



LEARNING BRIEF: ZIMBABWE

Girls' Education Challenge



The Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) was launched by FCDO in 2012 as a 12-year commitment to reach the most marginalised girls in the world and is the largest global fund dedicated to girls' education.

The GEC has had three projects in Zimbabwe. Two projects focused on transitioning girls between basic and secondary education. One project is supporting the most marginalised and vulnerable out-of-school girls to gain functional literacy and numeracy, and transition into formal schooling or safe livelihoods.

LEAD PARTNER	PROJECT	WINDOW	START DATE	END DATE
CAMFED International	The Ultimate Virtuous Cycle of Girls' Education	GEC-T	April 2017	January 2022
Plan International	Supporting Adolescent Girls' Education (SAGE)	LNGB	April 2017	June 2023
World Vision	Improving Girls' Access through Transforming Education (IGATE)	GEC-T	April 2017	January 2022



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LEAD PARTNER*	NUMBER OF GIRLS TARGETED	NUMBER OF GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES TARGETED	TEACHERS TRAINED	TEXTBOOKS/MATERIALS DISTRIBUTED	STUDENT KITS DISTRIBUTED
CAMFED International	172,579	11,649	7,222	183,862	1,435
Plan International	13,200	293	672	20,490	17,888
World Vision	40,928	409	1,717	27,297	3,302
Total	226,707	12,351	9,611	231,649	22,625

*Project reported data is from start of project to September 2021.

Highlights

Supporting national level service delivery

National Catch-Up Strategy Implementation Framework – At the national level, IGATE provided support on the MoPSE's (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education) implementation framework and costed action plan for the National Blended and Catch-up Learning Strategy. Guidance documents developed by IGATE were reviewed and approved by MoPSE for scale-out through additional funding provided by FCDO Zimbabwe. IGATE had developed materials to support the critical needs of foundational literacy and numeracy skills (FLAN) and teacher professional development. IGATE's learning materials, guidance documents and good practice developed for school and community educators were incorporated into the national implementation framework. This includes IGATE's integrated approach at school, in the community and at home which saw the percentage of parents engaging in school activities which target improving learning increase to 70%.¹ This approach reflects a key priority of the GEEAP² COVID-19 policy recommendation report; that parental engagement can increase children's learning. The Government of Zimbabwe formally approved the Implementation Framework and FCDO is funding a nationwide rollout – providing learning materials and guidance to 90,000 teachers, 9,000 head teachers and 54,000 community champions – reaching 3.7 million school-aged children in Zimbabwe.

Curricula, Certification and Learning Materials – All GEC projects have made substantial contributions to curricular and materials at both primary and secondary schooling in Zimbabwe, as well as reaching those who are out of school.

CAMFED's My Better World materials have been approved by MoPSE across all secondary schools and integrated into the national guidance and counselling curriculum. Self-study guides in Maths, English and science were also approved and have been provided nationally to support learners completing their education up to O level.

IGATE's set of modules on basic literacy, numeracy, financial, entrepreneur skills and life skills have been approved by MoPSE for scale-up. In addition, curricula for four vocational skills short courses have been refined and approved by Ministry of Youth (MoY) along with a certification framework. This meets a specific gap and opportunity for out of school youth who face barriers to entering a one- or two-year residential course and provides a practical solution for outreach to remote areas.

The Open University launched global access to the teaching and learning materials from the SAGE programme, on their Open Learn Create (OLC) site.³ The impact of making materials available on OLC provide educators with a range of materials to support learning for children and young people aged 10-19 years and for those working across Early Years to Grade 5. The learning materials (240 hours of learning) of this accelerated learning programme are free to use and in May 2021 received Ministry endorsement to be made available to the country's 2 million out-of-school children and all educators.

Policy and Framework – Applying the evidence and experience of CBE (Community Based Education) towards ongoing engagements with key stakeholders in MoPSE regarding non-formal education and MOY regarding vocational skills, IGATE has facilitated key dialogue and progress towards a more joined up approach to reaching OOS youth and contributed to a draft framework anchored on foundational literacy and numeracy, financial literacy, and links to vocational skills.

Reaching learners through Community Learning Circles and Learner Guides during the COVID-19 pandemic. CAMFED's internal monitoring showed that 92% of girls re-sitting examinations in 2021 were supported by Learner Guides (young women who volunteer to support and mentor girls) while they were out of school. Learner Guides made home visits, led community-based *My Better World* sessions and study groups, worked with teacher mentors

¹ IGATE materials incorporated include Learner materials (Reading, Numeracy and Financial literacy cards, Grade 7 Study Guides), Guides for primary teachers, secondary English and Mathematics teachers, School Heads and Community Learning Champions.

² <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/719211603835247448/pdf/Cost-Effective-Approaches-to-Improve-Global-Learning-What-Does-Recent-Evidence-Tell-Us-Are-Smart-Buys-for-Improving-Learning-in-Low-and-Middle-Income-Countries.pdf>

³ <https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/course/view.php?id=6892>

on lesson planning and informed parents about school re-opening. The rate of return to school among students was 96%. Plan International used a flexible and inclusive approach where girls could choose how they wanted to access learning, including door-to-door visits, by telephone, community-based small groups, or hub-based learning. The project reached 88% of girls. During lockdowns and school closures, World Vision set up WhatsApp groups by creating a mobile phone contact list for the key stakeholders at school and in the community, who were then able to disseminate learning materials to students.

Improving teaching practices through participatory methods. Both World Vision and Plan International conducted training on participatory teaching methods with teachers. This continued during the COVID-19 pandemic via WhatsApp. This modified approach allowed an integration of practice and offline tasks, where teachers could share ideas during group chats. For World Vision, at endline, teachers reported that putting this into practice, for example, through playing educational games with students, helped to increase student participation and comprehension in class. More than 95% of students reported that teachers encouraged questions and group work and used teaching resources in their lessons. In Plan International's project, girls were encouraged to be assertive through a range of participatory and active approaches, such as role-play, and gained public speaking skills, which will be used to share their experiences at local and national level fora.

This evidence reflects the 'good buy' of structured lesson plans with linked materials and ongoing teacher monitoring and training reported in the main report by the GEEAP (Global Education Evidence Evidence Advisory Panel). Furthermore, this is also reflected in the GEEAP follow up COVID-19 policy recommendation report⁴ of providing additional instructional support to teachers.

Improving transition for out-of-school girls and young women through community-based education activities. CAMFED's endline evaluation found that young women felt more confident about their ability to succeed in the next stage of their education by taking part in the project. Young women who participated in the post-school transition programme said it improved their safety and wellbeing, business management skills and ability to secure a job. 21% of school graduates surveyed said they would not have had the same opportunities if they had not participated in the programme. World Vision set up a community-based learning initiative for out-of-school girls, focusing on literacy, numeracy, and financial and entrepreneurial skills through local facilitators. The endline evaluation showed that girls who were part of Community Learning Circles were more likely to have greater improvements in both literacy and numeracy than the rest of the intervention group, and 75% of girls reached through community learning circles had successfully transitioned to becoming employed, enrolled in formal education, or a full-time vocational course. In addition, 89% of young mothers who finished vocational training started an income generating activity. Many reported that they used their profits to invest in their homes and pay their children's or siblings' school fees.

This evidence reflects the 'great buy' giving information on the benefits, costs and quality of education reported in the GEEAP main report. CAMFED focused on building networks, increased awareness of opportunities and supported girls, communities, and families to make decisions around education, training, and work.

Improving girls' leadership, confidence, and life skills. CAMFED's *My Better World* programme has been successful in increasing self-efficacy and self-confidence of girls. Findings from the project suggest that sessions have positively contributed to critical thinking and problem-solving leading to an increase in child protection through informed and safe decisions. For example, in Zimbabwe, the midline evaluation showed that there was a significant change in girls' opinions of when/what age they will get married. Evidence from girls who participated in Plan International's Champions of Girls' Education sessions indicates improvement in girls' self-efficacy, confidence, and agency. In World Vision's project, girls who became peer leaders demonstrated increased leadership abilities compared to midline.

This evidence reflects the 'necessary but limited-evidence' finding of GEEAP's main report on interventions to safeguard students from violence. From a qualitative data perspective, CAMFED's endline evaluation reported that feedback on child protection was felt to be much more robust in schools as a result of the programme. Students reported they felt safer, were more aware of their rights and reported increased confidence that their rights would be respected. Data showed that peer relationships (boys and girls) were stronger due to the My Better World curriculum. World Vision found at endline, despite the context of COVID-19, that girls in the project felt safer both in school and walking to school than the comparison group, and that churches, schools and communities had institutionalised measures that promoted the safety and wellbeing of girls.

⁴ <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/5f911bdf7c5c8abf060467865acf1abd-0200022022/original/Prioritizing-Learning-GEEAP-Report-Final-01-24-2022.pdf>

Progress and learning

Three GEC projects have published robust evidence to demonstrate their impact:

LEAD PARTNER	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS*
World Vision	At endline, IGATE had made positive learning gains for girls in school due to improved teaching methods and learning opportunities provided in the community. Learners experienced significant, positive improvements in literacy (0.26 standard deviation) and numeracy (0.29 standard deviation) skills since midline. By focusing on foundational skills in literacy and numeracy, IGATE were also able to improve the test scores for those who had been the weakest learners at the beginning of the project.
CAMFED International	At midline, the project recorded substantial improvements in literacy and numeracy skills among CAMFED supported learners. In addition, the midline survey confirmed that marginalised girls' learning outcomes in maths and literacy and those of other student groups improved at higher rates among learners in partner schools. At endline, while learning assessments were not completed due to COVID-19 constraints and the fact that much of the cohort had already graduated out of school, the endline evaluation indicates that the project was effective in supporting the learning of marginalised girls and helped to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
Plan International	After one year's engagement with the programme, over 80% of girls achieved scores equivalent to Grades 2-4 or Grade 5+ in literacy and numeracy, suggesting that SAGE has supported girls in developing knowledge and skills across both subjects. Results also suggested that SAGE is significantly supporting girls with disabilities to build literacy and numeracy skills.

* Evidence in the table is from an evaluation point, baseline, midline or endline carried out by an external evaluator or the implementing partner.

Spotlight on the GEC and COVID-19 in Southern Africa: [This brief](#) summarises emerging findings around the impact of COVID-19 on learning, wellbeing and return to school from GEC projects in Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. All projects in Zimbabwe were asked to participate in workshops and submit evidence around understanding the impacts of COVID-19 on learning, wellbeing and return to school. The brief was primarily aimed at national governments, INGOs and NGOs working in the region, and it has continued relevance due to the ongoing uncertainty and continued impact on schools and in some cases, school closures and learning. It outlines interventions that support the re-opening of schools and, in some cases the continuation of remote learning as schools remain closed.

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