for going to the market.

**Despite respondents reporting improvements in learning, as reported in section 3.3.7, the first group of OSGs who were supported by ENGINE II to write transitional examinations achieved a low pass rate.** From the first group of OSGs who were supported to write their exams by the end of Year 2 of the programme, only 14% of girls in the FCT and 50% of girls in Lagos achieved a pass mark in their exams. It is not known how



many girls would have achieved pass marks without support from ENGINE II, but these rates are nevertheless low given that ENGINE II screened these girls to ensure they have minimum levels of knowledge and then provided them with specific support to prepare them for the examinations. Information on pass rates for girls who were supported to take their examinations later on in the programme was not available, and neither is information on how girls who have re-enrolled into secondary education are performing in school. **There is therefore not sufficient evidence to tell whether the impact on learning that was observed at midline, and the improvements that respondents are reporting at endline, also translate into better educational outcomes.** The limited evidence that is available from Year 2 of the programme suggests that many girls continued to lack important knowledge and skills to progress on their educational journeys, but since we do not have evidence from a control group, we cannot compare this to what would have happened in the absence of the ENGINE II intervention.

### 9.1.4 Life skills

#### *Research question 4: Has ENGINE II contributed to improvements in ISGs' and OSGs' goal setting, and assertiveness and communication skills?*

The midline evaluation found a statistically significant and attributable impact of ENGINE II on life skills, measured using a life skills index that captures general life skills. This finding was supported by the qualitative research which demonstrated the different channels in how life skills have improved for ISGs and OSGs. For ISGs improved life skills had enabled them to better engage with their teachers and peers in class, to communicate more clearly and to make more informed decisions. OSGs had improved their confidence to interact with their customers as well as be more assertive. At endline, we built on the findings of the midline evaluation by examining two life skills (goal setting, and assertiveness and communication) in more detail. This allowed us to focus in more detail on understanding how and why certain life skills have changed as a result of the ENGINE II programme.

As has been noted in Chapter 2, the programme aims to improve a broader range of life skills but not all of these could be assessed at endline. In particular, the endline evaluation as originally designed intended to provide evidence on the impact that ENGINE II has had on girls' menstrual hygiene management and knowledge but this topic was too sensitive to be covered during phone interviews.

**Respondents strongly felt that ENGINE II had contributed to girls' communication and assertiveness skills.** They expressed that girls had learned to communicate with others respectfully and had become more confident in expressing their own opinions. Increased confidence was the change that parents noticed most about their daughters because of them attending the ENGINE II learning sessions.

Confidence and respectful communication are the key qualities of an assertive communication style. Because girls had become more assertive communicators, they were able to stand up for themselves and others.

ENGINE II built girls' communication and assertiveness skills using teaching methods at the learning centre that encouraged active participation of the girls, such as role play, peer-to-peer learning, and group work.

**Girls found the life skills sessions on goal setting useful, but most girls were not able to recall specifically what they had learnt.** Some girls reported having learnt that it is important to put in place a plan for achieving your goal that breaks the goal down into smaller tasks.

Many girls, particularly OSGs, had expected that they would receive direct financial support from ENGINE II to support them with achieving their goals. The fact that this support was not available discouraged girls from attending the learning centre sessions.

### 9.1.5 Teaching quality

#### Research question 5: Has ENGINE II contributed to LCFs' use of the LCTM?

At midline, the evaluation found no evidence of impact of the intervention on teaching quality based on LCFs' self-reported use of learner-centred methods on the Principles of Adult Learner Scale (PALS). As reported in section 3.3.6, early monitoring visits conducted by the programme also showed a slow adoption of the LCTM, and that it took a while for LCFs to make the shift from their regular classroom teacher-centred approach of teaching to the ENGINE II LCTM. Despite this, the midline evaluation provided evidence that ISGs perceived an improvement in the quality of teaching that they were provided with, and in the qualitative research, there were already some indications of LCFs using learner-centred approaches.

**AT endline, LCFs and girls strongly felt that LCFs at the learning centre were now teaching using a learner-centred approach.** Common methods used during the learning centre sessions included group work, role play, research and presentations, and peer-to-peer learning. While the endline evaluation is not able to robustly measure the impact of the programme on teaching quality, in the qualitative research at endline, all respondents were able to provide detailed examples of how LCFs are using learner-centred approaches during the learning centre sessions. This is also in line with the programme's own monitoring reports, which noted improved adoption of the LCTM in the last year of the programme.

**Girls and LCFs indicated that girls' active participation in the learning centre sessions had increased because of the teaching methods that LCFs used.** Programme monitoring data also show that girls participated in the sessions and volunteered answers in most observed lessons. Respondents were able to provide detailed examples of how the teaching methods mentioned above encourage girls to actively participate during the sessions. In particular, LCFs and girls felt that group work and peer-to-peer learning approaches were particularly helpful for encouraging weaker pupils to participate, because they learn from their stronger peers, and have the space to ask their peers questions when they do not understand something.

**One aspect that girls found important was that LCFs created an environment where girls could make mistakes without fear of punishment or embarrassment.** Girls reported that they were punished only for being disruptive, but not for answering questions incorrectly. When they made a mistake, the LCF would explain the concept again or would patiently work together with the student to help them arrive at the correct answer. As noted above, this approach gave the girls confidence in their ability to learn, as well as confidence in their ability to communicate effectively.

**LCFs did not use corporal punishment at the learning centre sessions. Most LCFs made use of at least some positive discipline practices, such as giving additional learning activities to disruptive students and rewarding good behaviour.** However, many reported that they asked students to stand or kneel as punishment for being disruptive, in some cases for up to 30 minutes. Girls were motivated not to be disruptive both by the rewards for their good behaviour, but also because they wanted to avoid embarrassment.

All respondents indicated that LCFs had changed their teaching methods because of ENGINE II. This was mostly attributed to attendance at the trainings, as well as to the teacher guides that were distributed.

**Despite these improvements, some master trainers noted that some LCFs were still using teacher-centred approaches, and that there was further room for improvement in the use of some learner-centred techniques,** such as the use of group work. This is in line with the programme progress reports, which indicate that LCFs were slow to adopt the LCTM, and continued to struggle with some aspects of the LCTM, including the use of group work and the use of improvised materials later on in the programme. In addition, as reported in programme progress reports, LCFs had low subject matter competency, particularly in numeracy.

For LCFs, the main challenges in applying the LCTM centred around a lack of textbooks and teaching aids, and a lack of sufficient space at the learning centre.

### 9.1.6 System and community-level changes in child protection policies and practices

*Research question 6: Has ENGINE II contributed to the adoption and implementation of policies and practices to support CVAP?*

**There is strong evidence that ENGINE II has led to the adoption of child protection policies at the state, community, and school level. A substantial achievement of the ENGINE II programme is the adoption of the CVAP referral protocol by all four state governments for use across the state.** The protocol details the responsibilities of various agencies and promotes collaboration in the handling of child protection incidents. The CVAP protocol details the responsibilities of case management agencies, as well as additional support services, such as health services, legal support, and mental health and psychosocial support. It therefore supports coordination of these services, which have previously been fragmented.

ENGINE II has also contributed to the adoption of a code of conduct that provides guidelines for the behaviour of teachers and students. The code of conduct has been adopted for use in schools in the FCT, Kaduna, and Kano. A code of conduct for use in non-formal education centres has been adopted at the federal level for national use.

**There is also evidence that ENGINE II has led to the implementation of these policies.** The CVAP protocol has been shared with schools and communities, although at least in one state this is limited to ENGINE II schools and communities for now. **School- and community-level respondents in turn were aware of the protocol, and some school management have taken supportive actions,** including the establishment of school-level committees to deal with cases of abuse inclusively. Schools have also developed or updated their codes of conduct to include zero-tolerance policies on bullying, harassment, and abuse. ENGINE II also implemented trainings for SBMC members, gender champions, and girl ambassadors. Respondents reported that this training increased their understanding of child protection issues and helped them to understand their roles in the implementation of the child protection policies.

**However, awareness of child protection policies is not yet universal.** Some respondents were not aware of the CVAP protocol, and some had not observed any changes in child protection at the community level. While schools reported making the code of conduct visible in the school and discussing it during assemblies, students seemed to be less aware of these developments than the school leadership.

**Lastly, the evaluation can provide only limited evidence on whether these child protection policies are actively being used.** The short duration of the phone interviews and the sensitive nature of the topic when it comes to discussing actual cases meant that this was difficult to explore.

**The available evidence suggests that while some progress has been made, it is likely that systemic issues around the reporting and prosecution of abuse cases continue to dissuade people from reporting cases of abuse when they occur.** Some state-level respondents reported that through ENGINE II's efforts and the introduction of the CVAP referral protocol reporting of abuse cases had increased. At the community level, however, while respondents were aware of the protocol, it had generally not yet been used. This might in part be due to reductions in such cases, where awareness raising has led to preventative actions being taken. However, it is also likely that systemic issues around the reporting and prosecution of abuse cases continue to dissuade people from reporting cases of abuse when they occur.

## 9.2 Reflections on the TOC

### 9.2.1 Assumptions

The evaluation was not designed to examine all assumptions underlying the TOC comprehensively. However, the findings of the evaluation found evidence that some of the assumptions underlying the TOC are not fully met, and it is worth discussing this evidence, while bearing in mind that not all assumptions were explored in detail.

#### *1. Assumption: There is demand from ENGINE II girls for the programme*

The findings from the evaluation show that amongst OSGs, there was inconsistent demand for the programme in its current format. The educational aspects of the programme lacked relevance for OSGs because they could not see how these were immediately linked to them being able to find work or earn an income. Learning a vocational skill was seen as more important but this part of the programme was substantially delayed; there were challenges in roll-out; and it was not intended to reach all OSGs.

The implication is that programmes that focus on providing vocational skills training, and add an educational element to this skills training are likely to be viewed as more relevant to OSGs. It seems likely that tailoring this educational element to focus on educational skills that would be directly relevant to the vocation would also increase the relevance of this component. The evaluation finds that OSGs were particularly interested in learning skills that they could directly apply to a business or vocation, such as the financial education sessions, learning how to calculate profit, and improving language skills to be able to better communicate with customers.

#### *2. Assumption and intermediate outcome: Girls regularly attend learning centre sessions*

The findings from the evaluation show that many girls do not attend the learning centres regularly. There are three different reasons that have different implications for the TOC and for future implementation:

- Firstly, as mentioned above, the programme in its current format lacked relevance for many OSGs which meant that they were not interested in attending the learning centre sessions.
- Secondly, ENGINE I provided financial benefits and some girls expected to receive these from ENGINE II, and were not aware that ENGINE II has a stronger focus on

education and learning. This can be mitigated through better communication at the start of the programme, and would not be a challenge for other programmes that are not following on from a previous implementation phase.

- Thirdly, many girls faced barriers to attending learning centre sessions regularly.
  - For ISGs, these centred mostly around scheduling of the learning centre sessions to fit in with other school activities, and these challenges could often be mitigated to some extent. However, hunger and concerns around safe travel continued to affect attendance and participation. It is understood that the programme did not provide food or transport allowances because this was considered to not be sustainable. At the same time, the evidence suggests that the assumption of regular attendance can only fully hold if girls can come to class without feeling hungry and have a safe means of getting home.
  - For OSGs, barriers to regular attendance centred around combining other responsibilities of caring for their families and earning an income with the learning centre sessions. Given the importance of these other activities, mitigation strategies such as sensitisation activities or excellence awards are unlikely to be effective because they do not address the underlying issues. Evidence from other programmes suggests that initiatives providing girls with stipends and providing childcare opportunities while girls attend training or learning centre sessions may be effective ways to address these barriers (Stavropoulou, 2018). In addition, the current intensity of the learning centre programme (attending for six hours a week over a course of 18 months) is unlikely to be viable for many OSGs.

### *3. Assumption: Formal banking services can be accessed by girls*

The evaluation finds that there are substantial barriers to girls accessing formal banking services. Firstly, there are severe institutional constraints in the issuing of NIMC identity cards, which are necessary for opening bank accounts. During programme implementation, NIMC contact centres were often not operational which made it difficult for the programme to support girls to register for these cards. Secondly, there were challenges with girls opening and using bank accounts, including long distances from banks, slow processing of forms from the banks, and girls not having all the information they needed to open a bank account.

In addition to supply-side challenges to girls accessing formal banking services, the evaluation also found that demand for savings accounts is low because many beneficiaries had start-up businesses that required revolving capital, and cash was therefore directly re-invested in the business. Bank charges and long distances from banks also discouraged girls from maintaining their bank accounts.

The programme identified that this assumption did not hold and as a result decided to focus more on supporting the informal savings groups that had already been established and supported during ENGINE I.

### *4. Community-based value chains and MFIs are willing to provide their support.*

The process of establishing partnerships with MFIs was slow, and the programme struggled to identify partnerships with MFIs at conditions that they considered to be realistic for the ENGINE II beneficiaries to meet. Where opportunities for loans were made available to girls, demand to access loans was low, and girls who did take out loans struggled with their repayment plans.

The programme identified that this assumption did not hold and as a result focused more on providing girls with equipment or grants in order to expand their businesses.

## 9.2.2 Causal pathways

In this section, we reflect on the causal pathways identified in the TOC.

1. *ISGs' and OSGs' learning outcomes (literacy, numeracy, and life skills) improve if they regularly attend learning centre sessions and are taught by competent teachers through a LCTM. Teachers become more competent at using a LCTM through training.*

The available evidence suggests that this causal pathway largely holds.

The evaluation has found that the programme had a significant impact on literacy and numeracy outcomes at midline for OSGs and on numeracy outcomes for ISGs. The qualitative research at endline points towards further improvements in learning. The evidence further shows that respondents link improvements in learning to the learner-centred teaching methods that LCFs are using in the learning centre sessions.

The evaluation also found that the programme had a significant impact on the life skills of ISGs and OSGs at midline. At endline, the evaluation provides further evidence of how the intervention has led to changes in girls' assertiveness and communication, and to a lesser extent, in their goal setting skills.

Robust evidence on the impact of ENGINE II on teaching quality is not available. At midline, the evaluation found no evidence of impact on teaching quality, in line with programme reports that the uptake of the LCTM was initially slow. However, qualitative research at endline and programme monitoring reports show that uptake of the LCTM subsequently improved, and findings suggest that this is linked to improvements in learning outcomes. The implementation review suggests that ongoing training and regular mentoring are necessary to ensure that the LCTM is adopted to a high quality.

Programme monitoring identified a potential mediating factor to this causal pathway: some LCFs had low subject matter competency, and this affected the quality of their sessions even when the LCTM was used. Therefore, a further assumption that was not initially identified by the programme is that LCFs need to have adequate subject matter competency in the subjects that they are teaching. Where this is not the case, training that also focuses on subject matter competency might increase gains in learning outcomes and should be explored in future interventions.

However, a key assumption underlying this causal pathway is that girls regularly attend learning centre sessions, and these outcomes would only be expected to emerge for girls who attend regularly. As noted above, this assumption did not hold. While the evaluation cannot examine learning outcomes and life skills for girls with different levels of attendance, intervention logic would suggest that we do not expect to see as large improvements for girls who attend sessions only irregularly. In addition, for some girls, the learning centre model was not relevant at all or they were not able to attend at all.

2. *ISGs and OSGs are more likely to transition successfully if they have improved learning outcomes, including life skills and business skills, and if they have access to economic opportunities. Access to economic opportunities is increased through linking girls to bank accounts and ID cards, opportunities to access savings and loans, and opportunities to access vocational skills training or expand their businesses.*

The evaluation is not able to provide evidence on the transition outcomes of ENGINE II beneficiaries, and it is therefore not possible to assess to what extent this causal pathway holds.

However, the evaluation findings suggest that some parts of the causal pathway do not hold. In particular, girls' access to economic opportunities is not increased through bank accounts and opportunities to access savings and loans, because most girls can or do not make use of these services, and girls who did access loans struggled with their repayments.

The strategy to provide girls with business expansion grants or equipment was only implemented towards the end of the programme. More evidence from future implementation would be needed to understand whether this leads to sustained business expansion. Similarly, more evidence is needed to understand whether linking girls to vocational skills training results in sustained longer term transition outcomes in terms of improved income, earnings and economic empowerment.

3. *The above pathways are facilitated by an enabling environment: that is, an environment where families and communities are supportive of girls' education, and where school policies promote an inclusive and safe environment for girls. This enabling environment is built through training and support provided to school governance bodies, particularly SBMCs and PTAs, as well as through work with state-level governments to promote inclusive education policies at the state level.*

The evaluation has found that working with state-level governments, SBMCs and PTAs on child protection has led to the implementation of supportive policies and practices in this area. These are clearly important achievements in and of themselves. However, the evaluation was not able to collect sufficient evidence on how these practices are actually being used in schools and communities, and whether girls feel included and safe as a result of these changes. Therefore, while the current evidence is promising, further evidence is needed to fully substantiate this pathway.

### 9.3 Lessons learnt

This section draws out some lessons that have been learnt from the endline evaluation about the implementation and the design of future programmes to support marginalised girls to improve their learning outcomes and to help them transition successfully.

Given the limitations to the evaluation design because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the evaluation was not able to evaluate all components of the programme's design and this limits our ability to identify clear lessons in these areas.

#### Lessons related to programme implementation:

- **Establish partnerships with VTIs and understand their selection criteria early in the inception phase to avoid delays:** A MIW assessment could have been carried out at the time of tracking the beneficiaries. This would have allowed the programme to identify earlier on which types of skills they needed to identify vocational training providers for, and understand earlier on where these types of training institutes might not be accessible because of the entrance requirements. This would also have allowed the programme to clearly identify before the start of the learning centre sessions which skills there would be no VTIs available for, so that girls could be offered alternative choices based on the skills for which VTIs were available.
- **Consider how barriers to learning centre attendance for ISGs can be addressed at the start of the programme:** ENGINE II was able to address some issues around the timing of the learning centre sessions by working closely with

schools, LCFs, and girls themselves. For future programming, it would be worth considering whether making some provision for food could reduce barriers related to girls feeling hungry, and whether making safe travel arrangements could reduce barriers related to girls feeling it is unsafe to travel home after school.

- **Continue to identify supervisors who are close to the learning centres where possible:** Involving head teachers as supervisors for the learning centres was a positive adaptation that overcame the barriers that master trainers faced in regard to carrying out their supervision visits, i.e. long distances to the centres and combining visits with other responsibilities. In addition, it meant that school management was more engaged in the programme and could become a greater collaborator in the delivery of the learning centre model.

#### Lessons related to programme design:

- **Reconsider how to provide access to learning and vocational training opportunities to marginalised OSGs:** The findings show that the current learning centre model is not accessible to many marginalised OSGs because they need to earn an income and look after their families. Evidence from other programmes suggests that providing girls with stipends and providing childcare opportunities while girls attend training or learning centre sessions may be effective ways to address these barriers (Stavropoulou, 2018).
- **Consider condensing the learning centre curriculum by identifying which skills OSGs are likely to need or value in future:** The evaluation found that OSGs have limited time available to spend on their skills development. In addition, many OSGs are mobile and may not stay in the same location for 18 months, which was the duration of the ENGINE II programme. Therefore, the current expectation that OSGs would be able to attend learning centre sessions for six hours a week for 18 months, in addition to concurrently attending vocational skills training organised by the programme, is therefore likely not achievable for most girls. As a result, it may be beneficial to conduct further research to identify which particular skills girls are likely to need or to value (and which can be taught in the duration of the programme), and to develop a shortened curriculum focusing on these skills.
- **Reconsider how to provide support to girls on business expansion:** For the group of marginalised girls targeted by ENGINE II, accessing loans does not seem to be a feasible strategy at the moment. While the informal savings groups created during ENGINE I were reported to be valued by the girls, it would be useful for future research to establish whether they lead to increased savings, and whether and how girls are able to expand their businesses based on these savings. Similarly, the strategy that ENGINE II introduced of providing girls with access to business expansion grants and equipment would require further evaluation to determine whether it leads to sustained business expansion over time.

#### Promising areas for further research and implementation:

- **Continue to provide teacher professional development that involves a strong focus on a learner-centred teaching pedagogy but that combine this with a focus on subject matter competency:** This evaluation was unable to provide evidence on whether ENGINE II has had an impact on learning and teaching quality at endline. However, the midline evaluation demonstrated some initial impacts on learning outcomes. In addition, perceptions at endline show that LCFs and girls greatly value the LCTM and feel that it has contributed to improvements in girls' learning. For future programming, it would be beneficial to combine this approach with a focus on subject matter competency, which programme monitoring revealed to



be low amongst LCFs. Whilst focused on primary schools rather than secondary schools and non-formal education, other evaluations in northern Nigeria that have measured subject matter competency directly have also pointed to low levels of subject matter competency amongst teachers, for example the evaluation of DFID's Teacher Development Programme.

- **Continue with a learning centre approach to build girls' confidence, assertiveness, and communication skills:** Perceptions from all stakeholders strongly indicate that girls became more confident, more assertive, and better communicators as a result of the learning centre sessions, and in particular as a result of the LCTM, which encouraged them to actively participate and share their opinions during the sessions. Once again, while the evaluation was unable to measure impacts on life skills outcomes, this appears to clearly be a positive benefit arising from the learning centre sessions.
- **Continue to involve a broad range of stakeholders at state, community, and school level on child protection issues:** The adoption of child protection-related policies at the state level, and subsequent implementation at a community and school level, are a key success of the ENGINE II programme. Engaging a broad range of stakeholders on these issues appeared to be a strategy that worked well to raise awareness of child protection issues. Further research would be needed to understand to what extent this approach also leads to better child protection outcomes, and how some of the structural barriers that are likely to emerge during further implementation of the CVAP protocol could be overcome.

## Annex A Summary of deviations from original logframe indicators

**Table 10: Summary of deviations from original logframe indicators**

	Measurement at baseline and midline	Measurement at endline	Comments
<b>Learning</b>	Quant: learning assessments (EGRA/EGMA, SeGRA/SeGMA)  Qualitative: perceptions of change in learning	Qualitative: Perceptions of improvement in learning	Learning assessments need to be administered face-to-face.
<b>Life skills</b>	Quant: general life skills index, decision-making index, menstrual hygiene management knowledge  Qual: perceptions of change in life skills	Qual: Perceptions of changes in goal setting, and assertiveness and communication	As menstrual hygiene management is particularly sensitive, and because privacy during phone conversations could not be guaranteed, this topic was not covered during the endline evaluation.  To narrow the focus for this evaluation question, we reviewed the ENGINE II life skills manual and identified goal setting, and assertiveness and communication as two key life skills targeted by ENGINE II that are valuable for both ISGs and OSGs, and that are applicable in both schooling, and work or business contexts. The selection was discussed with Mercy Corps and the FM.
<b>Transition</b>	Quant: girl survey (OSGs), school records (ISGs)  Qual: perceptions of changes in transition	Not assessed	In discussion with ENGINE II and the FM, we felt that conducting interviews on this topic would be particularly sensitive in the current circumstances, where many girls may have lost work or business, and may be worried about their work opportunities in the future.
<b>Attendance</b>	Quant: self-reported attendance rate in last week	Qual: Perceptions of barriers and contributors to attendance	Reporting on attendance rates requires schools and face-to-face learning centre sessions to be open.

	Measurement at baseline and midline	Measurement at endline	Comments
<b>Teaching quality</b>	Quant: lesson observations Qual: perceptions of change in teaching quality	Quant: analysis of monitoring data from Qual: Perceptions of teaching quality	Lesson observations require schools to be open.
<b>Access to economic opportunities</b>	Quant: girl survey Qual: perceptions of access to economic opportunities	Partially assessed through the programme implementation review	In discussion with ENGINE II and the FM, we felt that conducting interviews on this topic would be particularly sensitive in the current circumstances, where many girls may have lost work or business, and may be worried about their work opportunities in the future.  Programme documentation, monitoring data and interviews with programme staff provide some information on this indicator, reported as part of the programme implementation review.
<b>School governance</b>	Quant: SBMC survey, principal survey Qual: perceptions of change in school governance	Qual: perceptions of change in child protection policies and practices at school, community, and state-level	Mercy Corps and the FM were particularly interested in having a research question exploring system-level change including at a state-level, which was not a focus of the BL and ML evaluation rounds. A key focus of the activities at state level were on child protection.

## Annex B Additional details on the methodology

This annex presents additional details on the evaluation methodology for the endline evaluation. The approach to the endline evaluation including the key evaluation questions is described in section 2.1 of the report. The evaluation methodology for the three components (implementation review, primary qualitative data collection, analysis of monitoring data) is summarised in section 2.2 of the report and is described in more detail in this annex. This annex also describes our approach to research ethics and safeguarding. Limitations to the evaluation are described in section 2.3 of the report.

### B.1 Implementation review methodology

The implementation review addresses the **first research question on programme implementation**. The implementation review sought to **review the fidelity of actual implementation** to implementation plans, as well as changes to implementation and why they were made. It focused on three questions:

- Were the activities implemented in the expected format and for the expected duration, and did they reach the expected people?
- Were adaptations made to the planned activities, and why?
- What external factors affected programme delivery, and how?

The implementation review began with **documenting the planned ENGINE II implementation strategy at the output level as it was originally designed**, drawing on programme design and strategy documents, workplans, and the logframe. A challenge for this research question was that an implementation review was not part of the original evaluation design. As a result, the detailed programme design was not documented at the start of the evaluation and had to be reconstructed from the documents available programme documentation. This was challenging because strategy documents and workplans were regularly updated over the course of the programme, and usually only more recent versions were made available to the evaluation team. This write-up of the programme design was shared with the Mercy Corps team to check accuracy and completeness before other work was undertaken.

Next, we reviewed programme progress reports, workplans, monitoring data, attendance records, and other documentation of implementation of the programme to **understand what implementation has taken place, whether the activities were implemented in the expected format and for the expected duration, and whether they reached the expected people**.

After the desk-based review was completed, we identified areas where the implementation of the intervention had not been fully captured by the available documentation, and areas where implementation deviated from the plans. Based on this, we **selected respondents for key informant interviews (KIIs), including representatives from Mercy Corps and the SIPs and beneficiaries**. For the SIP interviews, several representatives from the same SIP attended each interview. This was preferred because programme staff had overlapping functions and had been part of the programme for different lengths of time, and therefore had complementary knowledge of the evolution of the implementation. The approach to the primary qualitative data collection to feed into the implementation review is the same as that

for the remainder of the evaluation, and is described in the next section. A breakdown of the respondents interviewed is provided in Table 12.

## B.2 Primary qualitative data collection

### B.2.1 Sampling approach

Because our interviewing time was reduced substantially because of the need to undertake phone interviews rather than face-to-face interviews, we were only able to explore one research question / theme per primary respondent. In some cases where we were interviewing respondents who were not directly targeted by this component of the programme, but who could still provide secondary perspectives on the research question, we covered at most three themes in the same interview. This influenced our sampling approach because we had to sample a larger number of respondents to cover all research questions, and had to allocate respondents per research question.

We used a **purposive sampling** approach for the qualitative data collection.

In the original evaluation design, the qualitative component was tracking a cohort of schools, but not tracking individual respondents within these schools over time. As a result, we did not collect contact information for the respondents in the qualitative research at midline. We did, however, collect contact information for all ENGINE II girls that were interviewed for the quantitative survey at midline. This information was therefore used to construct the sampling frame for the endline qualitative interviews with girls and their parents.

**We sampled a subset of the schools from the quantitative sample for the endline qualitative sample.** To maintain a general level of familiarity with and similarity across the context, we sampled schools from our quantitative sample that were in the same LGAs as the schools that were visited for the qualitative research at midline. Respondents were selected from two LGAs each in Lagos, Kaduna, Kano, and the FCT, cutting across 18 schools and 20 communities. The selected LGAs in each state consisted of one urban and one rural LGA.

**We then selected individual respondents who belonged to these schools and communities. For ISGs and OSGs, we constructed a sampling list for the selected schools, containing all girls for whom phone numbers were available and who were direct beneficiaries of ENGINE II.**<sup>87</sup> From this list, we allocated girls to the different research questions. During this process, we considered the different marginalisation characteristics of the girls to ensure that there was adequate representation of girls across a number of characteristics.

**The same sampling approach was used for parents.** We sampled parents belonging to different households compared to the girl respondents that were interviewed, but belonging to the same schools / communities as the girl respondents. This was done to minimise the burden on each household from participating in the research, to minimise any risk to the girl respondents in case parent interviews caused parents to question girls about their responses, and to broaden the range of respondents reached.

**We requested contact information for all other respondents (girl ambassadors, LCFs, teachers not directly trained by ENGINE II, master trainers, community-level respondents, and state-level respondents) from Mercy Corps.** School- and community-level respondents were sampled from the same schools / communities as the girls and

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<sup>87</sup> Our quantitative sample also contained some girls who were girl fora participants. These were excluded from the sampling list because they would not be taking part in the core ENGINE II activities.

parents. For sampling teachers who were not directly trained by ENGINE II, we asked Mercy Corps to identify teachers who had received step-down training from ENGINE LCFs in the last year and confirmed this with the respondent before starting the interview. LCFs were allocated to research questions based on the subjects that they taught at the learning centres: LCFs interviewed for the 'learning' and 'teaching quality' research themes had to teach either literacy or numeracy, while LCFs interviewed for the 'life skills' theme had to teach life skills sessions.

For girls, parents, girl ambassadors, and LCFs, respondents linked to the in-school component (for example, ISGs and LCFs who taught ISG learning centres) were sampled separately from respondents linked to the out-of-school component.

**Because we expected that we would not be able to reach all respondents, we sampled additional respondents from the start and ranked them in our order of preference.**

Interviewers made several attempts to contact each respondent before moving to the next respondent on the list.

## B.2.2 Data collection

### Research team

The research team comprised:

- OPM staff responsible for the design and delivery of the fieldwork, including the quality assurance of all research activities;
- three research assistants allocated to each of the northern states (Kano, Kaduna, and Abuja); and
- two research assistants focusing on the southern state (Lagos).

**Table 11: Breakdown of field team per state**

State	Number of research assistants (in-depth interview/KII facilitator)
FCT	3
Lagos	2
Kaduna	3
Kano	3
<b>Total team</b>	<b>11</b>

### Training

**Training for the ENGINE II endline research was conducted remotely over Zoom.** The eight-day training began on Monday 15 June by getting participants acclimatised with Zoom, how to mute and unmute calls, chatting, raising hands, and turning on video. The training was primarily hosted over Zoom but also made use of other platforms like Telegram and WhatsApp chatroom for break-out sessions and other communications. In attendance were 11 research assistants and 10 OPM personnel, consisting of a mix of facilitators, data staff, and team observers. The training sessions were highly interactive and involved the use of PowerPoint presentations via shared screen, Telegram for sharing and recording assignments, and the use of WhatsApp for group calls and energisers. At the end of every

day, participants were given take-home tasks, and feedback on activities and sessions was received from participants by means of evaluation forms.

**Three pilot exercises were carried out over the course of the training.** This was done to ensure that enumerators tested the instruments in actual field conditions before starting fieldwork. The pilot helped to identify possible logistical challenges, and mitigation strategies were discussed and agreed prior to the start of fieldwork. Debrief sessions were held with the research assistants and OPM staff. The debrief sessions provided room to discuss findings for each theme and identify areas which required further probes to boost the clarity on responses received.

**Trainings covered sessions on research ethics, with a focus on applying ethical principles and seeking consent over the phone.** The training also included a session on the safeguarding referral protocols shared by Mercy Corps.

## Data collection

**The qualitative research fieldwork for the endline study took place remotely using phone-based interviews and ran from 23 June to 6 July 2020.** KIs and in-depth interviews were held over the phone using a semi-structured interview guide.

Prior to all interviews, respondents were duly informed by the Mercy Corps team of the intended activities to be carried out. A follow-up SMS was sent by the OPM team ahead of each interview to confirm availability, and in instances where no response was received from the text messages a follow-up call was made, informing respondents of the activity and scheduling a suitable appointment for the interview. A maximum of eight call attempts were made for each potential respondent over a period of three days, at different times of the day. Calls were made at reasonable daytime hours, except for respondents who in responding to the initial SMS requested to be called early in the mornings or late at night or during the weekends, indicating that it would be easier to speak then. The outcome of each call was captured in the assignment sheet.

**Multiple attempts were made to reach some respondents but, as earlier stated, the OPM team anticipated that this could happen.** Thus, more respondents than required per theme were contacted in the first instance, allowing interviewers to quickly move on to the next available respondent within the first layer of selected respondents, while still maintaining the eight-call attempt protocol with unreached respondents from the first layer of selected respondents. In the event that the eight call attempts for the main respondents were unsuccessful and the theme interviews were yet to be concluded, the interviewer moved on to the first layer of replacements, repeating the process until all interviews in that theme were concluded.

Once a respondent was contacted for an interview, a **full consent statement** was read out to the respondent, providing a breakdown of the study objectives, risks, benefits, confidentiality, and expected duration, and seeking express permission to be interviewed and recorded. Respondents were told of their right to refuse the interview and to be able to withdraw consent at any point in the process. The consent was obtained before recording was started, to first seek permission to record. Once permission to record was given, the recording started, and a brief statement was made confirming that consent had been sought and given.

All sessions lasted between 25 and 50 minutes, with interviewers completing at least three interviews each day. **A phone recharge credit was sent to the respondent's phone number at the end of the call.** However, we did not mention this to the respondents until towards the end of the conversation to ensure that they were not influenced to either participate or provide specific responses to our queries based on this offer. The small

recharge amount was given as an expression of our gratitude for their time, rather than an incentive to speak with us.

The table below shows a summary of the respondents and the themes covered.

**Table 12: Number of respondents interviewed per theme**

RESPONDENT	TOOLS	FCT	KADUNA	LAGOS	KANO	TOTAL ACHIEVED	TOTAL EXPECTED
ISG	Life skills	4	4		4	12	12
ISG	Learning	4	4		5	13	12
ISG	Teaching quality	4	4		6	14	9
Girl ambassador	System change	1	1	1	1	4	4
Girl ambassador	Life skills	2	1	1	1	5	4
Girl ambassador	Programme implementation	2	2	2	2	8	8
OSG	Life skills	4	4	4	4	16	16
OSG	Learning	4	4	5	4	17	16
OSG	Teaching quality	4	4	4	4	16	12
Parent of ISG	Learning and teaching	4	3		3	10	12
Parent of OSG	Learning and teaching	5	3	4	4	16	16
Parent of ISG	Life skills and system change	4	4		3	11	12
Parent of OSG	Life skills and system change	5	6	6	5	22	16
ISG LCF	Life skills	1	1		1	3	3
OSG LCF	Life skills	2	3	1		6	4
ISG LCF	Learning and teaching quality	2	2		2	6	6
OSG LCF	Learning and teaching quality	2	2	2	2	8	8
ISG LCF	Programme implementation	2	2	2		6	6
OSG LCF	Programme implementation	2	2	2	2	8	8



<b>Non-Engine-trained teacher</b>	Teaching quality	1	2		1	4	8
<b>Principal</b>	Learning and teaching	2	2		1	5	8
<b>Master trainer</b>	Learning and teaching	2	2	2	2	8	8
<b>Master trainer</b>	Programme implementation	2	2	2	2	8	8
<b>State focal person</b>	System change	2	2	1	2	7	8
<b>SBMC / CAC member</b>	System change	2	4	4	3	13	8
<b>SBMC member</b>	Learning, life skills, teaching	3	1		3	7	8
<b>SBMC / CAC member</b>	Programme implementation	2	2	2	2	8	8
<b>Gender champion</b>	Programme implementation	2	2	2	2	8	8
<b>Faith leader</b>	System change	2	2	2	2	8	8
<b>Faith leader</b>	Learning, life skills, teaching	2	1	2	2	7	8
<b>NYSC representative</b>	Programme implementation	1	1	1	1	4	4
<b>MC (group interview)</b>	Programme implementation	1				1	1
<b>State partner (group interview)</b>	Programme implementation	1	1	1	1	4	4
<b>TOTAL</b>						<b>293</b>	<b>281</b>

Whilst the overall target was exceeded due to oversampling of some respondents, there were specific respondent groups that fell short, particularly the teachers not directly trained by ENGINE II and the principals. The shortfall across these two respondent lines was a result of retirement, transfer of staff, and unreachable numbers.

### B.2.3 Quality assurance

Research activities were supervised by OPM staff to ensure the rigour of the qualitative research by ensuring adherence to all field protocols and providing technical support.

Quality assurance started at the training stage by carefully preparing each of the team members on qualitative research methods and by carrying out multiple pilots and pilot debriefs to enhance the critical thinking skills of team members. The training also stressed

unbiased delivery of instruments and emphasised phone conversation dynamics and an understanding of the tools and study as a whole.

Rigour and mitigation of bias in the qualitative fieldwork was achieved through involvement of different individuals in the field teams, allowing team members to support each other and to discuss and question findings. OPM leads reviewed all calls for the first few days during the remote data collection to offer support and address technical queries.

Additionally, quality was assured through daily team briefs and debriefs. The debrief process, which provided an avenue to compare observational notes to help situate the analysis, is fully explained below. The debrief also allowed the team to address logistical and technical queries that were encountered during the day.

Quality assurance of transcription was ensured by allowing an initial transcript to be written up by one individual and then verified by a second individual. Also, transcripts were reviewed to ensure they were produced verbatim to mitigate bias at the stage of data capture.

#### **B.2.4 Synthesis and analysis of findings**

For this research, there were four stages to the analysis, starting during fieldwork itself. As a key part of the research process, we asked teams to start initial synthesis and analysis following each interview. This was followed by a daily debrief exercise that included all the researchers at the end of each day to discuss key findings and identify research gaps to be addressed in subsequent fieldwork days. All team members had to keep written records of all their activities, including interview notes, detailed transcripts, and debriefing notes, which were used during the analysis stage. The findings from the fieldwork were also triangulated against different existing data sources and the implementation review in order to minimise researcher bias and establish the validity of the findings.

The debrief sessions were structured thematically, so each researcher could share their findings related to each of the core themes. The thematic analysis was also disaggregated by state and type of respondents to ensure that the subtlety and nuance of the findings could be drawn out effectively. We were documenting the full range of responses and experiences at this stage to ensure that we covered the multitude of perspectives related to each theme. The debriefs were documented and shared with the qualitative research leads, who then conducted the next stage of analysis and consolidation of the findings. The programme manager and the qualitative expert then interrogated the findings from the debrief session, challenging the researchers to provide details and evidence to substantiate these findings. This process involved returning to the translations of the transcripts, and researchers had to present specific quotes to support each stage of the analysis.

Once the research leads were satisfied with the thematic analysis, the research team developed detailed annotated outlines for each chapter. The research leads then assessed and improved these outlines further, which provided the basis for the write up of the report. The process of analysis thus included verification at multiple levels, i.e. at the level of the respondent (by speaking to multiple respondents in each category), at the level of stakeholders (by speaking to multiple stakeholders in each area), at the level of researchers (by conducting debrief sessions with multiple researchers), and then finally through a thorough interrogation of the initial findings. This report presents the findings of this extensive thematic analysis.

## Discussion / interview debriefing

This section details the prompt we gave the research team regarding carrying out detailed debriefings of their fieldwork activities. These instructions demonstrate our approach to this exercise.

### Immediately after an interview or a discussion, it can help the overall analysis if the team does three activities:

On one sheet of paper, write down any memorable quotes from participants and under the quote write down who said it and where – e.g. *'I always attended the sessions at the learning centres, as they were just after my class, so it was easy to go. I was hungry most of the time, but it was important to attend, so I did not miss any lessons'*, ISG in district XYZ. The quote could be a single sentence, or a story or history related to the team during the discussion.

On another piece of paper, write down the key issues that came out. Try to put these issues under the main research areas concerning our main themes (such as learning or life skills).

Lastly, the team needs to think about how each interview adds to their overall understanding. Are there pieces of information still not clear or groups that are still missing out from discussion? Thinking this through will help plan the next interview in terms of issues they would like to concentrate on and other issues that they feel they already have a good idea about. It will also help in debriefing with the whole team at the end of the day.

### Team checks during daily debriefs

Team debriefs formed a key stage of analysis, consolidating and synthesising all the findings from the day's work and revealing research gaps that were addressed in the next day of fieldwork via either a follow-up interview with the same respondent or getting additional information from other respondents in that category. During debriefs, the team discussed how each tool added to the overall understanding of the research questions, noting where there were pieces of information that were still not clear or groups that were still missing from the discussion. Thinking this through also helped to plan the remaining research.

Tasking researchers with writing a debrief report provided more detail, such as capturing quotations and case stories which may not have emerged during the daily debrief sessions. It also worked to hold researchers accountable and increase their sense of ownership of the entire research process. We further enriched the analysis through the thematic analysis of the findings, paying attention to the diverse perspectives and experiences of respondents and highlighting both similarities and differences in their perceptions. This was followed by the development of a detailed outline of the final report, which was reviewed internally before the final report was drafted. The table below shows an extract from a debrief report template.

**Table 13: Extract from a debrief template**

Theme	Key findings	Key quotes
<b>Overview</b>	<p>What was the entire process like from the researcher's perspective? What went well?</p> <p>&gt;&gt;Availability and willingness to participate</p> <p>&gt;&gt;Duration of consent</p> <p>&gt;&gt;Duration of interview</p>	

Theme	Key findings	Key quotes
	>>Question flow >>Depth of responses >>Ease/difficulty in understanding questions >>Recording app issues >>Call rates/total value spent per call >>Respondents attention span >>Understanding of phrases/terms	
<b>Logistics</b>	Any logistical and planning challenges, changes to the schedule, things to improve for next day (this includes connection issues, rescheduling, unavailability of respondent, interruptions etc).	
<b>Observations</b>	Informal findings and observations not directly related to the themes (e.g. depth of responses, attentiveness, understanding of questions, their questions to us, etc.).	
<b>Learning</b> <b>(Perspective of all respondents asked about learning. Similarities? Differences? Examples?)</b>	Attendance in learning centre for literacy and numeracy. What has attendance been like in the past year? What has affected attendance? Change in girls' performance in English and mathematics in the last year? (Improvements? Deterioration? Why and how?) How has ENGINE contributed to changes in learning outcomes for the girls? What about ENGINE's support for learning outcomes was not useful or could have been improved? COVID impact on learning, how have girls adapted their learning during COVID?	
<b>Life skills</b> <b>(Perspective of all respondents)</b>	Attendance in life skills sessions. (Go into details. Which ones? Which were most effective?) What has attendance been like in the past year? What has affected attendance? Have there been any changes in girls' goal setting in the last year? (Give examples.) Why and how? Has ENGINE helped girls with goal setting? How? What could have been improved? Have there been any changes in girls' assertiveness and communication in the last year? (Give examples.) Why and how? Has ENGINE helped girls with assertiveness and communication? How? What could have been improved? Any other observations on life skills sessions? How are girls using life skills to cope during COVID?	

Theme	Key findings	Key quotes
<b>Teaching quality</b> <b>(Perspective of all respondents)</b>	<p>Changes in girls' participation in the last year? Changes in discipline in the last year? Any other changes in the teaching methods in the last year?</p> <p>How has ENGINE contributed to changes in teaching methods? In what ways have training, supervision, and any other resources been useful? What could have been improved about them?</p> <p>Have ENGINE trained teachers cascaded the trainings to other teachers? What has worked well and what could be improved? Impact of COVID on teaching.</p>	
<b>System and community change</b> <b>(Perspective of all respondents)</b>	<p>Has there been any changes or improvements on child protection at school, community, or state level?</p> <p>Has CVAP been adopted by the states, LGAs, and schools?</p> <p>Have CVAP or other child protection policies been implemented? How effective has implementation been? What has worked well and what can be improved?</p> <p>How has ENGINE contributed to the adoption and implementation of CVAP / child protection policies and practices?</p> <p>Impact of COVID on implementation of child protection policies. Any other observations?</p>	
<b>Conclusion</b>	<p>&gt;&gt;Main findings</p> <p>&gt;&gt;Lessons learnt</p> <p>&gt;&gt;Main challenges</p> <p>&gt;&gt;Suggestions for the future</p> <p>&gt;&gt;Anything else?</p>	

## Transcription

All interviews were recorded using the call app recorder, with explicit advanced informed consent from the respondents. The researchers also took written notes whenever possible. Each recorded interview was transcribed to transition raw interviews to evidence-based discussions. After completion of the fieldwork, the same team of researchers that conducted the interviews transcribed the collected data. This is because all transcribers were already familiar with the background of the programme, fieldwork data, and context. They were also provided with transcription guidelines and a template.

Transcripts were quality assured by the OPM qualitative research team. The collected data (audio and notes) are being treated according to the required ethical standards, especially concerning anonymity and data security. Names and personal identifiers have been excluded from transcripts, and data have been stored and referenced using appropriate unique identifiers.

## B.2.5 Challenges

### Challenges during training

Internet connection was a bit of a challenge during the training as participants sometimes dropped off, but this was mitigated by having a meeting co-host immediately let participants back into the meeting. Mini summaries were provided intermittently, including asking each participant to confirm at the end of each session if the session was understood. The sessions were also recorded and shared with participants at the end of the day.

### Challenges during fieldwork

**Bad phone networks:** The team experienced some challenges with bad phone networks sometimes leading to distorted sounds and call drops during the fieldwork. To mitigate this, research assistants encouraged respondents to move to locations with the strongest reception. Respondents were also intermittently reminded that, should calls drop due to network disruptions, they would receive a call back to continue and complete the interview. This helped ensure that the study and data quality were not affected by this challenge.

**Unreachable contacts:** Some contacts provided were not reachable, because phones were switched off, wrong numbers had been provided, or respondents were not answering their phones. The OPM team anticipated that this may occur, so efforts were made to sample an excess of 50% beyond the required respondents where possible, with each respondent category having four to five replacement listed in order of priority and assigned to each research assistant. Where a theme was completed, any sampled replacement respondents who had not been interviewed were reassigned to other themes where shortages were observed.

## B.3 Analysis of monitoring data

**Analysis of the monitoring data focused on contributing evidence to the various research questions.** Monitoring data were requested from Mercy Corps' monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) team at the start of the endline evaluation. As we received various pieces of monitoring data, we reviewed the data, sought clarification from Mercy Corps' MEL team where necessary, and requested additional data.

Monitoring data are collected for different purposes to data collected specifically for an evaluation. For example, monitoring data are particularly important for programme implementers to learn new things about their implementation. It is therefore not always important that monitoring instruments remain comparable over time. At the same time, monitoring data can provide useful insights to an evaluation because the data are collected more frequently and can show trends over time. Where there were limitations to the monitoring data or to the analysis, we mention these here and in the relevant section.

This section discusses each of the datasets that was available for analysis in turn.

### 1. Information on the number of beneficiaries

We were provided with a **beneficiary database** that contains information on all girls enrolled at the start of ENGINE II. The database contains information on girls' marginalisation characteristics, but this was missing for girls from Lagos who were not beneficiaries during ENGINE I (girl fora members from ENGINE I), and for an additional 922 girls.

At the end of Year 3 of the programme, ENGINE II tracked all beneficiaries. We also have a **database containing information on all girls that could be successfully tracked.** It

should be noted that the database of girls who were successfully tracked is not a clear identification of beneficiaries who were still actively participating in ENGINE II activities at the end of Year 3. Some of the SIPs reported that the tracking exercise tracked some beneficiaries who had never participated in any ENGINE II activities. Similarly, it is likely that some girls who were actively participating in ENGINE II activities might not have been reachable at the time of tracking.

## 2. Learning centre attendance data

We were provided with **learning centre attendance records submitted by the LCFs using the electronic CommCare platform**. LCFs are supposed to record attendance at each learning centre sessions using the CommCare platform. They record both the overall number of girls attending the session, as well as the unique ID numbers of each girl attending the session.

ENGINE II's MEL team informed us that attendance was regularly captured using the CommCare platform from April 2019 onwards. This means that learning centre attendance for the first seven months (September 2018 to March 2019) is not available and the analysis of **attendance trends therefore spans the period between April 2019 and March 2020**, representing Year 3 of programme implementation.

In addition to learning centre attendance data only being consistently electronically recorded from April 2019, programme progress reports and interviews with SIPs show that even after this date, there were technological challenges with the electronic recording of attendance. Challenges included not all LCFs having access to an Android device for recording attendance because some LCFs were assigned one device between two people; network issues that meant LCFs had to travel to better connected areas to upload their attendance data; lack of access to electricity which meant that Android devices were not always charged. These challenges meant that the CommCare platform was not used to record all learning centre sessions and that there were delays in submission of the data. The delays in submission of the data were less relevant for our analysis given that LCFs would record the date of the session even if the information was only submitted at a later stage. The fact that some learning centre sessions are unlikely to be recorded at all on the CommCare platform however had some implications for the analysis.

Comments made by LCFs in the data itself also suggest that there were some challenges with ID numbers. Not all girls appeared to have been assigned an ID number, or these ID numbers were not always available to the LCFs.

Based on these limitations, we therefore took the following approach to the analysis of the data:

- We assume that for those sessions where attendance was recorded, attendance rates are generally accurate. A review of the data did not reveal any substantial areas of concern aside from data entry errors that affect a small proportion of cases, which were excluded from the analysis. We therefore present overall class-level attendance trends across time.
- We conclude that the attendance data is not reliable or robust enough to allow tracking of attendance rates at the individual girl-level. This is because a) not all learning centre sessions were recorded, b) some ID numbers may not have been available, and c) it was not possible to clearly identify learning centres in the data or to identify which learning centre a girl belongs to.
- We do however show the number of girls that have never been recorded to attend any learning centre sessions. While this should be interpreted with some caution, assuming that all LCFs recorded attendance electronically at least some of the time, this indicator

provides an indication of the number of girls that never, or very irregularly, attended learning centre sessions between April 2019 and March 2020.

- Because not all learning centre sessions were recorded electronically, we also conclude that it is not possible to accurately tell from the attendance data how many hours of learning centre sessions were delivered.

### 3. Lesson observation data

We were provided with lesson observation data collected by master trainers during their supervision visits and captured electronically through the CommCare platform. The data contains observations on LCF and student behaviours during the observed sessions. No framework was developed at the start of the evaluation to classify behaviours into different groups, such as 'learner-centred' or 'teacher-centred'. Therefore, we did not construct any composite indicators. Instead we report on how certain specific LCF and student behaviour change over time. We focus on behaviours that are likely to be relatively straightforward to observe and therefore likely to be coded with high levels of accuracy, such as for example, whether group work was used during the learning centre session.

### 4. Data on number of girls linked to VTIs

We were provided with information on the number of girls linked to VTIs. The database contained fewer beneficiaries than the number of beneficiaries linked to VTIs that had been reported in the logframe. ENGINE II's MEL team reported that this was as a result of some girls having dropped out of the training, or girls who had completed the training no longer being captured.

### 5. Data on number of girls linked to business expansion / diversification grants

We were provided with information on the number of girls who have been linked to business expansion / diversification grants up to July 2020. However, we understand that the process of linking girls to these grants is still ongoing, and the data therefore does not present the final number of girls linked to these grants. We present some limited information based on the provisional data up to July 2020.

### 6. Data on attendance at trainings

The programme captured attendance at trainings manually using attendance registers at the venue of the training. Summary information on attendance is then calculated from these attendance registers and reported in the state activity reports. This information is not always recorded in a consistent summary format across the reports, and is not always summarised in the overall programme progress reports. **Where information on training attendance was reported in the overall programme progress reports, it is included in the implementation review. Where information on training attendance was not available in a clear summary format, it is not reported.** In addition, given that attendance is tracked through registers, it is not possible to report on the attendance rate at an individual level. For example, we do not know what percentage of mentoring sessions LCFs attended on average.

### 7. SBMC activity tracker

When designing the endline evaluation, we were planning to review data from SBMC activity trackers. However, it emerged that there is no database of SBMC activities, but rather state-level SBMC activity reports that are written reports about different activities conducted with SBMCs. Review of SBMC activity was therefore limited to reviewing information contained in programme documentation.



## B.4 Research ethics and safeguarding

Ensuring high ethical standards in the research and evaluation work we do is a core value for OPM. As a company, we are aware of the ethical dimension of the research and evaluations that we undertake, not only in terms of underlying moral codes around what we do but also the potential consequences of things going wrong, considering legislative changes in human rights and data protection. We have ensured that all evaluation activity adheres to the following approach:

- **Securing ethics approval** ensures that we uphold the highest ethical principles. For this evaluation, OPM holds ethical approval from the National Ethical Review Board. We sought approval for the re-design of the evaluation from the Review Board before any fieldwork was carried out.
- We ensure that we operate in accordance with all **international human rights conventions and covenants**, as well as any relevant local and national laws in the countries in which we operate.
- For each interview, **we sought verbal consent at the start of the phone call** using a simple and clear script. The consent statement made it clear that all **participation in evaluation activities was voluntary**, provided information that might affect participants' willingness to participate, and made participants aware of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty, including ending, interrupting, or rescheduling the call at any point. Consent to participate was explicitly confirmed by the researcher and the respondent was asked to clearly utter a short phrase such as 'Yes, I agree'. Consent was documented on the assignment sheet and was submitted together with the outcomes of the interviews at the end of each day.
- Ensuring the **confidentiality of information and the privacy and anonymity of participants** where appropriate, and honouring any guarantee of confidentiality where it was given, except where the need to act on serious wrongdoing (e.g. corruption or abuse) outweighs the normal commitment to confidentiality.
- **Respecting cultural differences and contextual circumstances**, such as local norms, religious beliefs, gender, age, ethnicity, disability, and other social differences when planning and undertaking studies, including the need to avoid over-burdening particular groups. Conducting research during this period also meant being mindful of the potential effects that COVID-19 was having on respondents' livelihoods, lifestyles, and their health, including their mental health.
- **Training and guidance** on the principles of ethical evaluation and research were provided to research assistants before the beginning of fieldwork.
- It was important to be conscious that **mobile phones were likely to be important assets in respondents' households**, and that taking a phone call had a time and opportunity cost, not only for the respondent, but potentially for other household members who may need to have used the phone. There was also a real cost to recharging the phone after the call. For this reason, calls were limited to approximately 30 minutes and respondents were given multiple opportunities to refuse participation, reschedule, or interrupt calls, as necessary. Respondents were also provided with a call card incentive to compensate them for their time.
- Given that we could not engage respondents face-to-face, we applied additional caution and **did not interview any respondents who were younger than 18 years old**, to avoid the need to seek parental consent for their participation and to avoid placing children at any risk that may have arisen from them answering a phone call.

Seeking parental consent would have been logistically more challenging, and may also have compromised the privacy of the phone call.

- **The research adhered to Mercy Corps' protocol for reporting any safeguarding incidents.** The core research team was trained by Mercy Corps on their reporting protocol for safeguarding incidents, and this training was stepped down to the full team of researchers.