

Evaluation Report Title: *Girls Education Challenge (GEC)*

Response to Evaluation Report (overarching narrative)

The first phase of the Girls' Education Challenge (GEC1) ran from 2012 to 2017. DFID has been very satisfied with the quality of the evaluation carried out under this programme. GEC1 had a complex evaluation set-up. Each individual project conducted their own impact evaluation and an independent Evaluation Manager (EM) conducted meta-analysis on the project evaluations. In addition the EM carried out primary research (for projects funded under the Step Change Window (SCW)) to establish the impact of the activities in that funding window on the educational outcomes of girls in the communities where GEC projects operate.

This management response covers the work of the EM. Given the complexity of the approach, the often variable quality and comparability of the data and evidence that the EM has had to work with, the insights drawn from this portfolio-level evaluation have been impressive. Whilst the project-level evaluations have provided accountability by rigorously measuring outcomes, the overall programme evaluation has measured the impact of the programme as a whole. The conclusions are fair and valid. They conclude that there has been progress on marginalised girls' literacy and numeracy, but that there remains a learning crisis whereby marginalised girls having low learning levels, are often over-age for their school grade, and still face extremely high barriers to education (not least poverty). The EM's recommendations are useful and, as can be seen below, have largely been accepted and adopted for the second phase of GEC (GEC2). This is, in part, due to the close collaborative working relationship between the EM, DFID and the GEC Fund Manager. The EM has, from early on, engaged both DFID and the FM in their analysis and findings, helping to shape the future direction of the programme.

There have been eight evaluation reports produced by the EM (listed below, with their SEQAS/EQUALS ratings). This document responds to the recommendations from the three headline reports. There is, inevitably, a lot of overlap between the recommendations.

- Step Change Window (SCW)
 - Baseline – Amber (Oct 2014)
 - Midline – Amber (Dec 2016)
 - Endline – Excellent (Nov 2017)
- Innovation Window (IW)
 - Baseline – Amber (Oct 2014)
 - Midline – Amber-Red (Jan 2017)
 - Endline – Good (Dec 2017)
- Strategic Partnerships Window (SPW)
 - Baseline – Amber (Dec 2015)
 - Endline – Good (Aug 2017)

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Evaluation Report Title: *Girls Education Challenge (GEC) – Step Change Window*

Recommendations	Accepted or Rejected	If “Accepted”, Action plan for Implementation or if “Rejected”, Reason for Rejection
<p>1.1 A more intensive focus and effort is needed to improve the magnitude of projects’ effects on girls’ learning levels. The SCW has reached and benefited a substantial number of marginalised girls. However, girls’ learning levels are still too low for their respective grades, hindering their effective progress through their education. SCW projects need to increase the magnitude of their effect on the learning levels of the cohort of girls supported in the next phase of the GEC. This recommendation builds on that made at midline, which highlighted the need for projects to focus on interventions that have proven to (or are most likely to) have the greatest impact on girls’ learning levels within the required timescales.</p>	Accepted	<p>The selection process for projects for the GEC Transition Window (GEC-T) in GEC2 resulted in some projects being dropped. These were generally those which had either (i) not demonstrated progress on learning outcomes in GEC1, or (ii) not produced a strong enough theory of change focussing on learning for GEC2. The contracting process for GEC-T included 93 contractual “strengthening measures” for projects to implement. Many of these were specifically aimed at improving theories of change, project capacity, and the quality of education interventions (e.g. around teaching).</p> <p>Changes already put in place for GEC2 will help projects retain focus on interventions having the greatest impact on learning outcomes. One such change is the introduction of intermediate outcomes (IOs) in projects’ (and the programme) logframes. These better explain the link between outputs and outcomes. These will be first measured at GEC2 baseline and then progress tracked at subsequent evaluation points. The use of IOs will be reviewed following baseline (mid-2018).</p>
<p>1.2 Projects need to develop realistic sustainability strategies that are based on a diagnosis of the type of barriers to girls’ learning that can be sustainably resolved within project timescales, compared to large (often underlying) structural or systemic causes (e.g. livelihoods /poverty, school infrastructure, supply of teachers) that require much larger and longer-term investments at a systems level. Many projects’ sustainability strategies were overly reliant on communities, schools or government ministries to continue activities once projects had come to an end. In part, this was because sustainability strategies were developed too late in projects’ lifecycles, with the underlying barrier to sustainability being a pervasive lack of resources within the target communities,</p>	Accepted	<p>DFID accept that, whilst GEC1 sustainability targets (on (i) matched funding and (ii) the existence of strategies) have been achieved, sustainability has been a weakness in GEC1. The monitoring and evaluation of sustainability has been strengthened for GEC2.</p> <p>In their monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) frameworks GEC-T projects have set out sustainability plans including clear targets and milestones. These recognise preparatory work with local communities, education systems and governments. GEC2 has introduced a conceptual framework for sustainability to monitor progress across three domains: School, Community and Systems. A sustainability scorecard will be used for project evaluations, and allow aggregation up at the portfolio level.</p>

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	schools and education systems. Sustainability strategies should explicitly recognise the trade-offs between addressing symptomatic effects to achieve short-term learning gains, versus what might be considered the longer-term objective of addressing structural causes of poor education outcomes for marginalised girls to achieve sustainable changes in learning.		The effectiveness of this new approach will be reviewed and adapted (if necessary) following GEC 2 baselines in mid-2018.
1.3	Projects need to develop interventions specifically designed to improve girls' numeracy. Overall, the SCW has had less of an impact on numeracy than literacy. The endline findings suggest that girls improve less in numeracy than in literacy when they are in school, and that in some contexts, teachers find it more challenging to teach numeracy than literacy. This implies that improving numeracy requires a more intensive effort and different types of intervention compared to literacy. Projects should design interventions that are based on a clear diagnosis of why targeted girls struggle to improve their numeracy compared to literacy, including analysis of the challenges schools and teachers face in being able to effectively teach numeracy.	Partially accepted	<p>This is partially accepted as this pattern (numeracy progress less than literacy progress) is not the case for all projects across the board.</p> <p>Nonetheless, as part of GEC2, the GEC Fund Manager has undertaken a specific review of numeracy, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing proposals for the GEC-T window • Lessons learned newsletter focussed on mathematics (March 2017); • Engaging specific projects to shape their numeracy approaches • Reviewing concept notes for the Leave No Girl Behind (LNGB) funding window <p>This approach will be reviewed again following analysis of learning data collected at GEC2 baseline, in 2018.</p>
1.4	Attendance should be monitored as an intermediate indicator of improvements in learning. Attendance proved very difficult to track and measure across the SCW. While household-based measures are not precise enough to capture small changes in attendance levels, the validity of school-based measures is often limited by the low reliability of school registers and records. Evaluation surveys may therefore not be the most appropriate tool to capture attendance data. Measuring attendance requires adapted strategies and tools, as well as the involvement of staff in the field to conduct regular follow-ups and spot checks throughout the course of the programme. Attendance indicators should therefore form part of projects' monitoring strategies as well as being included as intermediate outcomes that support their evaluation strategies.	Accepted	<p>Fully agree with this recommendation. For GEC2 attendance has become a compulsory intermediate outcome – i.e. a critical step on the path to the outcomes of learning, and transition. It will not be evaluated in comparison to changes in a control group – which was fraught with difficulty in GEC phase 1.</p> <p>The new approach to measuring attendance will be reviewed again following data collected at GEC phase 2 baseline, in 2018.</p>

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1.5	<p>Projects need to demonstrate a better understanding of how to support different needs of out-of-school girls. Out-of-school girls were often treated as a homogeneous group, under the assumption that all girls who are out-of-school have similar educational needs and require similar types of intervention. However, the endline evaluation findings suggest that out-of-school girls are a heterogeneous population - formed, on the one hand, of girls who have mostly been excluded from the schooling system (either because they dropped out early or because they never attended school), and on the other hand, of older girls who dropped out after completing a cycle of primary education.</p> <p>Projects need to explicitly recognise the varying needs of out-of-school girls rather than assuming they are a homogeneous subgroup. The former need to access learning environments, sometimes for the first time, where they can learn effectively, whereas the latter need to be re-engaged by schools and education systems and supported to overcome barriers that prevent them from staying in school and transitioning through education and schooling phases.</p>	Partially accepted	<p>Girls who are out of school are the focus of the new LNGB window. Bids for this funding have had to demonstrate that they have a strong understanding of target beneficiaries, their situations, their education background and their barriers to education.</p> <p>GEC-T evaluations are required to report on subgroups. These include, inter alia, age, disability status, geographic region, household status, sex. Projects evaluate and report on the different impacts on different subgroups of girls. This will be done for GEC-T baselines.</p> <p>For GEC-T evaluations the collection of quantitative evaluation data (learning, transition) on boys has been encouraged where possible and cost-effective.</p> <p>This recommendation is partly accepted because the requirement to measure transition in GEC-T evaluation (i.e. not only sampling in-school) means that linking learning and household survey data has not been made compulsory. A standard household template has been developed for GEC-T project evaluations. In fact, many GEC-T project MEL frameworks do set out plans for linking learning and survey data.</p> <p>As mentioned in recommendation 1.7, qualitative data will be strengthened in GEC2, and we will investigate the feasibility and usefulness of gathering all transcripts following baseline.</p>
1.6	<p>Projects need to better evidence the distribution of their effects on different groups of girls. More systematic subgroup analysis is required to understand the effects that projects' activities have on different groups of girls affected by different types of barriers. Projects need to be able to identify and track the extent to which specific subgroups are marginalised from achieving education outcomes. This includes gender comparisons of girls and boys. At the design stage, projects should collect evidence of which socio-economic subgroups are</p>	Partially accepted	See recommendation 1.5 above

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	<p>the most disadvantaged in their operating context, and in particular, whether girls are significantly disadvantaged compared to boys. Once subgroups have been defined, their outcomes should be tracked throughout the course of the programme (which includes collecting samples of sufficient sizes to be representative). For this, household data (which usually includes personal, social and economic subgroup characteristics) need to be systematically linked with learning outcome data. Projects' achievements should then be measured as the impact achieved by projects not only on their overall target population but on these different subgroups.</p>		
<p>1.7</p>	<p>Projects need to better evidence how changes in a particular barrier will translate into better learning outcomes. This is particularly important for barriers that are not directly related to learning, such as economic and poverty barriers. The link between barriers and learning outcomes and the intermediate steps between them need to be explicitly measured to ensure that theory of change continues to hold true. Projects also need to monitor changes in external conditions, which can cause changes in barriers. This is particularly true for economic conditions whose deterioration can impact across a range of factors both on the supply and demand-side, eventually threatening the validity of the whole theory of change.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>The introduction of intermediate outcomes (see recommendation 1.1) and targets and their measurement at evaluation points in GEC2 will make more explicit the link between outputs and outcomes. After this data is collected at baseline (2018) projects and DFID will examine where targets are being missed, and be able to test the theories of change.</p> <p>Changes to the monitoring process already introduced for GEC2 will help to better monitor and respond to external factors. The introduction of six-monthly Review and Adaptation Meetings (RAMs) between the GEC Fund Manager and projects are an opportunity to discuss progress against workplans and challenges to implementation. They are a chance to adjust workplans and budgets in response.</p> <p>The first set of RAMs took place in late 2017 and the process reviewed and improved for the second set (first half of 2018).</p> <p>Finally, the importance of using mixed-method has been emphasised for projects' evaluations for the GEC2. Improved qualitative data will be used to enhance, and explain quantitative findings. Again, this will be reviewed post-baseline (mid-2018).</p>

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1.8	<p>Projects need to systematically monitor changes in the quality of teaching to ensure that activities aimed at improving teaching quality are on the right track, and to inform corrections if this is not the case. Projects have largely been unable to measure changes in the quality of teaching and generally assumed that activities to improve teaching and pedagogy (such as teacher training) had a positive effect on learning, without testing this assumption. The evidence suggests that this assumption did not always hold true. More generally, it is crucial that projects are able to track and monitor the effectiveness of different types of activities, not only to inform course correction during implementation, but also to evidence what activities worked well or not, with a view to identifying which ones should be sustained (or not) after the end of the programme. Again, this is particularly important for activities where the theory of change and causal link to improved learning is unclear, as with activities designed to improve girls' confidence and self-esteem.</p>	Accepted	<p>The Review and Adaptation Meetings and Intermediate Outcomes (see recommendations 1.1 and 1.7) will both have a strong focus on teaching quality. Over 20% of intermediate outcomes are on teacher quality.</p> <p>For GEC2 the GEC Fund Manager is developing an assessment tool to be used to monitor the quality of teaching across projects. This will allow for cross-portfolio aggregation and comparison.</p>
1.9	<p>It is crucial that projects conduct context analysis as an integral part of their design and M&E process. Contextual factors have had a significant effect on projects' success, and projects need to take into account the effects of wider structural constraints that can threaten the validity of their theory of change and undermine their achievements. This includes carrying out a political economy diagnosis of the education system to ensure that the theory of change does not overestimate the system's capacity to supply basic educational needs (such as teachers; learning materials; schools; classroom infrastructure; safe water; food; electricity). Projects will then be in a better position to anticipate systemic constraints that can hinder the effectiveness of their interventions, such as the lack of running water when building toilet facilities.</p>	Accepted	<p>This is a requirement for organisations bidding for funds under the LNGB procurement process. In particular, the in-depth engagement of DFID country offices through the selection process has ensured that project activities are situated within the education sector in-country and fit with other DFID/donor work.</p> <p>For projects in GEC-T their lessons from the first phase were important for influencing their design for GEC2.</p>
1.10	<p>Projects need to improve their capacity to demonstrate and report <i>how</i> and <i>why</i> their interventions have worked well or</p>	Partially accepted	<p>For work on subgroups, the use of household surveys, links to learning data, and qualitative data, see recommendation 1.5. This is partially</p>

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<p>less well, with what effects on learning, for whom and under what different type of conditions. As recommended previously, a greater focus on identifying and tracking the characteristics of different subgroups will help projects do this. Similarly, identifying and evidencing the intermediate steps between outputs and outcomes as an integral part of their M&E frameworks will also help explain how and to what extent some interventions are having a greater effect on learning than others. Projects should also systematically report on the scale of activities delivered, and the process through which they were delivered, to enable better evaluation of the effectiveness of their interventions. The Terms of Reference for projects' external evaluators should be more prescriptive, including requirements to: use a standard household survey template; link household survey data with learning outcome data; and collect specific disaggregated data about key subgroups. Furthermore, the FM could consider requiring projects to provide qualitative data, for example in the form of redacted transcripts (or notes) of interviews and focus group discussions. The intention is to improve the external validity of the quantitative and qualitative analysis and findings produced by external evaluators, and enhance the quality of learning from significant investments in these evaluations.</p>		<p>accepted for the same reason as 1.5 – linking data has not been made compulsory, but encouraged.</p> <p>For the introduction of intermediate outcomes, see recommendation 1.1.</p>
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Evaluation Report Title: <i>Girls Education Challenge (GEC) – Innovation Window</i>
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	Recommendations	Accepted or Rejected	If “Accepted”, Action plan for Implementation or if “Rejected”, Reason for Rejection
2.1	<p>Projects need to focus more on those barriers that are most critical in preventing girls from learning. Projects have relatively short timeframes to deliver improvements in girls’ learning. In the next phase of the GEC, projects need to increase the magnitude of girls’ learning gains by clearly identifying the most important barriers to girls’ <i>literacy and numeracy</i>. Projects also need to address school-based barriers and the quality of teaching when implementing interventions that can only have an indirect effect on learning, for example, activities intended to improve enrolment and attendance. This recommendation builds on that made at midline, which highlighted the need for projects to focus on interventions that can have the greatest impact on girls’ learning levels within the given timescales.</p>	Accepted	See recommendation 1.1
2.2	<p>Projects should consider refocusing their designs to ensure that the teaching in school is of sufficient quality to deliver the learning gains that girls need. IW projects that intervened at the school level and addressed issues around the quality of teaching had the largest effects on girls’ learning levels. Improving teachers’ limited subject knowledge, training teachers in literacy and numeracy, and promoting the use of facilitation skills as well as participatory methods to ensure that girls understand what they are being taught, were particularly effective. This strongly supports the case for projects to consider refocusing their designs to include support that improves the quality of teaching that girls receive in school.</p>	Accepted	See recommendation 1.8
2.3	<p>Projects need to reflect on how best to support different needs of marginalised girls. Projects often treated marginalised girls as</p>	Accepted	See recommendation 1.5

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	<p>a homogeneous group, under the assumption that marginalised subgroups have similar educational needs and require similar types of intervention. However, girls living with disability or out-of-school girls engaging in income-generating activities often required additional, sometimes individualised support to attend school and learn effectively. This reflects the difficulties in targeting and designing projects tailored to the needs of heterogeneous populations, which projects could not always accommodate.</p>		
2.4	<p>Gender dynamics should be a key focus for projects in the next phase of the GEC. Gender is more than a cross-cutting issue. Gender relations are at the core of a programme specifically focusing on improving girls' education. There is strong evidence that boys also face their own specific barriers to education, and projects' interventions affected relationships between boys and girls, both positively and negatively. We recommend that projects consider including boys as part of their solutions to addressing gender inequalities, which most projects have raised in their reporting during this first phase of the GEC.</p>	Accepted	<p>Whilst the GEC remains a girl-focussed programme, projects are increasingly considering how working with boys may help them achieve outcomes. As part of their design for GEC-T projects have reflected on their specific learning from GEC1, a key element of which has been gendered impacts of their interventions.</p> <p>As part of GEC2 performance on gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) will be monitored and evaluated using a newly developed GESI continuum.</p>
2.5	<p>Projects should base their sustainability strategies on a realistic understanding of the barriers that they are able to overcome by the end of the project compared to those that need much larger investments over a longer period. Many projects' sustainability strategies were overly reliant on communities, schools or government ministries to continue activities. In part, this was because projects developed their sustainability strategies too late. However, projects' sustainability strategies were unrealistic in contexts characterised by a pervasive lack of resources among the communities, schools, and education systems that they were working with. Sustainability strategies should explicitly recognise the trade-offs between addressing symptomatic effects to achieve short-term learning gains, versus the longer-term objective of addressing structural causes of poor</p>	Accepted	See recommendation 1.2

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	education outcomes for marginalised girls to achieve sustainable changes in learning.		
2.6	<p>Projects should regularly monitor attendance as an intermediate indicator of improvements in learning. Attendance proved very difficult to track and measure across the IW. While household-based measures are not precise enough to capture small changes in attendance levels, projects often found that school registers and records were not sufficiently accurate or reliable ways of measuring attendance. Household surveys may not be the most appropriate tool to capture attendance data. Measuring attendance requires strategies and tools adapted to the school context and project design, as well as the involvement of staff in the field to conduct regular follow-ups and spot checks throughout the course of the programme.</p>	Accepted	See recommendation 1.4
2.7	<p>Projects need to improve their capacity to evidence, explain and report <i>how</i> and <i>why</i> their interventions have worked well or less well, with what effects on learning, for whom and under what different types of conditions. In the next phase of the GEC, projects require a more prescriptive approach and greater technical oversight to deliver good quality quantitative and qualitative data and analysis across the programme. For instance, projects could be required to provide qualitative data in the form of redacted transcripts (or notes) of interviews and focus group discussions. A more prescriptive approach to the type of quantitative research instruments and data collation methods that projects are required to use would also help improve data quality and consistency across the IW. The intention is to improve the external validity of both quantitative and qualitative analysis and findings produced by external evaluators, and enhance the quality of learning from significant investments in these evaluations.</p>	Partially accepted	See recommendation 1.10. This is partially accepted for the same reason as 1.5 – linking data has not been made compulsory, but encouraged.
2.8	<p>Projects need to be able to identify and track the extent to which specific subgroups are marginalised from achieving</p>	Accepted	See recommendation 1.5

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	<p>education outcomes. At the design stage, projects should collect evidence of which socio-economic subgroups are the most disadvantaged in their operating context, including whether girls are significantly disadvantaged compared to boys. Once projects have defined their subgroups, they should track their outcomes throughout the life of the programme ensuring they measure the impact on these different subgroups as well as the overall target population.</p>		
2.9	<p>Projects should monitor, evaluate, and report their implementation challenges and successes. A key reason projects struggled to present a coherent narrative about what worked well or less well in delivering their learning outcomes relates to the lack of evidence and documentation about the internal and external factors that influenced project delivery. In particular, contextual factors have had a significant effect on projects' success, and projects need to take into account the effects of wider structural constraints that potentially threaten the validity of their theory of change and undermine their achievements. Projects should more systematically track and report the exogenous factors that influence their project design and delivery, as well as the wider effects of their interventions on local actors and communities. This would help projects capture spillover effects and their complementarity (including potential duplication) with other actors, to inform the ways they could adapt and strategically enhance the impact of their interventions.</p>	Accepted	For plans on RAMs see recommendation 1.7.

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Evaluation Report Title: <i>Girls Education Challenge (GEC) – Strategic Partnership Window</i>

	Recommendations	Accepted or Rejected	If “Accepted”, Action plan for Implementation or if “Rejected”, Reason for Rejection
3.1	<p>Coca-Cola and Discovery require a stronger focus on improving girls’ literacy and numeracy outcomes through teacher training, teaching content, use of ICT resources, and direct instruction. It appears that general improvements in the learning environment in Discovery’s project areas has not translated into improved performance in the learning outcomes of girls as targeted by the GEC. Coca-Cola’s direct instruction to students did not allow enough time to focus specifically on literacy and numeracy to improve these outcomes. Furthermore, out-of-school girls received no direct instruction to improve their literacy or numeracy.</p> <p><i>If the GEC-T programme’s core objective is to significantly improve literacy and numeracy by the end of its lifetime then this should be the starting point for further problem diagnosis and key design decisions undertaken by projects. Project designs should be results-driven to ensure activities are relevant to the barriers to learning faced by the projects’ target girls.</i></p>	Accepted	<p>See recommendation 1.1.</p> <p>Specifically for the two projects mentioned: both have undertaken reviews into their approach to teaching and learning at the start of GEC-T. Both projects approaches will be reviewed at various points in 2018: following the second RAM (by May 2018); during the project Annual Reviews (Spring 2018); and following baseline (mid-2018).</p>
3.2	<p>Avanti and Discovery need to adapt their interventions to target girls more specifically. Special tutoring classes aimed at improving girls’ literacy and numeracy skills, as well as developing their aspirations for future, would be beneficial. These additional classes outside school hours could use ICT tools already provided by the programme. However, such interventions should be accompanied by extra financial support to the tutors or teachers for these extra-hours of teaching. Furthermore, the project should ensure that such classes are not clashing with girls’ housework responsibilities by rolling out interventions aiming at reducing these duties. Avanti should also reconsider the provision of stipends to</p>	Rejected	<p>DFID and the GEC Fund Manager have worked with both projects to redesign their approaches for GEC-T. In particular to ensure that teaching and learning outcomes are a focus, as well as to meet the new outcome of ensuring girls transition through education. The projects have not specifically taken on board all of these recommendations.</p> <p>As with all projects, progress on learning and transition will be monitored and tracked through a combination of RAMs, Annual Reviews and evaluations throughout 2018.</p>

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	boys in order to reallocate these resources to activities targeting girls.		
3.3	<p>Discovery needs to adapt its teacher training and use of ICT materials to better fit the local context. Comparing learning outcomes across the three countries in Discovery's programmes suggests that the educational context is dramatically different. With extremely poor baseline outcomes in the Nigerian project areas, a focus on remedial education for basic skills may be necessary to continue to see observable improvements in basic literacy and numeracy skills. On the other hand, in countries where education systems are relatively well-developed, for example for in-service teacher training, parallel approaches to teacher training can be counter-productive for teachers who may become confused and resentful. In these contexts, more emphasis should be put on enhancing, complementing and supporting existing systems for teacher training, teaching curricula and existing ICT initiatives, in particular those being implemented by government.</p> <p><i>A more systematic approach to context analysis at community, school and institutional levels will help SPW projects ensure that their solutions and services are adapted to the needs and priorities of different target beneficiary groups, and partners and stakeholders whose participation is critical to their success. This has to include sometimes very practical constraints related to the availability of electricity supply, internet connection, adequate classroom facilities and issues around affordability and maintenance.</i></p>	Partially accepted	<p>The spirit of this recommendation is accepted, although the detailed country recommendations may not be those taken forward by Discovery. The GEC Fund Manager undertook a strategic design review of the Discovery project at the start of GEC2. Some outcomes of this review were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support primary teachers in providing remedial support to struggling students. • Increased focus on tools and methods for teacher assessment of student learning. • Develop teacher networks in specific subject areas. • More closely monitor the activities in clubs, ensuring they are learning focused. • Increase teacher training. <p>Ongoing discussions between DFID, the GEC Fund Manager and Discovery in early 2018 will further develop the design of the GEC-T project. This will include implementing the changes from the review listed above, it will also consider how to best differentiate across countries.</p> <p>As with all projects, progress will be monitored and tracked through a combination of RAMs, Annual Reviews and evaluations throughout 2018.</p>
3.4	<p>Discovery and Coca-Cola need to review the value added of their current initiatives to improve community support. While the projects' evaluations found that many families feel there is not enough support for education in their community, they also provided little evidence that broad sensitisation campaigns had an observable impact on increasing community actions to support</p>	Rejected	<p>As with recommendation 3.2, there has been a process of re-designing projects for GEC2 to meet the outcomes of learning, transition and sustainability. The projects have not necessarily adopted these specific changes.</p>

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	<p>girls' education. Similar efforts to improve community support should be scaled back unless they can be designed to specifically deliver achievable and verifiable changes in community behaviour.</p> <p><i>Projects need a nuanced understanding of the complex relationships between different levels of community awareness of the benefits of girls' education and the practical decisions households take, to inform community-based interventions that are more specific and impactful as a result.</i></p>		<p>As with all projects, progress will be monitored and tracked through a combination of RAMs, Annual Reviews and evaluations throughout 2018.</p>
<p>3.5</p>	<p>All projects need to increase their support for poor families to address poverty-related barriers or acknowledge that they are not able to support girls from poorer families within their target groups. All projects identified poverty as a key barrier to education. Relevant interventions that were delivered, such as providing stipends or supporting income-generating activities did not appear to be sufficient to tackle poverty-related barriers. Projects may choose to drop activities that seek to address poverty-related barriers and focus their efforts on improving the quality of teaching in school. However, if addressing poverty remains an important part of projects' intervention strategies then they should consider more direct and targeted interventions, such as cash transfers.</p>	<p>Partially accepted</p>	<p>Partially accepted as this recommendation may not be the case for all projects in GEC2. Barriers to education differ by context, and many projects are focussing largely on poverty-related barriers.</p> <p>In addition, not all strategic partnership projects have continued into GEC2. Those that have have been selected based on the evidence provided that theories of change will be able to deliver on the outcomes of GEC-T. The exact changes outlined here may not have taken place.</p> <p>As with all projects, progress will be monitored and tracked through a combination of RAMs, Annual Reviews and evaluations throughout 2018.</p>
<p>3.6</p>	<p>If external evaluators continue to conduct project evaluations then a more prescriptive approach and greater technical oversight is needed to guide projects' commissioning of evaluations. The quality of research and evaluation delivered by external evaluators needs to improve. DFID and the FM should be more involved in the selection of external evaluators. This should ensure that external evaluators are proposing the most appropriate counterfactual evaluation designs and mixed methods research needed to meet the evaluation and reporting requirements of GEC-T. Greater oversight by the FM of the commissioning process overseen by projects should also ensure that external evaluators have the type and quality of evaluation and research skills required.</p>	<p>Partially accepted</p>	<p>This recommendation is largely accepted. The only element which is not is around linking learning and household data – see recommendation 1.5.</p> <p>External evaluators will continue to evaluate project activities, and there has been increased technical input from the GEC Fund Manager during the selection of projects' evaluators. They have provided advice on bids to ensure that evaluation designs are appropriate and feasible and that the appropriate skills are in place to conduct the evaluations.</p> <p>For use of household survey template, linking this to learning data, and qualitative data, see recommendation 1.5.</p>

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<p>The Terms of Reference for projects' external evaluators should be more prescriptive, including requirements to: use a standard household survey template; link household survey data with learning outcome data; and collect specific disaggregated data about key subgroups. Furthermore, the FM could consider requiring projects to provide qualitative data, for example in the form of redacted transcripts (or notes) of interviews and focus group discussions. The intention is to improve the external validity of the quantitative and qualitative analysis and findings produced by external evaluators, and enhance the quality of learning from significant investments in these evaluations.</p> <p>DFID could also consider complementing the evaluations commissioned by the projects with primary research (largely qualitative research) conducted by an independent Evaluation Manager as a means of verifying in the field the reported changes, in particular how and why these changes have occurred.</p> <p>The overall aim is to improve the quality of data, analysis and reporting by projects to achieve greater learning, consistency and comparability across the portfolio.</p>		<p>An independent Evaluation and Research Manager will be commissioned for phase 2.</p>
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