



COUNTRY BRIEFING: ZIMBABWE



GEC-T	2 projects	208,140 target beneficiaries
LNGB	1 project	16,500 target beneficiaries ¹

The GEC has three projects working in Zimbabwe: Two GEC-T projects focusing on transitioning girls between basic and secondary education and one LNGB project supporting the most marginalised and vulnerable out-of-school girls.

All projects have been impacted by the COVID-19 crisis as schools were closed throughout the country. Teachers' strikes in response to a lack of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and payment of salaries have also had an impact.

During the quarter July to September 2020, projects targeted direct contact with and support to over 17,000 girls through COVID-19 response activities. These activities focused on keeping girls safe through the provision of masks and PPE, raising awareness of COVID-19 and protection measures such as social distancing, and by providing menstrual hygiene materials.

PROJECT NAME	WINDOW	LEAD PARTNER	PROJECT START DATE	PROJECT CLOSE DATE
<u>Improving Girls' Access through Transforming Education (IGATE)</u>	GEC-T	World Vision	1 April 2017	30 September 2021
<u>The Ultimate Virtuous Cycle of Girls' Education</u>	GEC-T	Camfed International	1 April 2017	31 December 2021
<u>Supporting Adolescent Girls Education (SAGE)</u>	LNGB	Plan International UK	16 August 2018	31 December 2024

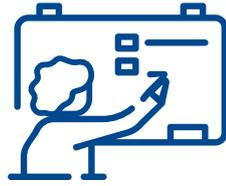


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¹ Number subject to adjustment following identification of beneficiaries. The project initially targeted 21 780 beneficiaries. This was reduced in January 2020 to 16 500 (prior to disruption due to Covid-19) due to changing economic and operational context.

Project data is based on reporting from May to October 2020

Since the start of the second phase of the GEC² (2017-2025), projects in Zimbabwe have reported the following achievements up to June 2020:



13,036
teachers trained



188,729
textbooks distributed



1,227
sanitary/wash kits distributed

Achievements

Camfed International: Results indicate progress in literacy and numeracy levels. The CAMA Learner Guides (members of the network of women leaders educated with **Camfed** support) have played a significant role, leading study groups and offering supplementary support for girls who are falling behind.

Marginalised girls stated that **Camfed** support has made a significant difference to their likelihood of completing school. There has been a reduction in the number of absentee students due to pregnancy, and this is supported by the engagement of community stakeholders in tackling early marriage and pregnancy through the community development committee mechanisms. The CAMA network has reached an additional 130,470 girls with educational support initiatives, against an original target of 50,000.

World Vision: Recent results highlighted evidence of increased use of interactive, more participatory learning methods, including group work, and that students enjoy these sessions more than when teachers use traditional methods such as dictation. Teachers and caregivers have reported that girls are demonstrating increased leadership skills gained through leadership clubs and camps. In terms of safety, there is evidence that child protection committees are becoming embedded, and girls overwhelmingly report that they have someone they trust to whom they can report abuse.

Challenges

The projects in Zimbabwe continue to face challenges that have arisen as a result of COVID-19, as well as some which pre-date the pandemic:

- The impact of COVID-19 led to restrictions and prolonged school closures, affecting access to learning. Schools fully reopened in early November, prioritising exam classes. Industrial action by teachers requesting a review of salaries has also impacted the availability of classes.
- The outbreak of COVID-19 resulted in the partial lockdown of the country and exacerbated pre-existing social risks. Following school closures, girls faced increased risks to their safety and wellbeing as a result of gender-based violence (GBV), exploitation, early marriages, teenage pregnancies and dropout.
- There are persistent economic challenges facing Zimbabwe; inflation and the economic situation have increased costs of implementation for projects in Zimbabwe, while persistent droughts have led to food scarcity.
- Girls' access to mobile phones is problematic. There is a risk that girls will lose out if they do not have a phone or cannot cover the cost of data to access platforms such as WhatsApp in rural areas.

Recent highlights

In response, the projects in Zimbabwe have now changed their activities to best meet the needs of the beneficiary girls. *Figure 1* outlines the types of activities projects have implemented and indicates the proportion of these that are existing, adapted or completely new to projects. Some highlights from these activities include:

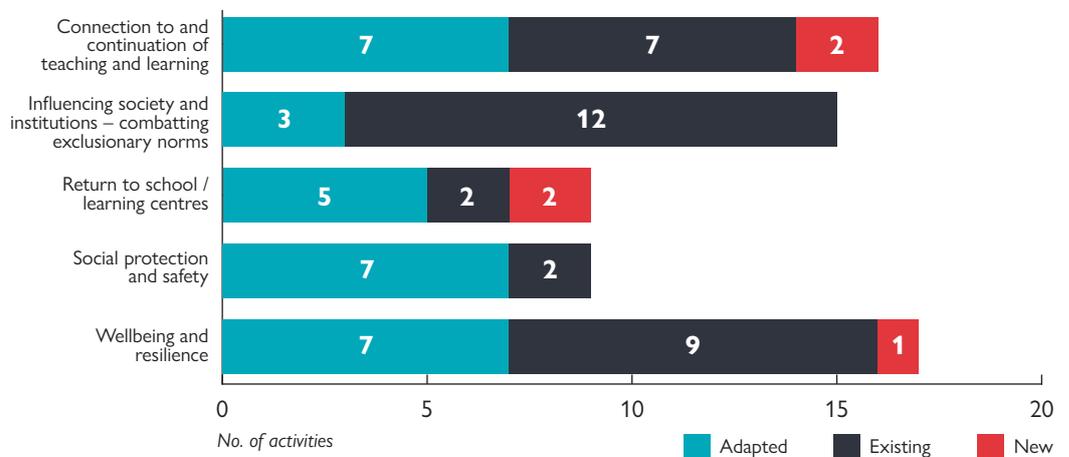
- **Maintaining contact with girls:** **Plan** have reached 50% of learners through digital means such as WhatsApp. For the remaining 50%, **Plan** are conducting door-to-door visits through their community educational facilitators in order to provide learning experiences. **Plan** also opened centres which comply with government restrictions for girls to attend if they could not be reached via technology or door-to-door visits.

² The first phase of the GEC ran from 2012-2017 and provided quality education for over a million marginalised girls. The GEC is now in its second phase (2017-2025), with up to 41 projects in 17 countries. The second phase is enabling existing GEC beneficiary girls to complete primary school and transition to secondary education, technical vocational training or employment. Within the second phase, a second cohort of girls are also being supported through the Leave No Girl Behind funding window, which consists of interventions for highly marginalised, adolescent girls who are out of school.

- **Adapting interventions and products:** **WorldVision** and **Plan** have both adapted quickly to COVID-19 and have collaborated well with the Ministries of Primary and Secondary Education. The two projects have produced learning materials for self-study during the pandemic and had them approved by the Ministry for use. Following collaboration with the FCDO country office, UNICEF plan to reprint these materials for circulation across all schools in the country.
- **Plan** have provided opportunities for girls to complete learning modules either by attending learning centres or through facilitators visiting and working with communities. **Plan** also produced non-formal education (NFE) materials. These NFE materials have since been endorsed and adopted by the national government, and there are plans to distribute them more widely via UNICEF.
- **Keeping girls safe:** **Plan** and **WorldVision** provided hand-washing facilities, and disseminated messaging on COVID-19 prevention and social distancing.

All projects have put in place safeguarding protocols and procedures specifically to ensure that their COVID-19 responses are safe for girls, other beneficiaries and staff members. Safety, as well as learning, continues to be a top priority for all GEC projects.*

Figure 1: COVID-19 Response activities in Zimbabwe³



Coordination and collaboration

All GEC projects in Zimbabwe are members of the Education Sector Cluster with which the government engages and consults. The projects have used this position to mobilise community and other stakeholder support for the education of out-of-school girls, leading to endorsements from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) for the programmes' Sustainability plans and involvement of NFE educators from local schools.

- **Camfed** is a member of the Education in Emergencies Cluster, co-chaired by UNICEF and Save the Children, alongside civil society organisations, INGOs and representatives from the MoPSE. **Camfed** has supported the MoPSE in implementing the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) at schools and, through partnership with UNICEF, MoPSE is scaling up printing of study guides initiated by **Camfed**.
- All projects in Zimbabwe have informed the government's response to COVID-19 in the NFE sector. **WorldVision** hosted the permanent secretary and chief directors at the 'Launch of the Grade 7 Study Guides' where the application of community learning circles was showcased. District school inspectors were present and encouraged by the high-level endorsement of the study guide and the learning circle model.
- The projects have collaborated with a diverse network of external stakeholders to produce and disseminate NFE learning materials for wider use; such as the Curriculum Development and Training Services, Learner Welfare and Psychological Services, Apostolic Women's Empowerment Trust, and faith-based consortiums such as UDACIZA.
- **Plan** has collaborated with the UK's Open University (OU) to train community educators, formal sector mentors and NFE mentors in inclusive, gender-responsive teaching strategies. This has resulted in inclusive adaptations being explored, developed and implemented in collaboration with the OU. OU technical experts have visited 25% of community hubs and noted improvements in 18 of 22 hubs in terms of their use of inclusive and gender-responsive teaching strategies.
- **Plan** have rapidly onboarded teachers and developed a curriculum tailored to girls with disabilities through collaboration with the Christian Blind Mission and various teacher training colleges.

³ Projects began implementing the COVID-19 response activities in Q2 2020 and will continue or be adapted in accordance with the evolving COVID-19 situation in each context and in agreement with the FM.

* Please see the safeguarding section on the COVID-19 page of the GEC website for materials and guidance provided to projects: <https://girlseducationchallenge.org/#/article/covid-19-response>. The GEC expects our projects to be compliant with our 14 minimum standards on safeguarding.

Lessons learned

- Data shows that certain subgroups of girls have been harder to reach, particularly girls from ethnic minority communities and girls with disabilities. This has mainly been due to poor network connection in ethnic minority communities and a lack of access to technology by girls with disabilities. As a result, the projects' mid-term response plans aim to mitigate against these inequalities, and closely monitor the impact of the alternative interventions.
- Projects have recognised that they need to strengthen support to communities and volunteers to enhance disability management. Activities will include continuous professional development training for teachers, hub volunteers and community members to strengthen the quality of learning support for girls with disabilities.
- Projects now have contingency plans in place for eventualities such as curfews, local lockdowns and tighter restrictions. These plans focus on remote communication and maintaining contact with girls. Projects have collected telephone numbers for beneficiaries, and alternative numbers and communication methods for girls without phones.

Priorities from January 2021

- **Plan** will assess the appropriateness of village saving and loan associations (VSLAs) for adolescent girls within the context of restrictions and economic uncertainty. If VSLAs are not deemed possible, then alternative options with similar outcomes will be explored and developed.
- **Camfed** will be running remedial and catch up classes to help girls catch up with the curriculum which will be facilitated by teacher mentors.
- As girls continue to return to school this will be interrupted and uneven, therefore **WorldVision** will be supporting community learning circles for literacy and numeracy to give girls the opportunity to practice their learning and ensure they have consistent support when learning from home.
- All projects will continue to keep in touch and try to engage in learning with girls, monitoring teacher availability in schools.
- All projects will closely monitor and adapt the ways beneficiaries gain skills and the capacity to respond to harmful norms, mental health issues and GBV.
- Projects will produce and disseminate knowledge products between projects and more widely throughout the sector.
- Projects will provide bespoke support to the girls, helping them to continue to attend school in a safe manner; provide training for Learner Guides, teacher mentors and headteachers and remedial and catch up classes to try and mitigate the loss of learning.

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**Girls'
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