

QUARTERLY LEARNING DIGEST



MARCH 2023

Welcome to the March 2023 Digest

Welcome to the March 2023 Learning Digest. As always, time moves fast – but especially this year as we collate and share learning and evidence from across the GEC portfolio.

We launched our Learning Brief series on 24 January, the International Day of Education. These are a series of 12 Briefs dedicated to understanding what is working – or not – in specific intervention areas. The first on school-related, gender-based violence and the second on Girls' Clubs, can be found in this Digest, with more to come by the end of April 2023. They are on topics such as social and emotional learning, community-based education, and working in fragile and conflict-affected states. These have been widely circulated and are getting a lot of interest. Thank you to projects and FM staff who have worked hard to synthesise so much learning. As we move through the Spring, we reflect here on international events like CIES, our Results paper and the many, many contributions from projects across the GEC family.



The value of implementation evidence



We launched the Learning Brief series on International Day of Education and were delighted to have an address by Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell MP, Minister of State for Development and Africa in the FCDO. This was followed by a discussion led by Sharon Tao, with Judith Herbertson (FCDO), Sally Gear (GPE), Pauline Rose (REAL Centre, University of Cambridge) and Nawal Saed (CARE) where they considered the value of implementation evidence and how it supports decision-making on a government and programme level.

Making an impact at CIES

There were over 15 GEC-related panels and papers at CIES. Most people we met knew of the GEC and were very keen to hear about portfolio-wide learning, particularly regarding 'what works/what doesn't work' for girls' education. The FM and projects achieved a strong level of coverage given the size of the conference. Specifically, we wanted to strategically demonstrate the GEC's thought leadership regarding value for money (VfM), as there is a large gap in work and literature in this field, particularly in terms of girls' education. Thus, the GEC's VfM Adviser, Valsa Shah, convened a panel which elaborated on the overall GEC VfM

approach/strategy, a deep dive into a PEAS VfM Case Study and a deep dive analysis on the use of EdTech in girls' education.



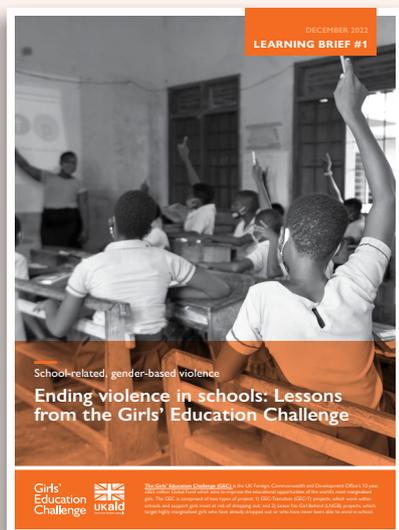
From left to right: Andy Brock: Portfolio Manager Cambridge Education, Annelies Baneke: PEAS Impact and Education Officer, Valsa Shah GEC VfM Advisor and Sharon Tao GEC Education Director.

We also aimed to demonstrate the GEC's credibility in the sector by convening a panel that thoughtfully problematised girls' education, by those leading in this field including Sally Gear of GPE, Antara Ganguli of UNGEI, Elaine Unterhalter of UCL-IoE and Sharon Tao of the GEC. Projects' great work was also recognised through excellent attendance at presentations and the opportunity to be part of the Gender and Education Committee panel. Congratulations Link Community Development and thank you to everyone that was involved!

Learning briefs

Ending violence in schools: Lessons from the GEC

Children must be safe when they go to school and learn. GEC projects are working to strengthen prevention and response at school, and shift social norms and behaviour around violence within families and communities. This Learning Brief identifies ‘factors for success’ in all of these areas and offers ‘guiding questions’ to improve the design and implementation of SRGBV work.

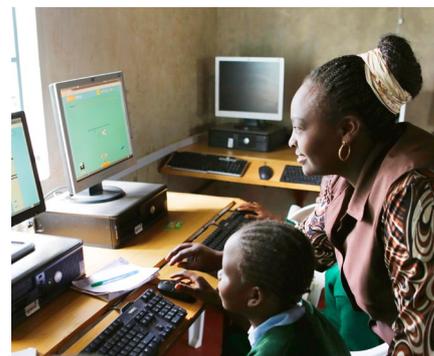


A space of their own: What we have learned about Girls' Clubs

Girls' Clubs can be a vital part of growth, empowerment and learning. How do we make them as effective as possible? This Learning Brief offers advice and guidance to support governments, donors and implementing partners in their efforts to form and strengthen effective Girls' Clubs.



What drives value for money in technology-enabled activities of Girls' Education Challenge projects?



This Spotlight Brief reviews 11 projects which feature EdTech within their programme interventions. The paper outlines which EdTech interventions were strong social investments that gave rise to good, cost-effective learning outcomes for girls. The projects selected for this study work with marginalised girls in and outside of schools in Ghana, Kenya, Nepal, Pakistan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

Busting myths about education and disability



This document busts eight myths about education and disability, highlighting how projects operating in communities across the globe are ensuring children with disabilities can access quality education. Discussions around education and disability need to drive action that is practical: one way to do this is to challenge misconceptions and bring evidence and data to the fore.

Results 2022

Find out more on GEC learning, transition and sustainability results from 2022.



“Don’t forget about me!”: How listening to girls with disabilities can keep them safer in schools

There is incredible power in the voices of girls with disabilities. Their experiences and voices must be heard and acted upon. In this blog, Michelle Lewis Sandall talks about what she has learned from visiting schools and working with girls with disabilities for over 20 years, and highlights the work that GEC projects are doing to ensure girls are safe and able to learn.

GEC Independent Evaluation Services

The Independent Evaluation (IE) of the GEC II was commissioned by the FCDO in February 2020 to deliver evaluation studies on different thematic topics that are considered of high learning value to the FCDO, Fund Manager (FM), Implementing Partners (IPs) and wider policymakers.

The IE team consists of a consortium of partners including Tetra Tech International Development (formerly Coffey International Development), the Research and Equitable Access and Learning (REAL) Centre at the University of Cambridge, Fab Inc., and several southern academic and research partners, providing significant experience in designing and implementing education evaluation and research across diverse GEC countries.

Update on completed Studies

Study 3 – GEC-T Impact Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Desk-based study using project data to quantitatively assess the extent to which the Girls' Education Challenge Transitions (GEC-T) Window is associated with changes in girls' learning and transition outcomes between baseline and midline (before COVID-19).

[Final Report](#) | [Report Annexes](#) | [Study Brief](#)

Studies in progress

Study 4 – Educating Girls with Disabilities in GEC, Phase II

The purpose of this study is to understand the ways GEC projects have engaged girls' with disabilities and the perceived and observed effects on their outcomes and their engagement with peers, teachers, caregivers/ families.

This report is due to be published in May 2023.

Study 5 – Education for Marginalised Girls Beyond Formal Schooling

The purpose of the study is to explore the perspectives, agency and choices of younger and older adolescent girls, and to understand how LNGB education pathways beyond formal schooling have met their needs.

This report is due to be published in December 2023.

Study 6 – Value for Money

Terms of reference for this study are currently being finalised. The study will focus on the value for money of reaching the most marginalised GEC girls.

Rapid Research and Learning Fund (RRLF)

The IE commissioned three RRLF studies to be delivered by:

- **The University of Portsmouth and Consilient Research** – longitudinally assesses the long-term impact of GEC programming by following up with the girls supported by the GEC SOMGEP project in Somalia to investigate their life outcomes seven years after participating on the project;
- **Population Council Kenya** – research that builds on five years of data collected from pre-COVID-19 cohorts to evaluate the impact of girls' empowerment programmes, as well as two rounds of data collected in rapid response efforts during the first year of the pandemic; and
- **The National Institute for Development Research (NIDR)** – participatory ethnographic action research on the access to education for marginalised Musahar girls in Nepal that aims to advance initial research that underpinned the FCDO-funded project: Girls' Education Challenge: Marginalised No More.

These research studies were selected due to their relevance to the research and learning objectives of the GEC and their focus on key GEC geographies i.e. Somalia, Kenya and Nepal respectively.

Two studies are completed and the third is nearing completion. Reports and annexes are available on the GEC website as follows:

University of Portsmouth: Six years later, what has become of them?

[Report](#) | [Annexes](#)

Population Council Kenya: Adolescent Education, Health and Wellbeing Status in Four Counties in Kenya – Two Years into the COVID-19 Pandemic

[Report](#) | [Annexes](#)



Contact the IE team

Any questions about the IE services or to connect with the IE team can be sent to the Programme Manager, **Louise Cathro** (louise.cathro@tetrattech.com) or Programme Director, **Simon Griffiths** (simon.griffiths@tetrattech.com).

Celebrating the joy of graduation in Ghana

This uplifting blog highlights the achievements of an amazing group of young women as they graduate with new knowledge and skills. Supported by World Education their businesses will provide life-changing income.



Against all odds: Why refugee girls stay in school

Faiza fled Somalia aged 10. Now 19, she is in the top 10% of students who sat the Kenya Secondary School Exams in 2022. In this blog, Faithy Ngaira explains how WUSC supports girls like Faiza to continue their education against the odds.

Collaboration, communication and choice – the legacy of the Team Girl Malawi project

Samantha Ross of Link Education International talks about her visit to the Team Girl Malawi project and its lasting impact on over 6,000 girls and boys.

“Enduring memories” – experiencing the impact of the GEC in Ghana

George McLaughlin of FCDO reflects on his visit last year to Ghana where he met the girls, teachers and communities whose lives have been impacted by the work of the GEC.

Supporting successful curriculum reform in Kenya

In this blog, the GEC's Alicia Mills outlines the challenges of curriculum reform in Kenya. She draws lessons and advice from GEC projects who worked with government, schools, teachers and pupils at the time to make it a success.



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Girls' Education Challenge



The Girls' Education Challenge is a project funded by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office ("FCDO"), formerly the Department for International Development ("DFID"), and is led and administered by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP and Mott MacDonald (trading as Cambridge Education), working with organisations including Nathan Associates London Ltd. and Social Development Direct Ltd. This publication has been prepared for general guidance on matters of interest only and does not constitute professional advice. You should not act upon the information contained in this publication without obtaining specific professional advice. No representation or warranty (express or implied) is given as to the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in this publication, and, to the extent permitted by law, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP and the other entities managing the Girls' Education Challenge (as listed above) do not accept or assume any liability, responsibility or duty of care for any consequences of you or anyone else acting, or refraining to act, in reliance on the information contained in this publication or for any decision based on it.