

Final reflections

Achievements and lessons learned

Making Ghanaian Girls Great!

GHANA

MAY 2017 – DECEMBER 2021



Girls'
Education
Challenge



“When COVID-19 came and we had to do virtual learning, instantly we were using the studios of the MGCubed project because they already had theirs established. They have also trained teachers. Occasionally, they bring teachers together and do capacity building for them on how their lessons could become more practical and interactive for the children to understand. It is due to the MGCubed studios that we were able to run the Ghana Learning Programme by recording it and allowing it to be played on our TV stations. That has also fed into the Ghana TV programme because MGCubed assisted us in doing the majority of the episodes.”

Director, Girls' Education Unit, Ghana Education Service



● Ghana

What did Making Ghanaian Girls Great! (MGCubed) do?

Making Ghanaian Girls Great!, also known as MGCubed, supported marginalised girls and children with disabilities in two regions of Ghana from 2017 to 2021. MGCubed was originally designed and delivered by the Varkey Foundation, from its inception until October 2019. The management of the project was then transferred to Plan International UK, with Plan International Ghana as the implementing partner.

MGCubed was designed to improve learning outcomes for marginalised pupils, support pupils to transition successfully through school and contribute to sustained improvements in the education system in Ghana. To do this, MGCubed aimed to address the challenges of teacher quality, teacher absenteeism and low-resource learning environments through the provision of quality educational content in rural schools in Ghana. This was done by using solar-powered and satellite-enabled distance learning infrastructure to deliver interactive learning sessions to students, teachers, communities and government officials.

MGCubed built on the first phase of the project (GEC1), which ran from 2013-2017 and supported primary pupils in Primary 3 to 6, with an explicit focus on supporting marginalised girls to continue on their educational journeys. In the second phase of the project (2017-2021), the project's main beneficiaries were Primary 3 to 6 pupils and Junior High school (JHS) students.

MGCubed was funded by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) through the Girls' Education Challenge (GEC), with match funding from KNet and Edutech (under the Varkey Foundation) and the People's Postcode Lottery (under Plan International UK). In total, MGCubed directly reached 25,547 children (14,132 girls and 11,415 boys), through its core interventions, which included:

- **Interactive, satellite-enabled literacy and numeracy lesson delivery:** MGCubed delivered high-quality interactive learning content to students in 72 schools using solar-powered and satellite-enabled distance learning infrastructure on a daily basis. These sessions included after-school literacy and numeracy remedial lessons for learners in Primary 3 to Primary 6 and Junior High School, while students in Primary 3 to Primary 6 were also offered grade-based lessons in Maths and English via the distance learning technology. The broadcast sessions were delivered by experienced Master Teacher Trainers from a central studio in Accra and facilitated by teachers within each classroom, known as MGCubed facilitators. In total, 3,122 hours of remedial lessons and 916 hours of by-grade lessons were delivered to the 72 target schools.



- **After-school club sessions:** MGCubed supported girls and boys to develop life skills, self-esteem and confidence through the delivery of after-school clubs - including girls-only, boys-only, and mixed clubs - which provided an opportunity to explore complex issues including sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), early marriage, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), harmful gender norms, financial literacy and income generation in a creative and fun environment. The girls-only clubs (known as Wonder Women) provided a safe space for girls to discuss sensitive issues such as menstrual hygiene and sexual exploitation and harassment while also learning about their rights and exploring their future aspirations. Female role models from various social and professional spheres were invited to some Wonder Women sessions to encourage and inspire participants. At the boys-only clubs (Boys Boys sessions), boys discussed topics such as positive masculinity and respectful relationships, while the Mixed Sessions provided a space for girls and boys to challenge gender stereotypes and foster positive relationships. As at the end of implementation, a total of 260 hours of after-school club session were delivered.
- **Inclusive and student-centred pedagogical training for teachers:** The project developed the skills and confidence of MGCubed facilitators through continuous professional development which equipped them with inclusive, child-centred and gender-sensitive strategies and methodologies. Each MGCubed school had three MGCubed facilitators (216 in total) who attended face-to-face training once a year, in addition to receiving online training delivered through the distance learning technology once a term alongside other teachers in MGCubed schools. The project also assigned Master Teacher Trainers to provide mentoring support to less experienced facilitators. All teachers in MGCubed schools were offered two weeks of online training once a term focusing on inclusive, gender-sensitive and participatory pedagogical techniques, safeguarding and classroom management.
- **School leadership and supervision training for Head Teachers, District Education Officials and PTA members:** MGCubed strengthened school management and governance by providing 83 hours of online training per term to Head Teachers focusing on school leadership; mentoring, monitoring and managing their teaching staff; and safeguarding and inclusion. The training involved supporting Head Teachers to develop School Performance Improvement Plans with an emphasis on promoting girls' transition. The project also trained District Education Officials via the satellite-enabled technology to support improved school management, supervision and monitoring processes, delivering training on how to assess and measure teaching and learning quality and on the importance of using data to inform teaching and learning quality, school governance and management. In total, 73 District Education Officials (31 women and 42 men) received MGCubed training over the course of the project.
- **Community training and advocacy:** The project promoted dialogue around safeguarding and inclusion, the importance of girls' education, positive discipline and gender equity at the household and community level via regular online training for caregivers, community members and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs). The project also worked with PTA members to identify strategies to reduce absenteeism and dropout. In addition to other face-to-face meetings, 94 hours of online training and advocacy sessions were held with the 72 communities during the project.
- **Safety net component:** Cash transfers were provided for girls transitioning from Primary 6 to Junior High School 1. Financial barriers were identified as a major obstacle to girls' participation in education, with the transition from Primary to Junior High School linked to a heightened risk of dropout. Prior to school closures in March 2020, 1,819 girls had benefited from cash transfers to support their transition from Primary 6 to Junior High School 1.

“I thought girls are not important, but the mixed session has changed that perception.”

Male student

How did MGCubed adapt during COVID-19?

In Ghana, as across the world, the outbreak of COVID-19 substantially disrupted education for all children. Ghana experienced one of the longest school closures globally, with schools closing in March 2020 and reopening to all grades in January 2021. MGCubed swiftly pivoted its interventions to support the national distance learning effort, while also focusing on maintaining engagement with children and their caregivers to encourage and facilitate home learning. The design and delivery of MGCubed made it possible for the project to pivot their approach and mitigate the impact of COVID-19. Still, the pandemic serves as a wake-up call for projects such as the MGCubed to have a contingency plan for such events in the future.

- **Ghana Learning TV:** MGCubed and its sister project, Train for Tomorrow (T4T), worked with the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service (GES) to support the Government's national distance learning programme through the creation of content for a national learning television channel (Ghana Learning TV). Plan International Ghana was involved in the Ministry of Education's National Distance Learning Committee which developed the strategy for nationwide distance learning, building on the strong relationship between MGCubed and the Ministry of Education, and reflecting the Government's trust in the project's existing infrastructure and

technical expertise. MGCubed worked in partnership with the Ghana Education Service to develop content for the broadcasts, provide studio infrastructure for the channel, and lead on editing, production and post-production of the episodes. Through this collaboration, a total of 420 lessons were broadcast for Kindergarten, primary and junior secondary students in Maths, English, Social Studies and Science via GLTV. MGCubed's Master Teachers Trainers also provided training and coaching to GES teachers on best practice in delivering inclusive and student-centred lessons remotely.

- **Technical assistance to the Ministry of Education:** The MGCubed project and its sister project, T4T, assisted the GES to produce and deliver a national distance learning programme for Senior High School (SHS) students. This involved working with highly experienced and qualified SHS teachers across the country to develop video lessons identified as difficult to teach or learn, providing targeted support to SHS students preparing to take the West African Senior School Certificate (WASSCE). By utilising MGCubed's existing infrastructure and technical expertise, the project supported the production and post-production of 144 episodes for students in Senior High Schools. Copies of these video lessons were handed over to the GES to be directly distributed to approximately 720 Senior High Schools across the country to support the teaching and learning of final year students.

“Through the TV lessons my child stayed at home every day to learn and also her academic performance has improved.”

Female caregiver,
Ningo Prampram

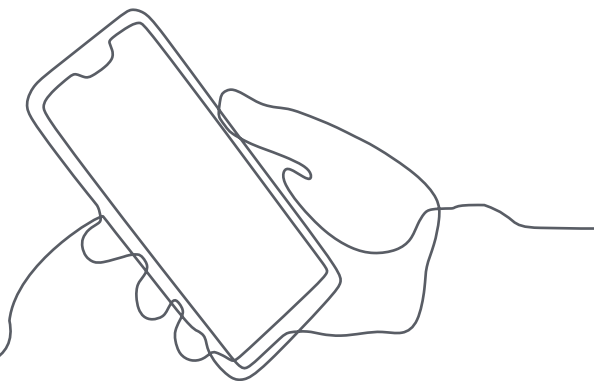


- **TV and decoder distribution:** Through the project's phone-based monitoring (which commenced after schools closed), MGCubed found that a significant proportion of project participants were unable to access GLTV, and the most common reason was either lack of access to a television or inability to access the channel. In response, MGCubed supported the most disadvantaged children to watch GLTV by distributing TVs and decoders (which enabled them to tune into the channel) to households that did not have access to them. Through this adaptation, a total of 2650 decoders and 2585 TV sets were distributed to households of girls without access to TV. The households of boys with disabilities were also included in the distribution to support them to participate in GLTV lessons. This intervention was central to increasing access to GLTV. According to a survey of a sample of MGCubed participants conducted between May and August 2020, only 32% of MGCubed students reported watching GLTV lessons. By January 2021, after the distribution, participation had increased to 72%.
- **Expanded cash transfer programme:** The project expanded eligibility for cash transfers to include girls entering Primary 6 in January 2021, in addition to those entering Junior High School 1, 2 and 3. Children from particularly vulnerable and marginalised groups, including pregnant girls, young mothers and girls and boys with disabilities, were included as beneficiaries of the expanded cash transfers to help address financial hardship caused by the pandemic. In total, 4,759 cash transfers were distributed as part of the COVID-19 response. The distribution of cash transfers was a key element of the project's back-to-school approach and contributed to the re-enrolment rate of 96% seen amongst MGCubed participants when schools reopened in January 2021.

- **Home learning support for beneficiaries and caregivers:** As part of the pandemic response, the project started conducting phone-based 'learning conversations' between Master Teacher Trainers (MTTs) or facilitators and project participants, creating a formal process by which MGCubed educators could offer encouragement and support for children's self-study as well as structured psychosocial support. Girls and their caregivers received support via phone at least once every two weeks, and households which were unreachable by phone received in-person visits that leveraged the existing relationships between project staff and communities. As part of this activity, MTTs and facilitators also engaged with caregivers to promote continued support for children's home learning, issuing guidance to caregivers on supporting their child to learn at home. The MTTs supported girls and boys experiencing intersecting sources of disadvantage such as young mothers, girls and boys with disabilities and pregnant girls. MGCubed facilitators, on the other hand, concentrated on engaging the wider cohort, using a combination of home visits and phone conversations. The team also engaged caregivers through community training sessions on strategies to support their child with home learning. After attending community training which included guidance on home learning, 95% of caregivers said they felt either a bit or much more confident to support their child with their learning at home, indicating that project activities targeting caregivers indirectly contributed to creating a more conducive environment for children's learning.
- **Back-to-school campaign:** Both before and after schools reopened, the project worked closely with district-level stakeholders to ensure as many children as possible safely returned to school. The first of such activities was the back-to-school campaign embarked on by the project at the community level, together with facilitators. The activity adapted back-to-school messages developed by GES and broadcasting them through community radio stations and information centres. In addition, teams of school leaders and facilitators visited churches, mosques and homes to educate parents, caregivers and children about the scheduled reopening of schools and the safety and hygiene protocols put in place.

“I am able to deepen my understanding of topics studied in school with the TV lessons.”

Student



- **Supporting schools to reopen safely:** As schools prepared to reopen, the project collaborated with District Education Officials to monitor the extent to which MGCubed schools were complying with pandemic protocols, adapting a UNICEF standardised checklist for safe school reopening. A total of 48 District Education Officials, comprising seven girls' education coordinators and 41 circuit supervisors, were involved in the activity. All schools that were identified as having gaps in their safety protocols were given extra support to ensure they were safe for the returning children. The project also distributed face masks and hand sanitiser to all children in MGCubed schools, in addition to supplying hand washing equipment to improve sanitation and hygiene.
- **Supporting community-based structures to monitor students' return:** MGCubed facilitators played a key role in monitoring trends in children's re-enrolment and following up with those who did not return. In cases where children were absent or not attending regularly, MGCubed facilitators linked up with district officials to follow up individual cases at the school and community level. The community-led early warning system, along with the project's follow-up efforts, were key to re-engaging children on the verge of dropout, contributing to the 96% return rate seen by the project. This monitoring system also enabled the project to identify girls who were pregnant and to refer them to the appropriate services within the community. In all, 27 girls were identified and referred to community-based services. To equip facilitators and teachers with the skills to provide emotional and wellbeing support to students, the project provided basic training on psychological first aid, stress management and wellbeing for MGCubed Facilitators and GES teachers to help them support children as they returned to school.

// DEBORAH'S STORY



My name is Deborah Tetteh. I am 22-year old lady from Alorkpem, a community in the Ada West district of the Greater Accra region of Ghana. I benefited from the Making Ghanaian Girls Great! (MGCubed) Project from 2014 to 2018. I attended Alorkpem Community Basic school.

I got pregnant in 2010 when I was in primary 6. After I gave birth, the MGCubed came and was organizing classes for girls who had stopped school. I joined the MGCubed class in 2014 and decided to go back to Junior High School (JHS) in 2017.

The MGCubed programme for Out-of-School girls helped me to make the decision to go back to school. When I joined the MGCubed project they gave us a lot of advice and that changed my mind about education.

In addition, the MGCubed project gave me some money which I used to buy a new school uniform, some books and a school bag.

The teachers in my new school were also very happy I came back. Because the project was training the teachers too, they were always giving me all the support I need. I continued attending the club and remedial lessons which helped me to catch up for all that I lost throughout my pregnancy and childbirth period.

I completed JHS in 2017 and gained admission into Growth ICCES Training Institute in 2018 to learn fashion design. I completed Growth ICCES Training Institute in September 2021.

My plan now is to start my own fashion design business. I am currently waiting for my final results. I also aim to further my education to the tertiary level one day.

Thank you very much MGCubed for all that have been done for me. If not because of all the support, I would have still been in the house.



What did MGCubed achieve?

Beneficiary reach: Number of student beneficiaries, teachers, communities of the MGCubed Project are as follows:

- Communities: 72 (36 Oti and 36 Greater Accra)
- Children directly reached: 25,567 (14,132 girls and 11,435 boys)
- Children reached through after-school clubs: 6,919 girls and 6,252 boys
- Caregivers reached directly: 15,740 (7,083 female and 8,657 male)
- Facilitators trained: 251 (108 female and 143 male)
- Teachers trained: 734 (294 female and 440 male)
- Head Teachers trained: 92 (15 female and 77 male)
- DEO officials trained: 73 (31 female and 42 male)

During COVID-19:

- Number of learning packs distributed: 7,760
- Number of GLTV episodes broadcast: 420

Improving girls' learning outcomes: Evaluation data has indicated that the project has had a significant positive impact on girls' education attainment across literacy and numeracy, with especially strong outcomes in literacy. The Midline evaluation found that girls' average aggregate literacy scores were 6.4% higher at Midline than Baseline, and the improvement amongst treatment girls was 1.16% greater than amongst girls in the comparison group. While there was no significant difference between MGCubed girls' and comparison girls' numeracy outcomes at Midline, treatment girls achieved higher results than the control group. At Endline, girls in project schools were found to have largely maintained existing learning levels in both English and Maths between school closures in March 2020 and schools reopening in January 2021, a significant achievement given girls' prolonged absence from formal learning.

Supporting girls to transition successfully: The transition from Primary 6 to Junior High School was identified as a key transition point at which girls may be more likely to drop out. At Midline, MGCubed participants had a transition rate 5.54% points above the comparison group, at 93.5%, a significant improvement from the 81.95% noted as successfully transitioning at Baseline. Between Baseline and Midline, the likelihood of an MGCubed girl transitioning successfully increased by 80% as compared to the comparison girls. At Endline, successful transition rates among MGCubed girls increased from 93.5% to 97%, a particularly significant improvement in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. 96% of girls in Primary 6 were found to have transitioned into Junior High School. Cash transfers were found to be especially effective in supporting girls' transition, with girls who received a cash transfer 1.3 times more likely to transition successfully than girls who did not at Endline.

Motivating girls to attend and re-enrol in school: At Midline, the attendance of MGCubed participants was shown to have improved, with 85% of enrolled girls attending school, compared to 81% at Baseline. The project appeared to play a large motivating factor in attendance with 89.2% of girls reporting being incentivised to attend school because of MGCubed interventions, with after-school clubs identified as a particularly strong motivating factor. The project's ongoing support to girls and their caregivers during school closures, in tandem with a school and community-led early warning system for dropout, also contributed to 96% of MGCubed participants re-enrolling in school when they reopened in January 2021.

Inclusive and child-centred pedagogy: Utilising its satellite-enabled technology, the project provided regular online training to a total of 251 facilitators and 734 other teachers within the 72 schools. Endline evaluation findings revealed an increase in the proportion of teachers classified as "highly Satisfactory" or "outstanding" in their lesson delivery. 66% of MGCubed Facilitators were considered outstanding in all teaching

quality domains, up from 55% at Midline. The Endline report also indicated an increase in the extent to which teachers were applying student-centred, differentiated learning strategies between Midline and Endline periods. 73% of MGCubed Facilitators and 71% of regular teachers satisfactorily demonstrated student-centred, differentiated learning strategies shared in MGCubed training in their regular lessons, compared to 56% at Midline.

Gender transformative impact of after-school clubs: A common theme emerging from qualitative data, both from project monitoring and evaluations, has been that girls can achieve the same things as boys and that household tasks are not solely a girl's domain. One boy said, *"the clubs have shown to us how some girls have gone to school to become great people such as doctors and engineers"*. Another boy said, *"we have been enlightened... girls are not meant for the kitchen. So, the boys no longer look down on the girls."* Echoing this, one boy commented: *"My sister used to do all the household chores – if someone asked me to help I would run and play ball – but now I cook and wash the utensils."* Some boys also mentioned that the clubs had led to an increase in their respect for girls, and that girls could hold the same roles and responsibilities as boys: *"I thought girls are not important, but the mixed session has changed that perception."* At Endline, caregivers, teachers, boys and girls independently reported that boys have started taking on more responsibility for household chores due to the influence of the project. The clubs also helped girls and boys to feel more comfortable to develop respectful friendships, and, by Endline, 90% of girls reported having friends of the opposite gender who they play with at school. Endline evaluation results showed aggregate-level improvements in how girls view their own personal capacities and that the majority have a strong positive perception of their personal skills. For example, 88% of girls believed they could stay focused on a goal despite things getting in the way, an 11% increase from Midline, while 86% of girls said they can develop a life plan and stick to it, up from 84% at Midline.

School leadership and supervision: The level of support provided by District Education Officials (DEOs) to MGCubed schools was found to have improved significantly both in frequency and in quality. Specifically, 99% of Head Teachers said that a member of the DEO office had visited their school in the past term, most often a Circuit Supervisor and/or Girls' Education Officer. 92% of Head Teachers mentioned that DEOs monitored teacher attendance on their visit, whilst 82% said the DEOs also inspect students' attendance. The proportion of Head Teachers reporting that they received written feedback from DEOs after a visit also increased to 71%, up from 66% at both Baseline and Midline. The monitoring strategies promoted through MGCubed training for DEOs have been firmly embedded in their practice, illustrated by the fact that all DEOs

surveyed at Endline said they would continue to use MGCubed monitoring strategies and/or tools after the project ends. In addition, the project supported systemic improvements in school leadership and management, working with schools to institutionalise the practice of developing gender-sensitive action plans. At Endline, 97% of Head Teachers said their school had a written School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP) with specific objectives and targets. In the schools with a written plan, 74% of Head Teachers mentioned that these targets addressed the gender-specific needs of girls and 55% mentioned that the SPIP had specific targets relating to girls successfully transitioning into secondary school.

Creating digital content: The MGCubed project has built a large repository of digital content. Below is a table showing a breakdown of the digital content recorded.

| Session title | Number of available records |
|--|-----------------------------|
| After-school clubs | 213 |
| Community training | 33 |
| GES training and school leadership | 33 |
| Instructional leadership (teachers and facilitators) | 160 |
| English (literacy) | 1305 |
| Maths (numeracy) | 1297 |
| Total | 3041 |

Collaboration and influencing at the national level: Influencing the MoE's strategy and approach to ongoing and future distance learning initiatives is one of project's major achievements. Through its partnership with the MoE, MGCubed (and its sister project, T4T) has been able to demonstrate the potential for distance learning modalities of lesson and teacher training delivery to be interactive and participatory, and the MoE has shown keen interest to adapt and continue with this technology-based innovation as a way to provide continuous learning even in the face of global adversity and disruptions to education. MGCubed has been supporting the MoE in reviewing its existing policies and programmes from a gender equality and social inclusion perspective, sharing lessons on gender, safe school environment and inclusion. The project has also supported the development of a workplan and budget for the review of the existing education sector gender policy by the MoE, working to ensure that inclusion and safeguarding are consistently mainstreamed, and Plan International has been included in a working group to oversee the policy development process.

“My sister used to do all the household chores – if someone asked me to help I would run and play ball – but now I cook and wash the utensils.”

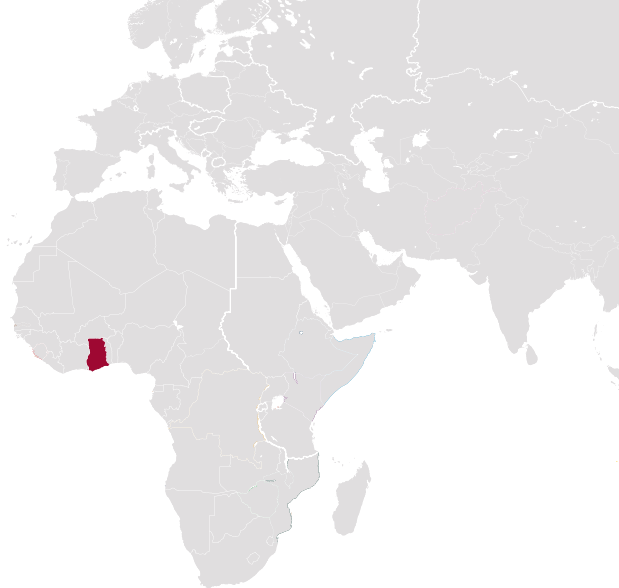
Male student



“For the mixed club I am always in a hurry to go because I love the way we are being taught to understand.”

Girl in Oti region, Ghana

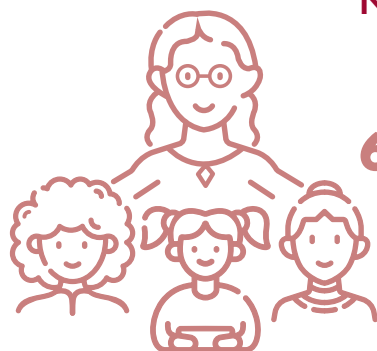
MGCubed in numbers



Number of children directly reached

25,567

(14,132 girls and 11,435 boys)



Number of children reached through after-school clubs

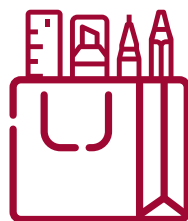
6,919 girls **6,252** boys



Number of teachers trained

734

(294 female and 440 male)



7,760

Number of learning packs distributed during COVID-19

Communities reached: **72**
(36 Oti and 36 Greater Accra)

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(7,083 female and 8,657 male)

Facilitators trained: **251**
(108 female and 143 male)

Head Teachers trained: **92**
(15 female and 77 male)

DEO officials trained: **73**
(31 female and 42 male)

Number of GLTV episodes broadcast during COVID-19: **420**



What did MGCubed learn?

1. A girl-focused, multi-faceted and adaptive approach to tackle barriers to girls' education.

The Theory of Change was based on there being no 'silver bullet', but the complex issue of girls' education needed an integrated approach, tackled from multiple angles. The project found that mitigating the intersectional barriers that girls faced required continual monitoring, identifying their evolving needs in a fluid context and adapting programmes and interventions to meet them. In order for the project to develop holistic and tailored approaches that respond to their specific needs and circumstances, engaging closely with and listening to the girls was also vital.

2 Listening and using the girls' voice to inform solutions means better programming.

The project listened to girls right from the start to understand the different aspects of their journeys through education – including both positive and negative experiences and involved them in designing solutions to the intersecting barriers they faced. Significant adaptations were done after the Midline evaluation and during COVID-19. The Midline evaluation revealed that certain groups of girls were achieving significantly lower learning outcomes than other girls, particularly young mothers, girls from certain minority linguistic groups and those with disabilities. The project developed several strategies aimed at mitigating this in early 2021. These included using language assistants, cash transfers, partnering with District Education Offices, supporting young mothers in income generation activities, and increasing the emphasis on inclusion and disability for community, teachers and District Education Officers.

3 Gender-transformative approaches must be at the centre of life-skills training for both girls and boys.

In Ghana, prevailing gender structures and norms act as constraints on girls' choices and opportunities. The project's after-school clubs were a key intervention deployed to equip girls with information, skills and support networks so that they could be change agents in their own lives. From 2017, the project included having collaborated activities between Wonder Women and Boys Boys clubs as well as in Mixed Clubs. These clubs provide an opportunity for girls and boys to participate in safe spaces for single-gender discussion and promote mixed engagement on issues ranging from sexual health to gender relations. Evaluation results showed this to be an effective mechanism for addressing harmful gender norms, shifting gendered attitudes amongst girls and boys and improving girls' self-confidence and self-efficacy.

4. MGCubed's training approach and leveraging technology/ distance learning platform, is effective in reaching remote schools and teachers.

MGCubed studio-based infrastructure enabled high-quality, inclusive and gender-sensitive lesson content to be broadcast to multiple classrooms at once. Teacher training on differentiation and inclusion enabled teachers within the classroom to provide the individualised support required by learners to ensure they understood/ could engage with the content of the broadcast.

Teachers have expressed the significant value gained from observing methodologies and techniques, with a focus on inclusive, student-centred and participatory techniques, and modelling within their own teaching practice. This ability to model positive pedagogical practices may also partially explain the progress observed at Endline in teachers' understanding of the value of using participatory tools and the improvements in equitable lesson delivery, which was particularly prominent during numeracy lessons.

5. Television as a learning modality can support the reduction of learning loss, but access remains an issue.

Interventions such as distribution of televisions and decoders to families proved to widen access, but significant gaps remained. Planning for the future, Ghana TV's broadcasting must consider how to reach the most marginalised to reduce widening the digital divide amongst learners.

6. Partnering with existing local structures and systems led to better outcomes and increased the likelihood of achieving sustainable improvements.

The project's engagement with existing national and local structures, particularly District Education Offices, has fostered trust and increased buy-in from the MoE and GES. From identifying and collaborating with the Centre for National Distance Learning and Open Schooling (CENDLOS), to working with School Improvement Support Officers at the district level for project monitoring, to identifying the central role communities and caregivers play in education, the project was able to effectively leverage these structures.

Collaboration with community-based structures was also integral to strengthening safeguarding approaches within schools and communities. The project identified the Girls' Education Unit as a key partner in promoting girls' education at the community level. In addition, the Unit led the back-to-school campaigns targeting young mothers and other vulnerable subgroups to return to school in January 2021. For instance, before the project assigned a greater role to SISOs (DEOs) for project monitoring, termly monitoring could only reach a third of the 72 target schools. However, after SISOs were engaged, each of the 72 schools were visited an average of twice each term. This significantly improved the quality of delivery at the school level. Working closely with community structures, including DEOs, to leverage local systems and knowledge was also critical to the project's efforts to re-engage learners and minimise dropout after schools reopened.

7. Importance of engaging caregivers in their children's education

Endline data revealed a strong link between girls' self-esteem and caregivers' attitudes towards girls' educational rights. Project monitoring data has consistently found that caregivers who received guidance on how to support their child to learn at home were significantly more likely to have helped their child with their learning. 84% of caregivers who had received some form of guidance on home learning said they had helped their child in the last seven days, compared to 65% of those who had not. At Midline, 97.5% of caregivers who were familiar with the after-school club content expressed support for it, compared to 77.2% of caregivers who were not aware of the topics discussed at the clubs.

8. Aligning priorities with the Ghana Education Service the project has been able to influence the direction of national education policy, leveraging MGCubed's expertise in EdTech and gender-sensitive teaching and learning approaches.

The project has been involved in several committees including the Online Education Committee to plan remote learning for schools during school closures and the Gender Policy for Education Sector Working Group to oversee the review of the sector gender policy. MGCubed was also involved in a working group convened by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA) to share learning on the development of an assessment framework for the new curriculum launched by the MoE. Collaboration with the Centre for National Distance Learning and Open Schooling (CENDLOS) led to opportunities to leverage MGCubed's technology and delivery expertise in order to extend the benefits of distance learning in Ghana.



// MANUBA'S STORY



Meet Manuba Tamalija, a student of Kecheibi M/A Basic School in the Nkwanta South district of the Oti region and a beneficiary of the MGCubed project. Manuba is a 16 years old girl and currently in Junior High school 2.

Manuba was first selected as a MGCubed beneficiary when she entered primary 3 in 2016. She has hearing difficulty, one of the main reasons why she was selected for the project so she could get extra support to keep up with the rest of the class. She has been attending the MGCubed remedial and after-school clubs since then.

Before Manuba started attending the remedial classes, she could not speak English fluently, but now she is very good at expressing herself in English. She also now knows how to do mathematical calculations very well.

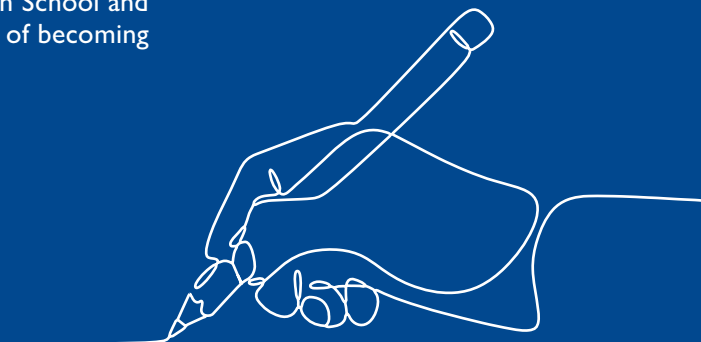
Manuba says she has seen a lot of changes in the way her teachers teach. For example, before the project, teachers used to cane if a student couldn't answer a question, but now they don't do that.

She also said she is getting a lot more attention because of her hearing condition than before. *"Now when any teacher comes to the class, they make me to sit in front so I can hear them well. They also always ask me if I understand what they said."* Sometimes during break her mathematics teacher would ask her to bring her book so he can see what she has written.

In the house too, Manuba said she used to cook every evening, but because of the remedial and the club sessions her mother doesn't ask her to do the cooking except on weekends. The community training sessions her mother attended on how to support girls' education also helped to influence this decision to have Manuba cook only on weekends.

When schools were reopening in January 2021 after 10 months of closure, Manuba received support from the project to be able to return to school. She received a cash transfer and Personal Protective Equipment including a face mask and hand sanitizer. Her school also received hand washing facilities so that Manuba and other students could return safely to school.

Manuba Tamalija wants to put all *"that has been given to me into good use"* so she can do well both in the Junior High School and the Senior High School in order to fulfil her dream of becoming a nurse.





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Find out more: www.plan-uk.org/about/our-work/education/girls-education-challenge | www.girlseducationchallenge.org
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