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Narrow Windows, Revolving Doors

GEC Thematic Research Report

Final Version
Evaluation Manager Girls' Education Challenge Fund
March 2016

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This document has been approved for submission by Coffey's Project Director, based on a review of satisfactory adherence to our policies on:

- Quality management
- HSSE and risk management
- Financial management and Value for Money (VfM)
- Personnel recruitment and management
- Performance Management and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Project Director

Signature:

Abbreviations and Acronyms

BEAM	Basic Education Access Module
CfBT	Education Development Trust
COPA	Conseil de Participation (PTA)
DFID	Department for International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EM	Evaluation Manager
FDSE	Free Day Secondary Education
FGM	female genital mutilation
FM	Fund Manager
FPE	Free Primary Education
GBV	Gender-based violence
GEC	Girls' Education Challenge
HHS	Household Survey
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IGATE	Improving Girls' Access through Transforming Education
IRC	International Rescue Committee
ISG	in school girls
KCP	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
KIPPRA	Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis
OOSC	Out of school children
ORB	Opinion Research Business
OSG	out of school girls
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SBA	School based assessment
SCW	Step Change Window
SSA	sub-Saharan Africa
UK	United Kingdom

Contents

Executive Summary

Introduction

In 2012, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) launched the £355 million Girls' Education Challenge Fund (GEC) to support up to a million of the world's most marginalised girls to improve their lives through education.

Coffey, in partnership with RTI International and ORB is the Evaluation Manager (EM) of the GEC. We lead the independent evaluation of the GEC as a whole, which includes conducting evaluations of all funding windows at baseline, midline, endline, a process review and thematic research.

This document reports the findings of the thematic research and includes recommendations for DFID and the GEC Fund Manager. The objective was to explore the factors that affect girls' school retention and drop-out, with a particular focus on girls aged 12-15. This is an important transition period in girls' lives, as they move from primary education to secondary school and from girlhood to womanhood.

Research process

The study was carried out between July and December 2015 in the following locations: Katanga Province in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Samburu East sub-county in Kenya, and Mberengwa District, in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe. Using semi-structured interviews and group discussions, we spoke to a total of 109 adolescent girls and young women across the three countries, as well as over 70 girls' education stakeholders, including parents, teachers and government officials.

Findings

Multiple inter-connected constraints militate against girls from low-income households completing secondary school. Broad patterns and trends affecting whole communities interact with household-level and individual factors to produce very different life-chances for girls from similar backgrounds. We heard many accounts of 'revolving door' schooling, with time in school punctuated by repeated exclusions for non-payment of fees as a result of different types of shocks and events that affected household's capacity to pay.

Direct costs

Households' inability to meet the direct costs of girls' schooling is often due to some type of shock or stress, such as the illness or death of parents, a father's loss of employment, or parents' separation. In all locations, a pattern emerged whereby girls' schooling is repeatedly disrupted – for days, weeks, months or years – while parents and carers struggle to find the means to pay their fees or buy them a uniform. Once they reach puberty, with its risks and distractions, girls have a small window of opportunity for education. Frequent periods of non-attendance make the window smaller, and can result in girls dropping out permanently.

Sex, pregnancy and marriage

There are various patterns and sequences of events linking pre-marital sex, pregnancy and marriage to girls dropping out of school. For example, girls in school may run away from home to cohabit with a man or get married, they may become pregnant after brief relationships involving gifts or money, or in a few cases they may become involved in prostitution. While pregnancy and marriage may be the immediate reasons why girls drop out of school, they are often linked to underlying factors, notably household poverty, and demoralisation following repeated school exclusions.

Opportunity costs

The opportunity costs of girls' education appear to be higher in Samburu East than in the other study locations. This is linked to: the persistent cultural tradition of early marriage for Samburu girls; pastoralists' dependence on girls' labour for herding small livestock; and recent droughts which have forced some parents to withdraw daughters from school as a coping strategy. However, we also found evidence that, following the death of a male household head, mothers in Katanga Province may withdraw their daughters from school so that they can help with farming and household tasks.

Parents' perceptions of the benefits of education

Many parents make great efforts to pay their daughters' school fees because they hope that, once they finish secondary school, the girls will be able to find secure employment in the formal sector and contribute to their parents' households. On the other hand, the formal employment sectors are very small in all three countries involved in the study. There is indirect evidence that other parents, especially in Katanga Province, DRC and Mberengwa District, Zimbabwe, do not see any value in school for their daughters due to the scarcity of job opportunities.

Girls' perceptions of the benefits of education

Like their parents, the girls interviewed for the study perceive school primarily as a route to work in the formal sector. Many seem over-optimistic about their employment prospects, and most girls have very limited ideas about the kind of jobs they can aim for. Hardly any girls interviewed for this study had ambitions to run their own businesses, although for many of them this may be a more realistic goal than a job in the formal sector.

Girls want formal sector jobs so that they can help their parents in later life, and because in their eyes a regular salary means financial independence and personal empowerment, especially with regard to marriage and husbands. We also have indirect evidence, mainly from Katanga Province, DRC and Mberengwa District, Zimbabwe, of girls dropping out of school because they do not see any benefit, because they dislike going to school or because they become pre-occupied with sexual relationships and marriage.

Recommendations

The following broad recommendations arise from the study findings:

For DFID's Education Team

- DFID's education policy and programming should review the constraints that prevent schools and education systems from supporting girls whose completion of a cycle of education is threatened by shocks of various types. For instance, strategies could be developed to minimise the number and duration of gaps in girls' attendance.

- The GEC's theory of change assumes that education helps girls to achieve better livelihoods and life chances, for example through improved employment prospects. Accordingly, future policy on girls' education could address the lack of income-earning opportunities awaiting girls after completion of secondary school. A joined-up approach linking economic growth, access to job markets and education would help to ensure that completing secondary school delivers genuine benefits for girls in terms of their life chances and economic prosperity.

For the Evaluation Manager

- Focussing on the context-specific perceptions and experiences of adolescent girls in this study has illuminated the quantitative and qualitative data collected at the GEC baseline. While quantitative evidence can identify patterns, trends and associations, qualitative research is often required to explain these. We recommend that, in future, in-depth qualitative studies should routinely accompany the collection of quantitative data on educational programmes.

For GEC projects and the Fund Manager

- The demand for girls' education is shaped by complex social, economic, environmental and cultural contexts which are subject to change, as well as by supply issues such as teaching quality. Programme designers need to understand how all these factors interact, so that they can tailor interventions and achieve sustainable change. In their midline evaluations and beyond, GEC projects and the Fund Manager should try to identify the most influential context-specific factors that affect girls' educational outcomes.

1 Introduction

1.1 Programme context

In 2012, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) launched the £355 million Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) Fund to support up to a million of the world's most marginalised girls to improve their lives through education. Projects across the GEC support girls' education for girls at primary and secondary schools.

Coffey, in partnership with RTI International and ORB is the Evaluation Manager (EM) of the GEC. The EM leads the independent evaluation of the GEC as a whole, which includes conducting evaluations of all funding windows at baseline, midline, endline, a process review and this thematic research.

1.2 Research context

The GEC thematic research explores the factors that affect the retention and drop-out of girls, with a particular focus on girls aged 12-15. This is an important transition period in girls' lives, as they move from primary education to secondary school, and from girlhood to womanhood.

The objectives of this research are:

1. To develop a greater depth of evidence around the role of different contextual, community, school-based, household and personal factors that 'push' girls out of school;
2. To place 'the girl' at the centre of the research design; and
3. To build up an understanding of the factors and conditions that ultimately affect the process of dropping out.

We designed the thematic research as a qualitative cross-sectional study across three locations. The research aims to answer:

- With regard to girls aged 12-15, what differences at individual and household level (in terms of: perceptions; attitudes; choices and strategies) result in some girls staying on at school, while others who face very similar circumstances drop out?

The findings supplement existing evidence from the GEC, specifically the analysis and findings from the EM baseline research of the Step Change Window (SCW), Innovation Window (IW) and Strategic Partnerships Window (SPW). The findings are designed to be used by:

- The EM, to strengthen our understanding and analysis of the effects of different types of interventions in the midline and endline evaluations;
- The Fund Manager, to help inform their qualitative thematic research, analysis and synthesis; and
- DFID, to help inform future programming and policy decisions about how to frame the complex problems that marginalised girls face in achieving good quality education outcomes and inform strategies for intervention.

1.3 Research process

The thematic research is a qualitative study that places the girl at the centre of the research design to understand how different factors and conditions over time affect her ability to stay in school.

We conducted the thematic research in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Kenya and Zimbabwe. We selected these countries, because we had an existing evidence base from our baseline research, which could be used to compare and contrast with new qualitative data and findings from the thematic research. Within each of these countries, the initial study locations for the thematic research were determined by sampling points in which we had already collected quantitative and qualitative data at baseline. Some changes to these sampling points had to be made and these are further explained in Annex A.

The Research Director led the research in each sampled country. In all three countries, she was accompanied by one member of Coffey's in-house GEC evaluation team. The fieldwork research teams in each country included two national translators and security staff where needed.

We carried out the fieldwork in two to three sampling points in each country. Data collection consisted of in-depth interviews and group discussions.

In each study location, our sampling frame consisted of: girls aged 12-15 who have dropped out of school (called out of school girls or OSG); girls aged 12-15 who are still in school (in school girls or ISG); girls' parents, guardians and other members of their household; school stakeholders who knew the interviewed girls and could comment on their situations; and finally community members with a perception of girls' schooling in the area. We spoke to a total of 109 girls and 71 adult informants across the three countries.

We spoke to 66 in school girls and 43 out of school girls. While we interviewed more girls who were in school than out of school, many of the in-school girls had dropped out and returned to school, which provided an opportunity to understand the dynamics and factors affecting a girls' ability to be in school.

We spoke to 63 girls between 12-15 and 43 girls over the age of 15. We found younger girls in the sampled age bracket were reserved and reluctant to speak about their school experiences. We included girls who were older than 15, as we wanted to speak to girls who had experienced the transition from primary to secondary school. Girls under the age of 15 are often still in primary school due to delayed enrolment or school repetition. We also spoke to girls who were slightly older, but who had dropped out around the age of 15-17.

Our research methods are explained in detail in Annex A.

1.4 Report structure

This report discusses the factors that affect girls' ability to stay in school that emerged during the fieldwork. For consistency and continuity, we have used the barriers identified in the SCW Baseline Report as the headings in this report. The factors that emerged during the fieldwork are mostly in line with the barriers to girls' education identified in the SCW Baseline Report. However, there are some differences between our findings and the barriers identified, which are reflected in the report's structure. We expect that these are due mainly to the context-specific nature of our study and its focus on retention and drop-out rather than differences in the barriers to girls' schooling in general – other possible reasons are discussed in the conclusion (Section 4).

Our evidence consists of what study participants told us, our own observations, and secondary literature. In this report, we mainly use extracts from interviews and discussions to support and illustrate our analysis. The examples we provide are representative of many similar stories we heard during the course of the fieldwork. Where we have counter-evidence to a point, we also try to include an example.

2 Study Contexts

We conducted the thematic research in three countries: Kenya, the DRC and Zimbabwe. These countries offer an opportunity to explore how factors affect girls in communities with different levels of drop-out rates.

2.1 Kenya study context

We conducted our research at three sampling points in Samburu East (a constituency of Samburu County) in Kenya: one in Wamba (an urban area); and two outside of Wamba in more rural areas.

Figure 1: Study location in Kenya

2.1.1 Socio-economic background

Samburu County, in the north of Kenya, is semi-arid, very lightly populated and has few urban settlements. Its main economic activities are nomadic pastoralism, farming and tourism.[i] While some Samburu live in settled communities, with access to services such as schools and dispensaries, the majority of the population are rural nomadic and maintain their traditional lifestyle, moving with their herds in the bush, having little contact with officialdom. Most Samburu pastoralists depend on livestock for wealth. Table 1 shows poverty and employment data in Kenya and Samburu Country.

Table 1: Poverty and employment data (Kenya)

	National	Samburu County
Poverty rate[ii]	45.9%	73.5%
Unemployment rate[iii]	8.6%	11%
Male	8.8%	
Female	8.3%	
Informal employment	77%	85%

(15 – 64 years)[iv]		

There is insecurity in Samburu County related to cattle-rustling between tribes. The area also regularly experiences severe droughts, which leads to crop failure and livestock deaths. Conflict, flooding, drought and other factors significantly affect livelihoods and education in Samburu County, which is one of the poorest counties in Kenya.

Samburu East is undergoing a contested cultural transition from the traditional pastoralist lifestyle to a more settled, sedentary, 'modern' way of life. In the mainstream national discourse, the pastoralist lifestyle is seen to be at odds with ideas of progress and modernity.

The cultural traditions of the Samburu include the continuing cultural tradition of *morans* (young unmarried warriors), the practice of 'beading' girls, early marriage, and female genital mutilation (FGM). Traditionally, the practice of beading girls refers to young warriors giving beads to a girl that they are interested in sexually. Fathers may also tell a girl to wear beads, as a signal that she is available for marriage. In Samburu County, girls who are beaded tend to be married between the age of 13 and 18 to men who have passed through the fourteen years of warriorhood.[v] FGM or circumcision is a traditional practice and rite of passage in Samburu County, which marks the transition from child to adulthood and the start of sexual activity. A pregnant girl who has not been circumcised is looked down on. In 2014 in the Rift Valley Province, which is now Samburu County, 26.9 per cent of women had been circumcised.[vi] Efforts are in place to reduce the practice of FGM and it is slowly declining.

Table 2: Social indicators for Kenya and Samburu County

Women who:	National	Samburu County
Are 20-24 and were married by 18[vii]	26.4%	30.1%
Have begun childbearing (aged 15-19) [viii]	18.1%	21.2%
Are circumcised (aged 15-49) [ix]	21%	26.9%

2.1.2 Education background and data

The legal framework in Kenya is generally supportive of education. It is compulsory for girls and boys between the ages of 6 and 13 (primary school age) to attend school. Table 3 provides an overview of the education system in Kenya.

Table 3: Education system in Kenya

Education level	Entrance age	Duration	Notes
Primary Education	6	8 years	Standard 1 to Standard 8; no direct school fees
Lower Secondary Education	14	2 years	Form 1 and Form 2; school fees
Upper Secondary Education	16	2 years	Form 3 and Form 4; school fees

The Constitution of Kenya (2010) states that every child has a right to free basic education. The introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) and Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) programmes in 2003 and 2008 made basic education officially free in Kenya. Although, parents are asked to contribute to school construction funds and provide uniforms. National government policy is that, in primary school a child should not be denied access to school if the parents cannot pay.[x] Secondary schools require fees, which vary depending on whether the child is a day or boarding student. Scholarships are available for students, based on merit.

Basic education includes two years of pre-school, eight years of primary education and four years of secondary education. The Ministry of Education budget was 7.5 per cent of the total government budget in 2012.[xi] While primary and secondary schools are free, the education burden on households is reported as being high due to indirect costs, such as uniforms, transportation and meals.[xii]

Kenya's Policy Framework for Nomadic Education (2008) sets out broad guidelines for coordinating and harmonising efforts to deliver good quality educational services to pastoralist populations.[xiii] It signalled the government's change of attitude towards pastoralist education, following years of criticism from pastoralist communities that formal education is inconsistent with their livelihood activities and serves to undermine their way of life.[xiv] However there is no implementation plan.

Table 4 shows education data at the national level and in Samburu County from 2009. More recent data is not available at this time. Across all education indicators, the population in Samburu County has much lower scores than the national average. Education in Kenya does not seem to favour boys over girls when looking at the Gender Parity Index (GPI) with regards to enrolment and retention in primary school, which is 1.01. In secondary school the GPI is 0.94 indicating that slightly more boys are enrolled than girls in secondary education.[xv]

Table 4: Education data at the national level and in Samburu County

	National	Male	Female	Samburu County[xvi]	Male	Female
Net primary enrolment[xvii]	91.4%	90.6%	92.3%	41.3%	43.1%	39.5%
Primary completion[xviii]	76.8%	79.2%	74.4%	29.8%	41.7%	19%
Net secondary enrolment[xix]	28.9%	29.8%	27.9%	7.8%	7.5%	8.1%
Dropout rate (secondary school)[xx]	3.5%	3.2%	3.7%	6.8%	6.9%	6.6%
Out of school[xxi]	18.4%	18.7%	18.0%	21.0%	21.4%	20.5%

Based on our quantitative analysis of the GEC household surveys at baseline, we found that in GEC project areas in Kenya enrolment peaks at ages 12 to 13 coinciding with the last two years of primary school, and declines thereafter. Retention rates drop substantially between the 12 to 13 and 14 to 15 age bands, marking the transition from primary to secondary school.

Table 5: GEC household survey outcome analysis for Kenya[xxii]

EM Data - Kenya	Enrolment[xxiii]	Retention[xxiv]
All	86	97
< 6	81	98
6 to 8	86	99
9 to 11	85	98
12 to 13	86	97
14 to 15	87	88

For learning outcomes, in-school girls in Kenya are above average at all ages in literacy and numeracy compared to other GEC countries.[xxv] However, they still do not reach international reading benchmarks for literacy.

Our quantitative analysis of the GEC household survey at baseline from Kenya showed relationships between the employment situation in the household and girls' proportion of time spend on household duties and enrolment. Distance to school and a different language of instruction at school were also factors affecting enrolment. The quantitative analysis also identified a relationship between low career aspirations for girls' education and enrolment and attendance. Girls not trying to do well at school, having low levels of family education were also related to enrolment and learning. Girls' learning levels mainly related to economic factors, including household income, material deprivation and the proportion of a girl's time spent on household duties.

Findings from our baseline research for the evaluation of the GEC are further discussed in Annex A.

2.1.3 GEC projects in Kenya

In Kenya, there are:

- two GEC SCW projects implemented by WUSC and CfBT;
- two IW projects implemented by Leonard Cheshire Disability Kenya and I Choose Life; and
- two GEC SPW projects implemented by Avanti and Discovery.

The thematic research was conducted in Samburu County where CfBT is implementing Wasichana Wote Wasome (WWW)[xxvi] with field partner AMURT. This project works in primary schools and surrounding communities in two very different contexts, namely ASALs like Samburu East, and urban slums. WWW's aim is to drive changes at four levels: the community, the home, the school and for the girl herself. The project takes a holistic, integrated approach which combines interventions across these four dimensions to overcome the complex barriers to girls' education in these two types of environment.

2.2 Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) Country Context

We conducted our research at three sampling points in Katanga Province in the DRC: one in the community of Mulungwishi; and two in the town of Kasenga.

Figure 2: Study locations in the DRC
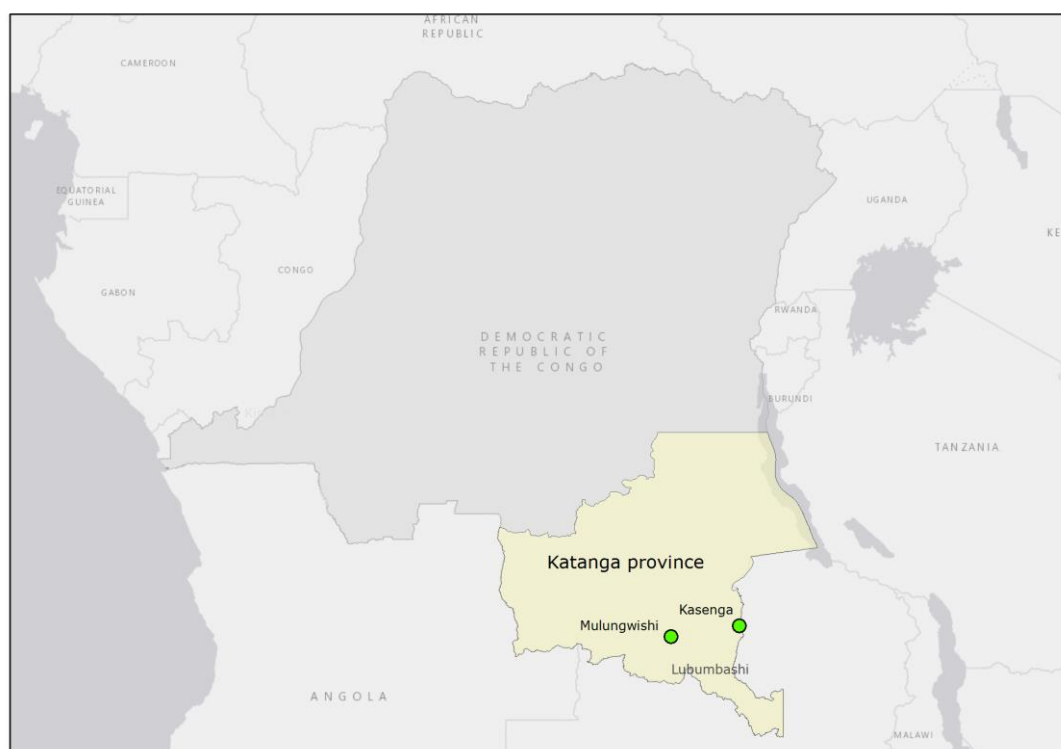
2.2.1 Socio-economic background

Katanga Province, in the south east of the DRC is the second largest province in the country. It is a copper and cobalt mining area with a large number of informal miners. Otherwise, Katanga's population are subsistence farmers or small scale vendors. Katanga is a drought prone province, which is likely to get worse in the future as a result of climate change.[xxvii] Table 6 contains poverty and employment information for both the country as a whole and Katanga Province.

Table 6: Poverty and employment data (DRC)

	National	Katanga Province

Poverty rate[xxviii]	63.4%	66.6%
Unemployment rate[xxix]	17.4%	Not available
Male	15.2%	
Female	19.6%	
Informal employment (15 – 64 years)	88.6%	90.2%[xxx]

In the DRC, it is legal for girls to marry at 15 and for boys to marry at 18. Katanga Province has the highest proportion of girls who have begun child bearing in the DRC. Table 7 shows marriage and other social indicators.

Table 7: Social indicators for the DRC and Katanga Province

Women who:	National	Katanga Province
Are married (aged 15-19)[xxxi]	25%	37%
Have begun childbearing (aged 15-19)	28.4%	44.5%

In the DRC, life expectancy is 49.6 years. With parents dying at a young age, many children are orphaned before they finish school.[xxxii] There are high rates of cholera and malaria across Katanga Province. In the case of eight per cent of children in Katanga Province, one or both of their parents have died.[xxxiii] Orphanhood in turn affects schooling. In Katanga Province, 57 per cent of orphans aged 10-14 attend school in comparison to 76 per cent of non-orphans.[xxxiv]

2.2.2 Education background and data

Katanga Province has a low literacy rate with 35 per cent of women aged 15 – 24 literate compared to 51 per cent across the DRC. This section presents education data for Katanga Province and the DRC. Table 8 summarises the education system in DRC and Table 10 presents data on enrolment and completion.

Table 8: Education System in the DRC

Education level	Entrance age	Duration
Primary Education	6	6 years
Lower Secondary Education	12	2 years
Upper Secondary Education	14	4 years

The Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Vocation Education governs primary and secondary education in the DRC. In 2010, the government launched a policy of free primary education with the plan of gradually extending it to include all levels of education. However, government budgeting and spending in education is not adequate.[xxxv] In DRC, public expenditure on education is 1.8 per cent of GDP compared to the average across sub-Saharan African, which is 4.6 per cent of GDP. [xxxvi] Across levels of education, 42 per cent of spending goes to pre-primary and primary education, 32 per cent to secondary education and 26 per cent to higher education. Best practice is for 50 per cent of education spending to be on primary education. [xxxvii]

While the central government manages the financing of the sector, implementation is decentralised with the provincial governments managing primary and secondary education. There are two types of public schools: (1) schools under the direct control of the government (écoles non-conventionnées); and (2) network schools, which are run by churches through agreements with the government (écoles conventionnées). The majority of students attend the second type of school, which tend to be more efficient and associated with lower unit costs. However, these schools face challenges due to a divided provincial and national management system, which has led to a

growth in the number of teachers and in turn unpaid staff at schools. Only 67 per cent of public school teachers are on the payroll and their salaries are low.[xxxviii]

Public schools have asked households to compensate them for the low level of government funding by taking on the burden of teachers' salaries (along with supplemental salaries), as well as school operating costs which are not adequately budgeted by the government.[xxxix] Families are estimated to pay about 95 per cent of school costs.[xl] Table 9 presents the structure of households' spending on education in Katanga Province.

Table 9: Disaggregation of household spending on education

	School fees and contribution to operating costs	Supplies	Transport	Uniform	Food	Pocket Money	One-off fees	Other expenses
Katanga Province[xli]	33.6%	10.7%	4.2%	9.6%	19.2%	4.7%	17.4%	0.8%

Households spent an average $228.10 on schooling in the 2010 to 2011 school year in Katanga Province. This is 11.7 per cent of their annual income. The share of income spent on education is higher in urban areas than in rural areas across the DRC.In Katanga Province, urban households spent 15 per cent of their income compared to 7 per cent in rural households.

Across the country, more than half of the children at risk of dropping out (as defined by UNICEF's out-of-school study) come from households with a monthly income of less than $50. For families in this class, 11.3 per cent of their annual income is spent on education, which is a comparable allocation to families in other income brackets. [xlii]

Education financing is a far-reaching economic and governance issue which has a huge impact on girls' chances of completing school in DRC, so **the heavy financial burden of sending children to school is an important contextual issue for this study.**

Table 10: Education data at the national level and in Katanga Province

	National	Male	Female	Katanga Province	Male	Female
Net primary enrolment[xliii]	74.8%	77.5%	72.1%	66.1%	72.6%	60.3%
Primary completion rate[xliv][1]	14.4%	15.4%	13.5%	10.6%	Not available	Not available
Transition rate[xlv][2]	87.2%	85.3%	89.7%	84.9%	Not available	Not available
Net secondary enrolment	31.8%	35.1%	28.3%	22.7%	26.1%	18.6%
Dropout[xlvi]	6.8%	5.6%	8.2%	7.8%	6.3%	9.5%
Out of school[xlvii]	28.9%	26.5%	31.7%	34.8%	32.3%	37.6%

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[1] This primary completion rate is the ratio of the number of children who are of age to be finishing primary school (11 years old) who were in the final year of the primary school cycle.
[2] Transition rate is the percentage of children who were in the last grade of primary school during the previous school year and who were attending the first grade of secondary school in the current school year (excludes repeaters in the final grade of primary school).

Nationally, 87 per cent of children who complete primary school continue to secondary school. In the DRC, boys' attendance is much higher than girls' attendance. The primary school gender parity index for attendance is 0.83 in Katanga compared to 0.93 across the DRC. The secondary school gender parity index for attendance in Katanga Province is 0.71 compared to 0.81 across the DRC. According to UNESCO there is gender parity when the Gender Parity Index (GPI) is between 0.97 and 1.03.[xlviii] The transition rate from primary school to secondary school in DRC is higher for girls than boys, at 90 per cent and 85 per cent respectively.

Table 11 presents dropout rates by school year, while Table 12 presents dropout rates by age. In Table 12, it is notable that the number of girls who have dropped out more than doubles between the age of 15 and 16, indicating that this is very significant age for girls in school. Also, the dropout rate increases especially between primary school and secondary school for girls.

Table 11: Dropout rate (%) by grade of primary and lower school secondary school children

	Primary						Lower secondary	
Characteristics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Boys (all provinces)	2.9	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.4
Girls (all provinces)	3.5	2.5	2.9	2.1	1.5	1.7	2.1	2.9
Katanga	5.1	4.0	3.9	2.6	2.5	2.9	2.8	2.3

Source: Household Survey OOSC-DRC 2012

Table 12: School exposure of girls aged 10 – 17 across the DRC (%)

Age	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Enrolled	83.3	84.6	82.7	84.5	80.6	79.2	65.8	58.8
Dropped out	6.8	7.2	8.7	7.8	14.1	12.5	26.0	31.9
Never attended	9.9	8.2	8.6	7.7	5.3	8.3	8.1	9.4

Source: Household Survey OOSC-DRC 2012

Based on our quantitative analysis of the GEC household surveys at baseline, we found that in DRC enrolment peaks at age 14 to 15, which could reflect late enrolment. Retention rates are lowest in DRC among 9 to 11 year olds.

Table 13: GEC household survey outcome analysis for DRC[xlix]

EM Data - DRC	Enrolment[l]	Retention[li]
All	84	94
< 6	46	100
6 to 8	85	97
9 to 11	91	90
12 to 13	88	96
14 to 15	95	100

For learning outcomes, girls in school in DRC are below average at all ages in literacy and numeracy compared to other GEC countries. Among students in school aged 6 to 8, DRC had the lowest literacy score of all countries in the GEC programme. For girls aged 14 to 15, DRC is still below average compared to other GEC countries and the average literacy score for that age group only indicates basic literacy.[lii]

Our quantitative analysis of the GEC household survey at baseline from DRC showed relationships between a lack of lighting, material deprivation, time spent on household duties and girls' enrolment. At school, unsatisfactory teaching was also identified as a barrier to enrolment. A girl's disability and low levels of family education were also

factors that affected enrolment. A journey to school over thirty minutes was identified as a factor affecting learning, but not a factor that affected enrolment.

Findings from our baseline research for the evaluation of the GEC are further discussed in Annex A.

2.2.3   GEC in the DRC

There is one GEC SCW project in the DRC. IRC implement Vas-Y Fille[liii] across five provinces in the DRC. It provides financial support to parents, improved teacher training and more tuition hours, increased community involvement, and accelerated learning programmes for out-of-school children.

2.3   Zimbabwe country context

We conducted our research around two locations in Mberengwa district in the Midlands Province in Zimbabwe.

Figure 3: Study locations in Zimbabwe
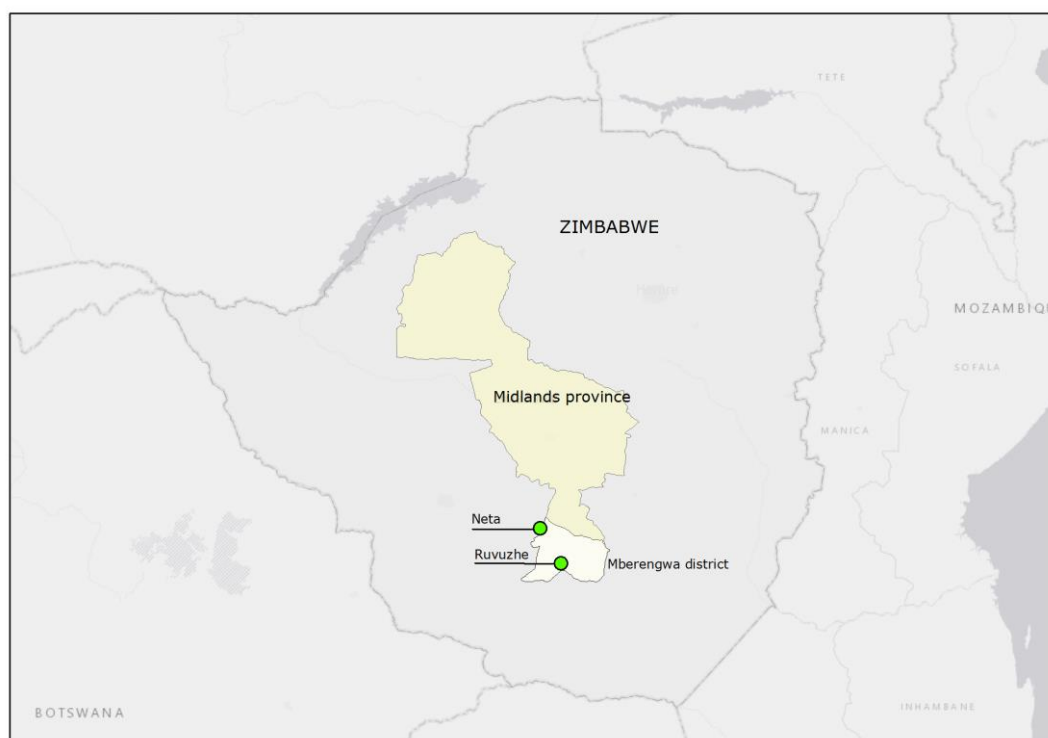
2.3.1   Socio-economic background

Mberengwa district is a mining area with different minerals including gold, diamonds and iron ore. Mberegwa district has been affected by severe droughts over the last thirty years. In certain areas, droughts occur at a rate of four in every five years. This significantly affects the livelihoods of the population in the district, as most people are subsistence farmers.

Table 14 present poverty and employment rates for Zimbabwe and Midlands Province.

Table 14: Poverty and employment data (Zimbabwe)

	National	Midlands Province
Poverty rate	62.6%[liv]	68.7%[lv]
Unemployment rate[lvi]	11.3%	10%
Informal employment (15 – 64 years)	84%	Not available

Our analysis of the GEC household survey at baseline showed direct and indirect relationships between poverty, intermediary factors such as material deprivation, poor housing, subjective wellbeing and household duties; and girls' enrolment and learning.

In Zimbabwe, marriage is legal at 16 for girls and 18 for boys. Zimbabwe has a high HIV prevalence among adults estimated at 16 per cent in Mberengwa.[lvii] Orphanhood is common with 16.6 per cent of children up until the age of 17 in Midlands having only one or no parents alive. In Midlands, 26.1 per cent of children lived with neither biological parent. Table 15 shows marriage and other social indicators.

Table 15: Social indicators for Zimbabwe and Midlands Province

	National	Midlands Province
HIV prevalence	15%	16%
Women who are married (aged 15-19)[lviii]	21.7%	25%
Have begun childbearing (aged 15-19)	23.5%	23%

2.3.2   Education background and data

Zimbabwe has one of the highest literacy rates in Africa. Across Zimbabwe, 92 per cent of women aged 15-24 are literate compared to 91.4 per cent in Midlands Province.[lix] Table 16 summarises the education system in Zimbabwe.

Table 16: Education system in Zimbabwe

Education level	Entrance age	Duration	Notes
Primary Education	6	7 years	Standard 1 to Standard 7
Lower Secondary Education	13	4 years	Form 1 to Form 4 (Ordinary Level)
Upper Secondary Education	17	2 years	Form 5 and Form 6 (Advanced Level)

The Zimbabwean Constitution entitles every citizen to a free state-funded basic education (primary education). The Zimbabwean Constitution was signed into law in 2013. However, the implementation of the laws in the Constitution has not been carried out to the full extent. In some cases students are sometimes able to attend school, but in other cases, they are excluded from school especially when their parents don't pay fees. Students who do not pay school fees do not receive their results and may not be able to sit for exams.

Students' households are required to pay school fees and various levies. Fees are for education-related school costs like course books and school material (not including teachers' salaries) and are between $5 and $30 per year. Levies are for school infrastructure and vary from $5 to $400 per year. The Government of Zimbabwe is responsible for paying teachers' salaries, which is between $200 and $400 a month.[lx]

Girls in Zimbabwe consistently have higher rates for school attendance, enrolment and completion than boys. In Midlands Province, at both primary and secondary school, more boys than girls are out of school. In Midlands Province, the primary school gender parity index is 1.03 and 1.29 for secondary schools.[lxi] This suggests that girls are attending primary and secondary school at a much higher rate than boys. The transition rate from primary school to secondary school in Zimbabwe is also higher for girls than boys, at 81 per cent and 77 per cent respectively.[lxii]

Table 17 presents education data at the national level and in Midlands Province.

Table 17: Education data at the national level and in Midlands Province

	National	Male	Female	Midlands Province	Male	Female
Net primary enrolment	93.9%	93%	94.7%			
Primary school completion rate[lxiii3]	98.9%	99.5%	98.4%	105.6%		
Transition rate to secondary school[lxiv4]	78.9%	77.4%	80.5%	87.1%		
Net secondary enrolment[lxv]	43.8%	43.7%	44%			
Dropout rate (average across primary)[lxvi]	3.1%	3.4%	2.8%	1.9%	2.2%	1.5%
Dropout rate (average across secondary)[lxvii]	21.3%	21.7%	20.8%	21.5%	23.6%	19.3%

Based on our quantitative analysis of the GEC household surveys at baseline, we found that in Zimbabwe enrolment rates in project areas are considerably higher than in other GEC project areas, with 98% enrolment among 9-11 year-olds and 91% enrolment among 14-15 year-olds. Retention drops substantially between 9 to 11 year olds and 12 to 13 years, which could mark the transition years from primary to secondary school.

Table 18: GEC household survey outcome analysis for Zimbabwe[lxviii]

EM Data – Zimbabwe	Enrolment[lxix]	Retention[lxx]
All	90	92
< 6	69	94
6 to 8	97	98
9 to 11	98	99
12 to 13	86	87
14 to 15	91	92
16 to 19	77	74

For learning outcomes, while girls in school in Zimbabwe do not reach international reading benchmarks for literacy, they still read more fluently than girls in other SCW project areas. In Zimbabwe, girls aged 9-11 read on average 47 words per minute, which means that they can demonstrate a basic level of literacy (compared with a SCW average of only 28 words per minute). At secondary school age, girls in Zimbabwean project areas achieve a reading score of 83 words per minute, compared with only 55 words per minute as the average across the SCW.[lxxi] In some Zimbabwean project areas girls had higher literacy rates than boys at both primary and secondary age, while in others there were only very small gender gaps.

Our quantitative analysis of the GEC household survey at baseline in Zimbabwe showed direct and indirect relationships between poverty, intermediary factors such as material deprivation, poor housing, subjective wellbeing and household duties; and girls' enrolment and learning. Costs associated with schooling and a families' disengagement with education were also identified as being prevalent barriers to enrolment.

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[3] The primary completion rate is the ratio of the total number of students, regardless of age, entering the last grade of primary school for the first time to the number of children of the primary graduation age at the beginning of the current school year. The primary completion rate can have values above 100 per cent, which can be a symptom of late entry, grade repetition or of an enrolment push at some point in the past, perhaps as a consequence of a school enrolment campaign.
[4] Transition rate is the percentage of children who were in the last grade of primary school during the previous school year and who were attending the first grade of secondary school in the current school year (excludes repeaters in the final grade of primary school).

Findings from our baseline research for the evaluation of the GEC are further discussed in Annex A.

2.3.3 GEC Projects in Zimbabwe

There are two SCW GEC projects being implemented in Zimbabwe: World Vision's Improving Girls' Access through Transforming Education (IGATE) Programme; and Camfed's "A New 'Equilibrium' for Girls". The thematic research was carried out in Mberengwa district around schools where IGATE operates. IGATE[lxxii] seeks to enhance household economic capacity to support girls in school, transform attitudes towards girls' education and strengthening family and community support systems for girls to stay in school. It also aims to increase girls' confidence, self-esteem and capacity to choose to stay in school, and to analyse issues impacting their retention and performance in school, empowering them to address these and perform better.

3 Findings

In this section, the study's findings from the three locations are analysed together, although we also highlight any significant differences between locations. We support the analysis with evidence in the form of extracts from interviews and discussions. The emphasis is on listening carefully to what girls and other actors told us, to provide a feeling for the texture of girls' lives and provide fine-grained and nuanced analyses.[lxxiii]

Our findings are organised under the following headings:

- Economic factors: direct costs of attending school;
- Economic factors: opportunity costs of attending school;
- Attitudes and support in family and community: parents' perspectives on benefits;
- Attitudes and support in family and community: girls' aspirations, attitudes and agency; and
- Personal factors.

These categories are necessary for analysis, but we do not see them as separate sets of issues.

3.1 Economic factors: Direct costs of attending school

Summary of direct costs of attending school

The direct costs of keeping girls in school are major factors in girls' school drop-out in the three study locations. This is also reflected in the GEC Step Change Window Baseline Report and the wider literature on girls' education in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The impact of direct costs on girls' ability to make the transition from primary to secondary school may be understated in our evidence. Due in part to late enrolment and disruptions to schooling, many of the girls in the targeted age group for interviews were still in primary school or had dropped out in primary school.

Poor households pursue multiple strategies, often requiring great efforts and sacrifices from parents and carers, to pay fees. Meanwhile girls' schooling is repeatedly disrupted by a 'revolving door' process. Issues related to paying direct costs are an underlying factor for other factors involved in girls dropping out: poor performance, discouragement, pregnancy and marriage.

Scholarships have enabled many girls to progress to secondary school in Samburu East. However, such support is non-existent in Katanga and is irregular in Mberengwa, where a change in the way schools deal with the non-payment of fees threatens to increase drop-out rates.

An inability to pay for the direct costs of schooling, particularly school fees, school levies and uniforms, was a dominant theme in almost all interviews and group discussions. Unless a school-age girl can access a bursary, scholarship or sponsorship arrangement, her chances of staying in school depend on her having a relative, usually but not always a parent, who is willing and able to pay her costs. Our findings cover:

- the diverse household-level shocks and stresses that lead to an inability to cover direct costs;
- the pathways of influence linking non-payment to girls dropping out; and
- the different strategies households use to cover girls' fees and other costs.

We also explain the official policies and practices, and elements of GEC programming that relate to direct costs as a factor for girls dropping out of school.

3.1.1 Household level shocks and stresses

We found a wide range of household-level shocks and stresses that disrupt a girl's access to an adult who will pay her school fees. These are connected to wider patterns like economic recession, the impact of climate change and public health issues such as epidemics and a lack of access to health services, which fall outside the scope of our study.

Illness or death of parents

In all three locations, we heard stories of girls having to drop out following the illness or death of one or more parents. This came up particularly often in Katanga, where a very high proportion of girls told us of parents who had suffered long debilitating illnesses before passing away. Although girls to whom this had happened tended not to know what had caused their parents' illness and death, key informants mentioned malaria, cholera, tuberculosis, typhoid and kwashiorkor as common health problems in the area. One PTA member said that alcoholism was a growing problem in her community, and told us about a household where the children were not in school because of the father's heavy drinking.

Loss of household livelihood

The loss or decrease of a household's livelihood, especially the father's income-earning activities, was often cited as a precursor to girls dropping out of school. While all three study locations face economic stress, the patterns and underlying reasons for the loss or decrease of household livelihoods differ across contexts.

In one of the locations in Katanga Province in the DRC, respondents explained that they faced diminishing returns to farming as well as fewer opportunities to earn income through casual labour such as selling firewood.

> *Households depend mainly on farming for income. People grow and sell tomatoes and maize as well as farming for subsistence. But harvests were poor last year. It rained late, not until March, this year, but rains have always been variable in the area. The price of maize has fallen. So many children are enrolling late this year, as parents did not have the money to pay their fees at the start of the school year. Even in a good harvest year, the cash proceeds of an entire harvest are not enough to pay the annual fees for two children. Apart from farming, people try to earn an income by burning and selling charcoal, and women bake and sell doughnuts and biscuits.*

> (PTA group discussion, Katanga)

In the second study location in Katanga Province, informants also spoke of recent poor harvests and some blamed them on rainfall variability.[lxxiv] Several study participants in this area also spoke of reduced income-earning opportunities for men due to the closing of a nearby mine and recent changes in road and river transport connections which have effectively marginalised the settlement.[lxxv]

In Mberengwa in Zimbabwe, there have been severe droughts in recent years, hurting farming as a livelihood activity.

> *The rains are late this year. Last year they started early but then stopped very soon. In 2013, rains were adequate and they managed to harvest something which helped to see them through 2014. But now they have nothing, not even the vegetables they used to be able to grow on land next to the lake to sell and raise money for school fees.*

> (Mothers' Group discussion, Mberengwa)

> *The community really wants their children to be educated, but the parents lack a lot of things. They are not able to pay for school fees because they need to provide their families with food. Due to droughts, they have not had any money. As a result, they can't pay school fees.*

> (Village Chief, Mberengwa)

Many men have migrated from Mberengwa to other parts of the country, or to South Africa, to find work. Based on our interviews, male migration has both benefits and disadvantages in terms of girls' schooling costs. It means fathers have access to cash, but that they lose touch with the household, temporarily or permanently.

In Samburu East in Kenya, where pastoralist livelihoods are the norm, the mass deaths of livestock during recent droughts has impoverished many households. In turn, this has affected girls' ability to make the transition from primary to secondary school.

> *Many girls have to drop out at the transition between primary and secondary levels because of fees. Parents are forced to sell animals to pay the fees, but your animals may have all died in the drought.*

> (Woman in mothers' group discussion, Samburu East, rural location)

Separation of parents

In Katanga in the DRC and Mberengwa in Zimbabwe, the divorce or separation of parents, often involving the father leaving to set up a household with another woman, came up frequently as a trigger for girls dropping out. In Katanga, divorce was sometimes attributed to male migration to find work in other parts of the country.[lxxvi]

> *Divorce is the main reason why girls drop out of school. When they stay with their mother, she cannot support their education.*

> (Female PTA member, Katanga)

In contrast to Katanga, divorce is still very rare in traditional Samburu society in Kenya. A female community activist remarked that there is no word for 'divorce' in the Samburu language. We did not come across any accounts of Samburu girls dropping out due to their parents separating, although one Samburu girl (Jackline, an OSG) explained that divorces were 'becoming more common because Samburu men are bad'.

3.1.2   Pathways of influence

There are various different pathways through which parents' inability to pay fees and other direct costs lead to girls being withdrawn or dropping out.

Repeated disruptions to girls' schooling: the revolving door process

In all study locations, a common pattern emerged: girls' education being repeatedly disrupted because of parents' failure to pay direct costs, which eventually culminated in them dropping out, either due to them being discouraged or because they get pregnant. We heard many accounts of this type of 'revolving door' schooling, with time in school punctuated by repeated exclusions for non-payment of fees. The following out-of-school girl's experience illustrates the 'stop-start' nature of many girls' schooling experiences:

> *My grandfather used to pay school fees for the first two terms but not the third time. So, at times I would have to miss school in the third term. I would still turn up for school during the third term, but sometimes I would be chased away. At other times, my grandfather would come in to talk to the teachers, so I would not be chased away.*

> (Batsirai, OSG, Mberengwa)

Repeatedly missing days, weeks or months of schooling negatively impacts performance. In some cases the revolving door process lasts several years, only to end in the girl dropping out permanently, either due to poor results and becoming discouraged or because she becomes pregnant. Pregnancy is further discussed in Section 3.5. In this example from Mberengwa, an OSG mentions the policy of barring students from examinations, or withholding their results.

> *I dropped out of school because my parents couldn't find fees for me. My family started having trouble paying school fees in Grade 3. So, I would miss school. Later on I got fed up that every time when I was about to sit an examination or a test, the teachers would chase me from school. Just when we were about to take a test, the teachers would chase me away. If I did take the test, the teachers would not provide my results…By Grade 5 my parents were not paying at all for school fees. I decided that it was useless to go to school because at Grade 6 we were getting chased away even before it was time to sit a test. I was missing a lot of school, so I decided, 'OK then, let me leave school'.*

> (Emoral, OSG, Mberengwa)

As Camfield (2009) points out, adolescent girls only have a 'limited window of educational opportunity'; disruptions to schooling due to direct costs make that window even smaller.

Withdrawing girls to pay for boys' schooling

Our findings show that following a household shock, parents may withdraw daughters in order to focus on paying for a son to complete school. There is strong evidence for this in Katanga as illustrated by the following in-school girl's story.

> *My father died when I was in Grade 4, aged nine. My mother said that she would only take care of the boys and she would marry the girls off. That's how the one who was in 6th year of secondary and 3rd year of secondary got married. The girls were married off three years ago when they moved here. Her mother received their bride price, which she used to send the boys to school… Since I was the youngest, I had to*

drop out in fourth grade and stay at home for a year. Later I got a bursary from Vas-y-Filles, so I could re-enrol.

(Ramona, ISG, Katanga)

In Mberengwa, the evidence is indirect and mixed. In this extract, the respondent talks about a preference to enrol a son:

The community is aware that it is important to send girls to school. However, if it comes to a fee issue and they need to decide, then they will choose boys. They choose boys because a boy will need to get married and pay the bride price. Whereas the girl is like a treasure and does not need to pay anything [to get married].

(Village chief, Zimbabwe)

Alternatively, parents may withdraw a child based on their scholastic aptitude instead of their gender. In this case in Mberengwa, a boy is attending a day school while his sister is at a better and more expensive boarding school, apparently because she has more scholastic aptitude than him:

My sister was at boarding school from Form 1 to Form 3, but then got put into a local day school. My brother was also at a boarding school, but was then moved to a local day school because of school fees. I think [her parents are paying for her to attend boarding school] it is because I am better than them at school.

(Zvashe, ISG, Mberengwa)

In Samburu East, parents explain that they choose schooling for children purely on the basis of scholastic aptitude:

We notice which children are clever. There is only one choice to make: herding or school? If we give a child pencil and paper, we can assess their aptitude for school work. Other children might be stupid, in which case we won't send them to school. You can always remove a child from school later if necessary.

(Member of mothers' group discussion, Samburu East, rural location)

Sometimes if there is not enough money to send both sons and daughters to school, then we will send one and the other will stay at home. The parents look at the marks and the child's attitude towards education.

(Bettina, Samburu East, rural location)

Withdrawing younger children to keep older ones in school

In poor households with several children, we found that parents may withdraw younger children from school to allow them to pay the fees of an older child, especially if the older child is approaching his or her final secondary school examinations. For example, a girl in Katanga told us she had to drop out for a year, so her older brother could get his diploma. This strategy affects younger boys as well as younger girls. However the impact is gendered, because missing one or more years of schooling increases the risk that girls will get pregnant or become preoccupied with getting married before they have a chance to complete secondary school. This is further discussed in Section 3.5.

3.1.3 Household-level strategies for paying girls' schooling costs

Where no external sources of funding are available, parents use multiple strategies to pay girls' schooling costs to keep them in school. Girls also try to stay in school as long as they can, in many cases being sent away repeatedly for non-payment.

Earning, saving and negotiating

Our findings show parents and carers go to great lengths to get the cash required to keep girls in school or send them back after they have been excluded for the non-payment of fees. In some cases, parents will also negotiate with the head teacher of the school so that the girl's fees may be paid in arrears rather than up-front.

When my parents were working in South Africa, they used to send money. Now, that they are not working there are issues with school fees. My younger sister who is in Grade 3 gets sent home and misses school because my parents have not paid her school fees. She is sometimes able to go to school because my parents made arrangements with the teacher. When my sister goes to Grade 4, my parents will pay in arrears. My parents are planning on going back to South Africa next month.

(Tinerudo, ISG, Mberengwa)

Girls working to earn cash

In Katanga and Samburu East, some ISGs and OSGs do casual work such as farm labour, washing clothes and dishes (Katanga) or selling charcoal door-to-door (Samburu East) as a way of earning money towards their school costs. However, such girls seem to be in a small minority. In Katanga this was said to be partly due to concerns about physical security. Another disincentive for doing casual work is the very low remuneration available:

> *A few girls wash clothes to earn money for fees, but it is not common. This kind of work is paid very badly so most girls don't think it is worth doing.*

(Diane, ISG, Katanga)

In Mberengwa, it is common for girls who have dropped out of school to get work as live-in housemaids. But, it may earn them little more than board and lodging. We heard no cases where such girls were able to save enough money to return to school.

Repeating grades to qualify for financial support

In Samburu East, several girls explained that they repeated Class 8, the final grade in primary school, in order to improve their Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCP) examination results and qualify for a scholarship. In Kenya, scholarships enable girls from poor households to go to boarding schools at secondary level. While boarding schools are seen as a better option for girls than day schools, they charge considerably higher fees, as described in Box 1.

Box 1: Joy, Samburu East (rural location)

I am in Form 4 at Kisima Girls' Boarding School. I had to repeat Class 8 in primary school, as I only got 234 in the KCP examination the first time I sat it. My parents could not afford to pay my secondary school fees, so I wanted to see if I could get better marks and get sponsorship. My father tried to prevent me, saying it was better for me to stay at home and school was a waste of time. I convinced him about the importance of school rather than staying at home. My mother backed me up, and together we persuaded my father to let me repeat Class 8. Now I am sponsored by Ewaso Lions, who pay for my fees and books in secondary school.

Seeking financial support from relatives

Across all three study locations, we found that adult relatives, specifically aunts, uncles and grandparents, are willing to make large efforts to support girls, as well as boys, to continue their schooling. The story in Box 2 illustrates these efforts as well as the agency and determination of an adolescent girl to stay in school and enable her siblings to also go to school.

Box 2: Marie, ISG, Katanga

I am now in the sixth year of primary school. After long illnesses my parents both died about two years ago. My father died first, after which I had to drop out of school to help my mother to farm. Otherwise, I would be in the second year of secondary school by now.

When I finish school I want to have my younger siblings live with me so I can take care of them, and I want a job too. My mother's younger sister is looking after me and my younger siblings now. She is a seamstress and has no children of her own. She was married to a soldier but he died. My aunt wants to support her nephews and nieces.

There are six children including me. My oldest brother, is working in Zambia. Then I have two sisters who are also going to school, and another three who are still too young. A friend of my mother's was paying fees for us to go to school in Zambia but then that person disappeared, so I decided to bring her younger siblings back to Katanga to live with our aunt. A friend of my older brother brought us here a year ago. My aunt has told us that she is worried that she might not be able to pay for us all to go to school, but she says that with God's help, she'll carry on.

In Mberengwa, like other study locations, relatives support girls' schooling and girls may further benefit from having a relative in South Africa.

There is an aunt, a younger sister of my mother, who sends money for the children. She is in South Africa. Also, my grandmother pays for my sister who is in Grade 4 to go to school. I don't know why she was selected to go live with our grandmother. My grandmother said that she wanted one child to take care of. At that same time, I was sent to live with another aunt.

(Tinerudo, ISG, Mberengwa)

There are also counter-examples, like relatives who take orphaned girls in but are not willing or able to support them in school. Instead, they may use the girls' labour or expect them to get married.

I am thirteen years old and in Grade 1 of secondary school. I know lots of girls who've dropped out; some of them were my friends. I know a girl who is an orphan, who went to live with a relative, either her grandfather or uncle. He told her that she wasn't bright, so he didn't want to risk his money paying for her fees. He said she could get married instead.

(Morine, ISG, Mberengwa)

This is further illustrated in Box 3.

Box 3: Paulina, OSG, Samburu East

Both my parents passed away and I now live with my married sister and her in-laws. I managed to do Classes 1-3 of primary school but I had a lot of difficulties going to school, including finding a uniform, an exercise book and a pen. I borrowed a uniform from my friend and the teacher lent me a book and a pen. However, where I am living with my sister, the family would tell me 'you can't just eat and sleep and go to school'. They said I had to look after the livestock. So I used to drop out of school every dry season to take the animals to pasture. When it rained, I would go back to school. This is what I used to do, but now I have completely dropped out of school…I finished Class 3 and then I did not have a uniform, so the teachers kept chasing me away. I got tired of it and I could not find anyone to buy me a uniform, so I decided to become a herder. My sister accepted my decision. I decided to go back to being a herder because I had no alternative. I still live with sisters' in-laws. Now, I spend my days herding goats, fetching water and collecting firewood.

We heard similarly conflicting evidence in the case of step-fathers. Some are willing and able to support step-daughters' education while others are not, depending on individual attitudes, intra-household relationships and household circumstances.

3.1.4   Effects of policies, official practices and programming

Our findings on the effects of government policies and programmes and school practices differ according to location.[lxxvii]

Mberengwa (Zimbabwe)

As mentioned in Section 2.3.2, the Zimbabwean Constitution entitles every citizen to a free state-funded basic education, and the Ministry of Education has banned schools from keeping children out of school due to non-payment of fees. In practice, the schools we visited in Mberengwa face a dilemma, because as a teacher pointed out, if children were allowed to attend school without their fees being paid, then no one would bother to pay them.

Several girls interviewed complained about being barred from taking examinations or not getting their results because their parents were behind with fees. Withholding end-of-year test results and reports can lead to distress for the girl concerned and may interfere with her studies, one girl whose father was struggling to keep her in boarding school explained:

I sometimes get stressed about my father not paying fees. Sometimes I pass my tests, but my father does not see my report because he has not paid my fees. So I get stressed and maybe I don't study. My friends console me, explaining that people come from different families and that everyone is different.

(Monica, ISG, Mberengwa)

Withholding reports is especially serious at the end of primary school, as secondary schools require these reports from new students. This affects a girls' ability to transition to secondary school. However, some girls' parents were able to negotiate with secondary school staff to allow their daughters to enrol without their reports.

Also, a recent change in how schools deal with the non-payment of fees is said to have led to an increase in drop-outs. Some informants in Mberengwa explained that the way non-payment of fees is being dealt with may have led to an increase in children, including girls, being withdrawn. According to these respondents, local schools used to give parents a degree of lee-way, allowing students to stay in school for long periods, punctuated by repeatedly sending them away, before they were definitively excluded for non-payment. The example below and Box 4 describe the policy change and draws attention to its counter-productive consequences:

> Now, if the child does not have the school fees, the teacher will take down the student's name and their parents' names, then the school committee will go to the village chief and have them arrested. Parents are now concerned that if they do not have fees and send their children to school they will be arrested. So, they have told their children to stay at home and not to go to school. The authorities need to go back to the drawing board.

(Key informant, Mberengwa[lxxviii])

It appears that parents' fear of being sanctioned is leading to students being withdrawn. This is likely to be more damaging for girls than boys, because the disruptions to their attendance increase the risk of them dropping out later because of pregnancy or marriage (further discussed in Section 3.5).

Box 4: Owami, OSG, Mberengwa

I dropped out earlier this year while in my second year of secondary school. My parents couldn't afford my fees. They were taken to the chief and warned, so they decided it would be better to take me out of school altogether until they had some money… This is the first time I have had to drop out. I used to get 'chased' from school when my parents hadn't paid her fees, but I just used to go back. What happens is that a teacher reads out the names of the students whose fees have not been paid and those students have to go home; they are told not to come back until their fees have been paid. Whenever that happened to me, I just went back the next day, was chased, went back the following day, was chased and so on from, say, Monday to Wednesday, after which the teachers stopped bothering to chase me away. This used to happen a lot but now the rule has changed; now parents are taken to the chief. That is what has led to me dropping out.

The government has a Basic Education Access Module (BEAM), which is a national government bursary scheme to support children from vulnerable households' education. However, our evidence indicates that BEAM is now operating at a greatly reduced level, at least in our Mberengwa study location. We spoke to one girl who said her parents had received assistance from BEAM this year. However, according to other study participants who had previously received BEAM support, it was not forthcoming this year:

> I dropped out because BEAM paid for my primary education and then they stopped paying… All those who BEAM used to pay for are now required to pay their own fees.

(Wanashe, ISG, Mberengwa)

A local government official told us: 'BEAM is available, but sometimes the government cannot afford it, so they stop it.'

Katanga (DRC)

As already mentioned (2.2.2) the DRC government launched a policy of free primary education in 2010, and plan to gradually extend this to all levels of education. In practice though, children who have outstanding fees are not allowed to attend primary or secondary school. They are also not allowed to sit for exams. In some cases, parents will try to negotiate with teachers to see if their child can remain in school while they try to raise money for fees. This works at schools on a case-by-case basis.

Samburu East (Kenya)

In secondary schools, if children's fees for the year have not been paid, they are not able to enrol and are not allowed in class. However, among all three locations, Samburu East offers girls the best chance of accessing funding from sources other than her own family. These sources include national government scholarships covering all or most of the direct costs of schooling, and Community Development Fund scholarships (organised by parliamentary constituency) which provide 50 per cent of costs. Accessing both these types of scholarship depends on achieving a certain threshold in examinations, with the threshold being slightly higher for the national government scholarships. Several interviewees were either already receiving such scholarships or were hoping to

do so when they went to secondary school. In Kenya, boarding schools are generally regarded as a much better option for female pupils than day schools. Several girls in Samburu East wanted to go to a boarding school but said it would only be possible if they won a full scholarship. As discussed, some girls repeat their final year in primary school in order to improve their examination results and qualify for a scholarship. In addition to these government schemes, we talked to girls who were receiving financial support for their education from local businessmen's' networks, community conservancies and wildlife tourism companies.

3.2 Economic factors: Opportunity costs of attending school

Summary of opportunity costs of attending school

The opportunity costs of attending school for girls in Katanga and Mberengwa are not high. However, in Samburu East, pastoralist households may deploy their daughters' labour, or their value as brides, as coping strategies in a context of drought associated with climate change.

A girl attending school presents opportunity costs to a family. Under opportunity costs of attending school, we explored marriage and work as the reasons for girls being withdrawn from school. We found that the influence of opportunity costs on adolescent female drop-out is defined by study location. Samburu East is where the opportunity costs of girls' education appear to be highest, while the opportunity costs of schooling in Katanga and Mberengwa were fewer and similar.

3.2.1 Opportunity costs of attending school in Katanga (DRC)

In Katanga, girls may be withdrawn from school to help their mothers to farm and work in the household (Primary School Director and Mother of ISG, Katanga), especially if their mother is a head of household. However, as there are hardly any income-earning opportunities for girls in the area, girls are rarely withdrawn from school so that they can take up paid work. In very poor households in Katanga, some parents decide to marry girls off to reduce the number of mouths to feed, and because a married girl may be able to farm her husband's land and contribute produce to her parents' household. We heard of one case where a female household head married off two of her daughters and used their bride price to pay for a son's schooling. However, according to a primary school director we spoke to, in general, a bride price is too low to incentivise the withdrawal of daughters from school.

3.2.2 Opportunity costs of attending school in Mberengwa (Zimbabwe)

In Mberengwa, as in Katanga, local income-earning opportunities for girls and young women are restricted. If girls in Mberengwa drop out of school due to an inability to pay fees or a lack of interest, they may then look for income-earning opportunities locally, or in nearby South Africa if they have relatives living there.

We heard several stories of ISGs eloping to be with their boyfriends, and subsequently marrying them. However, we did not hear of parents withdrawing ISGs to marry them off.

3.2.3 Opportunity costs of attending school in Samburu East (Kenya)

In Samburu East, since a devastating drought in 2012-2013, the opportunity cost of girls' schooling has increased. We heard several accounts of parents withdrawing their adolescent daughters from school as a household-level coping strategy, either marrying them off or allocating them to look after endangered livestock.

Withdrawing girls for early marriage

Many Samburu households lost significant numbers of livestock as a result of the recent droughts. Once a drought ends, obtaining bride price for a daughter is a way for household heads to obtain new animals and start to build up their herd again. Reducing the number of mouths to feed during the acute livelihood stress of a drought is an additional motivation for girls' early marriage. Several study participants said that these decisions are made exclusively by male household heads. Girls who have had to drop out of school because of fees are particularly vulnerable to arranged marriages:

> *If girls have to drop out due to lack of money for fees, their father may decide to marry them off for bride price, and to reduce the number of mouths to feed.*

(Aunt of OSG, Samburu East, (peri-urban location)

In other cases, ISGs have been withdrawn from school for the purpose of marrying them off:

> *Girls who drop out to get married; it is the parents' decision. The father will decide that a girl needs to get married off because they need the money. It happens during drought; the girl is sold because there are no cows or goats, so another alternative is to marry off the girl. It makes that girl unhappy, because later on she will go back to town to look for work, and she will end up washing the clothes of girls with whom she used to be studying.*

(Beatrice Lenawalbene, ISG, Samburu East, peri-urban location)

However, marrying off ISGs appears to be less common than marrying off OSGs, because once girls have started secondary school, the parents have already made investments in their education. Due to community sensitisation campaigns by government, NGOs and church organisations, girls and their parents know that early marriage for bride price is now against the law in Kenya. Several girls declared that, if their fathers tried to marry them off against their will, they would report them to the police or go to other authorities, such as their local pastor, for assistance. However, other girls said they would have no choice but to obey their fathers in such a situation, mentioning the fear of being cursed by their father if they do not do what he wants:

> *A girl was married off; it was her parents' choice. She was not happy about it, but now she is comfortable with it and she does not want to go back to school, because she does not want her father to curse her.*

(Ntachaua Lerantilei, ISG, Samburu East, rural location)

Withdrawing girls to work

There appear to be no income-earning opportunities for adolescent girls in rural areas in Samburu East. In the peri-urban location we visited, girls sometimes help their mothers to sell charcoal door-to-door, but this is regarded as a very poorly-rewarded livelihood activity.

On the other hand, daughters' labour is a vital element of Samburu pastoralist livelihoods, especially during dry seasons and droughts, when animals have to be taken in search of pastures and water. Daughters are often tasked with herding small animals such as goats and sheep, while boys and young men herd cattle and camels. Recent droughts in the area seem to have intensified requirements for girls' labour, and according to some respondents girls are more likely to be withdrawn from school to herd than boys:

> *Sometimes it is parents who remove girls from school, so that they can herd. They sometimes remove the boys too, but it is mainly the girls.*

(Sepina, OSG, Samburu East, peri-urban location)

Like early marriage, it is girls who are already out of school or still in primary school who are vulnerable to becoming herders, as parents have not yet invested in the girl's secondary education. Due to late enrolment and repetition, adolescent girls may also become herders, especially if their school performance is poor:

> *A girl may have to drop out if the parents need someone to take care of the animals. It is in primary school that this happens...In primary school, if students don't do well and keep failing tests, parents will withdraw them to herd, because what's the point of continuing?*

(Stella Lalmakar, ISG, Samburu East, rural location)

If a girl is repeatedly held back from school in order to take care of livestock, her resulting poor school performance and discouragement makes it more likely that she will later drop out altogether:

> *A girl I know dropped out in Grade 7. She used to play truant in the afternoons. She would go home. Maybe her parents weren't strict with her. Sometimes it was because her parents wanted her at home to help them. The father would tell her he needed her to look after the animals, or her mother would ask her to help around the house. She ended up not doing well at school, so she lost interest and in the end she decided to stay at home with her parents. She is now beaded and ready to be married.*

(Carole, ISG, Samburu East, rural location)

3.3 Attitudes and support in family and community: Parents' perspectives

Summary of perceived benefits of schooling

We found a high demand among parents for schooling for their daughters. Many are willing to make high-risk investments in this and struggle hard to maintain them. They are motivated by the hope, possibly misplaced, that their daughters will find formal sector jobs and support their parents in later life. Our findings may be skewed by selection bias; parents who think there are no job opportunities and that school is a waste of time were unlikely to participate in this study.

Yet, our findings are consistent with other studies. In DRC De Herdt et al (2012) call attention to the high demand for education, which they explain by showing that a Congolese individual's educational level is one of the most important determinants of income, regardless of actual learning outcomes. Based on her research in Zimbabwe, Ansell (2004) comments that there is a feeling of 'make or break' concerning schooling and jobs in Zimbabwe: either young people get a formal sector job after leaving school, or they are deemed to be failures. The national formal sector is very restricted and young women in particular face structural constraints in accessing jobs. This research also finds that the school system neither supports students to find jobs nor gives them the skills they need to be successfully self-employed.

In general, although parents' willingness to invest in their daughters seems to be at odds with the realities of job markets, it is based on reasoned judgments.

In general, the study revealed very positive attitudes towards schooling for girls as well as boys among parents in all locations. We found that many parents in poor households are prepared to struggle year on year to pay their daughters' school costs. In this section, we explore what motivates them. We also note that not all informants share these positive attitudes or are prepared to make the same investment in their daughters' schooling.

3.3.1 Perceived benefits of schooling: school as a bridge to stable jobs

Among parents in all locations, the study revealed very positive attitudes towards schooling for girls as well as boys. Most respondents linked schooling with the aim of finding secure stable employment. A few other study participants also mentioned that girls' schooling can help girls to run micro-businesses in adult life. Very few parents mentioned any functional benefits of schooling for girls, such as being able to read and write, in any of the locations. These two interviews capture the dominant discourses in all three locations:

Nowadays, the emphasis in the community is moving away from girls just getting married to the idea of girls getting jobs, so that they can help their parents.

(Mother of school-age girls, Katanga)

Parents see hope in children who go to school. They have confidence that they will take care of them in later life, whereas they have no such hopes of unschooled children.

(Mercy, ISG, Katanga)

These extracts and other evidence indicate that old attitudes whereby parents used to see girls' education as a waste of time are changing. In some cases, parents' new perspectives may have arisen from desperate household circumstances. Yet, disappointing experiences with unemployed children who have completed their schooling have not weakened parents' determination to get their daughters through school:

My parents talk to me and tell me to study very hard. They give examples of the struggles that they go through as a family. This includes challenges with my brother, who has now graduated from high school but has not found work. They tell me not to mess things up, and to work hard.

(Beatrice Lenawalbene, ISG, Samburu East, peri-urban location)

My two older brothers have finished school but are not working. They are looking for jobs. One is looking for work in Lubumbashi. Both my parents want me to attend school, but it is my mother in particular who encourages me and my other older brother, who is still living with us. He is now looking for any kind of work, just to survive.

(Marine, ISG, Katanga)

In Katanga, some mothers have a very specific motivation for wanting their daughters to get paid work, namely a wish to be able to give up farming, due to the arduous nature of the work:

> *I would be content for my daughters to move away, go anywhere at all, as long as they get a job. We expect them to help their parents once they get a job, so we don't have to farm any more. Now, we're like slaves. Farming is very hot work and you get respiratory diseases from the dust...When you are young it is easier.*

> (Mother of ISG, Katanga)

> *It is physically difficult for women to work in the fields. During the rainy season the working day is very long; they have to start early in the morning and don't finish until the evening.*

> (Head Teacher, Katanga)

We heard from several girls in Katanga that their mothers found it difficult to farm due to long-term health problems, in particular persistent chest or stomach pains. Poor health may underlie adult women's wish to give up working in the fields. More generally, this extract indicates a deep dissatisfaction with farming as a livelihood activity:

> *When me and my brothers and sisters were in school, none of us were allowed to work in the fields. Mothers won't teach their daughters how to farm if they are at school, as they don't want them to end up with nothing in their lives apart from farming, like them. Even now, when we have had to drop out of school, my mother still doesn't want us helping in the fields.*

> (Audrey, OSG, Katanga)

In Samburu East, both girls and their parents see girls' schooling as a pathway to formal sector jobs. The expectation is that once daughters are employed, they will contribute to their parents' household, for instance by giving them money to build a new house. In this way, sending daughters to school is part of a long-term livelihood strategy for the parents, and a way of enhancing the parental household's resilience in a context of frequent droughts:

> *Parents have come to realise that educated kids can get jobs. If all they can do is herd, they are vulnerable to droughts; everything you have can be wiped out. So parents have seen the benefits of schooling.*

> (Georgina, ISG, Samburu East, rural location)

At the same time though, the impact of droughts can itself lead to fathers withdrawing their daughters from school, illustrating the tensions between short-term coping and long-term resilience:

> *Everyone is very worried about drought and the loss of our animals. Our livestock are dying; what will happen to our children's education?*

> (Mother, Samburu East (rural location))

The general perception among study participants in all three study countries was that there would be employment opportunities for hard-working girls after completing school and undergoing training or higher education. However some key informants, as well as a small number of parents and school-age girls, expressed bleak views of the job market, especially in Mberengwa and Katanga.

> *Some children do not like school because they see the economy in Zimbabwe and they see that there are no jobs. They ask 'what is the point?', because I can be learned but it is all one, because there are no jobs. So whether or not you go to school, you end up in the same place. Although parents know the importance of education and they try to educate the child, the child will say, well look at the others who went to university and received a degree, but they are still like me with no job. This has all become an issue recently related to the economy. Children see no future in education. Students used to be excited about what they would become after studying: teacher, nurse, soldier… Now, they say I will finish then I will put the certificate up [on the wall] and it will be the same, because there are no jobs. A long time ago, the young used to be inspired by adults or older siblings. Now with the economy in Zimbabwe, they are not motivated to continue studying.*

> (Key informant, Mberengwa)

> *Many girls see that older girls and women who have completed secondary school are still without jobs and leading the same kind of lives as women who have not finished their education, so they don't see the point*

of finishing school. They have the same standard of living. It's common for girls to say; the main thing is how much money your husband has; that is what makes a difference in a woman's life.

(Primary School Director and PTA President joint interview, Katanga)

Similarly, a sub-county official in Samburu East remarked: 'Girls want to become teachers, nurses and solders, but very few jobs are available'. In Kenya, other key informants at the national and local levels told us that, unless a girl can find someone to fund her through tertiary education, her job prospects will be slight, due the high competition for jobs in the formal sector.

While no parents expressed negative views about girls' schooling to us, we did hear indirectly of parents and carers refusing to pay a girl's school fees on the grounds that it was a waste of time. For example, one father explained:

Parents often say that even if I send my daughter to school she will not get a job and will end up working on the field, so education is a waste. There are many children with diplomas who have become drivers because there is no other choice. There is a lack of employment options.

(Member of fathers' discussion group, Katanga)

3.4 Attitudes and support in family and community: Girls' aspirations, attitudes and agency

Summary of girls' aspirations, attitudes and agency

Girls' motivations for completing school have a strong bearing on retention and drop-out. Girls see school primarily as a route to salaried jobs, which will then bring personal empowerment and social status. For many girls, being able to help parents in later life, especially their mothers, is also an important motivation. Role models inspire girls, but most girls are aware of a very limited range of adult professions.

ISGs take pride in going to school. The result is often a sense of superiority over OSGs. We also heard of girls dropping out simply because they did not enjoy school.

Any analysis of adolescent girls' school retention and drop-out must explore their aspirations, attitudes and agency. Many of the ISGs interviewed for the study make great efforts to stay in school and to enlist adults' support in this, and it is important to understand their underlying motivations. We explore how girls perceive the benefits of schooling, the significance of role models, ISGs and OSGs' views on their status and lastly, negative attitudes towards school.

3.4.1 Girls' views on the benefits of schooling

Box 5: Lucia, OSG, Samburu East (rural location)

When you complete your education then you are in a position to get employment, salary and do your own things that you wish in your life. For example, getting a house, taking care of your children's basic needs, taking them to school, and you have your own money... Between girls who go to school and those who don't, those who go to school are in a better position because they have their own things and can choose their husband. For those who are at home, they end up with any man as long as he brings some cows. The life is not promising. They don't know what it will bring and you can't predict what kind of life you will lead.

Like their parents, many of the girls interviewed see schooling as a route to work in the formal sector which in turn will bring them many advantages. Girls' perceptions of the benefits of schooling and having a formal sector job differ somewhat from those of their parents, they are:

- Personal empowerment through financial independence;
- An equitable marriage;
- Ability to help parents;
- Pride, self-esteem and respect; and
- Functional benefits.

Personal empowerment through financial independence

Interviewees' main motivation for completing school was to be able to earn an independent income after completing school. Girls see this as important because of the financial independence, security and personal empowerment it will bring:

> *I will get married but I want to have my own livestock, because I will buy them myself, which is better. I will have my own things rather than someone giving them to me.*

(Carole, ISG, Samburu East)

> *Husbands don't always give their pay to the wife, but if I've been to school I can work and pay my own way and support my family. That's why I like going to school.*

(Doris, ISG, Katanga)

An equitable marriage

The quest for financial independence is closely related to girls' wish to choose their own husbands and avoid a marriage where there is a marked imbalance in power relations between husband and wife:

> *Sometimes, even if you marry, your husband doesn't respect you if you haven't been to school. He may shout at you.*

(Patricia, ISG, Katanga)

> *In the case of women who do not have a job, you can hardly find two couples who discuss things together. But women with jobs, they are in a position to discuss and agree together with their husband and live in a peaceful way, more than women who are herders and their husbands…Women with jobs can negotiate what they want to do with their husbands. For the other women, they will never come together to discuss, so the man is able to do what he wants. This is part of the reason that I want to have a job.*

(Jane, OSG, Samburu East, rural location)

In Samburu East the desire to avoid a traditional arranged marriage, usually to an older man who may already have other wives, appeared to be girls' primary motivation for completing secondary school. Traditionally, women in Samburu East do not have the option of divorce from their husbands, unlike in the other study locations. This may be one reason why the issue appeared to be so important for girls in Samburu East. When asked about marriage, some Samburu interviewees got very agitated, and a few began to cry.

> *I want to be a security guard or a policewoman, or join the army (when asked about marriage, she scowls and turns her face away) I do not want to be beaten by a husband. Instead I want to study and get a job, and after that I will decide whether or not I want to marry. My father used to beat my mother a lot until my brother intervened and stopped it. I have seen many other women beaten by their husbands.*

(Esther, ISG, Samburu East, rural location)

Another girl when asked about marriage, frowned and exclaimed:

> *'I never want to hear about it! Husbands rule and women have no voice in marriage. My younger sisters, who are married, lead miserable lives. They are often beaten and have repeatedly fled back to parents' home, only to be fetched back by their husbands.'*

(Marline, OSG, Samburu East, rural location)

Ability to help parents

Many girls said they intended to help their parents financially once they had found paid work. For some, this was their primary motivation:

> *I never want to get married. I want to finish school and then support my mother, because she really helped me when I got pregnant and was in trouble. If I got married, my husband would control me and I wouldn't be able to help my mother; that's the Samburu way in marriage.*

(Georgina, ISG, Samburu East, rural location)

Pride, self-esteem and respect

Many girls expressed pride in going to school and said it gave them some status in the community:

> *I would like to go back to school because it brings self-esteem, intelligence and the respect of others.*

(Isabelle, OSG, Katanga)

> *If you're not learned in your community, people treat you like a nobody.*

(Akudzire, ISG, Mberengwa)

Functional benefits

Girls mentioned the instrumental value of school more often than the functional benefits of school-based learning. There were several exceptions, when girls talked of the following advantages:

- Being able to read and write (Katanga), specifically being able to read official signs, official letters, and packaging in shops (Samburu East);

- Being appreciated by a potential husband due to the ability to read official letters while he is away from home (Katanga);

- Being able to speak well, so that people respect you (Katanga);

- Being able to talk to people from outside the area who do not speak the local language (Samburu East);

- Being able to understand adults in the community when they are talking French (Katanga);

- Knowing how to take care of your children properly (Samburu East); and

- Knowing how to keep a clean household, e.g. washing the dishes properly (Samburu East).

3.4.2 Effects of role models

Encounters with role models both inspire girls themselves and give them an advocacy tool which they can use to persuade their parents and carers to support their schooling. The importance of role models emerged most strongly in the Samburu East rural locations, where up to now very few girls have gone through school to show the way for the next generation. In some cases, girls said their role models were older siblings. In each location, most young interviewees cited female teachers, nurses, and doctors as their role models. The following extract is interesting because of the reason the interviewee gives for admiring the woman concerned:

> *My role model is a woman who works for MCK, a mining company. I admire her because she has never had any children and just works, although she is married.*

(Diane, ISG, Katanga)[lxxix]

Successfully combining paid work with marriage is highly problematic for women in DRC (see, for instance, Davis, 2014).

It is not necessary for girls to actually meet role models to be inspired by them or to use them to sway parents on the matter of fees. For instance, an ISG in Samburu East said she was inspired by a woman who had a job outside the area and had helped her parents to build a new house. When asked to say more about this woman she admitted that she had never actually seen or heard of a specific woman who had done this, she had only heard that it sometimes happened. Still, by telling her father about the imaginary woman she managed to persuade him to continue paying her school fees.

Girls' role models were not always female. The male role models whose work had inspired girls were journalists, teachers, an accountant, a geologist and an agronomist. This shows that, if girls have male rather than female role models they are likely to be aware of, and interested in, a much wider range of professions than the traditional female professions of teaching and nursing.

Girls had encountered their role models by chance during school visits or at church. Others were relatives or neighbours. This indicates both the power of role models to capture girls' imaginations and the narrow frame of reference they have for envisioning their futures.

3.4.3   Setting themselves apart: attitudes towards girls' education status

ISGs tend to make a sharp distinction between themselves and OSGs. As well as the fact that ISGs see themselves acquiring knowledge which is denied to OSGs, girls mentioned differences in: dress and appearance; social status and perceptions of future prospects.

Dress and appearance

In Samburu East, even girls who have only been to school for a few years are easy to distinguish from other girls because they wear Western dress and never wear the traditional beads (Lesorogol, 2008).

> *When you look at someone who has been to school, she looks smart and always looks good. Women who have not been to school will grow old inside the cows and goats, and when people look at you, you are just a small poor thing.*

> (Nasika, OSG, Samburu East, rural location)

Social status

In all three locations, girls said that ISGs and OSGS do not mix socially:

> *Girls who are at school tend to ignore others; 'it's as if they don't exist'.*

> (Sabine, OSG, Katanga)

> *I'm different from girls who have never been to school, and don't want to mix with them. I wait for my friends who are still in school to return home at the end of the day and socialises with them instead. Schooled and unschooled girls have different life-styles and styles of dress. I don't know how to live a traditional girl's life now, and wouldn't want to.*

> (Severina, OSG, Samburu East, rural location)

OSGs are also keenly aware of the social gap between themselves and ISGs:

> *I do not see my old school friends any more. They no longer accept me, as I'm not on their level now and they no longer have school life in common, so they have nothing to talk about.*

> (Audrey, OSG Katanga)

Perceived future prospects

Both ISGs and OSGs see a stark contrast between the future lives of girls who have completed school and those who have not:

> *The difference between girls who've finished school and those who haven't is that the latter won't have money to buy food; they'll have to grow it themselves. Also they won't be able to control the number of children they have, whereas I will be able to decide how many to have.*

> (Fleur, ISG, Katanga)

> *I know a girl who dropped out because she failed dismally, so she stopped coming. Now that girl will only ever be able to get casual work, very hard physical work, whereas I will have things easier.*

> (Nandi, ISG, Mberengwa)

One OSG explains that for girls who have left school:

> *I feel like they are low and they do not have much value. For girls who have been to school, they have more value and they can be proud to have gone to school and then they will get a job. When you go to school you have the possibility to get a good job and maybe even get married to a president. And, when you are not in school and you see the other girls who go to school, you feel ashamed because you see that the others will go to school and will get a job.*

Several ISGs and OSGs described OSGs in adulthood as 'nobodies' whose lives are dogged by poverty, dependence and limited choices and who would 'never achieve anything in life'. In contrast, girls who complete school have a chance to 'be somebody' or 'be important'.

3.4.4   Negative attitudes or lack of interest in schooling

Many girls in the study locations have negative attitudes to school, do not see any benefits and have decided to drop out of their own volition, sometimes against their parents' wishes. Unfortunately, selection bias meant that we did not talk to many of these girls. Rather, we heard about them indirectly, from their relatives, friends and former class-mates. It is not always possible to discern in these indirect accounts the specific reason why girls decided to drop out, as in this case described in a group discussion:

> There are girls who drop out because they are not interested. One of my friends who did not like school, dropped out and then was just sitting at home. She does not have a baby and is not married. I remember that my friend would do well in school and would always go to school. Then in sixth grade, on her own, she decided that she did not want to go school.

(OSG in group discussion, Katanga)

Two girls interviewed in Mberengwa described themselves as 'stupid' or 'not bright', and gave that as the reason they had decided to drop out. According to the mother of one of these girls:

> She is lazy and not ambitious....She did not drop out because of fees but because she did not do well, so she decided to leave... Her grades were low and she had difficult grasping any of the material. There was no future in her going to school.

(Mother of OSG, Mberengwa)

Neither of these girls was planning to marry or was working at the time of the interview, although one said she was waiting for her parents to take her to South Africa to work.

The phenomenon of girls feeling 'too old' to be in school was mentioned by several study participants in connection to girls dropping out or not wanting to return to school. The issue of girls dropping out because they become preoccupied with sexual relationships and marriage is covered in Section 3.5, while the problem of girls losing heart after repeated exclusions from school is covered in Section 2.

3.5 Personal factors

Summary of personal factors

Our findings show that there are many pathways to pregnancy, and that once ISGs become pregnant, their trajectories are by no means uniform. Childcare support is a critical factor in whether or not girls re-enrol in school (e.g. Grant and Hallman, 2008); this came across very strongly in Samburu East.

Household poverty, poor school performance and disruptions to school attendance are all involved in pathways to pregnancy.[lxxx] Understanding these diverse pathways and convergences is important for policies and programmes, because it enables the identification of suitable strategies and entry-points for intervention.

We targeted girls aged 12-15 in our research as this is a time in girls' lives when they are making the transition from childhood to womanhood. We found that personal factors that affect girls' ability to stay in school in this age group were pre-marital sex, pregnancy and marriage.

In line with the literature and GEC baseline findings, the research found that pregnancy is one of the main factors in female students dropping out. We found diverse patterns and sequences of events concerning the relationships linking pre-marital sex, pregnancy, childbirth and marriage on the one hand and girls dropping out of school on the other hand.[lxxxi] We also focus on how these issues are in turn closely associated with 'pull' factors.

Box 6 summarises how mothers in Mberengwa saw the relationships between pre-marital sex and a girl's education. These middle-aged women tended to put the blame for pregnancy on girls themselves, and are nostalgic about what they remember as an age of 'lost innocence'. Some of the influences and changes they deplored were also mentioned in Katanga, such as romantic films and the use of mobile phones to contact boyfriends. In contrast to the mothers' group, Box 7 shows the perspective of a thirteen-year old ISG in the same area who saw issues of sex and pregnancy in terms of girl-children being exploited and abused by older men (including community elders) and young men alike, while at the same time being subjected to peer pressure.

The descriptions in Box 6 and Box 7 are neither representative nor comprehensive in their coverage of the many issues and trajectories discussed in this section. They are showcased here as particularly vivid accounts of some

of the threats that schoolgirls face as they begin adulthood, to highlight the perspectives of different education actors, and to illustrate the discourses that surround schoolgirls who are sexually active.

Box 6: Primary School Mother's Group discussion, Mberengwa

Once they reach puberty, girls start to get interested in boys. One woman says that for her generation it was different; they only started to take an interest in the opposite sex when they were 16-17. Boys and girls would swim together in the dam lake without embarrassment. Now puberty seems to come earlier. Parents used to talk together and send daughters to an aunt to get advice about sex, but now it's different.

Girls these days are clever. If they see kids from better-off households with biscuits, they want to copy them and get hold of such things themselves. That is why girls get pregnant. The boy will say 'You ate my biscuits; you spent my money, now you have to have sex with me'. In other words, the boys lead the girls on. Some young men around here do gold-panning and the girls might think they have money because of the way they walk and the way they dress. Also, the girls watch romantic films on TV, and they have phones so they can contact boys easily.

Box 7: Monica, ISG, Mberengwa

Girls who have gotten pregnant, they behave badly then they drop out. They get involved with older men, who use them then leave them. They can't stay with their parents because they get chased away, since the parents don't want to take care of them and the child. They also can't go to the man who got them pregnant, because they may already be married, or the boy may refuse [to help her]. So, in the end the girl may end up working on the streets or becoming a housemaid, and in the end they become prostitutes.

The other reason that girls become pregnant is because they have many relationships, sometimes more than five people and they are having sex with them. Sometimes they are forced by the elders. These are girls who maybe have finished Grade 7 in primary school they get involved in these activities before going to secondary school. When the girls do this, they want money. But, the boys will take advantage of them and use them first and then not give them any money.

I think that other girls do this to enjoy themselves. When I was in Grade 7, there was peer pressure because other girls had boyfriends and they …made fun of those who did not have boyfriends, so they become involved. Girls asked me why I did not have a boyfriend, so I had to control myself. I told them 'No, I don't want a boyfriend; I want to concentrate on school.'

In this section, we look at the different types of sexual relationship that school-age girls get involved with, and how they may lead to dropping out. Then we look at what happens after girls become pregnant. We highlight the inter-relationships between multiple factors, and briefly discuss attitudes and discourses on pregnancy and marriage, focusing on how these might affect girls' schooling decisions.

3.5.1   Pathways between sexual relationships and dropping out of school

Understanding the types of sexual relationship that lead to female pupils dropping out, and why, is key to identifying potential policy and programme changes that might reduce the problem. Study participants identified the following pathways linking sex, pregnancy and marriage to girls dropping out of school:

- girls leaving to co-habit with men;
- pregnancy following romantic relationships;
- pregnancy following sexual relationships involving gifts and money; and
- girls becoming involved in prostitution.

We found similar patterns in the three study locations, but there are some differences, especially between Samburu East and the other two locations. For example, while we did not hear of girls deciding to leave school in order to set up households with boyfriends in Samburu East, it seems to be common in Mberengwa and Katanga. Also, no one in Samburu East mentioned school-age girls becoming involved in prostitution, whereas this came up in Mberengwa and in Katanga.

3.5.2   Marriage

Study participants used the term 'marry' to refer to both customary marriages and situations where couples simply started living together. While we heard no instances of this in Samburu East, the subject did come up several times in Mberengwa and in Katanga. Study participants attributed girls' decisions to set up homes with their boyfriends, or marry, to a range of factors, including:

- love and romance; and
- as a livelihood strategy.

Marrying for love and romance

In Mberengwa, several interviewees gave accounts of girls eloping, and dropping out of school, because they wanted to live with their boyfriends. This pattern did not emerge in either Katanga or Samburu East.

A teacher in Mberengwa explained that parents will approve of an elopement:

> *Government policy is that children should not marry at a young age, but parents will not object if someone comes for their child even if she is young. We have many examples of a girl going to her boyfriend to get married. Then the girl's parents will want to know if the boyfriend will marry the girl. If he does, then the parents let her live with him. They do not see a reason for taking her away. You see that a girl will run away to be with the boyfriend's family. This starts to happen in Grade 7.*
>
> (Teacher, Mberengwa)

Yet, the parent's behaviour in the next extract shows that they do not want their daughter to get married and they want her to stay in school.

> *One of my friends dropped out of school to go get married, but the girl's parents went to go get her back; they were not happy. Her parents had already paid for her school fees, but she decided to go get married. They went to the boyfriend's house and got her back. It turned out that the boyfriend was twenty-four and because the girl was fifteen and under-age, the parents went to the police and got the boyfriend arrested. Her parents are going to make her go to school next year. The girl still wants to marry the boy. She says that once he gets out of prison, she will marry him. She does not want to go to school.*
>
> (Margaret, OSG, Mberengwa)

Marrying as a livelihood strategy

Some informants attributed girls 'running away' to get married to their desire to escape the poverty of their parents' household.

For example, some girls decide to get married after giving up the struggle to pay schooling costs.

> *If there was not enough money to pay for my studies, then I might think about marriage. I have friends who got married following issues with money; they then left school… Since they could not go to school, instead of staying at home they decided to get married. Those were the options.*
>
> (Tshibola, ISG, Katanga)

A teacher explained that marriage further complicated girls' situations:

> *The problem rests with the child's household situation. That is how the whole story starts when parents cannot take care of their children. Then, the girl may decide to get married that way she can lift herself from this mess (household situation). The girl is not educated about the disadvantages of marriage and she does not realise that she will then face so many challenges. She will realise that it was not the best situation when she is already in the marriage.*
>
> (Teacher, Mberengwa)

We heard of several cases where a wife wanted to return to secondary school but her husband would not allow her. We found no evidence of girls returning to school while they were married.[lxxxii]

3.5.3   Romantic and sexual relationships

It is common for girls in all locations to have boyfriends. This was probably under-reported by ISGs, because there is a strong normative discourse in all locations that 'serious' schoolgirls should not engage in relationships with boys.

For researchers, it is not always possible to distinguish between the different types of sexual and romantic relationships that school-age girls engage in. This is partly due to fieldwork sensitivities. In our case, the study's short duration meant we could not build up relationships with interviewees over time. As a result, many of the stories concerning these pathways were collected second-hand, from sisters, parents, friends, school-mates and teachers. Ethical considerations prohibited us from discussing in detail sexual matters with girl children.

Rather than trying to make firm distinctions, it may be useful to think about such relationships in terms of a continuum. For example, at one end of the continuum, it is sometimes hard to tell whether relationships involving presents are primarily romantic or transactional in nature, since relationships of love and affection often involve gifts, and in any case the parties' motivations may well differ. At the other end of the continuum, relationships involving transactional sex may shade into outright prostitution.

In Katanga and Mberengwa, we heard stories of girls dropping out not because they got married or became pregnant, but because they became preoccupied with boys, sex and romance, as in this extract:

> *[Some girls who have boyfriends] may end up dropping out. Those girls think that they will enjoy the relationship more if they drop out of school, and they want to enjoy it. I think girls who get married or pregnant are not interested in school, because they run away from school and they are found in corners with their boyfriends.*

> (Zvashe, ISG, Mberengwa)

3.5.4   Transactional sex and prostitution

In all locations apart from the rural areas of Samburu East, sexual relationships characterised by men or boys giving presents to girls (in the form of sweets, snacks, foodstuffs or cash), figured heavily in conversations about pregnancy and dropping out of school. In both Mberengwa and Katanga, there was a tendency for key informants to attribute schoolgirl pregnancy to transactional sex, as this type of relationship is often called in the literature. When asked about the cause of schoolgirl pregnancy, a female PTA member in Katanga immediately remarked: 'Even if your parents are poor, you don't have to use your body to get things.' However, other interviewees stressed the naiveté of girls, especially from poor households, who are easily taken in by men who buy them things:

> *I have a cousin who got pregnant when she was fourteen, by a young man who gave her sweets and biscuits. My cousin's parents were relying on her to get educated and help them, so I was very sorry when I heard my cousin was pregnant... The man has refused to accept that he is the father of her baby.*

> (Perlina, ISG, Samburu East, peri-urban location)

Some interviewees spoke of mothers in poor households turning a blind eye to their daughters' transactional sexual relationships, because they are glad of the food and other goods it brings.

In the case below, an ISG's friend gradually got involved in prostitution and then left school.

> *One of my friends started on a bad path. She did not listen to her parents. Her parents forced her to go to school. At one point, she stopped going to school on her own. She would skip school and would find herself in bars. She started become a prostitute, then she left school…There are a lot of girls who prostitute themselves.*

> (Tshiela, OSG, Katanga)

For others, the causal direction is different. After being forced to leave school due to economic constraints, prostitution may then present itself as one of a very limited range of livelihood options:

> *If girls drop out, many turn to prostitution or are taken on as housemaids.*

> (Senior teacher in secondary school, Mberengwa)

In Mberengwa, prostitution is associated with beer halls and the presence in the area of illegal gold miners. We heard of mothers encouraging their daughters into prostitution to alleviate household poverty:

> *Some of the girls are the children of single mothers who can't take care of them. Their mother will ask the girl to find a way to take care of herself, so the girl will end up getting involved with the illegal miners. The illegal miner gives the girl money in exchange for sex. Some of the girls leave school and then they take care of the families by getting money from the illegal miners. They value their families more than school. The mothers don't value the education; they just want their daughter to bring money in. They do not marry off the daughter, they just want money. If the girl gets pregnant, they may even abort the child.*

(Hope, ISG, Mberengwa)

3.5.5   Pregnancy

During the thematic research, we heard of a range of educational outcomes for schoolgirl mothers, depending on attitudes and circumstances. For girls whose pregnancy is an unwelcome disruption to their schooling, rather than a choice, their ability to re-enrol depends on several factors:

- educational policies and school practices;
- availability of and attitudes to abortion;
- availability of childcare and financial support; and
- school performance.

These factors are explored, followed by a discussion on girls' attitudes towards pre-marital sex and pregnancy.

Educational policies and school practices

Education policies in all three locations enable schoolgirls to return to school after giving birth, although actual school practices sometimes differ from official positions.

Kenya

Kenya's National School Health Policy (2009) and Gender and Education Policy (2003) provide for pregnant girls to re-enter school after six months leave. It also allows for currently pregnant girls to be in school for "as long as possible"[lxxxiii] and for girls to re-enrol at a different school. In practice, school heads often determine re-entry at their discretion, as there are limited policy implementation guidelines and the relevant policies do not contain sanctions against schools which refuse to re-admit girls. Similarly, school heads decide how long a girl can remain in school while pregnant.

DRC

We were not able to identify specific national policies on the treatment of pregnant learners in DRC. A study participant explained that the Ministry of Education has directed school authorities to allow girls to return after their pregnancy, but that girls should not remain in school during their pregnancy. We heard that girls who become pregnant in primary school are asked to leave, to avoid disturbing her school-mates (Primary School Director). However, if a girl gets pregnant while she is in the upper grades of secondary school, she may be allowed to stay.

Zimbabwe

In 1999, Zimbabwe's Ministry of Education Sport and Culture provided for pregnant learners to continue with their education, stating that they should be "assisted to stay in school as long as possible". The same document also provides for the pregnant learner and the father of baby (if he is also a pupil) to take up to three months absence from school. Pregnant learners are allowed to take public examinations, and if a young mother returns to school, she should be placed in the same grade that she was in before leaving.

In practice, we heard from respondents in Zimbabwe that many head teachers expel female students once they find out they are pregnant. It is common for pregnant girls to join, or be sent to, the supposed father's house, which usually results in the girl dropping out of school permanently. Many Zimbabwean communities consider marriage a better option than school for a pregnant girl.[lxxxiv]

Abortion: attitudes and availability

In Samburu East and Katanga, we heard of pregnant girls seeking abortions to avoid having to drop out of school:

> *Some girls get pregnant then they are given herbs for abortion. Some are lucky and are able to go back to school, but others have infections and get ill. It is common for girls to get abortions, they can access them easily. They use traditional herbs and women squeeze the child out. Once when we were collecting firewood, we saw women aborting a girl's baby by pressing their elbows on her stomach.*

(Beatrice Lenawalbene, ISG, Samburu East)

Availability of childcare and financial support

We heard several stories of parents and other relatives encouraging girls to return to school after giving birth, providing childcare for the girls' babies and paying for their schooling costs. In Samburu East, mothers' willingness and ability to look after their daughters' babies enabled many girls to return to school, illustrated in the extract below and in Box 8.

> *I got pregnant in the first term of Class 8 in primary school, then after giving birth, I came back and repeated Class 8. My mother looks after the baby, who is now two years old. I was very unhappy during the two years when I was out of school after giving birth. When I got pregnant, I always thought I would return to school, but then I decided to stay at home for two years, because my mother got pregnant at same time so I could not rely on her to look after my baby. But my mother told me that I must go back to school.*

(Georgina, ISG, Samburu East (rural location)

Box 8: Fleur, ISG, Katanga (Grandmother's support)

I got pregnant while I was at school, so I had to drop out. My father was angry and I had to go and live with my paternal grandmother. My father never accepted my child, who is now 15 months old. My mother had died earlier, and since then my father also died. Now me and my younger brother and sister all live with our paternal grandmother. My grandmother pays all our school fees by farming and selling maize, cassava, peanuts. She has been the driving force for our education. She first persuaded our father to pay our fees, then encouraging me to go back to school after having my baby, then has been paying for all our of our school fees herself. My grandmother wants me and my siblings to have a good life. She is encouraging me to find a job or do business, so I can take care of my own children as well as my younger brother and sister.

Some fathers of girls who had given birth had refused to continue paying for the girl's schooling, on the grounds of it being a poor investment.

Attitudes and discourses

Among ISGs, there is a strong negative discourse surrounding the issue of premarital sex, accompanied by the stigmatization of girls who get pregnant, and ISGs' fears that they might themselves get pregnant and have to drop out of school.

In all three study locations, the tendency is for parents, teachers and ISGs to blame and stigmatise girls who have to drop out after becoming pregnant:

> *[If I] get pregnant by maybe someone who is nothing, I'll have to marry that man because he has already spoiled my life. Then it will end like that… You've abused your parents. You get married in a shameful way.*

(Carole ISG, Samburu East, rural location)

ISGs tend to set themselves apart, both literally and figuratively, from girls who have given birth. However, some of the comments made by ISGs may have been to align to normative discourse :

> *I have friends who became pregnant, but I do not like to see them because I could start thinking like them. I now just says 'hello' to them, but I do not spend time with them.*

(Kapinga, ISG, Katanga)

> *If I strive hard, I can finish school. I won't get pregnant and have to drop out because I'm a girl with standards, unlike girls who behave like that.*

> (Nandi, ISG, Mberengwa)

This distancing on the part of ISGs is associated with a discourse often articulated by teachers, officials and parents, namely that girls' educational success depends on their own behaviour and application. At the same time though, several girls, including some who had not reached puberty said that they were afraid of becoming pregnant themselves:

> *I'm frightened of getting pregnant without finishing my education when I'm not ready to be married and then I may be with someone who is also not ready for marriage. I'll be in a relationship that I'm not prepared for.*

> (Carole, ISG, Samburu East, rural location)

The stigmatizing of girls who have given birth is often expressed as harassment and bullying if they return to school. While this may deter some young mothers from continuing their schooling after giving birth, others endure it.

> *Some of the other girls at school gossip behind my back about me having had a baby and going back to repeat Form 2, but I have decided that I don't care. I was determined to succeed when I returned to school, so my marks improved.*

> (Monica, ISG, Samburu East, rural location)

3.5.6 Pathways of influence

While pre-marital sex, pregnancy and marriage are often the proximate or precipitating cause of girls dropping out of school, they may not be the underlying cause.[lxxxv] Here, we try to show some of the connections among different factors, and how they work.

Economic factors

Dropping out because of pregnancy, childbirth and marriage is entwined with economic constraints. Most obviously, household poverty underlies girls' engagement in transactional sex, which may then end in pregnancy. Also, the next interview extract shows how, when girls have to drop out of school temporarily due to the costs issue, they may become demoralised, and pregnancy may then intervene to prevent them from ever re-enrolling:

> *I could not pay for [some of my daughters'] education. I was out of work. Education is not free and the parents have to take responsibility for what the state would normally pay for. When girls stay at home then they lose the ambition of continuing to study and then they definitively drop out of school. It happened to all my daughters; after staying at home, they lost ambition. The girls started to think about marriage; it happens a lot.*

> (Member of fathers' discussion group, Katanga)

The case of Perlina's cousin (Samburu East) has already been mentioned as an instance of a girl being led astray by a young man offering gifts. In addition, Perlina made this comment, which also illustrates how missing school temporarily due to parents' inability to pay fees may then lead to pregnancy and permanent drop-out:

> *My cousin got good marks but used to miss classes a lot, for instance when there was no money to buy her books or pay her exam fees. That is what gave her a chance to get involved with men.*

> (Perlina, ISG, Samburu East, peri-urban location)

Girls' decisions to set up independent households with men may also be bound up with a desire to escape poverty in the parents'/guardians' household. Lastly, poverty plays a role in preventing girls from returning to school after pregnancy and childbirth, although it is very difficult to ascertain the relative importance of economic factors in these decisions (Grant and Hallman, 2008).

Late enrolment and repetition

In all locations, a high proportion of girls enrol late and repeat grades. The reasons for late enrolment include parents' inability to pay fees and, in some cases in Samburu East, insecurity arising from tribal clashes. Grade repetition is usually due to poor performance, which participants attribute to the following:

- being repeatedly excluded from school due to the non-payment of fees (discussed in Section 3.1);

- being withdrawn by parents on a day-by-day basis to work (discussed in Section 3.2);
- not being able to do homework because of household tasks or a lack of lighting at home; and
- having to walk long distances to and from school.

Other than poor performance, there is the practice of repeating Class 8 of primary school in Samburu East, in order to improve examination results and qualify for a scholarship, which has been discussed in Section 3.1.

Whatever the reasons for late enrolment and grade repetition, the cumulative effect is that many girls reach puberty while they are in primary school or junior secondary school, increasing the risk that they become pregnant or decide to marry before they finish school. An interviewee in Katanga implied that a girl's ability to finish school is a race against time:

> Some people now prefer their daughters to finish school before marrying. They fight to pay fees as they don't want daughters to get pregnant while still at school.

(Mother of school-age girl, Katanga)

Dislike of school

For other school-age girls, their pregnancy was a result of playing truant because of their dislike of school, as in this example:

> One of my daughters got pregnant. She did not like school and would play truant, misbehave. By the time I realised, it was too late, she was pregnant. The daughter is now married and has four children with the same man who first got her pregnant.

(Female COPA member, Katanga)

4 Conclusions

Although there is strong demand for girls' education, multiple inter-connected, context-specific and dynamic constraints affect girls' ability to stay in school

We found strong demand for girls' schooling among our study participants. This is linked to girls' and parents' awareness of the potential long-term benefits, notably formal employment, and to parents' own experiences of poverty and hardship. However, there are multiple inter-connected, context-specific and dynamic constraints which affect the ability of girls from low-income households to complete secondary school. The GEC targets areas and countries that are particularly challenging. Large-scale trends affecting whole communities, such as economic recession, interact with household-level and individual factors to produce diverse outcomes. Even girls in similar households in the same village can experience very different schooling trajectories, depending on minor disparities. This draws attention to the precarious and contingent nature of their schooling.

Costs and pregnancy are the main factors that affect girls' ability to stay in school

In general, our study has found that failure to meet the direct costs of girls' schooling, and pregnancy, are important proximate causes of female drop-out in the study locations. In addition, the opportunity costs of adolescent girls going to school are significant 'pull' factors in Samburu East and, to a lesser extent, Katanga. Costs and pregnancy are causally related to underlying economic, social, governance and cultural factors as well as characteristics of the education system itself.

Education policies and practices are misaligned with the factors that over time lead to girls dropping out of school

The transition to secondary school coincides with girls' transition to adulthood, with all its distractions and risks. One of the most important points emerging from our evidence is that, currently, there is a marked disconnect between these life-cycle realities and the policies and practices of school systems. We have seen how many different kinds of shock and stress can lead to a girl dropping out for varying lengths of time due to non-payment of fees or the lack of a uniform, despite parents' and carers' struggles to cope. The resulting 'revolving door' schooling often leads to poor performance, demoralisation, and pregnancy; as their difficulties accumulate, girls may reach a critical point where the balance tips into permanent drop-out. Dropping out is a process rather than an event[lxxxvi], and girls are often in a race against time to finish school before circumstances push them out of school.

In today's context of economic stress and climate change, a daughter's schooling can be an important element in her parents' long-term livelihood diversification strategy, because of the potential jobs she might be able to access with a school degree. Diversifying income streams can enhance the parental household's resilience in the face of further shocks and stresses. This means that school governance bodies play a crucial role in the resilience of poor households. More specifically, their policies and practices regarding the direct costs of schooling can either help or hinder households' resilience. If parents have to withdraw girls in order to avoid direct costs and cope with economic adversity, this is likely to make their households more vulnerable to economic hardship in the long term.

While violence and school-related factors were not very prevalent in the study, it does not mean they are not important influences on girls' education in these locations

Our findings are generally consistent with the literature on girls' education in SSA. The added value of this study lies in: its fine-grained and context-specific information; the emphasis on listening to adolescent girls and young women in marginalised locations where little research has yet been done on these issues; and the study's comparative design, which has thrown up both similarities and differences in the three different contexts.

The study findings also broadly reflect the barriers to girls' schooling identified in the GEC Step Change Window Baseline Report. However, two sets of issues which were identified there did not emerge in our study as factors in retention and drop-out.

The first of these is gender-based violence. According to the Step Change Window Baseline Report, several GEC projects have cited violence and safety concerns as barriers to girls' schooling. We asked all adolescent female interviewees to comment on their experiences of school; only one study participant, an OSG in Samburu East, raised the issue of male teachers sexually harassing female pupils. Also, we specifically asked adolescent female interviewees to comment on how male pupils treated their female school-mates. Several girls said that boys were harsh and mocking in the way they related to female pupils, but none mentioned physical or sexual abuse at boys'

hands. It is possible that gender-based violence was an unreported element in some of the pregnancies we heard about; the short duration of our study did not enable us to build relationships of trust with the interviewees, so we could not probe on such matters. Whatever the possible reasons, the fact remains that our evidence does not indicate that violence and safety issues affect retention in our study locations.

The other category of issues which was covered in the GEC Step Change Window Baseline Report, but which did not emerge during our study, were school-related problems such as poor teaching and infrastructure. Very few study participants criticised schools in any way.[lxxxvii] The issue of long distances to school did not emerge strongly either, although it was mentioned by two key informants as a reason for girls failing to make the transition from primary to secondary school.

The lack of criticism regarding schools may have been partly due to selection bias, in that we were unable to interview many girls who had dropped out of their own volition. Such girls would probably have been more likely to criticise their former schools than either ISGs or girls who had dropped out but wanted to return. Other possible reasons why in-school issues came up so infrequently may have been that ISGs associated us with school authorities, or that OSGs thought we might help to pay their school fees, so they wanted to appear positive about school. Lastly, due to the short duration of our fieldwork and a lack of alternative locations, we often had to interview girls in empty classrooms. In this setting, girls may have been less likely to criticise the school than if we had been able to interview them at home. In short, our findings may well underestimate the importance of in-school factors in female drop-out.

5 Recommendations

Recommendations for DFID's Education Team

Given the many interacting constraints that militate against adolescent girls' school retention, a holistic policy and programming approach is likely to be more productive than targeting issues in isolation. There is no 'magic bullet' to solve the problem of high female drop-out rates, particularly in very challenging contexts such as those targeted by the GEC. Our evidence suggests the following broad strategic recommendations for DFID's Education Team.

- Many of the underlying factors that influence girls' retention in school have their roots outside the education system, in economic, environmental, social, or cultural spheres. Examples in point are household-level shocks related to climate change, and cultural pressures on teenage girls to marry. If education systems in the study locations were better able to accommodate and respond to such shocks and pressures, they could contribute to environmental resilience, livelihood and gender equality goals, as well as educational aims. Our findings suggest that a greater focus is needed on developing school systems that are better able to respond to adolescent girls' realities rather than the other way around. In particular, strategies should be developed to address the 'revolving door' problem, so that the number and duration of gaps in girls' attendance are minimised.

  We recommend that DFID policy and programming review the constraints that prevent schools and education systems from supporting girls whose completion of a cycle of education is threatened by shocks of various types.

- The theory of change for the GEC assumes that education helps girls to achieve better livelihoods and life chances, for example through improved employment prospects. Yet we have indirect evidence, from Mberengwa and Katanga in particular, that many girls and their parents do not see any value in them completing school, due to a lack of job opportunities. There is also a poignant discord between the employment aspirations of girls in school and the actualities of national job markets, and it is clear that most girls have very limited ideas about the kind of jobs they can aim for. Hardly any girls interviewed for this study had ambitions to run their own businesses, although for many of them this may be a more realistic goal than a job in the formal sector.

  We recommend that future policy on girls' education should consider the lack of employment and income opportunities awaiting girls after completion of secondary school. A joined-up approach linking economic growth, access to job markets and education would help to ensure that completing secondary school delivers genuine benefits for girls in terms of their life chances and economic prosperity.

Recommendations for the Evaluation Manager

- Focussing on the perceptions and reported experiences of adolescent girls in specific contexts has enabled us to identify the key factors in girls' school retention and drop-out, and analyse how they are causally related. This has illuminated the huge amount of quantitative and qualitative data collected at the GEC baseline.

  We recommend that the collection of quantitative data on educational programmes should be accompanied by small-scale, in-depth qualitative studies. The two types of research are complementary, because quantitative findings identify patterns, trends and associations which qualitative research can then set out to investigate and explain, resulting in a better understanding of how different factors relate to each other, the effect of different contexts and the outcomes for girls' education.

  We also recommend that for the GEC midline and endline evaluations that key contextual factors, such as the effects of government policy or climate change is used to examine and explain key findings that arise from the analysis of primary and secondary data.

Recommendations for GEC projects and the Fund Manager

- Adolescent girls, households and communities exist in complex and dynamic social, economic, environmental and cultural contexts which underlie demand for girls' education. An improved understanding of how these demand factors interact with supply factors, such as teaching quality, to shape girls' educational outcomes will enable programme designers to tailor interventions with a view to achieving significant and sustainable change.

  We recommend that, in their midline evaluation reports and beyond, GEC projects and the Fund Manager seek to identify the most influential context-specific factors which combine to influence the extent to which different types of interventions have been effective in improving girls' education outcomes.

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[iii] KIPPRA (2013), Kenya Economic Report. Calculated as currently unemployed population of 15-64 years, as percentage of the total economically active (employed and unemployed) population of aged 15 -64 years

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[xix] KIPPRA (2013), Kenya Economic Report. Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis

[xx] Ruto, S, Ongwenyi, Z and Mugo, J (2009), Educational Marginalisation in Northern Kenya. Education for All Global Monitoring Report

[xxi] UWEZO (2014), Proportion of children out of school, Uwezo East Africa This is for children age 6-16

[xxii] Further detail on our data and methodology from baseline is available in the SCW baseline report.

[xxiii] EM Household survey data

[xxiv] Year-on-year retention by country and age group (EM household survey data only)

[xxv] Based on EGMA and EGRA scores (EM GEC data)

[xxvi] http://www.educationinnovations.org/program/wasichana-wote-wasome-www-let-all-girls-learn

[xxvii] UNEP (2011), DR Congo Fact Sheet. United Nations Environment Programme

[xxviii] Institut National de la Statistique (2014), Rapport Global: Resultat de l'enquête sur l'emploi, le secteur informel et sur la consommation des menages. This rate is calculated using the Foster-Greer-Thorbecke index

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xxxiii Institut National de la Statistique et Fonds des Nations Unies pour l'Enfance (2011), Enquete par grappes a indicateurs multiples en Republique Democratique de Congo (MICS-2010) Rapport Final.

xxxiv Institut National de la Statistique et Fonds des Nations Unies pour l'Enfance (2011), Enquete par grappes a indicateurs multiples en Republique Democratique de Congo (MICS-2010) Rapport Final.

xxxv World Bank Group (2015). Public Expenditure Review.

xxxvi World Bank Group (2015). Public Expenditure Review.

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xliii Institut National de la Statistique et Fonds des Nations Unies pour l'Enfance (2011), Enquete par grappes a indicateurs multiples en Republique Democratique de Congo (MICS-2010) Rapport Final.

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xlviii UNESCO (2010), Gender Parity in Primary and Secondary Education. UNESCO Institute of Statistics

xlix Further detail on our data and methodology from baseline is available in the SCW baseline report.

l EM Household survey data

li Year-on-year retention by country and age group (EM household survey data only)

lii Based on EGMA and EGRA scores (EM GEC data)

liii http://www.eduquepsp.cd/Actualit%C3%A9s/projet-de-valorisation-de-la-scolarisation-des-filles-pour-la-promotion-de-leducation-pour-tous.html

liv Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT) and ICF International (2012). Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey 2010-11. Calverton, Maryland: ZIMSTAT and ICF International Inc.

lv Zimstat (2015), Poverty Report.

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lvii UNAIDS (2014), Zimbabwe Developing subnational estimates of HIV prevalence and the number of people living with HIV.

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lx New Zimbabwe (2015) Government Pays Teachers, but Deducts U.S.$40 Per Individual, All Africa.

lxi Zimstat (2015), Zimbabwe Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2014 Final Report.

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lxvi Zimstat (2015), Zimbabwe Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2014 Final Report

lxvii Zimstat (2015), Zimbabwe Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2014 Final Report

lxviii Further detail on our data and methodology from baseline is available in the SCW baseline report.

lxix EM Household survey data

lxx Year-on-year retention by country and age group (EM household survey data only)

[lxxi] Based on EGMA and EGRA scores (EM GEC data)

[lxxii] http://www.wvi.org/education-and-life-skills/igate-improving-girls-access-through-transforming-education

[lxxiii] As far as possible, we have tried to reflect interviewees' actual words. For reasons of concision though, we sometimes present summarised extracts.

[lxxiv] Although it was common to hear that farming is not profitable, we also heard of individuals who were able to make it pay. For example, one grandmother of several orphaned children was putting them all through school on the proceeds from farming.

[lxxv] More positively, the second Katanga location is on a border with Zambia, and several girls who were interviewed had relatives working there who were contributing to their school costs. A few girls had even attended school in Zambia for short periods.

[lxxvi] During interviews, translators usually used the English word 'divorce', but the stories concerned the breakdown of customary rather than church or civil marriages:

[lxxvii] Evaluating GEC programmes was not the purpose of the study. We only include in this section points that came up during interviews and discussions, which relate to the research topic.

[lxxviii] This person asked not to be identified.

[lxxix] Diane, who is fifteen, also said that she saw herself as a role model for her younger brothers and sisters.

[lxxx] Hunt, F. (2008). Dropping out from school: a cross-country review of the literature. Create Pathways to Access Research Monograph 16. University of Sussex Centre for International Education.

[lxxxi] Due to the scope and nature of our fieldwork, we did not investigate knowledge about, or the use of, contraception.

[lxxxii] We heard indirectly of a few cases where a husband was willing for his wife to go to a college or university, but could not find the financial means to support her.

[lxxxiii] Birungi, H et al (2015), Education Sector Response to Early and Unintended Pregnancies: A Review of Country Experiences in Sub-Saharan Africa, Population Council.

[lxxxiv] Runhare, T (2010). A Comparative Case Study of Institutional Responsiveness to Mainstreaming of Pregnant Learning in Formal Education, University of Pretoria.

[lxxxv] Lloyd, C.B. and B.S. Mensch (2008). Marriage and childbirth as factors in dropping out from school: An analysis of DHS data from sub-Saharan Africa. Population Studies, 62:1, 1-13.

[lxxxvi] Hunt, F. (2008). Dropping out from school: a cross-country review of the literature. Create Pathways to Access Research Monograph 16. University of Sussex Centre for International Education.

[lxxxvii] The small number of girls who did say they disliked certain aspects of their school mentioned: corporal punishment and other harsh treatment by teachers (several ISGs in Mberengwa); teacher absenteeism (one ISG in Samburu East); male teachers drinking and sexually harassing female pupils (one OSG in Samburu East), and dirty school toilets (one ISG in Katanga). Crucially for our study, none of the girls who mentioned these problems gave them as reasons for girls dropping out.

Annexes

GEC Thematic Research Report

Evaluation Manager Girls' Education Challenge Fund
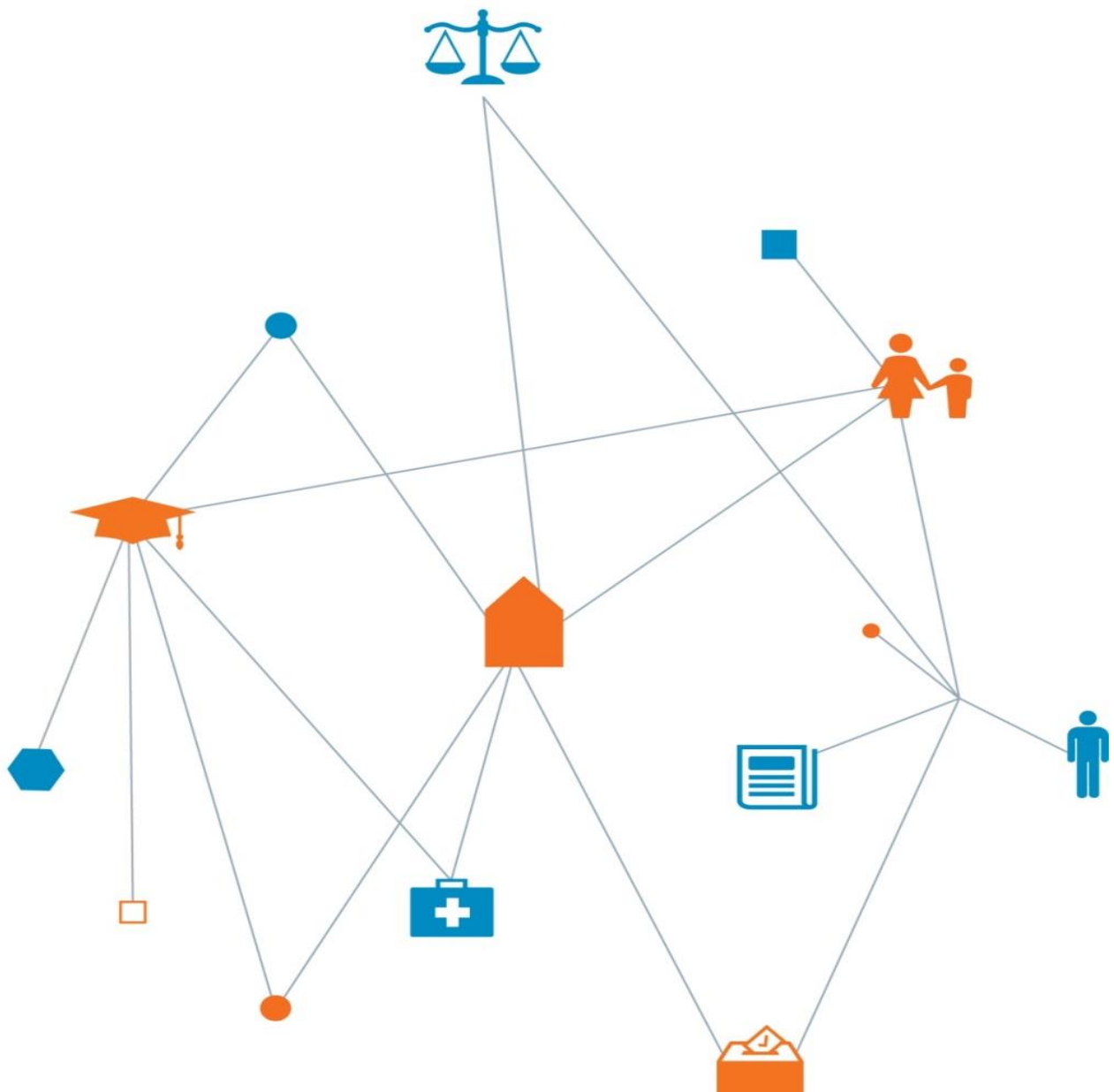
Annex A: Study Design and Methods

1.1 Introduction

As the EM of the GEC, we are responsible for establishing, leading and managing a rigorous monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness and impact of individual projects and the GEC as a whole. We carried out primary research and produced baseline reports for the Step Change Window (SCW) and the Innovation Window (IW) of the GEC in 2014[1]. We will be carrying out research and producing a midline report in 2016 and a final evaluation report in 2017. Our primary research for the baseline, midline and endline of the GEC includes: longitudinal household surveys, standard tests of learning ability, school visits and qualitative research.

The thematic research builds from our fund-level SCW baseline research, which highlighted a need to understand in greater depth particular factors that affect the education of marginalised girls. Our approach to the thematic research explores how these diverse factors and processes combine to affect girls' ability to stay in school. The thematic research study is cross-sectional and comparative. We sampled countries or areas that reported varying levels of dropout rates to understand coping strategies and also why particular factors are barriers to education in some contexts but not others.

We conducted fieldwork in communities in three countries: Samburu East in Kenya, Katanga Province in the DRC and Mberengwa District in Zimbabwe. Our primary research focused on girls aged between 12-15, as it is an important transition period in girls' lives, as they move from primary education to secondary school, and from girlhood to womanhood.

1.2 Literature review

As explained, this research follows the GEC baseline research and builds on findings from this report. In addition to the EM baseline report and annexes, and other GEC secondary data like SCW project reports, we have reviewed secondary literature to inform the design and analysis of our findings.

The EM produced a thematic literature review in 2012 of the impact of education on marginalised girls' life chances in developing countries.[2] It was used to identify gaps in the literature and develop our EM research questions for the GEC. It also highlighted the need for qualitative research on girls' education in developing countries.

Prior to fieldwork, we conducted a review of educational and ethnographic literature on the specific study locations for the thematic research. This was to inform our understanding of social, cultural, economic and political factors that may be affecting girls' education in each context. The quality and availability of literature relating to education for fieldwork areas was limited.

Evidence from our literature review is included in the findings section.

1.3 GEC Baseline research and findings

At baseline, our findings suggested that the main factors that affect girls' attendance are a combination of low household income, low aspirations of caregivers, little enjoyment of school on the part of girls and dangerous journeys to school. For enrolment, our findings suggested that the main factors that affect girls are negative attitudes to girls' education and girls' duties in the home. However, in this quantitative analysis, we were not able to clearly identify these factors as barriers to enrolment or attendance, as the model explains only a small part of the variation in attendance measured at baseline.

Our qualitative research at baseline provides more descriptive detail on the factors that were considered barriers to education in the country areas visited as part of the thematic research. However, the interactions between factors and how they affect girls' ability to stay in school is less clear. These factors and how they interact were further explored in the thematic research.

Kenya

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[1] The full baseline report and qualitative analysis is available:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/425360/Step-change-window-full2.pdf
[2] Rao et al (2012). A review of the literature on the impact of education on marginalised girls' life chances in developing countries.

In Kenya, the most commonly reported barriers to attendance in CfBT project areas were poverty, early marriage and pregnancy. These barriers were particularly cited as affecting older girls, who cannot afford the cost of secondary school, and who can get pregnant and are seen as marriageable once they hit puberty. Even in public schools where education is free, some caregivers were not able to afford other associated school costs such as uniforms or the firewood that students were described as having to provide in order to receive lunch.

Respondents also often described violence as a barrier to education, including violence at school, domestic violence and sexual assault. Frequently, respondents reported that schools have insufficient numbers of textbooks, that the quality of school buildings and classrooms is poor and that there aren't enough trained teachers, which hamper children's attendance and learning outcomes. Respondents also reported particular difficulties sending children to school in times of drought or flood, due to the attending poverty, or hazards which make the journey to school impossible or ill advised.

Less commonly but also significant, respondents reported negative community and household attitudes towards girls education, particularly among pastoralist households in Samburu. Migration and mobility, of nomadic households or displaced populations searching for work were also reported as affecting school enrolment and attendance.

DRC

In the project areas of IRC in the DRC, poverty was one of the main barriers to education especially in relation to enrolment and attendance. Specific challenges reported included maintaining a source of livelihood for the household, including employment and income generating activities and ability to afford school fees and school materials. Poverty and the families' inability to meet basic needs was reported by respondents as pushing girls to dropout of school and find alternatives to schooling. Alternatives suggested were marriage, where a girl is no longer perceived as a responsibility to the household or finding jobs where they are able to earn income and support the family.

Early marriage was another reported barrier. The main reasons reported for early marriage were: the traditional and common norm within the area of marrying teenage girls (most mention girls aged 15 years old) and the girls' interest in marriage and the existing peer pressure to drop out of school and get married. Pregnancy was also mentioned due to pregnancies of young girls or the fear of pregnancy as a challenge to enrolling girls in school.

Zimbabwe

In the project areas of World Vision in Zimbabwe, like in the DRC and in Kenya, poverty was the most often reported barrier to girls' education. The challenges of poverty for attendance or enrolment were in terms of an inability to pay the costs of school, including uniforms and books. Parents were willing to send their children to school and willing to pay fees, but they simply could not afford to pay. Respondents also noted seasonal disruptions which make it particularly difficult to afford the costs of school. Poverty could push girls to drop out and find work either to support themselves and their households or because they do not see education as rewarding and as a path to a better life. Respondents also identified poverty as a factor that can lead girls to get married to escape poverty and better support their families, or to engage in sex with men as a way to support themselves and their families.

In the baseline qualitative research in World Vision project areas, pregnancy was also identified as a barrier, as respondents reported the difficulties faced by girls who become pregnant and are not allowed to return to school, facing high levels of social stigma and shame. Girls who become pregnant were identified as the group facing the strongest specific barriers to education, although orphans were also reported to face considerable difficulties.

Many respondents in World Vision project areas described disruptions to their ability to make a living, primarily in terms of spoiled crops, damaged homes and lost livestock, generally due to seasonal or chronic droughts. Respondents in World Vision project areas discussed this issue more often than respondents from other project areas, across all regions being surveyed, suggesting that it is quite a severe issue which commonly affects children's ability to attend school.

1.4 Research design

The thematic research places the girl at the centre of the research design to understand how different factors and conditions over time affect her ability to stay in school.

Objectives of the thematic research

1. To develop a greater depth of evidence around the role of different contextual, community, school-based, household and personal factors in 'pushing out' girls out of school; and

2. To place the girl at the centre of the research design; and

3. To build up an understanding of the factors and conditions that ultimately affect the process of dropping out.

We designed the thematic research as a qualitative cross-sectional study across three locations. The research aims to answer:

- With regard to girls aged 12-15, what differences at individual and household level (in terms of: perceptions; attitudes; choices and strategies) result in some girls staying on at school, while others who face very similar circumstances drop out?

1.5 Selection of study locations

1.5.1 Sampling approach

We sampled countries and projects from the SCW as we had primary qualitative and quantitative baseline research about the communities and countries that we could build on and use for comparison in the thematic research.

We removed Afghanistan from the sample due to the level of instability. Similarly, we removed Sierra Leone from the sample due to the on-going outbreak of Ebola during the research period. All 13 other SCW projects were included in the sample.

The main design factors that influenced the thematic research sampling were:

- the presence of at least one of the six key thematic barriers;

- the presence of girls age 12 – 15 in the sample; and

- the level of girls' drop-out rates (high/medium/low).

We also took a comparative approach to the thematic research. In sampling, this meant including projects which reported relatively fewer dropouts or barriers to education along with projects that reported relatively more. This was to help provide insights into coping strategies and why particular issues are barriers to education in some contexts but not others.

An initial mapping of each of these factors was conducted across SCW projects included in the sample. Key variables and/or indices relating to these factors were identified in the EM's Household Survey (HHS) and EM's School-Based Assessment (SBA) quantitative datasets. The HHS and SBA did not include questions about pregnancy and early marriage, out of ethical and sensitivity concerns, so this information was only collected through the qualitative research which accompanied the HHS. For this reason, pregnancy and early marriage was analysed using qualitative data. Poverty, disability and violence levels along with drop-out rates were derived from EM household survey data while school-based factors draw on SBA data.

Table 1 below presents three types of data:

- Comparative indexes that assess the relative incidence of material poverty, disability, violence, teacher pedagogy and school-based factors as barriers to education. As the broad idea is to ensure the degree to which these barriers are present in each project, prevalence rates for each of these barriers were not calculated in relation to the overall population in each project area. Rather, prevalence rates for these barriers were measured using indexed sets of variables, and prevalence was assessed comparatively between projects, to assess the relative prevalence of a particular barrier in a project area as compared to the other project areas. The average across all 15 Step Change Window projects was calibrated at 0, with negative numbers in Table 1 being lower than average prevalence and positive numbers being higher than average prevalence. Teacher pedagogy and school-based factors were only assessed through the SBA, and so data on those barriers is only available for projects where the SBA was administered.

- Drop-out rates are presented directly as a percentage of the total number of girls in school in project areas, and were not indexed comparatively to the other projects.

- Qualitative information is also presented, which records the number of times a particular barrier was mentioned by respondents in the qualitative in-depth interviews. The qualitative data was not coded to measure the number of respondents who reported a particular barrier, as the qualitative sample was not designed to be robust at that level. Rather, the qualitative sample was designed to triangulate quantitative findings from the HHS data, filling in gaps on the nature and causality of barriers reported by HHS and SBA respondents. Here, the qualitative data is provided to provide an indicative sense of how frequently a particular barrier was mentioned by respondents; this is of particular use for assessing pregnancy and early marriage as barriers, since data was not collected on these barriers through the quantitative survey for ethical and sensitivity reasons.

Table 1 – prevalence of barriers of interest across SCW project areas

Prevalence of barriers of interest across SCW project areas		Drop-out	Preg. & EM	Material Poverty		Disability		Violence		Teacher Pedagogy		School-based factors		
		QUANT	QUAL	QUANT	QUAL	QUANT	QUAL	QUANT	QUAL	QUANT	QUAL	QUANT		QUAL
		HHS	IDI	HHS	IDI	HHS	IDI	HHS	IDI	SBA	IDI	SBA		IDI
		Rate	Count	Index	Count	All	Count	All (avg)	Count	Index	Count	Index	All (avg)	Count
DRC	IRC	6.5%	10	1.00	94	0.16	2	0.03	66	0.27	17	0.98	0.27	63
Ethiopia	STC	7.4%	19	0.85	187	0.30	3	0.01	104	-0.37	38	-0.10	0.04	131
Mozambique	STC	3.2%	8	0.61	211	0.55	4	0.04	141		49			155
Tanz. & Zimb.	Camfed	9.3%	3	1.21	100	0.20	0	0.03	53		5			84
Kenya	WUSC	2.8%	6	1.42	206	0.27	5	0.03	122	-0.33	26	-0.65	-0.04	87
Ethiopia	ChHpe	3.9%	22	0.47	196	0.08	11	0.02	255	-0.28	31	-0.23	-0.46	376
Zimbabwe	WV	4.6%	4	1.48	311	0.21	26	0.03	146					216
Kenya	CfBT	3.3%	3	1.10	237	0.19	11	0.03	105	0.39		-0.42	-0.13	138
Somalia	RI	6.5%	10	0.75	164	0.16	5	0.03	146					147
Somalia	CARE	4.8%	8	0.46	212	0.15	12	0.02	140					110

Notes on index development

Material Poverty

The prevalence rates of each variable associated to material poverty were calculated individually and then compared with a previously constructed index on poverty, developed as part of the EM baseline analysis. As the numbers were very consistent across projects, the prevalence rate as conveyed by the index is used in Table 1.

Disability

Clear indices calculating disabilities were already available from the EM baseline analysis. They are sub-divided into mental, physical and all disabilities, the last of which accounts for those with at least one of the two former categories. These prevalence rates are calculated in a similar fashion, where the number of disabilities is divided by the total number of observations in the set. "All" disabilities was identified as the primary indicator of prevalence.

Violence

For violence, prevalence rates of positive indicators of reported violence in the home area, on a girl's travel to school and violence at school within the last year were averaged to compute a measure of overall prevalence of violence in each project.

Teacher Pedagogy

Quality of pedagogy can be affected by culture, context, and/or personal preference, but at a basic level it references the level of engagement between teachers and pupils. Thus, we complemented qualitative findings with a standardized index constructed as part of the EM baseline analysis which identifys poor classroom engagement by the frequencies at which pupils raised their hands during class. It should be stated that this is only a broad approximation of the quality of teaching practices.

School-based factors

The average of variables in the SBA dataset associated with teacher shortage and inexperience, lack of school materials and poor learning environment was taken. This average was then compared with a previously-constructed index of poor class quality.

1.5.2 Sampling Strategy

Initial analysis showed that the sample of included SCW projects reported concerns across all six of these thematic areas, to greater or lesser extents and no clear patterns emerged that would indicate groupings or possible stratification variables useful for sampling. This gave confidence that whatever SCW projects were selected, we would be able to probe across all six key thematic areas.

Therefore, we focused on the other key design factor influencing the thematic research: the level of drop-out rates among 12-15 year old girls. All SCW projects were found to have sufficient numbers of girls age 12- 15 in the baseline sample to accommodate the planned 'snowball' household sampling approach proposed in the thematic research specification.

Drop-out rates varied significantly across the SCW projects, so this was selected as a viable stratification variable. We divided the SCW projects into three sub groups (high drop-out rates, mid-range and low) and randomised each sub-group to select the final three projects for the sample. This stratification would allow us to study how the barriers affect girls in communities with different levels of drop-out rates.

Drop-out rates were measuring using the number of girls who are not enrolled but were previously enrolled compared with the overall population, which is comprised of those who were never enrolled and those who currently are. Projects were ordered from highest to lowest dropout rates. These rates naturally stratified projects into high, medium, and low groups in which there were 4, 2 and 4 projects respectively. From these groups one project was chosen randomly. This resulted in the following sample:

- IRC – DRC
- World Vision – Zimbabwe
- CfBT – Kenya

The prevalence rates of the barriers were then assessed across these three groups, the satisfying stratification and potential for groups of comparison led to the acceptance of these as the ensuing locations for thematic evaluation research.

For each of these SCW project areas, we used the GEC SCW sampling framework to identify the treatment groups where we had conducted qualitative research for our baseline research. We opted to carry out the thematic research in treatment areas to avoid affecting projects' midline research and bothering control communities with additional research.

We then randomly selected our sampling points from these locations. This resulted in the following sample:

- Mbuji-Mayi (Kasai Oriental), DRC
- Ruvuzhe (Mberengwa District), Zimbabwe
- Wamba (Samburu East), Kenya

The sampling point in the DRC was changed due to security risks and tensions in the selected community during the fieldwork period. Specifically, while the research team was in the DRC, there was an incident at a school in Mbuji-Mayi in the province of Kasai-Oriental, which was creating tensions at schools in the sampled communities. GEC project staff advised that it would be difficult to conduct interviews in the area during our fieldwork period.

The new sampling points in the DRC were in Katanga Province based on guidance from DFID and GEC project staff. The new sampling points were not in communities where the EM had collected primary data at baseline, but they were in the IRC project's treatment areas.

1.6 Fieldwork

1.6.1 Approach

We used a critical realist approach to the information we collected from study participants. Our research was based on a belief that we could provide a reliable answer to our research question through listening to what study participants told us. At the same time though, we tried to be aware of potential distortions and bias emanating from the study participants or the translators. Our approach also involved fieldworker reflexivity; we tried to monitor any biases we ourselves might be bringing to bear.

The Research Director developed topic guides for each sampled country. We used these topic guides for the interviews. We also discussed the interviews and any emerging topics after each day of fieldwork. This ensured that both researchers probed emerging topics in subsequent interviews.

1.6.2 Research team

The Research Director, Geraldine Terry led the research in each sampled country. In all three countries, she was accompanied by one member of Coffey's in-house GEC team. The fieldwork research teams in each country included two national translators and security staff where needed.

In Kenya, the research team was made up of Geraldine Terry and Carrie Baptist and two local translators: Severina Lemachokoti and Joy Lenaa. Both translators spoke Samburu, Swahili and English and came from Samburu East. A "fixer" in the local community was used to help arrange interviews with sampled girls in each sampled community. The research team was accompanied by a Kenyan close protection officer and local police for security reasons. During research, security staff remained by the vehicle and away from the interviewing area.

In the DRC, the research team was made up of Geraldine Terry and Elizabeth Edouard and two translators: Terry Kafyeke and Rosette Kaninda Lusamba. One translator spoke English, French and Swahili fluently. The other translator only spoke French and Swahili fluently. She worked with Elizabeth who is a native French speaker. The research team was accompanied by an international close protection officer and local security professional and driver for security reasons. During research, security staff remained by the vehicle and away from the interviewing area. These individuals did not interact with the research respondents and their presence did not affect the research.

In Zimbabwe, the research team was made up of Geraldine Terry and Elizabeth Edouard and two translators: Monica Chitakunye and Farirai Gonera. Both translators were local and spoke Shona and English.

1.6.3 Sampling

The starting point for sampling of schools and communities in each country was a community sampled in our EM baseline qualitative research. In each community, we aimed to identify two to three schools to use as sampling points for our research. Having two to three sampling points enabled us to compare across contexts, given differences regarding girls' experiences of education between peri-urban and rural areas. Our sampling criteria for schools was the following:

- School or community with a primary and secondary school
- School location (rural, urban, peri-urban)
- A consideration of travel distances, balancing the need to include remote communities in our research with an awareness that our fieldwork was of limited duration

We worked with local government or project staff in-country to determine the additional sampling points. At the start of the fieldwork, we met with GEC project staff in each country to identify entry points for the sampled schools and communities.

Sampling framework

In each study location, our sampling frame consisted of girls aged 12-15 who have dropped out of school; girls aged 12-15 who are still in school, and to a lesser extent, girls' parents, guardians and other members of their household; school stakeholders who knew girls interviewed and could comment on their situations; and finally community members with a perception girls' schooling in the area. We spoke to a total of 109 girls across the three countries.

Table 2 presents our sample for the study by country.

Table 2: Thematic Research Sample by country

Country	Number of girls interviewed
Kenya	31
DRC	42
Zimbabwe	36
Total	**109**

We found younger girls in the sampled age bracket were reserved and reluctant to speak about their school experiences. As a result, we focused more on girls around the age of 15. In some cases, we included girls who were older than 15, as we wanted to speak to girls who had experienced the transition from primary to secondary school. Girls under the age of 15 are often still in primary school due to delayed enrolment or school repetition. We also spoke to girls who were slightly older, but who had dropped out around the age of 15-17. Table 3 presents our sample by the girls' age.

Table 3: Thematic Research Sample by age

Age	Number of girls interviewed
<10	2
12-15	63
> 15	43
Total	**109**

Table 4 presents our sample for the study by the girls' school status. While we interviewed more girls who were in school than out of school, many of the in-school girls had dropped out and returned to school, which provided an opportunity to understand the dynamics and factors affecting a girls' ability to be in school.

Table 4: Thematic Research Sample by school status

Girls' school status	Number of girls interviewed
In school[3]	**66**
Primary school	32
Secondary school	34
Out of school[4]	**43**
Dropped out of primary school[5]	17
Dropped out of secondary school	26

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[3] Of the 66 girls who are in school, many have dropped out at one point during their schooling or have had irregular attendance
[4] Of the 43 girls who are out of school, many are still trying and/or have plans to go back to school
[5] Some of the girls who dropped out in primary school dropped out when trying to transition to secondary school

Total	109

Of the girls interviewed who dropped out of primary school, four dropped out at the end of the last year of primary school. Of the girls who dropped out of secondary school, one dropped out in the first year of secondary school. This sample provides specific first-hand experience on the factors that affects girls' transition from primary to secondary school.

In addition to our sample of girls, we carried out group discussions and interviews with parents, school administrators, community leaders and GEC staff. We spoke to over 60 stakeholders to girls' education during the fieldwork.

Sampling of girls

In each country, we had a different approach to sampling girls in and out of school due to varying circumstances. The approach and related strengths and weaknesses for each country is described below.

Kenya

In Kenya, the schools were closed during the fieldwork period. As a result, we depended on connections to the community through the local translators who were active in women groups in Samburu East. They were able to make contact with local women in the community, who then arranged for other adults and for school-age girls to meet us.

Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, the GEC project staff asked us to work with local government to identify schools for the sample. The District Education Officer in Mberengwa District helped us to identify schools based on our school sampling criteria. As our fieldwork started when schools were closing for the holiday period, we were able to visit two schools that were still open. To sample out of school girls, we asked teachers to identify any out of girl schools in the community. At the third sampling point, we met with students out of school hours, as the school had closed for the holiday period . We randomly sampled in-school girls from the girls between the ages of 12-15 who were present. We asked these in-school girls to identify any out of school girls in their community. Once these girls were identified, we worked with the District Administrator and local community leaders to identify the girls and we arranged to meet them in their community. This sampling approach for out of school girls was most consistent with the proposed approach in the research specification. However, this approach presented logistical challenges for the local government, as it required significant amounts of their time and local leaders were not always able to identify the out of school girls for us to interview.

DRC

In the DRC, we identified schools to visit with IRC project staff. To sample school girls at each of the school, we started at the school by speaking with head teachers and parent committees. For in-school girls, we either randomly sampled girls from an attendance book or asked the head teacher to identify at random a specified number of girls.

For out of school girls, the head teacher and parent committees advised that they would be able to identify these girls and arrange for them to meet us. They arranged for out of school girls to meet us. This may have led to our sample being biased towards girls with positive attitudes towards school and girls who hoped we might be able to help them with school fees. We mitigated this potential bias by asking interviewees about girls they knew who were out of school, including sisters and friends. This gave us rich, although indirect, information about OSGs.

1.6.4   Refusals

We explained the research to all potential respondents before starting the interview. We made it clear that the girl could end the interview at any time if she felt uncomfortable. As the recruitment of girls for the interview was done across all countries in some way by a community member, we made sure that they understood the purpose of the research and explained to the girl that participation in the research was voluntary. We are not sure how many girls refused the research during this initial recruitment. We heard of no refusals in Samburu East. In DRC, from a group discussion with eight girls, six girls indicated that they did not want to be included in an in-depth interview, while two of the girls from the group indicated that would like to continue with an in-depth interview. In Zimbabwe, at least two out of school girls refused to be interviewed when recruited. These experiences indicate that the respondents were aware that the research was voluntary.

1.6.5 Transcription

All of the interviews and discussions were conducted in a local language with English translation, except in the DRC where half of the interviews were translated into French.

The majority of the interviews were recorded. They were not recorded if the respondent did not want to be recorded or if the setting of the interview was not conducive to high quality audio recordings.[6]

We took notes during the interviews, which included our observations and interpretation and any non-verbal cues. We then transcribed the English audio of fifty per cent of the interviews. We transcribed all the French audio then translated it to English. The remaining interviews had detailed field notes and were conducted by the Research Director who was the lead author of the report. We also used the audio-recordings to fill in gaps in field notes.

It was determined that transcriptions would not add to the quality of the research. As the interviewers and authors of the thematic research report were the same individuals, relevant notes and observations were already immediately available. The use of full transcription from audio would have provided validation of the translation provided by the translators in the field. However, due to difficulties in identifying a qualified translator with the relevant local language, English and transcription skills, the added benefit of validating the translation was not considered worthwhile.

We discussed with the translators terms in the local language that related to the cultural context and conveyed specific meaning to the girls' narrative. These terms remained in the local language in the transcription.

We have not used the real names of any study participants in the report to ensure confidentiality.

1.7 Analysis

1.7.1 Coding framework

The GEC baseline analysis framework, identified the following categories of factors as significant: economic, school-based, attitudes and support in family and community, violence and safety, and personal. While we used these categories as a general analytical framework, our findings are inductive.

Our coding list and analytical framework for the thematic research is inductive, in that it emerged through the fieldwork rather than being imposed by the researchers. We developed a preliminary coding list based on the fieldwork in Kenya and the DRC. We added other codes based on emerging factors from the Zimbabwe fieldwork.

Our coding list is separated into two main areas. Firstly, we have identified push factors, which enable girls to go to school. Secondly, we have identified pull factors, which prevent girls from going to school. All factors, which emerged from our thematic research fieldwork have been included in our coding list.

1.7.2 Analysis and synthesis

We closely considered our interview notes and transcriptions, and any point that emerged from our information as being relevant to our research question was included in our analysis and grouped according to theme. Any evidence for a particular point, in the shape of study participants' statements was always considered along with counter-evidence, if any existed.

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[6] In some cases interviews were conducted outside in windy areas.

Annex B – 1: Summary of findings in Samburu East sub-county, Kenya

1 Introduction

1.1 Programme context

In 2012, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) launched the £355 million Girls' Education Challenge Fund (GEC) to support up to a million of the world's most marginalised girls to improve their lives through education. Projects across the GEC support girls' education for girls at primary and secondary schools. The GEC includes 37 projects across 18 countries, including Kenya.

Coffey, in partnership with RTI International and ORB is the Evaluation Manager (EM) of the GEC. The EM leads the independent evaluation of the GEC as a whole, which includes conducting evaluations of all funding windows at baseline, midline, endline, a process review and this thematic research. This annex summarises the thematic research findings in relation to our study locations in Samburu East sub-county in Samburu County, Kenya.

1.2 Research context

The GEC thematic research explored the community, school-based, household and personal factors that affect the school retention and drop-out for female pupils, in particular those aged 12-15. This is an important transition period in girls' lives, as they move from primary education to secondary school, and from girlhood to womanhood.

Our findings complement evidence collected during the EM's baseline research for the GEC Step Change Window and Innovation Window. They will be used to strengthen the EM's midline and endline evaluations and the FM's research, as well as helping to fill knowledge gaps more widely.

1.3 Research process

We carried out fieldwork in three locations in Samburu East, Kenya: two rural villages; and a peri-urban area on the edge of Wamba, a small town which is the administrative capital of the sub-county.

Our sampling frame consisted of girls aged 12-15 who had dropped out of school (out of school girls or OSG); girls aged 12-15 who were in school (in school girls or ISG); their parents, guardians and other members of their household; education stakeholders such as Head Teachers and officials, and community members. We spoke to 30 girls and young women between the ages of 12 and 22, most of who fell within the age-range of 12-15 years. We also talked to 21 parents (almost all of whom were mothers) and 12 other adult informants including teachers and government officials. We used semi-structured individual interviews, supplemented by two group discussions with mothers and one group discussion with key informants in the sub-county administration.

2 Study context

2.1 Geographical context

We conducted our research at three sampling points in Samburu East presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Study locations in Kenya
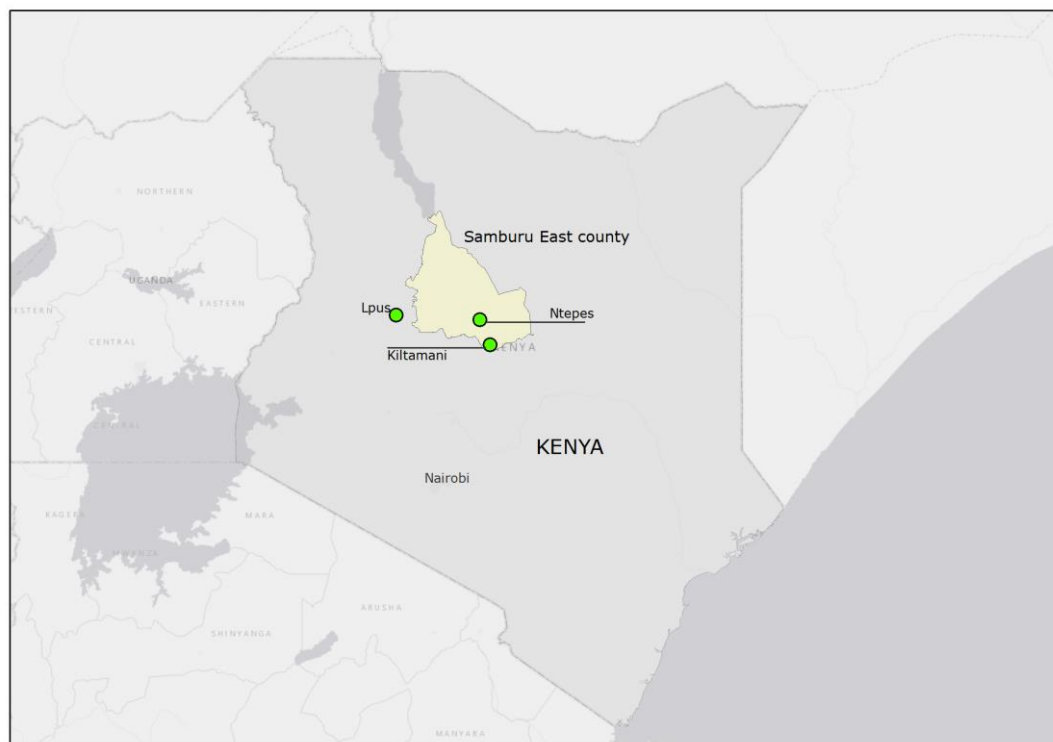
Samburu County, of which Samburu East is a part, is situated in Kenya's Arid and Semi-arid Lands (ASALs). It is very thinly populated and has few urban settlements. The Samburu are pastoralists, raising cattle, sheep and goats and in some cases camels. Droughts leading to the death of livestock have always threatened their prosperity. Some Samburu live in settled communities, with access to services such as schools and dispensaries. Others follow their traditional pastoralist way of life in more remote areas and have relatively little contact with officialdom, including schools. We conducted our fieldwork in settled Samburu communities; these communities are in a period of transition between the traditional Samburu pastoralist livelihood and culture and a way of life that is more akin to mainstream Kenyan norms and values.

2.2 Socio-economic background

Samburu County, in the north of Kenya, is semi-arid, very lightly populated and has few urban settlements. Its main economic activities are nomadic pastoralism, farming and tourism.[i] While some Samburu live in settled communities, with access to services such as schools and dispensaries, the majority of the population are rural nomadic and maintain their traditional lifestyle, moving with their herds in the bush, having little contact with officialdom. Most Samburu pastoralists depend on livestock for wealth. Table 1 shows poverty and employment data in Kenya and Samburu Country.

Table 1: Poverty and employment data (Kenya)

	National	Samburu County
Poverty rate[ii]	45.9%	73.5%
Unemployment rate[iii]	8.6%	11%

Male	8.8%		
Female	8.3%		
Informal employment (15 – 64 years)[iv]	77%	85%	

There is insecurity in Samburu County related to cattle-rustling between tribes. The area also regularly experiences severe droughts, which leads to crop failure and livestock deaths. Conflict, flooding, drought and other factors significantly affect livelihoods and education in Samburu County, which is one of the poorest counties in Kenya.

Samburu East is undergoing a contested cultural transition from the traditional pastoralist lifestyle to a more settled, sedentary, 'modern' way of life. In the mainstream national discourse, the pastoralist lifestyle is seen to be at odds with ideas of progress and modernity.

The cultural traditions of the Samburu include the continuing cultural tradition of *morans* (young unmarried warriors), the practice of 'beading' girls, early marriage, and female genital mutilation (FGM). Traditionally, the practice of beading girls refers to young warriors giving beads to a girl that they are interested in sexually. Fathers may also tell a girl to wear beads, as a signal that she is available for marriage. In Samburu County, girls who are beaded tend to be married between the age of 13 and 18 to men who have passed through the fourteen years of warriorhood.[v] FGM or circumcision is a traditional practice and rite of passage in Samburu County, which marks the transition from child to adulthood and the start of sexual activity. A pregnant girl who has not been circumcised is looked down on. In 2014 in the Rift Valley Province, which is now Samburu County, 26.9 per cent of women had been circumcised.[vi] Efforts are in place to reduce the practice of FGM and it is slowly declining.

Table 2: Social indicators for Kenya and Samburu County

Women who:	National	Samburu County
Are 20-24 and were married by 18[vii]	26.4%	30.1%
Have begun childbearing (aged 15-19) [viii]	18.1%	21.2%
Are circumcised (aged 15-49) [ix]	21%	26.9%

2.3 Education background and data

The legal framework in Kenya is generally supportive of education. It is compulsory for girls and boys between the ages of 6 and 13 (primary school age) to attend school. Table 3 provides an overview of the education system in Kenya.

Table 3: Education system in Kenya

Education level	Entrance age	Duration	Notes
Primary Education	6	8 years	Standard 1 to Standard 8; no direct school fees
Lower Secondary Education	14	2 years	Form 1 and Form 2; school fees
Upper Secondary Education	16	2 years	Form 3 and Form 4; school fees

The Constitution of Kenya (2010) states that every child has a right to free basic education. The introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) and Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) programmes in 2003 and 2008 made basic education officially free in Kenya. Although, parents are asked to contribute to school construction funds and

provide uniforms. National government policy is that, in primary school a child should not be denied access to school if the parents cannot pay.[x] Secondary schools require fees, which vary depending on whether the child is a day or boarding student. Scholarships are available for students, based on merit.

Basic education includes two years of pre-school, eight years of primary education and four years of secondary education. The Ministry of Education budget was 7.5 per cent of the total government budget in 2012.[xi] While primary and secondary schools are free, the education burden on households is reported as being high due to indirect costs, such as uniforms, transportation and meals.[xii]

Kenya's Policy Framework for Nomadic Education (2008) sets out broad guidelines for coordinating and harmonising efforts to deliver good quality educational services to pastoralist populations.[xiii] It signalled the government's change of attitude towards pastoralist education, following years of criticism from pastoralist communities that formal education is inconsistent with their livelihood activities and serves to undermine their way of life.[xiv] However there is no implementation plan.

Table 4 shows education data at the national level and in Samburu County from 2009. More recent data is not available at this time. Across all education indicators, the population in Samburu County has much lower scores than the national average. Education in Kenya does not seem to favour boys over girls when looking at the Gender Parity Index (GPI) with regards to enrolment and retention in primary school, which is 1.01. In secondary school the GPI is 0.94 indicating that slightly more boys are enrolled than girls in secondary education.[xv]

Table 4: Education data at the national level and in Samburu County

	National	Male	Female	Samburu County[xvi]	Male	Female
Net primary enrolment[xvii]	91.4%	90.6%	92.3%	41.3%	43.1%	39.5%
Primary completion[xviii]	76.8%	79.2%	74.4%	29.8%	41.7%	19%
Net secondary enrolment[xix]	28.9%	29.8%	27.9%	7.8%	7.5%	8.1%
Dropout rate (secondary school)[xx]	3.5%	3.2%	3.7%	6.8%	6.9%	6.6%
Out of school[xxi]	18.4%	18.7%	18.0%	21.0%	21.4%	20.5%

Based on our quantitative analysis of the GEC household surveys at baseline, we found that in GEC project areas in Kenya enrolment peaks at ages 12 to 13 coinciding with the last two years of primary school, and declines thereafter. Retention rates drop substantially between the 12 to 13 and 14 to 15 age bands, marking the transition from primary to secondary school.

Table 5: GEC household survey outcome analysis for Kenya[xxii]

EM Data - Kenya	Enrolment[xxiii]	Retention[xxiv]
All	86	97
< 6	81	98
6 to 8	86	99
9 to 11	85	98
12 to 13	86	97
14 to 15	87	88

For learning outcomes, in-school girls in Kenya are above average at all ages in literacy and numeracy compared to other GEC countries.[xxv] However, they still do not reach international reading benchmarks for literacy.

Our quantitative analysis of the GEC household survey at baseline from Kenya showed relationships between the employment situation in the household and girls' proportion of time spend on household duties and enrolment. Distance to school and a different language of instruction at school were also factors affecting enrolment. The

quantitative analysis also identified a relationship between low career aspirations for girls' education and enrolment and attendance. Girls not trying to do well at school, having low levels of family education were also related to enrolment and learning. Girls' learning levels mainly related to economic factors, including household income, material deprivation and the proportion of a girl's time spent on household duties.

Findings from our baseline research for the evaluation of the GEC are further discussed in Annex A.

2.4 GEC projects in Kenya

In Kenya, there are:

- two GEC SCW projects implemented by WUSC and CfBT;
- two IW projects implemented by Leonard Cheshire Disability Kenya and I Choose Life; and
- two GEC SPW projects implemented by Avanti and Discovery.

The thematic research was conducted in Samburu County where CfBT is implementing Wasichana Wote Wasome (WWW)[xxvi] with field partner AMURT. This project works in primary schools and surrounding communities in two very different contexts, namely ASALs like Samburu East, and urban slums. WWW's aim is to drive changes at four levels: the community, the home, the school and for the girl herself. The project takes a holistic, integrated approach which combines interventions across these four dimensions to overcome the complex barriers to girls' education in these two types of environment.

3 Findings

3.1 Overview

Our evidence indicates that the main reasons for adolescent girls dropping out of school in Samburu East are: an inability to cover direct costs, in particular fees and uniforms; pregnancy and high opportunity costs. We found little evidence of girls dropping out due to a lack of interest in school.

3.2 Economic factors: direct costs

As in the other study locations, the challenge of paying for school fees has defeated many parents, resulting in their daughters dropping out of school. In particular, recent severe droughts, which may be associated with climate change, threaten households' ability to pay for their daughters' schooling. When droughts result in the death of large numbers of livestock, it constrains fathers' ability to sell animals to raise cash for school fees.

Sources of financial support for individual girls

On the other hand, girls in Samburu East have the chance to access funding from sources other than their own families. These sources include national government scholarships covering all or most of the direct costs of schooling, and Community Development Fund scholarships (organised by parliamentary constituency) which provide 50 per cent of costs. Accessing scholarships depends on achieving a certain threshold in examinations, with the threshold being slightly higher for the national government scholarships. In addition to these government schemes, private sponsorship is available from local community conservancies and wildlife tourism companies.

3.3 Economic factors: opportunity costs

The opportunity costs of girls' schooling are high in Samburu East, due to the importance of girls' labour in household livelihoods and the traditional cultural norm of early marriage for girls. We heard indirect evidence that the opportunity cost of girls' schooling has increased since the drought in 2012-2013. Some parents in the study location have withdrawn their adolescent daughters from school as a household-level coping strategy, either marrying them off or allocating them to look after vulnerable livestock. From the point of view of fathers, marrying daughters off makes sense as a coping strategy for two reasons: first, the bride price accrues to their fathers, enabling them to buy more animals; and second, the household has one less person to support.

3.4 Parents' and girls' aspirations

In Samburu East recent droughts, which may be associated with climate change, are undermining the traditional pastoralist way of life. In response, both parents and girls themselves now see girls' schooling as part of a diversified livelihood strategy. This is because schooling is perceived to lead to secure formal sector jobs, and parents have high hopes that their educated daughters will help them financially once they find paid work. Some parents told us that daughters were more likely than sons to help their parents in this way. This may explain why mothers go to great lengths to support their daughters' schooling, sometimes opposing their husbands to do so and being beaten as a result. The fact is, however, that in common with many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Kenya has a very small formal sector jobs market (key informant, Nairobi), and tertiary education or training is often required in addition to secondary school qualifications.

Although Samburu East parents are keenly aware of the potential benefits of formal sector jobs, pastoralism is central to their livelihoods and culture, and pastoralist households rely heavily on their children's labour to help take care of livestock. This means that few, if any, rural households in the area are prepared to send all their children to school. Several parents told us that they allocate their children either to herding or to school on the basis of aptitude, rather than gender. Many of the in-school girls we spoke to had sisters who had never gone to school, but were living the traditional life of a Samburu woman, for instance wearing traditional beads and marrying early.

Girls who are in school, or who have dropped out and wish to return, declare that they want to find jobs and help their parents, but they also have other motivations for wanting to finish school and find jobs. They seek the financial independence that will enable them to avoid traditional Samburu marriages, for instance by choosing their own husbands and having some say in decision-making once they are married. In particular, the wish to avoid being trapped in marriages characterised by domestic violence emerged as a strong motivation for girls to complete school.

3.5 Personal factors

In Kenya, pregnant girls are able to return to school once their babies are weaned, and we interviewed several who had already done so or who wanted to do so. In all these cases, the girls' mothers were either looking after their children while they were at school, or had offered to do so. The high level of support from mothers to girls who had given birth and wanted to go back to school was striking. In contrast, girls who had given birth were receiving little or no support of any kind from their babies' fathers, most of who refused to take responsibility.

We heard reports of young mothers being mocked and harassed by other pupils after they return to school. Although this appears to deter some girls and young women from re-enrolling, others were prepared to endure such treatment because of their determination to complete school and find jobs.

Our evidence indicates that it is lack of means to pay fees which is the main factor preventing Samburu East girls from re-enrolling once their children are weaned, rather than the fact of having given birth itself.

4 Conclusions

In our study locations Samburu East, adolescent girls' schooling is at the centre of far-reaching social and cultural change, as people in these settled communities seek to benefit from the modern Kenyan economy as well as maintain their pastoralist livelihoods and cultural traditions. Recent droughts have added to parents' hopes that educated daughters will be able to contribute to their parental households. Samburu girls themselves see schooling as a route to financial independence, which will in turn enable them to escape from oppressive cultural norms and values. However, given the limited formal sector in Kenya and high competition for jobs, it is likely that many girls and their parents may be disappointed.

Despite their own and their parents' efforts, an inability to pay direct costs and the relatively high opportunity cost of girls' education in this pastoral society mean that many girls in Samburu East ultimately fail to complete secondary school. Such girls find themselves in a very difficult 'half-way' situation. They are unwilling to accept the traditional role of a Samburu wife because they are aware of alternative ways of living, but at the same time these alternatives remain tantalisingly out of reach.

A very positive feature of girls' education in Samburu East is that, due to the various scholarship schemes and sponsorship from the tourism sector, girls in Samburu East have better access to sources of funding outside their own households than girls in the other study locations. However, as such scholarships and sponsorships are limited in number, not all girls can benefit. Girls whose ability to study is affected by repeated disruptions to attendance, being required to do housework in the evenings or having no artificial light for night-time study are disadvantaged, because they are less likely to obtain the high marks that government scholarships require.

Annex B – 2: Summary of findings in Katanga Province, DRC

1 Introduction

1.1 Programme context

In 2012, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) launched the £355 million Girls' Education Challenge Fund (GEC) to support up to a million of the world's most marginalised girls to improve their lives through education. Projects across the GEC support girls' education for girls at primary and secondary schools. The GEC includes 37 projects across 18 countries including in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Coffey, in partnership with RTI International and ORB is the Evaluation Manager (EM) of the GEC. The EM leads the independent evaluation of the GEC as a whole, which includes conducting evaluations of all funding windows at baseline, midline, endline, a process review, and this thematic research. This annex summarises the thematic research findings from our study locations in Katanga Province, DRC.

1.2 Research context

The GEC thematic research explored the community, school-based, household and personal factors that affect school retention and drop-out for female pupils, in particular those aged between the ages of 12-15. This is an important transition period in girls' lives, as they move from primary education to secondary school and from girlhood to womanhood.

Our findings complement evidence collected during the EM's baseline research for the GEC Step Change Window and Innovation Window. They will be used to strengthen the EM's midline and endline evaluations and the FM's research, as well as helping to fill knowledge gaps more widely.

1.3 Research process

We carried out the fieldwork in three locations in Katanga Province in the DRC: one in the community of Mulungwishi; and two in the town of Kasenga.

Our data collection methods were semi-structured interviews and group discussions. Our sampling frame consisted of girls aged 12-15 who had dropped out of school (called out of school girls or OSG); girls aged 12-15 who are still in school (in school girls or ISG); girls' parents, guardians and other members of their household; school stakeholders who knew the interviewed girls and could comment on their situations; and finally community members with a perception of girls' schooling in the area.

We spoke to a total of 42 girls and young women in the DRC, 16 in Mulungwishi and 26 in Kasenga. We also spoke to 27 adult informants, including groups of PTA members in both Mulungwishi and Kasenga, a group of fathers in Kasenga, and school principals and teachers in both settlements.
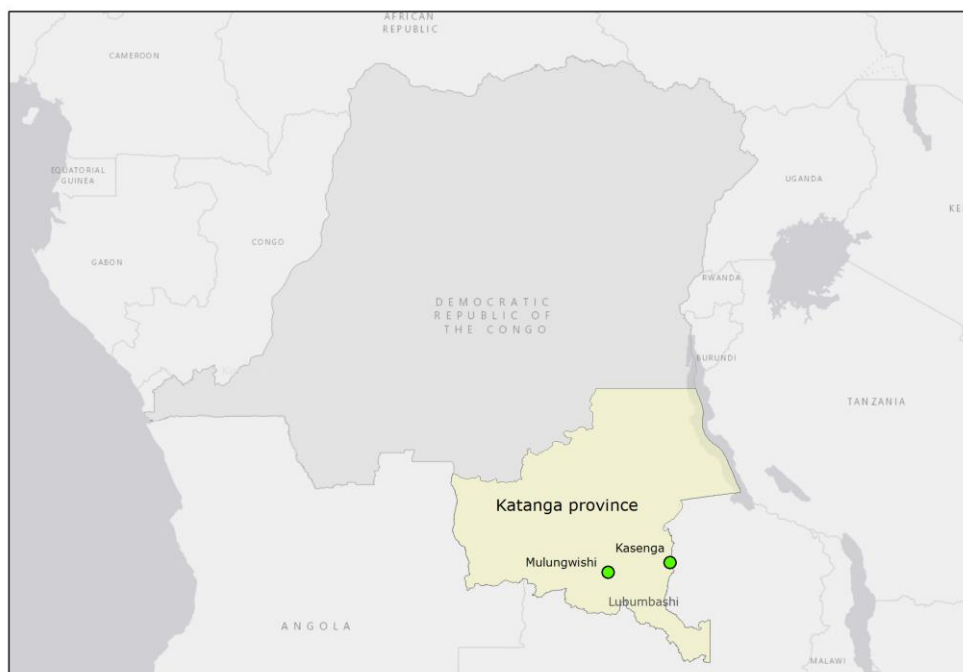
2 Study context

2.1 Geographical context

We conducted our fieldwork in two areas of Katanga Province presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Study locations in the DRC

Katanga Province, in the south east of the DRC is the second largest province in the country. It is the most industrialised part of DRC, dotted with large copper and cobalt mines which provide employment for many local men. Otherwise, Katanga's population are subsistence farmers or small scale vendors. Katanga is a drought prone province, and droughts are likely to be exacerbated in future as a result of climate change.[xxvii]

2.2 Socio-economic background

Katanga Province, in the south east of the DRC is the second largest province in the country. It is a copper and cobalt mining area with a large number of informal miners. Otherwise, Katanga's population are subsistence farmers or small scale vendors. Katanga is a drought prone province, which is likely to get worse in the future as a result of climate change.[xxviii] Table 1 contains poverty and employment information for both the country as a whole and Katanga Province.

Table 1: Poverty and employment data (DRC)

	National	Katanga Province
Poverty rate[xxix]	63.4%	66.6%
Unemployment rate[xxx]	17.4%	Not available
Male	15.2%	
Female	19.6%	
Informal employment (15 – 64 years)	88.6%	90.2%[xxxi]

In the DRC, it is legal for girls to marry at 15 and for boys to marry at 18. Katanga Province has the highest proportion of girls who have begun child bearing in the DRC. Table 2 shows marriage and other social indicators.

Table 2: Social indicators for the DRC and Katanga Province

Women who:	National	Katanga Province
Are married (aged 15-19)[xxxii]	25%	37%
Have begun childbearing (aged 15-19)	28.4%	44.5%

In the DRC, life expectancy is 49.6 years. With parents dying at a young age, many children are orphaned before they finish school.[xxxiii] There are high rates of cholera and malaria across Katanga Province. In the case of eight per cent of children in Katanga Province, one or both of their parents have died.[xxxiv] Orphanhood in turn affects schooling. In Katanga Province, 57 per cent of orphans aged 10-14 attend school in comparison to 76 per cent of non-orphans.[xxxv]

2.3   Education background and data

Katanga Province has a low literacy rate with 35 per cent of women aged 15 – 24 literate compared to 51 per cent across the DRC. This section presents education data for Katanga Province and the DRC. Table 3 summarises the education system in DRC and Table 5 presents data on enrolment and completion.

Table 3: Education System in the DRC

Education level	Entrance age	Duration
Primary Education	6	6 years
Lower Secondary Education	12	2 years
Upper Secondary Education	14	4 years

The Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Vocation Education governs primary and secondary education in the DRC. In 2010, the government launched a policy of free primary education with the plan of gradually extending it to include all levels of education. However, government budgeting and spending in education is not adequate.[xxxvi] In DRC, public expenditure on education is 1.8 per cent of GDP compared to the average across sub-Saharan African, which is 4.6 per cent of GDP. [xxxvii] Across levels of education, 42 per cent of spending goes to pre-primary and primary education, 32 per cent to secondary education and 26 per cent to higher education. Best practice is for 50 per cent of education spending to be on primary education. [xxxviii]

While the central government manages the financing of the sector, implementation is decentralised with the provincial governments managing primary and secondary education. There are two types of public schools: (1) schools under the direct control of the government (écoles non-conventionnées); and (2) network schools, which are run by churches through agreements with the government (écoles conventionnées). The majority of students attend the second type of school, which tend to be more efficient and associated with lower unit costs. However, these schools face challenges due to a divided provincial and national management system, which has led to a growth in the number of teachers and in turn unpaid staff at schools. Only 67 per cent of public school teachers are on the payroll and their salaries are low.[xxxix]

Public schools have asked households to compensate them for the low level of government funding by taking on the burden of teachers' salaries (along with supplemental salaries), as well as school operating costs which are not adequately budgeted by the government.[xl] Families are estimated to pay about 95 per cent of school costs.[xli] Table 4 presents the structure of households' spending on education in Katanga Province.

Table 4: Disaggregation of household spending on education

	School fees and contributio	Supplies	Transport	Uniform	Food	Pocket Money	One-off fees	Other expenses

	n to operating costs							
Katanga Province[xlii]	33.6%	10.7%	4.2%	9.6%	19.2%	4.7%	17.4%	0.8%

Households spent an average $228.10 on schooling in the 2010 to 2011 school year in Katanga Province. This is 11.7 per cent of their annual income. The share of income spent on education is higher in urban areas than in rural areas across the DRC. In Katanga Province, urban households spent 15 per cent of their income compared to 7 per cent in rural households.

Across the country, more than half of the children at risk of dropping out (as defined by UNICEF's out-of-school study) come from households with a monthly income of less than $50. For families in this class, 11.3 per cent of their annual income is spent on education, which is a comparable allocation to families in other income brackets. [xliii]

Education financing is a far-reaching economic and governance issue which has a huge impact on girls' chances of completing school in DRC, so the heavy financial burden of sending children to school is an important contextual issue for this study.

Table 5: Education data at the national level and in Katanga Province

	National	Male	Female	Katanga Province	Male	Female
Net primary enrolment[xliv]	74.8%	77.5%	72.1%	66.1%	72.6%	60.3%
Primary completion rate[xlv7]	14.4%	15.4%	13.5%	10.6%	Not available	Not available
Transition rate[xlvi8]	87.2%	85.3%	89.7%	84.9%	Not available	Not available
Net secondary enrolment	31.8%	35.1%	28.3%	22.7%	26.1%	18.6%
Dropout[xlvii]	6.8%	5.6%	8.2%	7.8%	6.3%	9.5%
Out of school[xlviii]	28.9%	26.5%	31.7%	34.8%	32.3%	37.6%

Nationally, 87 per cent of children who complete primary school continue to secondary school. In the DRC, boys' attendance is much higher than girls' attendance. The primary school gender parity index for attendance is 0.83 in Katanga compared to 0.93 across the DRC. The secondary school gender parity index for attendance in Katanga Province is 0.71 compared to 0.81 across the DRC. According to UNESCO there is gender parity when the Gender Parity Index (GPI) is between 0.97 and 1.03.[xlix] The transition rate from primary school to secondary school in DRC is higher for girls than boys, at 90 per cent and 85 per cent respectively.

Table 6 presents dropout rates by school year, while Table 7 presents dropout rates by age. In Table 7, it is notable that the number of girls who have dropped out more than doubles between the age of 15 and 16, indicating that this is very significant age for girls in school. Also, the dropout rate increases especially between primary school and secondary school for girls.

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[7] This primary completion rate is the ratio of the number of children who are of age to be finishing primary school (11 years old) who were in the final year of the primary school cycle.
[8] Transition rate is the percentage of children who were in the last grade of primary school during the previous school year and who were attending the first grade of secondary school in the current school year (excludes repeaters in the final grade of primary school).

Table 6: Dropout rate (%) by grade of primary and lower school secondary school children

Characteristics	Primary						Lower secondary	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Boys (all provinces)	2.9	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.4
Girls (all provinces)	3.5	2.5	2.9	2.1	1.5	1.7	2.1	2.9
Katanga	5.1	4.0	3.9	2.6	2.5	2.9	2.8	2.3

Source: Household Survey OOSC-DRC 2012

Table 7: School exposure of girls aged 10 – 17 across the DRC (%)

Age	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Enrolled	83.3	84.6	82.7	84.5	80.6	79.2	65.8	58.8
Dropped out	6.8	7.2	8.7	7.8	14.1	12.5	26.0	31.9
Never attended	9.9	8.2	8.6	7.7	5.3	8.3	8.1	9.4

Source: Household Survey OOSC-DRC 2012

Based on our quantitative analysis of the GEC household surveys at baseline, we found that in DRC enrolment peaks at age 14 to 15, which could reflect late enrolment. Retention rates are lowest in DRC among 9 to 11 year olds.

Table 8: GEC household survey outcome analysis for DRC[l]

EM Data - DRC	Enrolment[li]	Retention[lii]
All	84	94
< 6	46	100
6 to 8	85	97
9 to 11	91	90
12 to 13	88	96
14 to 15	95	100

For learning outcomes, girls in school in DRC are below average at all ages in literacy and numeracy compared to other GEC countries. Among students in school aged 6 to 8, DRC had the lowest literacy score of all countries in the GEC programme. For girls aged 14 to 15, DRC is still below average compared to other GEC countries and the average literacy score for that age group only indicates basic literacy.[liii]

Our quantitative analysis of the GEC household survey at baseline from DRC showed relationships between a lack of lighting, material deprivation, time spent on household duties and girls' enrolment. At school, unsatisfactory teaching was also identified as a barrier to enrolment. A girl's disability and low levels of family education were also factors that affected enrolment. A journey to school over thirty minutes was identified as a factor affecting learning, but not a factor that affected enrolment.

2.4   GEC in the DRC

There is one GEC SCW project in the DRC. IRC implement Vas-Y Fille[liv] across five provinces in the DRC. It provides financial support to parents, improved teacher training and more tuition hours, increased community involvement, and accelerated learning programmes for out-of-school children.

3 Findings

3.1 Overview

As in Samburu East, Kenya and Mberengwa District, Zimbabwe, our evidence indicates that being unable to meet the direct costs of schooling, and pregnancy, are common reasons why adolescent girls drop out of school. In addition, many adolescent girls have no interest in school. While, from parents' point of view, the opportunity costs of adolescent girls' education are lower than in our Kenyan study location, some girls do drop out to help their mothers with farming.

Certain patterns emerged very strongly from the Katanga fieldwork; these suggest that, for girls in poor households in Katanga, the 'race against time' to graduate from secondary school is especially urgent.

3.2 Economic factors: direct costs

The issue of direct costs tended to dominate interviews and discussions during fieldwork in Katanga. Households are expected to finance 73% of education spending in DRC; this includes administration as well as schools themselves.[lv]

3.2.1 Household-level shocks and stresses

In Katanga there was a particular emphasis on two types of household-level shocks that result in girls dropping out of school: the death or illness of parents; and parents' separation.

3.2.2 Death or illness of parents

A high proportion of girls interviewed in Katanga were either single or double orphans, while many others reported that one or both parents were chronically ill. These problems came up much more often in interviews in Katanga than in the other two thematic research study locations. Girls who are still in school when such misfortunes strike are likely to be forced out due to inability to pay fees, unless they have relatives or benefactors who can pay their costs. It is likely that orphanhood and parental illness affects low birth-order girls more than their older sisters, as girls born to young parents are more likely to complete school before their parents' earning capacity is damaged by ill-health.

3.2.3 Parents' separation

Marital breakdown is another important underlying reason for girls having to drop out of school in Katanga, because it usually entails a loss of access to the father's income. This reason for girls dropping out was mentioned frequently in Katanga, whereas it did not appear to be a significant factor in girls dropping out in the other countries included in the thematic research.

3.2.4 Prioritising son's education

There is evidence that, where parents have to choose between sending a son or a daughter to school, in general they are more likely to send the son. Informants in Katanga say that the rationale for this is that girls will get married, whereas boys have to make their own way in life.

3.2.5 Policies and practice regarding non-payment of fees

School authorities in our fieldwork area seem to be flexible regarding non-payment of fees, in that they allow parents and carers to pay in arrears. Even so, the 'revolving door' pattern is common, with several interviewees reporting that they had to miss whole years of schooling, in some cases more than once, due to an inability to pay fees. Such interruptions increase the risk of girls dropping out of school before they can complete secondary school.

3.3 Opportunity costs of girls' schooling

In Katanga, girls may be withdrawn from school to help their mothers to farm and work in the household, especially if their mother is a head of household. Parents are more likely to withdraw girls from school to help with farming and housework than they are to withdraw boys for their labour power. As there are hardly any income-earning opportunities for girls in the area, girls are rarely withdrawn from school in order to take up paid work. In very poor

households in Katanga, some parents decide to marry girls off to reduce the number of mouths to feed, to obtain a bride price, and because a married girl may be able to farm her husband's land and contribute to her parents' household income in that way.

3.4 Girls' and parents' aspirations

The parents we spoke to in Katanga Province hope that their adolescent in-school daughters will be able to find paid work after leaving school, and contribute to their parents' upkeep in old age. In particular, women want to be able to give up farming as they get older, and hope that financial support from their daughters will enable them to do so. At the same time though, several key informants painted a bleak picture of both the local and national job market, where jobs are few and far between and young people's access to posts is decided by contacts and networks rather than by scholastic achievement.

As in the other countries involved in this study, we found in Katanga that in-school girls themselves see school as a route to paid work and financial empowerment. They also take pride in going to school. On the other hand, our indirect evidence indicates that many adolescent girls drop out of school because they have no interest in it, do not believe that finishing school will enable them to find jobs, or actively dislike going to school.

3.5 Personal factors

In Katanga, the risk that girls will become pregnant before they complete secondary school is another important factor in the 'race against time' already alluded to. One mother of a school-age girl told us that parents struggle to pay their daughters' fees so that they can complete school before that happens.

4 Conclusions

Broadly speaking, our findings in Katanga Province were very similar to those in Mberengwa District in Zimbabwe and Samburu East sub-county in Kenya. Direct costs were repeatedly mentioned as an obstacle preventing girls from completing school, and schoolgirl pregnancy also emerged as a key issue.

The number of girls who struggled to stay in school following the illness or death of one or more parents was very striking in Katanga, suggesting a potential synergy between improvements in public health and girls' school retention in the province. The likelihood of one or more parents being affected by chronic illness or dying, means that girls, especially the younger girls in a household, are locked into a 'race against time' to complete their schooling.

Problems of education sector financing, whereby parents in DRC find themselves providing a large proportion of the funding for the entire sector as well as schools themselves, is a fundamental education governance issue affecting girls' retention in school. The perceived lack of job opportunities is another key factor that militates against girls completing school. Without changes on these two fronts, significant gains in the proportion of girls completing secondary school may well remain out of reach.

Annex B – 3: Summary of findings in Mberengwa District, Midlands Province, Zimbabwe

1 Introduction

1.1 Programme context

In 2012, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) launched the £355 million Girls' Education Challenge Fund (GEC) to support up to a million of the world's most marginalised girls to improve their lives through education. Projects across the GEC support girls' education for girls at primary and secondary schools. The GEC includes 37 projects across 18 countries including Zimbabwe.

Coffey, in partnership with RTI International and ORB is the Evaluation Manager (EM) of the GEC. The EM leads the independent evaluation of the GEC as a whole, which includes conducting evaluations of all funding windows at baseline, midline, endline, a process review, and this thematic research. This annexe summarises the thematic research findings from our study locations in Mberengwa District, Midlands Province, Zimbabwe.

1.2 Research context

The GEC thematic research explored the community, school-based, household and personal factors that affect school retention and drop-out for female pupils, in particular those aged between the ages of 12-15. This is an important transition period in girls' lives, as they move from primary education to secondary school and from girlhood to womanhood.

Our findings complement evidence collected during the EM's baseline research for the GEC Step Change Window and Innovation Window. They will be used to strengthen the EM's midline and endline evaluations and the FM's research, as well as helping to fill knowledge gaps more widely.

1.3 Research process

We carried out the fieldwork around two locations in Mberengwa district in the Midlands Province in Zimbabwe.

Our data collection methods were semi-structured interviews and group discussions

Our sampling frame consisted of girls aged 12-15 who had dropped out of school (out of school girls or OSG); girls aged 12-15 who were in school (in school girls or ISG); their parents, guardians and other members of their household; education stakeholders such as Head Teachers and officials, and community members. We spoke to 37 girls and young women and 11 adult informants, including parents, teachers and Village Chiefs.

2 Study context

2.1 Geographical context

We conducted our fieldwork around two locations in Mberengwa district in the Midlands Province in Zimbabwe presented in Figure 1.
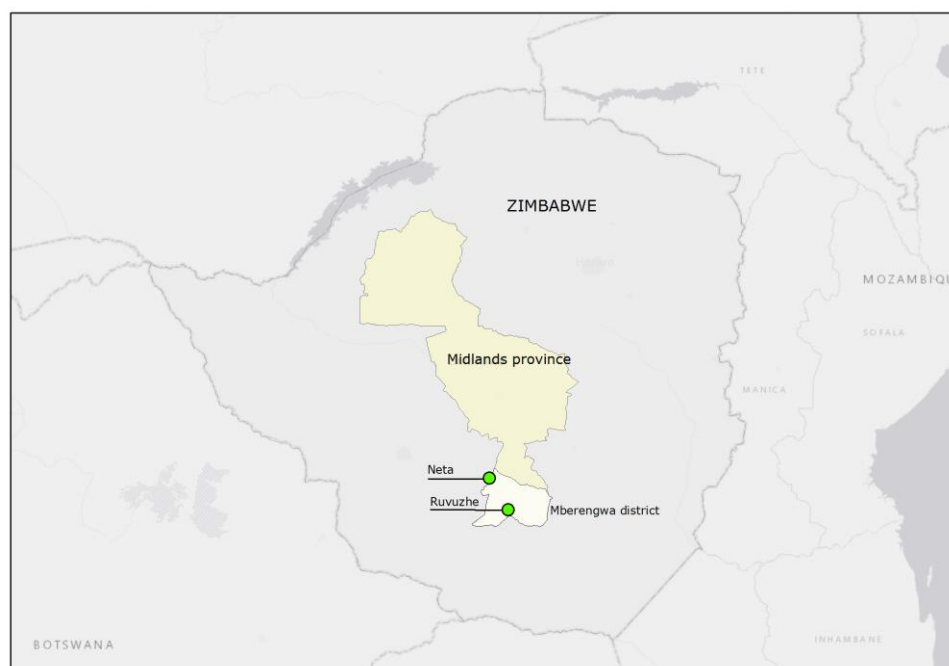
Figure 1: Study locations in Zimbabwe

2.2 Socio-economic background

Mberengwa district is a mining area with different minerals including gold, diamonds and iron ore. Mberegwa district has been affected by severe droughts over the last thirty years. In certain areas, droughts occur at a rate of four in every five years. This significantly affects the livelihoods of the population in the district, as most people are subsistence farmers.

Table 1 present poverty and employment rates for Zimbabwe and Midlands Province.

Table 1: Poverty and employment data (Zimbabwe)

	National	**Midlands Province**
Poverty rate	62.6%[lvi]	68.7%[lvii]
Unemployment rate[lviii]	11.3%	10%
Informal employment (15 – 64 years)	84%	Not available

Our analysis of the GEC household survey at baseline showed direct and indirect relationships between poverty, intermediary factors such as material deprivation, poor housing, subjective wellbeing and household duties; and girls' enrolment and learning.

In Zimbabwe, marriage is legal at 16 for girls and 18 for boys. Zimbabwe has a high HIV prevalence among adults estimated at 16 per cent in Mberengwa.[lix] Orphanhood is common with 16.6 per cent of children up until the age of 17 in Midlands having only one or no parents alive. In Midlands, 26.1 per cent of children lived with neither biological parent. Table 2 shows marriage and other social indicators.

Table 2: Social indicators for Zimbabwe and Midlands Province

	National	Midlands Province
HIV prevalence	15%	16%
Women who are married (aged 15-19)[lx]	21.7%	25%
Have begun childbearing (aged 15-19)	23.5%	23%

2.3   Education background and data

Zimbabwe has one of the highest literacy rates in Africa. Across Zimbabwe, 92 per cent of women aged 15-24 are literate compared to 91.4 per cent in Midlands Province.[lxi] Table 3 summarises the education system in Zimbabwe.

Table 3: Education system in Zimbabwe

Education level	Entrance age	Duration	Notes
Primary Education	6	7 years	Standard 1 to Standard 7
Lower Secondary Education	13	4 years	Form 1 to Form 4 (Ordinary Level)
Upper Secondary Education	17	2 years	Form 5 and Form 6 (Advanced Level)

The Zimbabwean Constitution entitles every citizen to a free state-funded basic education (primary education). The Zimbabwean Constitution was signed into law in 2013. However, the implementation of the laws in the Constitution has not been carried out to the full extent. In some cases students are sometimes able to attend school, but in other cases, they are excluded from school especially when their parents don't pay fees. Students who do not pay school fees do not receive their results and may not be able to sit for exams.

Students' households are required to pay school fees and various levies. Fees are for education-related school costs like course books and school material (not including teachers' salaries) and are between $5 and $30 per year. Levies are for school infrastructure and vary from $5 to $400 per year. The Government of Zimbabwe is responsible for paying teachers' salaries, which is between $200 and $400 a month.[lxii]

Girls in Zimbabwe consistently have higher rates for school attendance, enrolment and completion than boys. In Midlands Province, at both primary and secondary school, more boys than girls are out of school. In Midlands Province, the primary school gender parity index is 1.03 and 1.29 for secondary schools.[lxiii] This suggests that girls are attending primary and secondary school at a much higher rate than boys. The transition rate from primary school to secondary school in Zimbabwe is also higher for girls than boys, at 81 per cent and 77 per cent respectively.[lxiv]

Table 4 presents education data at the national level and in Midlands Province.

Table 4: Education data at the national level and in Midlands Province

	National	Male	Female	Midlands Province	Male	Female
Net primary enrolment	93.9%	93%	94.7%			
Primary school completion rate[lxv9]	98.9%	99.5%	98.4%	105.6%		
Transition rate to secondary school[lxvi10]	78.9%	77.4%	80.5%	87.1%		
Net secondary enrolment[lxvii]	43.8%	43.7%	44%			
Dropout rate (average across primary)[lxviii]	3.1%	3.4%	2.8%	1.9%	2.2%	1.5%
Dropout rate (average across secondary)[lxix]	21.3%	21.7%	20.8%	21.5%	23.6%	19.3%

Based on our quantitative analysis of the GEC household surveys at baseline, we found that in Zimbabwe enrolment rates in project areas are considerably higher than in other GEC project areas, with 98% enrolment among 9-11 year-olds and 91% enrolment among 14-15 year-olds. Retention drops substantially between 9 to 11 year olds and 12 to 13 years, which could mark the transition years from primary to secondary school.

Table 5: GEC household survey outcome analysis for Zimbabwe[lxx]

EM Data – Zimbabwe	Enrolment[lxxi]	Retention[lxxii]
All	90	92
< 6	69	94
6 to 8	97	98
9 to 11	98	99
12 to 13	86	87
14 to 15	91	92
16 to 19	77	74

For learning outcomes, while girls in school in Zimbabwe do not reach international reading benchmarks for literacy, they still read more fluently than girls in other SCW project areas. In Zimbabwe, girls aged 9-11 read on average 47 words per minute, which means that they can demonstrate a basic level of literacy (compared with a SCW average of only 28 words per minute). At secondary school age, girls in Zimbabwean project areas achieve a reading score of 83 words per minute, compared with only 55 words per minute as the average across the SCW.[lxxiii] In some Zimbabwean project areas girls had higher literacy rates than boys at both primary and secondary age, while in others there were only very small gender gaps.

Our quantitative analysis of the GEC household survey at baseline in Zimbabwe showed direct and indirect relationships between poverty, intermediary factors such as material deprivation, poor housing, subjective wellbeing and household duties; and girls' enrolment and learning. Costs associated with schooling and a families' disengagement with education were also identified as being prevalent barriers to enrolment.

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[9] The primary completion rate is the ratio of the total number of students, regardless of age, entering the last grade of primary school for the first time to the number of children of the primary graduation age at the beginning of the current school year. The primary completion rate can have values above 100 per cent, which can be a symptom of late entry, grade repetition or of an enrolment push at some point in the past, perhaps as a consequence of a school enrolment campaign.

[10] Transition rate is the percentage of children who were in the last grade of primary school during the previous school year and who were attending the first grade of secondary school in the current school year (excludes repeaters in the final grade of primary school).

2.4   GEC Projects in Zimbabwe

There are two SCW GEC projects being implemented in Zimbabwe: World Vision's Improving Girls' Access through Transforming Education (IGATE) Programme; and Camfed's "A New 'Equilibrium' for Girls". The thematic research was carried out in Mberengwa district around schools where IGATE operates. IGATE[lxxiv] seeks to enhance household economic capacity to support girls in school, transform attitudes towards girls' education and strengthening family and community support systems for girls to stay in school. It also aims to increase girls' confidence, self-esteem and capacity to choose to stay in school, and to analyse issues impacting their retention and performance in school, empowering them to address these and perform better.

3 Findings

3.1 Overview

In broad terms, the main causes of adolescent girls dropping out of school in Mberengwa District are the same as in the other two study countries. Many parents and carers are unable to meet the costs of girls' schooling, and this often results in frequent disruptions to girls' schooling. On the other hand, the opportunity costs of girls' schooling seem to be low in Mberengwa District, due to the lack of paid work opportunities in the area. As in the other study locations, pregnancy is an important factor in girls dropping out of school. Lastly, we heard considerable indirect evidence of girls and their parents being uninterested in school, for various reasons. This last factor, lack of interest, came across more strongly in Mberengwa District than in our study locations in Kenya and DRC.

3.2 Economic Factors: Direct Costs

Many parents in our study location struggle to pay school fees. This is due to two main reasons: economic recession; and the impact of drought.

Fathers losing access to casual labour came up often as the reason for the non-payment of girls' school fees. Many men have migrated from Mberengwa to other parts of the country, or to South Africa, to find work. Based on our interviews, male migration has both benefits and disadvantages in terms of girls' schooling costs. It means fathers have access to cash, but they lose touch with the household, sometimes temporarily and in other cases permanently. Access to the South African job market has enabled some families to maintain girls in school with the help of remittances from relatives across the border.

In addition, Mberengwa District is one of the most drought-prone areas in the country, and recent reduced harvests due to drought has meant that some parents have been unable to pay their children's school fees and other costs.[lxxv] Rainfall for the 2015-2016 farming season are projected to be lower than normal, and the President of Zimbabwe, Mr Robert Mugabe, has declared a national state of disaster; with 26 per cent of the population being designed 'food-insecure'.[lxxvi] It is highly likely that, faced with household food insecurity, parents in poor households will withdraw children from school as a coping strategy.

There is some evidence that, in poor households where parents cannot afford to send all their children to school, they are more likely to pay sons' schooling costs than they will their daughters' costs. During interviews and discussions, parents justified this on the grounds that boys have to make their way in the world, while girls can always get married. Therefore, it is possible that the projected food insecurity in Zimbabwe in 2016 may well affect girls' retention in school more than boys. However, not all parents automatically favour sons when it comes to education. We also heard of parents selecting which children to send to school purely on the basis of their school performance. These parents see children who do well in school as better investments than those who do not, regardless of their sex.

3.2.1   Effects of policies, official practices and programming

Basic Education Access Module

The Basic Education Access Module (BEAM), a government scheme to pay the direct education costs of children from low-income households, appears to have ceased functioning in our study location. This has led to some children, including girls, dropping out of school. It is not known whether this is a local problem, or whether BEAM is no longer functioning across Zimbabwe as a whole. As financial support is critical for the retention of girls from poor households, the situation needs to be investigated further.

Policies and practice regarding non-payment of fees

Official government policy in Zimbabwe states that no child should be excluded from school due to the non-payment of fees. At the same time, however, the running of schools is dependent on the payment of fees and levies, so schools face a dilemma. Parents' struggles to pay fees, and the way school authorities deal with non-payment, have given rise to a 'revolving door' pattern of schooling. In other words, girls' school attendance is punctuated by gaps of days, weeks, months or years as they are repeatedly excluded for non-payment. Some of the girls we spoke to had experienced such disrupted attendance for several years. Repeated disruptions to attendance tend to lead to permanent drop-out, because they are associated with poor school performance, girls becoming demoralised, and in many cases, girls becoming pregnant or deciding to give up their educational aspirations and get married.

In the study location, school authorities have until recently allowed students to attend school even if fees have not been paid, but barring them from taking end-of-year exams, or withholding their examination results. The effect has been to demoralise students, making it more likely that they will eventually give up and drop out. Also, if parents do not know how their children are doing through examination results, they are less likely to be willing to invest in their education. Withholding reports is especially serious at the end of primary school, as secondary schools require these reports from new students.

At least one school in our study location has recently adopted a stricter approach to the non-payment of fees. This may have an even more detrimental effect on retention than the practices described above. While the school in question used to allow parents a grace period for paying fees, the new policy on non-payment is to 'arrest' parents or carers and take them to the Village Chief to be warned. Some parents have decided to pre-empt this possibility by withdrawing their children from school altogether. Children, including girls, who used to attend school at least intermittently are now in effect excluded.

3.3 Girls' and parents' aspirations

As in other study locations, ISGs and their parents hope that school will be a step on the path to formal sector jobs. However, local work opportunities for girls and young women are very restricted; girls from poor households often become live-in housemaids for little more than board and lodging. Also, the national job market is very limited, because of the very poor state of Zimbabwe's economy. There are only 700,000 people currently employed in the country's formal sector, in a population of almost 14 million.[lxxvii] We have indirect evidence that many girls in Mberengwa are not in school because they or their parents do not see any point in it, given the lack of job opportunities.

3.4 Personal Factors

Death of parents

Orphanhood is common in Midlands Province; 16.6 per cent of children aged 0 – 17 years have one or both parents deceased and 26.1 per cent of children lived with adults who are not their biological parents. The loss of a parent, in particular a father in paid work, is usually detrimental to girls' retention in school; although we heard of step-parents and other carers supporting girls through school, others were unwilling or unable to do so.

Parents' divorce

The divorce or separation of parents, often involving the father leaving to set up a household with another woman, came up frequently as a trigger for girls dropping out, although less so than in Katanga Province in DRC.

Elopement

In our study location in Mberengwa, there appears to be a cultural pattern of adolescent girls eloping to cohabit with boyfriends. If they are in school, this is accompanied by them dropping out. Some informants attributed elopements to girls wishing to escape from the poverty of their parental households. Girls who marry, whether following elopement or the traditionally-sanctioned process of negotiations between households, often move in with the husbands' parents, who then require their labour. These girls' chances of returning to school are miniscule.

Prostitution as a means of livelihood

Prostitution as a factor in girls dropping out of school came up frequently during interviews in Mberengwa. Informants sometimes linked prostitution to the presence of illegal gold-panners working in the area, while others focussed on older men in the community itself. It seems that the possibility of earning cash through prostitution may be a factor in some girls' decision to drop out of school, especially in the case of girls from very poor households.

3.5 School-based factors

Two school-based issues emerged strongly from our fieldwork: teachers' use of corporal punishment and poor performance in examinations.

Corporal punishment

Our evidence indicates that teachers in at least one school in the study location commonly use corporal punishment to discipline students.[lxxviii] The indications are that boys are more likely to be physically punished than girls. This is consistent with studies in several countries which have found that corporal punishment is practised more often and more harshly on boys rather than girls.[lxxix][lxxx] In Mberengwa, we heard that corporal punishment has directly led to some boys dropping out. We heard of no such cases for girls, but some female informants did speak of being beaten by teachers. For instance, one girl said she had been beaten for being absent from school due to illness.

Poor examination performance

In one of the secondary schools we visited, ISGs reported very poor end-of-year examination results. Several girls told us that they had passed in only two or three subjects out of eight papers taken. Most of the girls themselves appeared to be satisfied with these outcomes, which suggest girls have very low expectations of their school. In a primary school we visited, one teacher volunteered that the Grade 7 examination results had been very poor. She said that while parents blamed the teachers for their children's poor examination results, she herself attributed them to students' erratic attendance.

If girls cannot pass national school examinations and go on to higher education or the formal job market, then in their own eyes and their parents' eyes, their schooling will have been wasted.

4 Conclusions

Both the state of the national economy and the current food insecurity arising from drought are likely to have significant effects on girls' retention in school in Mberengwa District in years to come, as household livelihoods fail and parents are unable to pay their daughters' school fees. It is possible that more in-school girls in our study location will become involved in prostitution, as a way of coping with severe hardship in their parental households.

Our evidence indicates that girls who are currently in school, as well as those who have had to drop out but wish to return, have very positive attitudes to education, and try their utmost to complete secondary level despite serious obstacles. We also have evidence of poor parents and guardians making huge efforts to keep girls in school.

Annex C: Thematic Evaluation Research Specification

Aim

Our aim is to develop an in-depth understanding of the multiple reasons why girls drop out of school. This should provide greater insights (than possible through the Evaluation Manager's baseline studies) into how diverse factors and processes combine to constrain the capacity of girls to make decisions about their enrolment in school. These insights will help us and other stakeholders to identify situations where we might expect specific types of interventions to work or not work with regards to keeping girls in school, as well as help inform the design of research instruments to measure these effects in the midline and endline evaluations.

Objectives

4. To develop a greater depth of evidence around the role of different contextual, community, school-based, household and personal factors in 'pushing out' girls out of school; and

5. To place 'the girl' at the centre of the research design to 'build out' from a definite decision at a specific point in time an understanding of how this decision is affected under different types of conditions.

Scope and focus

- **Scope: the research will be *evaluative* in nature** – by this we mean the thematic research should be focused on supporting our understanding of the key evaluation questions for the GEC Programme. This requires a better, more in-depth understanding of the barriers that affect girls and the reasons why they apply to some girls in some situations and not others, in order to learn how to measure impacts more effectively. Its scope and focus will therefore be informed and defined by the analysis and findings arising from the EM baseline research of the Step Change Window and Innovation Window.

- **Focus: the research will focus on girls who have *dropped out* of school relatively recently** – the focus of the thematic research will be on factors that influence the decisions of families, girls and boys, not to keep girls in school. This will involve understanding how factors "add-up" or accumulate to ultimately contribute to a specific decision to drop out of school – put in another way, experiencing a **tipping point**[11] effect. A key question will be whether this tipping point is an arbitrary factor or whether it is consistent and predictable given the effects of other factors over time that lead up to this decision.

- The starting point of the thematic research is girls who have recently dropped out of school. This may extend to: girls who dropped out a longer time ago; girls who dropped out and re-enrolled; girls who never enrolled; and girls who are at risk of dropping out of school. This will be determined iteratively in the course of conducting the fieldwork always maintaining a sharp focus on current factors affecting decisions to stay in school or drop out.

- It is important that the research captures the girls' own views of their learning and achievement, the nature of their educational experience and the value they perceive in achieving a formal education – including their views of its relevance, practical issues affecting participation and the extent to which they have the capacity to inform decisions about their own education.

- To help explain the concept of a tipping point effect we will explore the concept of **'strategies'** that were identified through the qualitative research for the baseline studies of the IW and SCW. This will involve a limited amount of research with girls and families who experience very similar conditions and pressures to those girls who have dropped out, but have been able to make a different decision to stay in school. The contrast in behaviours and decisions observed around those girls who have dropped out of school and those that have stayed in school will enable us to better understand how and why some girls are able to

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[11] In other words, the point at which a series of small changes or incidents becomes significant enough to cause a larger, more important change.

cope with the barriers that they face to their education while others are either not able to do this or adopt alternative intended life strategies that don't involve going to schools; and alternative **'pathways'** that are not driven through a capacity to make choices but rather by factors beyond the control of girls and households.

- **Research focus on girls aged 12-15** – the research will focus on adolescent girls who drop out of school between the ages of 12-15. By focusing on this age group the research will be able to gather data about: the factors that affect girls in both primary and secondary schools; their experiences as they transition between schools; and how barriers affecting their decision to stay in school and the coping strategies they employ change as they make this transition. Furthermore, our baseline research suggests that girls of secondary school age are particularly marginalised in the sense that they are often enrolled below their expected grade level and are unable to demonstrate basic reading and mathematics skills, which justifies focusing on this age group in particular.

- **Understanding tipping point issues under different conditions:** the research is focused on the tipping point issues that lead to a girl and /or her family deciding that she should drop out of school. The GEC baseline research has highlighted a need to understand in greater depth particular barriers to the education of marginalised girls. The approach to the thematic research should test the extent to which these barriers or conditions influence the cumulative decision-making process that leads to girl leaving school. The key conditions that should be considered through the research relate to:

  - *Poverty* – different dimensions and consequences of subjective poverty, perceptions of poverty and material deprivation that affect girls' ability to remain in school and learn;

  - *Pregnancy and early marriage* – as a barrier that either causes girls to drop out of school or as a reason for girls dropping out of school on purpose to have children and get married;

  - *Disability* – as a dominant barrier in itself to enrolment, retention and learning, compared with other barriers that may affect disabled girls;'

  - *Violence* – defined as violence (sexual, physical and psychological abuse) in the home, on the way to and from school, and in school that affects girls' enrolment, retention and learning;

  - *Pedagogy* – teaching practices and the effects of the different ways in which boys and girls in class are taught and as such the effects this has on marginalised girls; and

  - *School-based factors* – in-school factors (apart from pedagogy) that and are associated with the quality of education that is provided such as the lack of school facilities, teachers, books, equipment or large classroom sizes, teacher qualifications etc.

- The **research approach and sampling methodology** (below) should consider identifying GEC project sites that from the baseline research demonstrate a strong prevalence of one or more of the above factors. The tipping point approach enables an assessment of the extent to which these conditions affect girls' decision to leave school after accounting for all other factors that may also affect that decision.

- It is important that the analysis of contextual factors is focused on how these factors specifically act as barriers to achieving educational outcomes (i.e. enrolment and retention) at the household, school and community level. This is necessary to ensure the analysis provides sufficiently granular findings to explain the intersections between barriers, context and education.

Research approach

Outline of approach as follows:

1. The girls and families that form the focus of this research should be **selected from project target communities at the sampling point level**[12] **that are characterised by 'marginalisation'** in the widest sense and as far as possible reflect the **types of conditions** listed above.

2. The research approach should be **driven by the selection of girls aged 12-15 and their households who have <u>recently</u> dropped out of school** from GEC project target communities to allow data to be

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[12] Potential to use indicators from EM household survey that identifies different dimensions of marginalisation and poverty.

collected that provides insights into the nature of the tipping point factors that affect the decision to stay or leave school.

3. We will develop a sampling methodology and sampling framework that:

   - **Is transparent** – to enable strong external validity of the analysis, findings and conclusions that are drawn;

   - **Is representative** – it is assumed that the research methodology will largely involve qualitative in-depth interviews. The design of the sampling framework should, as far as possible, be designed to produce findings that are representative of the target population to enable strong conclusions to be inferred from the analysis of the causes of girls leaving school; and

   - **Provides an appropriate balance** between the number of interviews that are possible given the time and resource constraints and the depth of the research undertaken with each research participant.

4. Given the constraints on resources, the selection of the sample needs to **build on existing information** we already have from our baseline data, analysis and reports.

5. We will carry out a limited amount of analysis of the existing baseline data to check for relevant plausible patterns of association (especially interactions between factors) at the country level.

6. Select project communities / countries (e.g. 2 – 3 countries, visiting 2- 3 communities in each country) as candidates for the research. The selection of project sites and countries for the thematic research should be informed by the baseline evidence, and any available national and regional analysis of the prevalence of key barriers of interest for the thematic research (listed above).

7. The research should build on the qualitative baseline data that the EM collected so that the new data and findings from the thematic research can be compared and contrasted with our existing data and analysis. This means that the selection of project communities should be **limited to those projects within the Step Change Window and more specifically those communities where we undertook in-depth interviews.**

8. Given the limited size of the sample it will be difficult to efficiently find girls who have dropped out of school and experience the type of conditions that we want to research through random selection of project sites. By developing the sampling framework, first from the quantitative baseline data and secondly, from our qualitative baseline data, we will have greater certainty that we will find the contrasts between girls and families that we want to explore.

9. The EM's Step Change Window qualitative research involved approximately 50 in-depth-interviews (IDIs) per project – approximately 30 IDIs with caregivers in the households; 10 IDIs with community leaders; and 10 IDIs with staff at the schools that the girls from the households attended. The research was typically conducted across approximately 10 project sampling points /sites, which equates to about 3 IDIs with households per sampling site /village /community. These sites were randomly selected. To ensure that this research is as focused and efficient as possible we will **use the locations of the household IDIs as a starting point** for sample selection.

10. The **sampling criteria** for selecting the most appropriate project sampling points will be driven by those sampling points in which the EM has collected qualitative data. The EM household survey data for those sampling points will be used to identify girls who have recently dropped out of school to identify a relevant population from which to select girls for participation in the research. Due to resource constraints, this research will be limited to 2-3 countries. Sampling criteria for final selection of the sampling points are still to be determined, but it is envisaged that the sample will be stratified as far as possible by the six barriers listed previously. In selecting the sample frame, consideration should be given to the benefits of selecting a mixture of communities that are in **rural as as well as urban locations, in an appropriate proportion to the overall mix of urban and rural activities across the GEC as a whole**. Within the stratified sampling framework, projects and project sites will be selected randomly to ensure a reasonable level of representativeness across the sample.

11. Once the households have been selected the research teams will need to **adopt a snowballing approach to 'build out' to include other potential research participants** on the basis of the data collected from the initially targeted households. This will ensure that the research team is able to identify and build a reasonably 'representative' sample of research participants as informed by data and information that is

12. Once the research communities /countries have been selected, we will conduct a rapid focused appraisal of available literature to inform the development of the research plan and design of the fieldwork instruments.

13. Conduct primary qualitative research including in-depth interviews, short-term observations and document reviews with households, girls, teachers and community members in the selected project sites. The research team conducting the fieldwork will be composed of:

    • two international qualitative researchers; and

    • national translators who have research experience and is able to accurately and reliably translate and support the qualitative research process in the field.

14. Produce theme-based case studies within a single thematic research report.

15. **Outline of timescales:**

    • The final GEC Thematic Research Report will be delivered to DFID at the end of September 2015.

    • Sufficient time should be allowed for internal quality assurance and externally by DFID – approximately 6 weeks.

    • The first draft of the report should be completed by the end of July 2015.

    • The fieldwork should take no longer than 2-3 months to complete.

    • It is envisaged that this research will start at the start of March 2015.

Research methodology

A combination of qualitative research methods will be used including interviews, observation, focus group discussions and document review will be undertaken.

In-depth interviews with different stakeholder groups (out of school girls, in-school girls, parents/mothers, teachers, girls/boys, community leaders) to explore the following indicative topic areas:

• How do members of these groups view the value of schooling for girls and the instances/rate of drop out (boys and girls – do they view these differently).

• Are girls able to express their views? Do they feel their views are taken seriously?

• What were the reasons for dropping out, expectations of schooling and 'education'?

• Were alternative routes to education other than schooling considered or adopted?

• Gendered expectations and gendered roles for girls?

• What are the issues girls have confronted in school before drop out (safety, distance, different cultural context?)

• Does schooling make a difference to girl's choices, especially in relation to marriage?

Observations on the nature of:

• Interactions between parents and girls/boys within the household and the wider community.

• Interactions between teachers and girls/boys in the classroom.

• The classroom as a space for learning.

Review of documentary evidence:

• Teaching and learning materials - for gendered nature of images, texts, roles, relevance and quality.

• Third party data – school statistics and academic records.

• School curriculum and policy documents.

Sampling Approach

Our sampling approach is presented in Annex A.

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