



MARCH 2021

COUNTRY BRIEFING: MOZAMBIQUE



GEC-T

1 project

15,430 target beneficiaries

The GEC has one GEC-T project in Mozambique, STAR-G, that operates in Gaza, Manica and Tete provinces.

STAR-G aims at improving the life chances of marginalised girls by equipping them with functional literacy and numeracy skills and helping them to transition to the next stage of education. It focuses on improving the skills and motivation of teachers and providing bursaries and remedial classes to girls who require them. This is done through supporting mainstream schools and alternative education, such as Community-Based Education (CBE) and distance learning. Between April and September 2020, the project has focused on interventions aimed at supporting children to continue their education as they face the impact of the pandemic, local conflicts and recent natural disasters. During the quarter July to September 2020, the project has been able to reach and provide direct support to 9,191 girls through their COVID-19 response activities.

PROJECT NAME	WINDOW	LEAD PARTNER	PROJECT START DATE	PROJECT CLOSE DATE
<u>Successful Transition and Advancement of Rights for Girls (STAR-G)</u>	GEC-T	Save the Children Fund	1 April 2017	31 January 2022

The project has focused on interventions aimed at supporting children to continue their education as they face the impact of the pandemic, local conflicts and recent natural disasters.

Project data is based on reporting from May to October 2020



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STAR-G has reported the following achievements up to June 2020:



4,676

teachers trained
(1400 male,
3276 female)

13,046
girls club leaders trained
(1706 male, 11342 female)



79,492

textbooks
distributed



13,514

sanitary/wash kits
distributed

Achievements

By June 2020, the project had completed its first full academic year since the programme was redesigned¹, and has launched and monitored school-based project activities around teaching and learning, child protection and gender empowerment.

Challenges

During the period of school closure from March 2020, project-supported girls have had limited opportunity to continue with formal education. Due to Cyclone Idai, schools in Manica and Gaza provinces were shut prior to COVID-19, resulting in some girls being out of school for over a year. Most girls have very limited access to the technologies (such as radios, phones and internet) needed to engage with the distance learning programmes that have been put in place by the national government, and so were unable to engage meaningfully in learning activities. Planned teacher training programmes have had to be postponed as training institutions were also closed. A rise in gender-based violence, early marriage and pregnancy, and child abuse and exploitation has been recorded and girls are at heightened risk of dropping out of school permanently. The ways in which these challenges are being addressed by the project are outlined below.

The province of Manica continues to be impacted by armed conflict which has been ongoing since 2019. The armed attacks have affected eight project target communities in the Gondola district, forcing the project to halt activity in those at-risk communities, affecting up to 800 STAR-G Cohort girls from eight schools and six Distance Learning Centres, as well as eight community core groups.

Recent highlights

To respond to the recent challenges, the project has adapted key approaches to ensure that girls stay safe and keep learning during school closures.

- **Ensuring girls can continue learning:**
 - STAR-G established **distance learning centres** giving 886 girls and 945 boys the opportunity to transition to secondary education. A total of 811 tutors and managers of the centres were trained in classroom management and effective lesson delivery to ensure quality.
 - STAR-G set up 48 **study groups for distance learning** in order to provide some physically distanced, safe socialisation opportunities and promote peer-to-peer learning among students.
 - The project continued to **broadcast activities and messages through radio programmes**, to allow girls from different subgroups to continue learning and to remain aware and sensitised on issues affecting vulnerable girls. 54 radio sessions were broadcast in 32 communities where the project operates, reaching 39 schools (32 primary schools and seven secondary schools).
 - The project also **distributed government-approved mathematics and Portuguese workbooks** to GEC beneficiaries to enable them to continue learning at home.
 - A rapid assessment indicated that around 75% of project beneficiaries, two thirds of whom are girls, have been able to continue with some learning activities at home during COVID-19.

¹ The project was redesigned from April 2017 to July 2018 to focus more on transition from primary to secondary school.

- **Strengthened child protection mechanisms at community, district and provincial level:**
 - The project's efforts to train Child Protection Community Committee members and Referral Groups at district level has improved coordination and alignment and increased community monitoring. Project communities now have increased capacity to report, refer and respond to child protection violations.
 - Furthermore, the project has trained Matrons and Patrons groups and targeted information, education and communication materials which has increased their knowledge and helped to challenge harmful social norms surrounding early marriage and pregnancy, and wider girls' rights and sexual and reproductive health services.

Coordination and collaboration

The project has strong links to government and NGOs and throughout the COVID-19 crisis, coordination and collaboration efforts have strengthened further, some examples include:

- Engagement and coordination with the Ministry of Education and Human Development (MINEDH) including supporting the Open Distance Learning Institute to enhance the distance learning offering, building capacity of Institutes for Pedagogue and University of Pedagogue around the teacher professional development cycle. The project also worked with MINEDH to mainstream gender-sensitive pedagogy and positive discipline.
- The project is delivering an online training package for distance learning tutors and managers on how to tailor support during this time and is an active member of the Coordination Group for Education in Emergency (GCEiE) Cluster response.
- STAR-G is part of the education group for distance learning, and collaborated with MINEDH to engage with national and community radio stations to broadcast literacy and numeracy programmes so that girls could continue learning while schools were closed.
- STAR-G is incorporating the newly released MINEDH COVID-19 school reopening key guidelines aimed to ensure that learning continues through various platforms.
- The project worked with Humanity International to develop packages for children with disabilities to provide specific support when schools reopen. They also collaborated with Rede Homens Pela Mudança (HOPEM, Men Engaged in Gender Empowerment), the organisation that is responsible for influencing boys and men to support girls' education, to develop materials aimed at helping boys and men to better understand the exacerbated barriers to girls education.

Priorities from January 2021

As classes open in January 2021, dropout rates are expected to be high due to the effects of COVID-19. As such, the project will continue to work with the MINEDH on their back-to-school campaign to try to counteract this. STAR-G will be reprioritising teaching and learning, with the aim of helping girls to catch up when they return to school. As part of this, the project will be focused on improving literacy and numeracy across the grades, which will be reinforced through the teacher professional development cycle.

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Contact: uk_girls_education_challenge@pwc.com | www.girlseducationchallenge.org

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