



unicef 
for every child

Final Evaluation of Girls' Education Project Phase 3 (GEP3) 2012–2022 in Northern Nigeria

Final Report



Published by the
United Nations Children's Fund
United Nations House
Plot 617/618, Diplomatic Zone
Central Area District
P.M.B 2851, Garki
Abuja, Nigeria
Tel: +234 (0) 9-4616100
Web address: <http://www.ng.one.un.org>



Final Evaluation of Girls' Education Project Phase 3 (GEP3) 2012–2022 in Northern Nigeria Final Report

The Final Evaluation of Girls' Education Project Phase 3 (GEP3) 2012-2022 in Northern Nigeria was developed by the Overseas Advising Group, and commissioned by UNICEF on behalf of the Federal and State Ministries of Education with the generous financial support and partnership with the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other non-commercial uses permitted by copyright law.

Preface ■ ■ ■

I am deeply grateful to the Government of Nigeria for the tremendous benefit to disadvantaged girls, women, boys and communities in northern Nigeria from the Girls' Education Project Phase 3 (GEP3) 2012-2022 in northern Nigeria, which is fully funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, UK (FCDO), and supported by the Federal Government of Nigeria and State Governments.

This independent Evaluation Report has revealed the return of this large investment that has contributed to the reduction of the inequalities of access, enrolment, and retention of girls in basic education in northern Nigeria as part of the strategic objectives of our national programmes on Education for All.

We value the results achieved vis-à-vis the huge expectations for the education sector in Nigeria, such as the substantial increase in gross enrolment of girls in schools and improved gender parity index (GPI) across Bauchi, Katsina, Niger, Sokoto, Zamfara and Kano states. The increase in enrolment ratio for girls to boys from a baseline rate of 0.73 and midline of 0.78 to the end-line ratio of 0.97 closed the gender gap in the project communities, and the enrolment ratio for public schools specifically increased significantly from 0.56 to 1.00 in those intervention communities. These are laudable achievements by the project. The evidence of the benefits of unconditional cash transfer in collaboration with other initiatives in increasing household investments in girls' education and improving the enrolment, retention and learning outcomes of girls; economic empowerment of mothers; and increasing leadership and mentorship roles for women are important outcomes of this

project that display potentials for replicability and scale-up.

I use this opportunity to commend UNICEF for their continuous value-added support for capacity development, for developing innovative approaches and strategies for the education sector in Nigeria, and for demonstrating impact, efficiency and effectiveness in support of government efforts to achieve access, enrolment, retention, and improved learning outcomes for girls in basic education in Nigeria. I can testify to the gratitude of the Government of Nigeria for the financial support of FCDO who has invested at least GBP79,029,241.8 (approximately US\$109,109,762.23) within the 2012–2022 Girls' Education Project Phase 3 (GEP3) in Northern Nigeria.

I highly commend our state governors and LGA chairmen who have demonstrated serious commitment to education sector policies by ensuring the financial contributions of states and communities to make those achievements possible. I reiterate the commitment of the government that has been strongly expressed by the President of Nigeria to ensure Universal Basic Education in Nigeria.

We appreciate the good example and culture of learning and accountability for results that UNICEF has demonstrated by completing this independent evaluation. I call all actors and development partners of the education sector and State Governments to use the findings to strengthen programmatic strategies and approaches to respond to the lessons learned and address the recommendations of the evaluation.

Mallam Adamu

Honourable Minister of Education
Federal Republic of Nigeria

Foreword ■ ■ ■

UNICEF Nigeria is pleased to deliver this end-programme final evaluation report of the Girls' Education Project Phase 3 (GEP3) 2012–2022 in Northern Nigeria, funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, UK (FCDO), and supported by the Federal and States Government of Nigeria.

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Nigerian Government for their commitment to the major policy goal of reduction in the number of out-of-school children, including girls, which is well articulated in the Strategic Plans for Development of Education Section in Nigeria (2011–2015 and 2016–2020); as well as in the targets for achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Basic Education (UBE), as stipulated in the six Education for All (EFA) goals. Furthermore, considering that lack of access to education is a key dimension of child poverty, the Government's Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP), which developed from 2017 to 2020 and continued in Nigeria's Medium Term National Development Plan (2021–2025), highlights poverty reduction and social inclusion as one of the nine government priorities. Additionally, in 2017, the National Social Protection Policy (NSPP) was approved by the Federal Executive Council, and it was developed within the framework of the ERGP. The overall goal of the policy explicitly affirms gender sensitivity.

On behalf of UNICEF Nigeria Country Office, I would like to recognise and appreciate the great leadership role played by the Government of Nigeria through the Federal Ministry of Education and the States Ministry of Education, States Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), Local Government Education Authorities, and the good model of a joint partnership with community structures, including

women "champions", traditional and community leaders for achieving this commendable results for girls' education in Nigeria.

UNICEF is also very grateful to the FCDO for the considerable financial investment (over US\$109 million) in the Girls' Education Project Phase 3 (GEP3) in Northern Nigeria.

The results of this evaluation display the strong positive impact made by GEP3 project on the enrolment, retention and learning outcomes of girls in basic education in northern Nigeria, highlighting the closing of the gender gap in all those aspects. Equally important are the achievements in economic empowerment of women and households, and the finding that Cash Plus initiatives provide the potential for important strides to be made in girls' education.

I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to all those that led, managed, and contributed to this evaluation: The Federal Ministry of Education, the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, the National Bureau of Statistics, the Evaluation Steering Committee members, the UNICEF Evaluation and Education Units, and the FCDO.

On behalf of the UNICEF Nigeria country office, I take the opportunity to reiterate our commitment to continuing our support to our partners for realising the global agenda for education for children, especially girls in Nigeria. We look forward to a continued partnership with the Federal Ministry of Education at federal and state levels, local government areas and communities to help realise this common vision.

Cristian Munduate

Country Representative
UNICEF Nigeria

Acknowledgements

This draft final analytical report for the Final Evaluation of the Girls' Education Project Phase 3 (GEP3) 2012–2022 in Northern Nigeria was developed by the Evaluation Team of the Oversee Advising Group, which includes Dr Alexia Peyser Alciaturi, Team leader; Dr Ngozi Akwataghibe, Country lead, Mixed Methods Advisor; Dr Peter Hayombe, Quantitative Advisor; Rose Anne Papavero, Cash Transfer Specialist; Oladayo Abayomi Adebayo, Statistician and Impact Analyst; Dr Tolu Oladele, Value for Money Analyst and Hubal Pfumtchum, Quality assurance, Project Coordinator. The Evaluation team was supported by our local partner, The Education Partnership Centre (TEP) who implemented the field work, carried out the initial data processing and cleaning; and provided some input in the learning outcomes assessment analysis. The TEP team is led by Dr Mo Adefeso-Olateju and includes Ms Moyo Sowande, Mr Dotun Olaomi, Mr Ezekiel Ayodele, and Ms Morenike Idewu.

The Evaluation Team appreciates the excellent support received from UNICEF Nigeria. We are especially grateful to Dr Robert Ndamobissi, Evaluation Manager, for his immense support, astute guidance, valuable insights, technical advice and oversight, incisive direction, and quality assurance throughout the evaluation phases. We are also thankful to Dr Saadhna Panday-Soobrayan, the Chief of Education in Nigeria; Mr Michael Banda, Senior Education Manager; Ms Azuka Menkiti, Education Specialist; Francis Ndem, for their valuable support throughout the evaluation. We especially appreciate Alexandra Xuechen Bao, Education Officer for all her efforts in ensuring that we had access to available documents and data for the evaluation. We recognise contributions of UNICEF's Team of Social Policy, which includes Temi Esteri Fet'era, Isah Ibrahim, Yusuf Auta and Lucia Jofrice (Programme Specialist, Shock Responsive Social Protection).

We appreciate the support of the UNICEF field officers (FO) throughout this evaluation. We are particularly thankful to the Kaduna FO: Francis Elisha; the Sokoto FOs: Miriam Mareso, Bulti Assaye, Tukur Labbo-Yabo and Safiya Abdullahi; the Kano FOs: Michael Banda, Saka Adebayo Ibraheem and Muntaka M Mukhtar; and the Bauchi FOs: Mairama Dikwa and Raphael Aiyedipe.

We express our gratitude to the key government stakeholders in this evaluation: the Federal Ministry of Education (FME), the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, and the National Bureau of Statistics. We are also very grateful for the strategic leadership, guidance and quality assurance roles played by the Evaluation Steering Committee (ESC) chaired by Hajiya Binta Tijani Abdulkadir, the Director of Basic and Secondary Education, FME; and co-chaired by Ms Janice Dolan, Senior Programmes Advisor FCDO. We appreciate all the ESC members for their support and steer throughout this evaluation. Again, special thanks go to Michael Banda-GEP3 Project Manager, Robert Ndamobissi-Evaluation Specialist, Euphrates Efosi Wose-Chief of Education, Azuka Menkiti-Education Specialist, and Alexandra Xuechen Bao-Education Officer who worked closely with the evaluation team. We also appreciate the support of the Child Protection Manager, UNICEF, Amandine Inna Renee Bollinger; Gender and Development Specialist, UNICEF, Venera Zakirova; FHI360 Technical Advisor, RANA Project, Mika'ilu Ibrahim and Dr Folake Olatunji-David, Director of Educational Planning, Research and Statistics. We are also very grateful to the National Chairperson of HiLWA, Prof Aisha Ismail; Education Adviser at FCDO-UK Nigeria, Johanna Koernig; Former Vice Chancellor; Dean- Faculty of Education, University of Abuja, Prof Appolonia Uzoaku Okwudishu; Dean – College of Science and Technology, Kaduna State Polytechnic, Dr Aliyu Usman; Director Planning, Research and Statistics, UBEC, Akpan Ossom Udo; Director of Social Mobilisation, UBEC, Ossom O. Ossom; State Coordinators of GEP3 Programme: QISMB-DPRS, Kano state, Muhd Ibnu Alhassan; Board Secretary and Former DPRS, Katsina state, Prof Isa Muhammed; Head of EMIS, GEP3 Focal Point, Niger state, Dr Faruk Mashegu; (SUBEB) Director Special programmes/UNICEF Focal Person, Zamfara state, Muazu Mohammed; (SUBEB) Director ECCDE/UNICEF Focal person, Sokoto state, Faruk Umar Katune; and State Universal Basic Education Board, Bauchi state, Umar Sani.

Hubal Pfumtchum

Co-founder, Oversee Advising Group (OAG)
info@myoag.org | www.myoag.org

¹ The independent evaluation of GEP3 was carried out by Oversee Advising Group (OAG), a consulting firm specializing in evaluations and headquartered in Douala with representations in Montreal and Brussels.

CONTENTS

PREFACE	i
FOREWORD	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....	iii
ACRONYMS	xiii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	1
<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>Evaluation purpose and objectives</i>	1
<i>Scope of the evaluation</i>	2
<i>Evaluation criteria</i>	2
<i>Methodology</i>	2
<i>Findings and conclusions (by Evaluation Criteria)</i>	2
<i>Lessons learned</i>	10
<i>Recommendations</i>	11
1. CONTEXT.....	13
2. EVALUATION OBJECT.....	19
3. EVALUATION PURPOSE	26
4. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES	30
5. EVALUATION SCOPE	31
5.1 <i>Thematic scope</i>	31
5.2 <i>Geographical scope</i>	31
5.3 <i>Chronological scope</i>	31
6. CRITERIA AND EVALUATION QUESTIONS.....	32
6.1 <i>Evaluation criteria</i>	32
6.2 <i>Evaluation questions</i>	33
7. METHODOLOGY.....	35
7.1 <i>Design of the evaluation</i>	35
7.2 <i>Methods and data collection tools</i>	36
7.2.1. <i>Quantitative methods</i>	36
7.2.2. <i>Qualitative methods</i>	37
7.3. <i>Sampling strategy</i>	38
7.3.1. <i>Identification of treatment and comparison groups</i>	38
7.4. <i>Quantitative sampling strategies</i>	39
7.4.1. <i>Determination of sample size of pupils using MICS sample Determination Formula</i>	39
7.4.2. <i>Determination of sample size of the pupils using power calculation</i>	40
7.4.3. <i>Justifications for adapting the power calculation sampling approach over MICS survey sampling formula</i>	41
7.4.4. <i>Determination of sample size of households/caregivers using Power Calculation</i>	42
7.4.5. <i>Sampling technique for school and household surveys</i>	42

7.4.5.1. School survey sampling procedures	43
7.4.5.2. Sampling technique for household survey	43
7.5. Qualitative sampling	43
7.6 Field staff training, pre-testing, and field data collection	44
7.6.1. Recruitment of enumerators	44
7.6.2. Training of enumerators	45
7.6.3. Pre-testing of tools	45
7.6.4. Fieldwork Implementation	45
7.6.5 Strategy to deal with COVID-19	46
7.7 Data analysis and quality assurance	46
7.7.1 Data storage and cleaning	46
7.7.2 Quantitative data analysis	47
7.7.2.1 Measurement of pupils' proficiency in literacy and numeracy	47
7.7.2.2. Attribution analysis of measurement of DID or PSM	48
7.7.2.3. Analysis of HH income from cash transfer HH survey	48
7.7.2.4. Cost benefit analysis of GEP3 programme	48
7.7.3. Qualitative data analysis	50
7.8.2. Supervision	51
7.8.3. Selection bias	52
7.9. Ethical considerations and evaluation principles	52
7.10. Limitations and mitigations measures of the evaluation	54
8. FINDINGS AND PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS	56
8.1. Relevance of GEP3 2012–2022 (is GEP3 doing the right things for children?)	57
8.1.1. Appropriateness of the programme's Theory of Change	59
8.1.2. Review of the Assumptions in the Theory of Change	60
8.1.3. Review - Value of the strategies and activities of GEP3	63
8.1.4. Appropriateness of the CTP design in Niger and Sokoto states	65
8.2. Coherence of GEP3 2012–2022	67
8.2.1. Coherence alignment with global strategies and priorities on girls' education	68
8.2.2. Alignment with national and state strategies and priorities	68
8.2.2.1. Alignment of GEP3 with the National Policy of Education (Education Act 2014)	69
8.2.3. Alignment with local and contextual realities	70
8.3. Effectiveness of GEP3	70
8.3.1. Overall performance evaluation of effectiveness of GEP3	72
8.3.2. Key achievements in girls' enrolment, retention and completion of basic education	77
8.3.3. Influence of CTP on expenditure on education and household consumption and welfare	81
8.3.4. Pupils' learning outcomes	83
8.3.5. Results of English and Hausa literacy by proficiency category	88

8.3.6.	Numeracy assessment	89
8.3.7.	Association between pupils' household wealth index and their performance in numeracy and literacy tests	94
8.3.8.	Availability and capacity of teachers	95
8.3.9.	The effects of governance in schools through monitoring and management structures	98
8.3.10.	Drivers of change	100
8.3.11.	Hindrances to achieving the desired change	102
8.4	Impact of GEP3 2012–2022	103
8.4.1.	Long-term effects and impact of GEP3 as defined within GEP3 Logframe/results framework	106
8.4.2.	Overall programme impact of GEP3 on pupils and households in line with the programme ToC and assumptions	108
8.4.2.1.	Programme impact of GEP3 – Cash Transfer Programme interventions – Comparison of net enrolment ratio (access) in primary education between treatment group LGAs and control group using the HH survey	108
8.4.2.2.	Programme impact of GEP3 – RANA and CTP interventions on pupils' English and Hausa literacy	110
8.4.2.3.	Programme impact of GEP3 – RANA and CTP interventions on pupils' numeracy	113
8.4.3.	Unintended positive effects	114
8.4.4.	Unintended negative effects	114
8.4.5.	Long-term transformative changes or differences	115
8.5.	Efficiency, value for money of GEP3 2012–2022	117
8.5.1.	School infrastructure, monitoring and management	119
8.5.2.	Cost-benefit of GEP3	122
8.6.	Sustainability of GEP3	126
8.7.	Resilience of GEP3	131
8.8.	Gender Equality and Equity	133
8.8.1.	Addressing gender in the design and implementation of GEP3	135
8.8.2.	Gender, equity and CTP.....	135
9.	LESSONS LEARNED	139
10.	FINAL CONCLUSIONS	141
11.	RECOMMENDATIONS	145

List of tables

Table 1: Brief presentation of the object of the evaluation	19
Table 2: Primary Evaluation Stakeholders' interests and uses of the evaluation	27
Table 3: Secondary Evaluation Stakeholders' interests and uses of the evaluation	28
Table 4: Project states and selected LGAs	38
Table 5: Sample size distributions of pupils/pupils and schools by state	39
Table 6: Sample distributions of schools and pupils/pupils by state	40
Table 7: Breakdown of sample distributions of schools and pupils by study group and state	40
Table 8: Sample distributions of clusters/communities and households/caregivers by state	41
Table 9: Breakdown of sample distributions of clusters/communities and households/caregivers by study group and state	42
Table 10: Comparing number of sample and actual survey coverage of pupils/pupils by state	43
Table 11: Comparing number of sample and actual survey coverage of households/caregivers by state	44
Table 12: Sample sizes for the qualitative interviews	44
Table 13: Limitations and mitigation measures of the evaluation	54
Table 14: Evidence rating	56
Table 15: Assessment of output, outcome and impact indicators against GEP3 results framework	73
Table 16: The strength of evidence on the effectiveness	76
Table 17: Number of schools in the head teacher survey	78
Table 18: Examining the distribution of the number of female children enrolled in P1–3 in households by evaluation treatment type	80
Table 19: Number of pupils covered during an English literacy assessment by GEP3 intervention type	84
Table 20: Number of pupils covered during a Hausa literacy assessment by GEP3 intervention type	84
Table 20: Number of pupils covered during a Hausa literacy assessment by GEP3 intervention type	85
Table 21: Means of Hausa and English scale scores in treatment school type at end-line	85
Table 22: Distribution of pupils' English literacy by background variables	87
Table 23: Distribution of pupils' Hausa literacy by background variables	88
Table 24: Distribution of pupils' numeracy by background variables	93
Table 25: Means of numeracy scale scores in treatment IQSs at end-line	93
Table 26: Distribution of numeracy and literacy scales by household wealth status of pupils attending GEP3-iQSs	94
Table 27: Distribution of numeracy and literacy scales by household wealth status of pupils attending GEP3 primary schools	95
Table 28: Strength of evidence on impact	104
Table 29: The DID estimate of the impact of the CTP on school enrolment by gender between baseline and end-line	109
Table 30: PSM estimate by state of impact of CTP on school enrolment by gender between treatment group and comparison group at end-line	109

Table 31: Comparison of net enrolment ratio of girls and boys by the state and CTP treatment and control groups	109
Table 32: Comparison of gross enrolment ratio of girls and boys by state and CTP treatment and control groups	109
Table 33: DID estimate of the impact of the CTP on household spending on education per gender between baseline and end-line.....	110
Table 34: Comparison of the average money spent on girls' and boys' education by state and CTP treatment and control groups	110
Table 35: DID estimate of the impact of RANA on pupils achieving basic English and Hausa literacy between baseline and end-line	111
Table 36: DID estimate of the impact of RANA on pupils achieving basic English and Hausa literacy between baseline and endline	111
Table 37: DID estimate of the impact of RANA on pupils achieving basic English literacy between baseline and end-line by gender	111
Table 38: DID estimate of the impact of RANA on pupils achieving basic English literacy between baseline and end-line by state and gender.....	112
Table 39: Comparison of the proficiency score of pupils achieving basic English literacy by state and CTP treatment and control groups	112
Table 40: DID estimate of the impact of RANA on pupils achieving basic Hausa literacy between baseline and end-line	112
Table 41: DID estimate of impact of RANA on pupils achieving basic Hausa literacy between baseline and end-line	113
Table 42: Results of differences between estimated means of scores of pupils achieving basic numeracy	113
Table 43: Comparison of the proficiency score of pupils in numeracy by gender and CTP treatment and control groups	114
Table 44: Strength of evidence on efficiency	117
Table 45: Project infrastructure support to schools	119
Table 46: Unit cost per girl enrolled from 2015-2020	123
Table 47: Trend of burn rate	123
Table 48: Cost category and actual expenditure	122
Table 49: One-way sensitivity analysis – potential outcomes due to varying scenarios	125
Table 50: Net enrolment ratio by household wealth status in treatment group	135
Table 51: Distribution of average money spent on girls' and boys' education by household wealth status before and after receiving the cash transfer	136

..

List of figures

Figure 1: Geopolitical map of Nigeria	14
Figure 2: The interlinking areas between school and community-level interventions	21
Figure 3: GEP3 Theory of Change	22
Figure 4: GEP3-CTP Theory of Change	23
Figure 5: Cycle of data collection process with CommCare	45
Figure 6: Circular type of sitting arrangement	46
Figure 7: Percentage increase in the number of girls enrolled (gross) in primary education (public + private) between 2018 and 2019 (Source: Analysis of 2018 and 2019 EMIS Data)	46
Figure 8: Gender Parity Index (primary) (VfM equity) (Source: Analysis of 2018 and 2019 EMIS Data.)	46
Figure 9: School enrolment ratio comparison of baseline, midline and end-line	78
Figure 10: School enrolment ratio– P2	79
Figure 11: Percentage of households with female children aged 15 years who have completed nine years of schooling (basic school/junior secondary).	80
Figure 12: Extent of CTP removal of financial barriers on girls' enrolment, attendance and completion in schools	80
Figure 13: Caregivers' perception of the extent of influence of CTP sensitisation's efforts on the decision to send female children to school	81
Figure 14: Estimates of reported influence of CTP on schooling and household consumption and welfare (in Naira).....	81
Figure 15: Percent increase in estimated expenditure on household consumption and schooling	82
Figure 16: Extent of the influence of cash transfer to caregiver on household consumption	82
Figure 17: Percent of household that regularly cooked three (3) meals per day by CTP status	82
Figure 18: Distribution of languages spoken at home by state	84
Figure 19: Means of Hausa and English scale scores in treatment (GEP3 beneficiaries public schools and IQSs) at baseline and end-line	85
Figure 20: Means of Hausa and English scale scores in treatment group by state at end-line	86
Figure 21: English literacy scores attend-line by state and gender	86
Figure 22: Hausa literacy scores attend-line by state and gender	87
Figure 23: Percentage of pupils in each English proficiency band at baseline, midline and end-line	89
Figure 24: Percentage of pupils in each Hausa proficiency band at baseline, midline and end-line	89
Figure 25: Percentage English literacy proficiency at end-line by state.....	90
Figure 26: Percentage Hausa literacy proficiency at end-line by state	90
Figure 27: Numeracy scale scores in treatment group by state at end-line	91
Figure 28: Numeracy scale scores in treatment group by state and gender at end-line	91
Figure 29: Numeracy scale scores at end-line by school type and gender.....	92
Figure 30: Percentage numeracy proficiency at end-line by state	92

List of figures

Figure 31: Percentage numeracy proficiency at end-line by gender	92
Figure 32: Percentage numeracy proficiency at end-line by school type	93
Figure 33: Distribution of pupils' scale scores in numeracy and literacy by their household wealth status	94
Figure 34: Average number of teachers by school type at BL, ML and EL	95
Figure 35: Pupil-teacher-ratio comparison BL, ML, EL	95
Figure 36: Teacher provision of learning activities to pupils	96
Figure 37: Lesson materials used in schools	96
Figure 38: Scores of teachers' actions	97
Figure 39: The extent of external monitoring in schools	99
Figure 40: Households perceptions of effectiveness of the SBMC/CBMC	99
Figure 41: Literacy rate of young women (15–24 years)	106
Figure 42: Rate of early marriage (under 19) in target states	107
Figure 43: Early childbearing (had a live birth before age 15)	107
Figure 44: Availability of water sources by school type across BL, ML and EL	119
Figure 45: The extent of external monitoring in schools	120
Figure 46: Trend of unit cost expended per girl enrolled	123
Figure 47: Trend of GEP3 dollar spent to leverage \$1 from states	124

List of pictures

Picture 1: Focus group discussion with schoolgirls	56
Picture 2: Head teacher interview	68
Picture 3: Teacher explaining to pupils in the classroom	71
Picture 4: Learning assessment of a female pupil	104
Picture 5: Teachers in class	117
Picture 6: FGD –School-based management committee	126
Picture 7: Focus group discussions with men	132

ACRONYMS

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
ASC	Annual School Census
BL	Baseline
CBMC	Community-based Management Committee
C4D	Communication for Development
CBO	Community-based Organisation
CL	Confidence level
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CT	Cash Transfer
CTP	Cash Transfer Programme
CSV	Comma-separated Value
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DID	Difference-in-differences
DFID	Department for International Development
DoC	Drivers of Change
EAC	Educate A Child
EFA	Education for All
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EGMA	Early Grade Mathematics Assessment
EL	End-line
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESC	Evaluation Steering Committee
ESSPIN	Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, UK
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGN	Federal Government of Nigeria
FME	Federal Ministry of Education
FMoH	Federal Ministry of Health
FTTSS	Female Teacher Training Scholarship Scheme
GEP3	Girls' Education Project Phase Three
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GESC	Girls' Education Steering Committee
G4G	Girls for Girls
GPI	Gender Parity Index
GBP	British Pound Sterling
GBV	Gender-based Violence
HH	Household
HiLWA	High-level Women Advocates
HRBA	Human Rights-based Approach
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IQS	Integrated Qur'anic School
IQTE	Islamic/ Qur'anic/Tsangaya Education
IRR	Internal Rate of Return
JSS	Junior Secondary School
LESOP	Local Education Sector Operational Plan
KII	Key Individual Interview

ACRONYMS

LGA	Local Government Area
LGEA	Local Government Education Authority
Logframe	Logical Framework
MA	Mothers' Association
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MEL	Monitoring Evaluation and Learning
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
ML	Midline
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSC	Most Significant Change
NBPC	National Budget and Planning Commission
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NDHS	National Demographic and Health Survey
NEDS	Nigeria Education Data Service
NEMIS	Nigeria Education Management Information System
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
NHREC	Nigerian Health Research Ethics Committee
NNHS	National Nutrition Health Survey
NPV	Pet Present Value
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OLAP	Online Analytical processing
P1, P2, P3, P4	Primary 1, Primary 2, Primary 3, Primary 4
PSM	Propensity Score Matching
PTR	Pupil-teacher Ratio
RANA	Reading and Numeracy Activity
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SE	Standard Error
SES	Socioeconomic Status
SMoE	State Ministry of Education
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SSI	Semi-structured Interview
SSS	Senior Secondary School
TEP	The Education Partnership Centre
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US\$	United States dollar
VfM	Value for Money
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
WLS	Weighted Least Square

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, with over 206 million people² living in 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory. Despite efforts by the government to make basic education free and compulsory within the framework of the 2014 National Policy on Education, at least 10.2 million children at the primary level and 8.1 million children at the junior secondary school (JSS) level are reported to be out-of-school in Nigeria³. Most of these children were girls and primary school-aged children from the northern states. In addition, the gender parity index (GPI) in basic education in the North-Central, North-East and North-West geopolitical zones were 0.89, 0.77 and 0.73, respectively⁴. Studies have indicated that about 50 per cent of children attending school were not learning as expected. As such, 63 per cent of children in rural areas and 84 per cent of children in the lowest economic quintile could not read⁵.

In response to this situation, UNICEF developed and implemented the Girls' Education Project Phase 3 (GEP3) from 2012–2022 in partnership with the Government of Nigeria and the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom. With an investment of GBP79 million (approximately US\$109.1 million), GEP3 aimed to improve basic education, increase social and economic opportunities for girls and reduce disparities in learning outcomes between girls and boys in northern Nigeria. The programme focused on addressing the barriers to girls' education, including sociocultural and gender norms, economic and socio-political contexts and constraints related to local governance, educational material, staff capacity and low financing in the education sector.

To fulfil UNICEF's commitment to generate sound evidence on the results achieved for children, a final evaluation was conducted to generate lessons learned and ensure the sustainability of these efforts. This final evaluation presents the findings of the independent evaluation of GEP3 undertaken by the Overseas Advising Group.

Evaluation purpose and objectives

The main purpose of this evaluation is to provide solid evidence on the achievements of GEP3 impacts, outcomes and outputs as indicated in the programmatic documents and results framework. It also provides a comprehensive review of the programme's theory of change. This evaluation focused on two key components of the programme: GEP3 programme which was implemented in six focal states and the GEP3 Cash Transfer Programme (CTP) which was implemented in Sokoto and Niger states. The study aimed to:

1. Determine if GEP3 achieved the expected results related to access and retention of girls in basic education and improved the quality of learning outcomes in basic education in northern Nigeria.
2. Document the resilience of communities and families in support of girls' education.
3. Understand the drivers of educational participation and performance of girls.
4. Analyse the value for money of GEP3.
5. Assess GEP3 preparedness and response to external shocks.
6. Provide strategic recommendations for future investments and initiatives to advance gender equality in education.

² United Nations Population Division, 2019 Revision of World Population Prospects, < www.worldometers.info/demographics/nigeria-demographics >

³ Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), 2018 National Personnel Audit (NPA) Report on Public and Private Basic Education Schools in Nigeria. Abuja: Binani Printing Press, 2019.

⁴ Federal Republic of Nigeria, Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), 2012. < <https://ubec.gov.ng/> >

⁵ National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2017 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2016-17, Survey Findings Report, Abuja, Nigeria, NBS and UNICEF, 2017. < www.unicef.org/nigeria/sites/unicef.org.nigeria/files/2018-09/Nigeria-MICS-2016-17.pdf >

Scope of the evaluation

This evaluation assessed the contributions that GEP3 made to the education sector and explored the merits and shortfalls in the programmatic areas of access, quality and governance of education in northern Nigeria. In addition, it provided an objective assessment of the results obtained – what worked, what didn't and why – and the enabling factors and barriers to success. The evaluation focused on six programme states: Bauchi, Katsina, Niger, Sokoto, Zamfara and Kano for the duration of the investment from May 2012 to June 2021⁶.

Evaluation criteria

The design and approach of the evaluation were informed by the Terms of Reference and the Development Assistance Committee's criteria for relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. In addition, the criteria of resilience and gender equality and equity were used.

Methodology

The evaluation used a mixed methods approach by combining qualitative and quantitative methods. The methodology included a quasi-experimental longitudinal panel design that tracked a cohort of targeted schools over the life of the programme. This design was developed to simulate a before and after approach with and without comparisons.

The evaluation included: (i) a household survey to measure the effectiveness and impact of cash transfers to girls' parents and caregivers; (ii) a school survey consisting of pupil learning outcome assessments; (iii) interviews of headteachers; (iv) classroom observations and headcounts; and (v) a desk review, key informant interviews and focus group discussions with a variety of stakeholders. A value for money and quantitative analysis of secondary data from national household surveys complemented the evaluation.

The effectiveness and impact of GEP3 on learning outcomes and socioeconomic indicators related to girls' education were assessed through the comparison of achievements in three school treatment groups. The first school treatment group benefited from 10 GEP3 interventions and the Reading and Numeracy Activity (RANA)⁷. In the second school treatment group, families of girls received unconditional cash transfers in addition to the 10 interventions and RANA. The third comparison group (i.e., control group) did not receive any GEP3 interventions.

Findings and conclusions (by Evaluation Criteria)

RELEVANCE

GEP3 was highly relevant in addressing the needs and barriers related to girls' education in northern Nigeria. The programme improved girls' access to school and increased their rates of enrolment and retention by using a comprehensive and systemic approach. This involved partnering with school and community-based organizations, committees and women's organizations and aimed to ensure that girls had safe and nurturing environments in schools and communities, which proved successful.

Several key complementary strategies such as Girls for Girls⁸, the High-Level Women Advocates (HiLWA), and Mothers' Associations, were very influential in supporting and mentoring girls. Local authorities, teachers, parents and girls reported that these strategies also impacted the larger community and demonstrated the effectiveness of female-run local initiatives.

⁶ GEP3 was implemented until 2022 with a slight pivot in the interventions for the costed extension phase (July 2021 to September 2022) towards adolescent girls in junior secondary schools.

⁷ Reading and Numeracy Activity (RANA) was designed to improve literacy and numeracy instruction in Grades 1-3 in public schools and Islamic Qur'anic Schools (IQS), with the goal of increasing literacy outcomes for learners, especially girls. To achieve these goals, RANA has developed Hausa-language teaching and learning materials, built teacher capacity, mobilized communities and engaged local governments to improve early grade reading policies.

⁸ Girls for Girls, also known as G4G, are girls' peer mentoring groups established at the school level.

Evidence indicated that there were strong and sensible synergies between community-level stakeholders involved in the programme, such as School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs), Mother's Associations, HiLWA and Community-Based Management Committees. This participation resulted in a robust and efficient community engagement process.

The plausibility of GEP3's theory of change was supported by the stakeholders' common understanding and adherence to the GEP3 objectives. This overwhelming support was due in part to the redesign and simplification of the theory of change in 2015. Overall, the theory of change was determined to be robust, structurally sound, plausible and upheld most of its assumptions. The implementation strategy of the programme fits well within the existing government strategies; however, future programming would need to consider existing structural barriers such as poverty, in-service teacher competencies, cultural stereotypes and gender norms.

COHERENCE

The evaluation team concluded that the GEP3 was very coherent with global, national and state policies and priorities, local priorities and contextual realities. The programme was aligned at the federal and state levels with global strategies on girls' education and the broader policy environment, including social protection and gender policies. It was strongly aligned with the national policy goal⁹ of reducing the number of out-of-school children, especially for girls in northern Nigeria.

Key contextual elements related to social, cultural, political, economic and governance domains and causal factors were taken into consideration when formulating the hypotheses and the underlying design of interventions. The GEP3 strategy focused on the most vulnerable and marginalized children, including girls, and ensured coherence with each state's priorities on integrating Islamic schools into the education sector.

EFFECTIVENESS

Evidence reveals that GEP3 effectively achieved its expected results related to girls' enrolment, retention and education completion. Improving the quality of teaching and teaching capacity

and improving governance and support for the inclusion and participation of different stakeholders, such as local and traditional authorities, was also achieved to some extent.

Access: The enrolment and retention of girls in schools were primarily driven by the programmes' intensive, comprehensive and sustained sensitization efforts enveloped in GEP3. There is evidence of a substantial increase in the gross enrolment of girls in schools and an improved gender parity across the targeted states. The GPI, which measures the ratio of girls to boys for enrolment, increased from 0.73 (baseline value) to 0.78 (midline) and reached 0.97 by the end of the programme. This suggests that the gender gap was almost closed in the targeted communities. The improvement in the GPI for public schools was especially profound: from 0.56 (baseline) to 1.00 (end-line) ($p < 0.01$)¹⁰.

In Niger and Sokoto states, the highest impact was felt by households that utilized a combination of early learning and cash transfer interventions. The proportion of households with two or more female children enrolled in school benefited the most from this combination (25 per cent) compared to households that received only GEP3 early learning (21.7 per cent) and the control group (17.9 per cent) ($p < 0.01$). Similarly, those benefiting from the combination of early learning and cash transfer interventions were households with one to two girls (33.0 per cent) and three or more girls (5.2 per cent) who completed nine years of schooling, compared to the GEP3-learning-only group and the control group ($p < 0.01$).

Quality: Pupils that benefited from the GEP3-RANA programme scored higher in literacy (Hausa and English) and numeracy assessments than their control group peers. For instance, pupils in the GEP3-RANA programme scored significantly higher in English literacy than their counterparts in the control group ($p < 0.01$). There were marked improvements in early learning, girls' inclusion and participation in the learning process when teachers, especially female teachers, were better trained.

The percentage of pupils achieving basic literacy in English increased from 10 per cent at the baseline to about 32 per cent and 40 per cent at the midline and end-line respectively. Pupils in GEP3 schools outperformed their peers in non-GEP3 schools, with a statistically significant difference in scores. On average, girls performed better than boys in Hausa and English

⁹ Federal Ministry of Education, 4-Year Strategic Plan for the Development of the Education Development: 2011–2015, Federal Ministry of Education, Abuja, Nigeria, 2012.

¹⁰ The difference is statistically significant at a 1 per cent level.

literacy in public primary schools for the end-line assessments. For instance, girls scored 10 points higher than boys in English literacy in Katsina and Niger and five points higher in Sokoto.

Pupils in GEP3-supported Integrated Qur'anic Schools (IQSs) scored significantly higher in numeracy tests than their counterparts in the control group ($p < 0.01$). Pupils in IQS were also significantly more literate in Hausa and English languages than pupils in public primary schools ($p < 0.01$). This may be attributed to the pupils' age, as children in IQSs are older than their public school counterparts.

Though the capacity-building of teachers was a noted strength of the programme, there were structural gaps in the quality of teaching. This was partly attributed to inadequate teaching aids, entry profiles and teachers' poor comprehension of new teaching material.

Governance: Building the capacity of head teachers in school management improved school governance. Evidence implies that this positively impacted the monitoring of teacher availability and performance. Governance was also improved by strengthening SBMCs, though in a few cases, non-functional SBMCs created a gap in monitoring and support, hindering the achievement of desired results.

External monitoring was suboptimal, with about 77 per cent of participating schools meeting with the local government authorities. Seventy-five per cent of schools received visits from GEP3 officials, against a baseline of 80 per cent of schools receiving a monitoring visit. Furthermore, only 60 per cent of the headteachers surveyed had attended management training. To address the weakness in the education system regarding quality practices (methods, strategies and pedagogical competencies), teacher training should be a clear focus in the next programme cycle.

IMPACT

GEP3 demonstrated an overall strong positive impact on girls and their families, communities and schools. The impact of the CTP on girls' enrolment in primary schools was strongly positive and statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). At the end-line assessment, households that benefited from CTP enrolled more girls in early grades of primary education (Grades 1-3) than households that did not. The probability of a girl

enrolling in school from a household that benefited from the CTP was 92.1 per cent compared to 76.6 per cent for a girl from a household that didn't receive cash support. The impact of unconditional CTP on household spending for girls' schooling was also strongly positive and statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Similarly, GEP3-RANA positively impacted Hausa and English literacy learning outcomes at both midline and end-line assessments, with more substantial improvements in English than in Hausa. However, there was a slight decline in the programme's impact between the midline and end-line, likely due to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and regional security risks.

While the impact of GEP3 interventions on the literacy rate was higher for boys than girls at the midline assessment, girls outperformed boys during the end-line assessment. Between the midline and end-line assessments, the programme impact on boys achieving basic English literacy decreased from 7.9 per cent to 1.2 per cent. In comparison, the programme impact on girls' proficiency in English increased from 4.3 per cent to 7.9 per cent. The decline in the share of proficient boys requires further analysis.

National population surveys showed improvements in the literacy rate among young women aged 15–24 years and a reduction in early-marriage, adolescent pregnancy and childbearing in the focal states. The rate of early marriage (under the age of 19) dropped from 54.7 per cent to 25.7 per cent and the early childbearing rate (i.e., girls who had a live birth before the age of 15) dropped from 6.9 per cent to 2.4 per cent.

The programme enabled a definite shift in mindset regarding the importance of education for girls. The raised profile of educated girls indicates a transformation in perception and a change in gender norms.

One unintended negative consequence of increased student enrolment was revealed during the programme evaluation. With more pupils enrolled in target schools, the pupil-teacher ratio increased significantly from 44:1 at the baseline to 77:1 at the end-line ($p < 0.01$), putting the quality of teaching at severe risk.

It is also worth noting that stakeholders raised some concerns about including conditions on cash transfers during the programme design for GEP3. However, the successful implementation of unconditional cash transfers changed stakeholders' perceptions. The

programme's successes, including cost efficiency, comprehensive coverage and improvements in the enrolment and retention of girls in public primary schools, have influenced subsequent CTP designs in Nigeria. This includes the design of the Federal-Funded National Cash Transfer Programme, which has a base cash grant for targeted poor households and individuals and a conditional top-up.

EFFICIENCY

GEP3 demonstrated good value for money with a positive Net Present Value and the opportunity to scale up interventions are incredibly promising. The analysis of the original value for money proposition in the business case demonstrated that GEP3 spent less than the benchmarked unit cost for most activities with overachievement of the target on girls' enrolment. The unit cost expended per additional girl enrolled was much lower than the budgeted amount. It was estimated that GBP£107.3 would be spent per additional girl enrolled in the business case, but the annual target of 100,000 was exceeded each year at a lower cost. Overall, 1,283,024 girls were enrolled at a unit cost of £43 (US\$60) per girl and £55 (\$75) per girl retained in school. The cost of the RANA programme decreased from \$23 to about \$8 per child in the expansion phase heralding the possibilities for nationwide scaling of the programme.

The analysis of information about school infrastructure showed a consistent reduction in the proportion of schools that needed repairs from the baseline (93 per cent) to midline (87 per cent) and end-line (70 per cent) ($p < 0.01$), suggesting that school grants inculcated a culture of infrastructure maintenance. The limited availability of toilets for pupils across all types of schools was also an issue. The pupil-to-toilet ratio in IQS was 198:1 compared to 246:1 in public primary schools, highlighting a need to improve the quantity and quality of infrastructure.

SUSTAINABILITY

GEP3 has established sustainable, transformative gains with strong community ownership that informs culture and practices on girls' education. However, the capacity to sustain GEP3 interventions depends on the government's financial commitment. There is sufficient government capacity to implement and monitor the programme at national and state levels and ample evidence regarding local ownership and the use of local capacity.

All six focal states have developed sustainability plans to enable the programme activities to continue beyond GEP3. For example, Bauchi, Katsina, Kano, Sokoto and Zamfara detailed plans to institutionalize enrolment drive campaigns at the level of the States Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) and/or at the community-level. They also have plans to digitalize the Education Management Information System to support the Annual School Census and continue and expand the training of teachers, teacher facilitators and headteachers. All states indicated government budgetary commitments to these activities, but there was not yet evidence of the release of government funds.

RESILIENCE

GEP3 was resilient to internal and external setbacks, including insecurity and the COVID-19 pandemic. Community ownership of the GEP3 programme proved to be the right platform for tackling the COVID-19 pandemic that affected school attendance in all focal states. The flexible and innovative strategies developed to cope with the drawbacks of the pandemic, such as radio educational programmes, parents teaching and community mentors, seemed to play a double role in maintaining social contact and ensuring continuity of learning. Gender-based violence, including rape, harassment and molestation, seemed to have worsened during the COVID-19 lockdown, with girls at home for extended periods. Nevertheless, there was evidence of growing awareness of this social problem and instances at the school level when these problems were discussed. The geographical distance between schools and homes was directly related to the perception of danger and risk of gender-based violence on the roads to and from schools. Spontaneous strategies, such as walking to school in groups, seemed to have partially alleviated this threat. Female mentors/mentees empowered by the programme, such as HILWA, Girls for Girls or female teachers, seemed to be better prepared and more sensitized to these issues, which helped to create spaces to address them. Overall, long-lasting insecurity issues implicitly influenced outcomes in Niger state, a factor that should be considered in future interventions or follow-up efforts.

GENDER EQUALITY AND EQUITY

There was strong evidence that GEP3 enrolled an extraordinarily high number of girls and significantly impacted girls' learning outcomes. This resulted in a narrowing of the gender gaps and changes in social norms related to the value of women's economic empowerment. The Net Enrolment Rate of girls in CTP households differed between the wealthiest and the poorest households compared to the same variable for boys, implying that gender-sensitive cash transfer interventions bridged the divide for girls.

The programme worked holistically with women – through Mother's Associations, HiLWA and Girls for Girls – and engaged with multiple

education made with the cash transferred to mothers and caregivers.

Future programme designs should address the socially transmitted fear of (and shame associated with) pregnancy out of wedlock, a significant reason for girls' early-marriage after their first menstruation. Programme designs that support mothers and fathers through parenting education and enable intergenerational dialogue on sexual and reproductive health and rights could address these ongoing concerns.

The most compelling element of change in gender equality is the traditional script relegated to daughters. This change was articulated by various community representatives



stakeholders, including community-level decision makers, to improve local governance by systematically addressing drivers of gender inequality. The engagement of women, especially as mentors and high-level advocates, was a strategy that produced both intrinsic and extrinsic benefits. HiLWA-related activities generated high-level political interest in girls' education. Even more importantly, mentoring offered by Girls for Girls led to a change in mindset among girls: a crucial foundation to ensure long-term change.

There was also evidence of social and behavioural change related to the importance of girls' education at a broader community-level among religious leaders, parents and teachers. Indications of the impact that CTP had on the social and economic empowerment of women and improved livelihood for households were especially promising. This appeared to influence the position of women in decision-making within the family and community and was highlighted by the increased investment in girls'

participating in the focus group discussion conducted during the programme evaluation. The older generation, for example, maintains that the primary role of a girl is to be a mother and wife under the guidance of her husband, with formal education helping to fulfil those roles. The perception of the younger generation, both boys and girls, is that education allows girls to pursue professional careers, such as doctors and teachers, and have financial independence. They see this as a critical factor in transforming the household gender dynamics from a submissive/dependent wife-husband relationship into a balanced and equal partnership. The evaluation also highlighted the effectiveness of intergenerational dialogue for programmes aimed at abandoning harmful social norms. Developing mutual understanding between different generations in a community was crucial in creating an enabling environment for adolescent girls and young girls to pursue further education and delay the age of marriage.

Reflections on the 12 strategic interventions of GEP3

Twelve strategic interventions were implemented throughout GEP3 programming:

1. Enrolment drives
2. School grant cash transfer for learning and retention of girls in school (which ended in 2017)
3. Girls for Girls groups
4. Capacity development of teachers and headteachers
5. Early literacy and numeracy intervention (i.e., RANA)
6. Capacity development of School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs)
7. Support of effective data-collection (e.g., Annual School Census in the GEP3 states and Local Education Sector Operational Plans)
8. Inclusion of Integrated Qur'anic Schools in Education Management Information Systems
9. Promote increased representation and participation of women through the High-level Women Advocates
10. Girls Education Steering Committee as a forum to advocate for girls' education issues at national, state and local government area levels
11. Advocacy and advice to generate planning and budgeting to sustain interventions at a larger scale
12. Advocacy engagement to support interventions



Enrolment drive campaigns that focused on girls in Grade 1 and girls in IQSs were carried out as planned and there is evidence of increased enrolment and retention of girls in basic education throughout the programme years. The COVID-19 lockdown and prolonged school closures led to a halt in enrolment activities, especially school and community-based activities. Nevertheless, the high effectiveness of enrolment campaigns over the years meant the effects of the COVID-19 restriction were minimal. By the end of the programme, five states (Bauchi, Katsina, Kano, Sokoto and Zamfara) outlined plans to institutionalize enrolment drive campaigns at the SUBEB and/or community levels, with government budgetary commitments to drive these activities.

School grants were provided to support the learning and retention of girls in school. IQSs and public schools benefited from school repairs, school uniforms, monthly financial support, classroom construction and school furniture (e.g., chairs and tables). However, only public schools benefited from improved sanitation facilities through the construction of boreholes and toilets. There was some social accountability for funds, including formal and informal control measures. Focus group respondents observed the presence of indicators such as approved improvement plans, monitoring tools and physical improvements carried out on the school premises. Improvements such as renovated classrooms, rehabilitated school buildings and new latrines were enumerated. In some cases, the SBMCs led the planning and implementation of activities funded through microgrants given to schools to ensure accountability.

By having alumnae of **Girls for Girls groups** become mentors, the ripple effects of investing in girls' education are multiplied for future generations. Integrating this 'imitation strategy' into the programme ensured that girls developed a voice, gained confidence and interacted with other girls as mentors to showcase the value of education. Girls for Girls was influential in stimulating a push-back to early-marriage practices and was mentioned several times during focus group discussions. However, the desired level of change was limited due to strong stereotypes and inflexible attitudes linked to culture and religion. The Girls for Girls programme also supported the development of new skills. For instance, girls in Katsina learned how to make petroleum jelly and

liquid soap, knit, weave mats and baskets and make beads.

Capacity development of teachers and headteachers was carried out in public schools and IQSs. Teachers received pedagogical training and management training was delivered to headteachers, administrative staff and education managers. This was pursued in states through the Female Teachers Trainee Scholarship Scheme and the Headteachers Capacity Training Programme. The training was considered valuable and vital in improving the quality of teaching and learning and raising awareness of girls' access to education. There was also an increase in the use of learning resources, such as teacher textbooks, as evidenced by the end-line assessment (26.7 per cent) compared to the baseline (9.5 per cent) and midline (2.2 per cent) assessments. The use of posters, charts and pictures increased from 6.5 per cent to 7.9 per cent. The increased rate of material support in planning and management (e.g., lesson plans) and didactic elements (e.g., posters) could also be attributed to the skills acquired during training.

Early literacy and numeracy intervention through Reading and Numeracy Activity (RANA) was designed to improve literacy and numeracy instruction in Grades 1-3 in both public schools and IQS, with the goal of increasing literacy outcomes for learners, especially girls. To achieve these goals, RANA developed Hausa-language teaching and learning materials, built teacher capacity, mobilized communities and engaged local governments to improve early-grade reading policies.

The **capacity of SBMCs were developed** and frequently mentioned in the interviews and focus group discussions as critical drivers of change. Some 92 per cent of schools had functional SBMCs in place, and 85 per cent of them indicated that the SBMCs were supportive of implementing GEP3 in their schools. The role played by SBMCs was reported as crucial in reducing early marriages for girls. In addition to sensitizing the communities about the importance of girls' education, they played mediatory roles in families. When they noticed girls' absenteeism from school, a signal of imminent dropout, they convinced men to release their daughters to return to school. They also carried out other advocacy activities and performed monitoring roles in schools to ensure the presence and availability of teachers.

The **effective support of data collection** and the improvement in education data quality and quantity was a notable achievement of the programme. All GEP3 local government areas developed and implemented Local Education Sector Operational Plans with monitoring and evaluation embedded in the programme design cycle. GEP3 improved the capacity of monitoring and evaluation teams at the state level, including the capacities of SUBEBs, in data collection and management. The improved monitoring and data management skills were reported as enhancing accountability and transparency and SUBEBs provided strong support for implementing and monitoring GEP3. In addition, GEP3 supported the implementation of the Annual School Census, which helped to identify the changes and gaps in pupils' annual enrolment in schools for necessary government or donor action. The standardization of Education Management Information System procedures and the decentralization of GEP3 data were reported as strengthening the programme's efficiency due to the improved quality of data collection and data treatment practices.

The programme supported the **inclusion of Qur'anic Schools into the Education Management Information System** to collect evidence on gender-sensitive issues and reinforce improved teaching and learning practices in those schools. Through improved data collection, girls and boys attending IQS were statistically recognized as being in school. This was particularly relevant as IQS are often socially favoured by parents as the schooling of choice for their daughters.

GEP3 promoted **women's increased representation and participation through HiLWA and Mother's Associations**. The HiLWA were

benefited from basic education without compromising cultural and religious ideals. They also served as influencers to encourage parents to allow access to basic education for female children. These women were key drivers of change, as seen in their crucial roles as mentors, advocates, sensitizers and facilitators of the enrolment and retention of girls in schools. Mother's Association activities and their financial commitments were also frequently reported as critical in reducing the number of out-of-school children.

Advocacy at the national, state and local government area level is an important component of GEP3. The **Girl's Education Steering Committee** provides strategic guidance and oversight to the implementation of GEP3 and addresses emerging issues that have policy implications on the provision of educational services nationally or in states with a similar context. Advocacy and advice for planning and budgeting at the community-level sustain interventions at a larger scale. With the federal government's assurance, the improved capacities of the government and GEP3 stakeholders stimulated more commitment at the state level and eventually led to higher budgetary allocations. Improvement in management capacities at the local and state levels is reflected in the better handling of programme protocols, including the cash transfer component.

As part of **advocacy engagement** to support interventions, the programme successfully increased the number of teachers in schools, as highlighted by stakeholders during the interviews. In addition, HiLWA successfully lobbied for teaching positions for young women in the communities.

LESSONS LEARNED

Methodologically speaking, the comprehensive societal approach (e.g., considering a wide range of social, psychosocial, cultural and economic factors, including gender norms) was effective in inducing the change in perceptions and behaviours concerning girls' education. The combination of interventions and use of different change-inducing modalities such as training, awareness-raising, role modelling (HILWA), peer influence (Girls for Girls) and financial incentives were internally coherent and complementary. This wide array of approaches also allowed adequate targeting of different types of stakeholders, including community, school population, teachers, local authorities and families.

Simplifying the theory of change in 2015 and focusing on fewer, more streamlined and cohesive interventions aimed at improving girls' education proved to be the right decision to achieve more concrete and feasible results. This coincided with a modification in UNICEF's project management arrangements in terms of staffing, project architecture and technical delivery. These corrections improved cooperation with the state

government allowing the programme to promote sustainable scale-up of project interventions. Project management of risk, finance, results and data also improved significantly after this redesign and was an important lesson learned.

Several key strategies of the programme were identified as good practices including RANA, IQS, Girls for Girls and HILWA. The evidence-based approach that RANA used for early-grade literacy and numeracy improved reading and numeracy skills for both girls and boys. The 'imitation strategies' for mentoring used by HILWA and Girls for Girls were essential drivers of transformational shifts among girls and other community members and holds the potential to drive the change in social norms and shift the defined script for girls in the community.

The combination of early learning and cash transfer interventions had a multiplier effect¹¹ on girls' enrolment, retention and completion. This is an important finding and should inform the package of interventions for the next programme cycle.

¹¹ A phenomenon whereby a given change in a particular input, causes a larger change in an output.

Recommendations

Strategic recommendations

1. Include cash transfer initiatives whenever possible, especially with the Plus element (e.g., complementing cash transfers with additional inputs and services). Integration or scale-up of the financial household component as part of a more comprehensive inclusive education intervention strategy shall be considered in future programmes.
2. Plan for classroom overcrowding with worsening pupil-teacher ratios as the result of increased student enrolment. Comprehensive efforts are needed to prepare and inject new contingents of trained teachers.
3. Create a more enabling environment (e.g., working with the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the gender policy) to achieve gender equality and transform discriminatory social norms that affect girls. Approaches to changing power relations between men and women, as well as girls and boys at the community, local, institutional and national levels, should be supported by government policymaking. The focus should be to actively reach out and reinforce sectoral programming with adequate methodological and technical tools.

Operational recommendations

1. Consider integrating a sexual and reproductive health and rights sensitizing module in the Girls for Girls package of the programme to prevent unintended teenage pregnancies that could impact girls' education and prolong child marriage. Contextualizing the training module or toolkit to the local setting could address specific gender norms and incorporate lessons learned from this evaluation.
2. Maintain and scale up the holistic gender-sensitive approach:
 - a. Expand improvements in the school environment to allow robust menstrual hygiene management in schools.
 - b. Offer a life skills programme in the Girls for Girls component and consider different barriers and concerns that become obstacles to learning.
 - c. Advocate for broader integration of Girls for Girls, HiLWA, 'He for She' and similar strategies in the education sector.



1. CONTEXT

Nigeria is the most populous country and the largest economy in Africa with over 206¹² million people living in 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT); and 136 trillion Naira of annual GDP estimated in 2018. However, human capital is still weak. Nigeria's education system is based on the 6-3-3-4 system: those numbers represent years in primary (basic), junior secondary (basic), senior secondary and tertiary (minimum of four years) education respectively. The model was adopted in 1989. The financing of basic education in Nigeria is the legal responsibility of the 36 states and the 774 Local Government Areas (LGAs). The state governments are expected to fund basic education through their annual budgetary allocations¹³. Despite efforts made by the Government with the support of development partners to make basic education free and compulsory within the National Policy on Education 2014, at least 10 million children are reported to be "out of school" in Nigeria at the primary level¹⁴ – mostly girls and children from the northern states. With approximately 20 million out-of-school children globally, Nigeria has the highest number of out-of-school children in the world. Only 68 per cent of six to 11-year-olds regularly attend primary school and only 38 per cent of children between three and five attend organised early childhood education programmes (MICS, 2021). Additionally, by 2012 in the North-Central, North-East and North-West geopolitical zones, the gender parity indices in basic education (primary 6 level) were 0.89, 0.77 and 0.73 respectively¹⁵.

Regarding the quality of education, about 75 per cent of children are not learning as expected, and therefore do not demonstrate foundational reading and numeracy skills (MICS, 2021). Approximately 86 per cent of children who live in rural areas and around 95 per cent of children in the lowest economic quintile do not demonstrate foundational skills (MICS, 2021).

The Federal Government collaborates with sub-national governments and the private sector in implementing the Ministerial Strategic Plan (2016–2019) entitled "Education for Change". With support from the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), UNICEF is working with the Government and other partners to test and build on several approaches to increase access to quality education for girls and boys, especially those out of school, in rural areas and with disabilities, and to ensure that children complete education and leave school with relevant skills and knowledge for lifelong learning and employability.

UNICEF developed and implemented the **Girls' Education Project Phase 3 (GEP3)** from 2012–2022 in partnership with FCDO. The programme aimed to improve basic education, as well as social and economic opportunities for girls. This was done through increased enrolment, completion, and learning of girls in basic education in northern Nigeria, covering five states (six states from 2018 with the inclusion of Kano). The programme was co-funded by Educate a Child, a part of Education Above All that covered Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, and Zamfara in which Kebbi was solely funded by the East African Community. However, this evaluation was focused on FCDO support. It was UNICEF's responsibility to generate sound evidence of the results for children, their sustainability, and lessons learned from this investment in education.

1.1 Context of the Evaluation

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is in the western part of the African continent covering a total land area of 923,768 km square. Nigeria (Figure 1) is bordered by Niger in the north, Benin in the west, Cameroon, and Chad in the east. The country is structured in six geopolitical zones (North-East, North-West, North-Central, South-West, South-East, and South-South zones). From the administrative point of view, Nigeria is organised in 36 states and the FCT (Abuja); and 774 LGAs.

¹² <https://www.worldometers.info/demographics/nigeria-demographics> sourced by 2019 Revision of World Population Prospects, United Nations Population Division.

¹³ UNESCO. Forces of educational policy change since 2000 in Nigeria Paper commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015, Education for All 2000–2015: achievements and challenges" ED/EFA/MRT/2015/PI/38 efareport@unesco.org.

¹⁴ Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), 2018 National Personnel Audit (NPA) Report on Public and Private Basic Education Schools in Nigeria. Abuja: Binani Printing Press, 2019.

¹⁵ Universal Basic Education Commission, 2012.

In economic terms, the country presents two distinctive realities, with the southern regions of Nigeria reflecting a better overall situation than the north; the difference is directly explained by the large oil reserves' exploitation and related economic activities. The geographical location of the southern port of Lagos, in the Gulf of Guinea, also reinforces the commercial and trade activity of the region. On the other hand, the north, which boasts a higher population, suffers from poverty and debilitating illiteracy, economic and health indicators.

Education indicators for northern Nigeria are worse than for the rest of Nigeria, partly driven by demographics and the number of children who should be in school, partly by social attitudes toward “western” education, and partly by the difficulties experienced by governments in ensuring provision in predominantly rural LGAs.

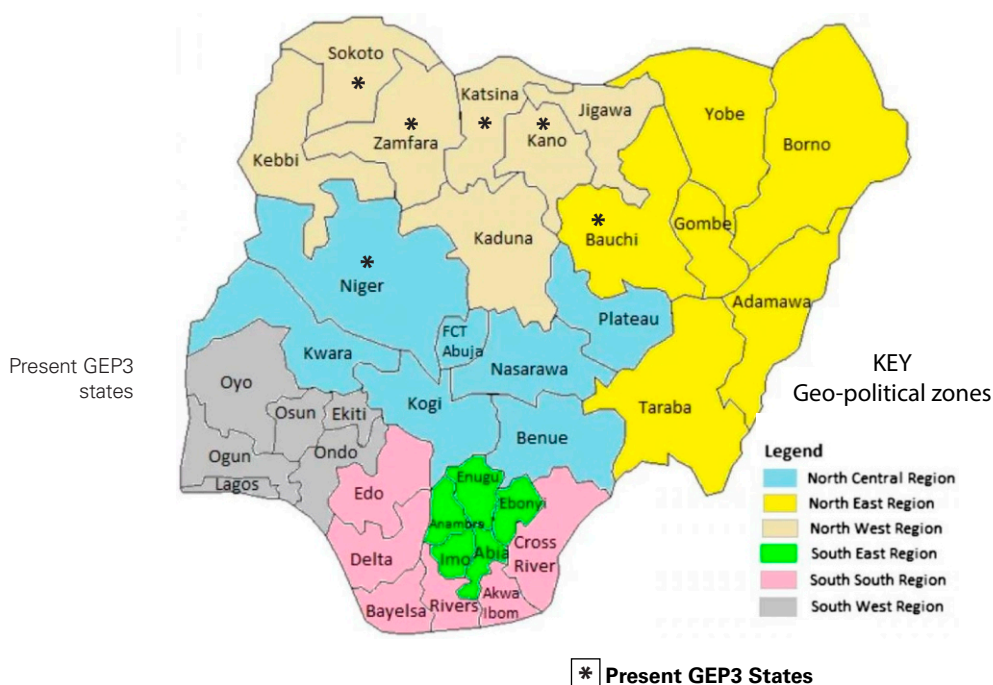
Furthermore, according to the Global Education Partners 2020 Review, “The northern states of Nigeria are characterised by a paucity of reliable data on access, equity and learning outcomes, as well as on financing.” Overall and as mentioned before, Nigeria has the largest population of primary out-of-school children in the world (10.2 million in total, from which 3.8 million are girls), many of them in the northern states of the country (NEMIS, 2018). Among those counted as being out of school, a significant proportion attends unregistered Islamic and Qur’anic Schools, which in some cases outnumber registered schools.

Where learning outcomes have been measured, it has been demonstrated that “the majority of pupils in these northern states are failing to meet basic minimum standards in literacy and numeracy”¹⁶. Furthermore, factors such as teachers’ effectiveness based on their competencies vary depending on teaching contexts, language mastery, subjects, as well as workload and class size should be considered.

In the North-East and North-West states of Nigeria, the female primary net attendance ratio is 57.5 and 61.6 per cent respectively, which means that more than 40 per cent of girls are not currently in school (NEMIS, 2018).

Culturally speaking, Nigeria's major ethnic groups are Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo and Fulani. According to estimations from 2018, Hausa people make up 30 percent of the country's population (NDHS, 2018). Hausa is an ethnic group of people speaking the Hausa language. The Hausa are mainly present in West Africa, most of them living between Nigeria and Niger. Another 30 percent of Nigeria's population is constituted by Yoruba and Igbo people while about six percent of Nigerians are Fulani¹⁷.

Figure 1: Geopolitical map of Nigeria



¹⁶ Prospective evaluation of GPE's country-level support to education, Final report – year 2, January 2020.

¹⁷ Published by Simona Varrella, Feb 15, 2021, in Statista <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1203438/distribution-of-ethnic-groups-in-nigeria/>.

Nigeria is viewed as an economic powerhouse in the Sub-Saharan region and is rated as an emerging market¹⁸. Even though the country is projected to be one of the “Next Eleven” biggest economies of the world¹⁹, income and opportunities-related inequalities are also growing rapidly and are undermining poverty reduction efforts by the Government and donors. Other challenges include high levels of unemployment, regional inequality and socio-political unrest in the country.

1.2 Purpose of the programme

GEP3 was a ten-year project, running from 2012 to 2022, that aimed at ensuring more girls complete basic education and acquire skills for life and livelihoods in five northern Nigerian states. The states considered in this project were Katsina, Sokoto, Bauchi, Niger and Zamfara; with Kano joining in 2018.

The project aimed at **improving access, retention and learning outcomes for girls, and reducing the disparities between girls' and boys' education outcomes**. Over the long term (impact), the project sought to contribute to improved social and economic opportunities for girls in northern Nigeria. The project aimed at responding to the high burden of out-of-school girls prevalent in the northern Nigeria region²⁰.

In 2014 the project was re-designed and its Theory of Change²¹ simplified to become more strategic and systematic, which resulted in a more focused project. By eliminating some components and interventions, the focus was recentred on early learning outcomes. Moreover, since GEP3 was designed as a pilot and scale-up initiative, the two main phases were:

2012-2017 => pilot' and
2018-2020 => scaling-up.

As assessed in 2017, at that point the pilot interventions had already reached 210 public primary schools and 200 Integrated Qur'anic schools (IQSs) in each of the involved states. It is worth mentioning that during this pilot period, interventions were mainly funded by GEP3. By the end of the pilot period, GEP3 aimed to secure the state government's involvement to invest their resources to scale up local piloted interventions that had demonstrable results from 2018 until the end of the project.

The duration of the whole project was 10 years, initially from May 2012 to 30 April 2020. The total programme amount received was US\$89,367,192.37 of which \$81,762,802.98 had been spent by the end of March 2020, representing a 91 per cent overall expenditure rate. Through a Memorandum of Understanding among partners the project's duration was extended to 30th June 2021²². Further extensions occurred bringing the project's duration to 2022 and the total amount contributed by the FCDO to GBP79,029,241.85 (approximately \$109,109,762.23).

Generally speaking, GEP3 tackled a series of interventions organised in three output areas that, in turn, guided the evaluation effort:

- Output 1: Increased enrolment and retention of girls in basic education; (12.9 per cent of the budget)
- Output 2: Improved capacity of teachers to deliver effective learning for girls; (40.7 per cent of the budget), and
- Output 3: Improved governance to strengthen girls' education (26.6 per cent of the budget).

¹⁸ World Bank (WB), 2017. The World Bank in Nigeria: An Overview. [online] Available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nigeria>.

¹⁹ MINT Countries: Nigeria Now Listed Among Emerging World Economic Powers! The Street Journal. Available at: <http://thestreetjournal.org/2014/01/mint-countries-nigeria-now-listed-among-emerging-world-economic-powers/>.

²⁰ The total number of Out of School Children for Basic education estimated by UNICEF at the beginning of the programme was 3,530,035 children in the five states (UNICEF, ToR Final Evaluation Girls' Education Project Phase 3 (GEP3) in Northern Nigeria, August 2020).

²¹ Please refer to chapter on ToC and evaluation hypothesis.

²² EDOREN, 2016: Evaluation of UNICEF Girls' Education Project Phase 3 (GEP3), Draft Baseline Synthesis Report.

GEP3 also proposed initiatives that focus on tackling key obstacles identified as hindering full access to education for girls. UNICEF identified four main types:

- **Socio-cultural factors**, such as beliefs that efforts in girls' education are a poor family investment choice and presumptions about the projections of female and male social roles²³.
- **Economic factors** such as poverty spread practices of child labour, and weak supply chains of goods.
- **Constraints related to quality local governance**, material and staff capacity, and lack of financing of the education sector in general, in addition to the prevalence of violence in schools and communities impacting girls' education.
- **Socio-political situations** such as the prevalence of violence in local communities and schools, as well as growing overall insecurity²⁴ in the region due to activities of militia groups such as Boko Haram²⁵.

Based on the original project design, 12 strategic intervention fields were chosen, and they became the guidelines for the initiatives.

1. Enrolment drives
2. School grant cash transfer for learning and retention of girls in school
3. Girls for Girls groups under School-Based Management Committees and Community-based Management Committees
4. Capacity development of teachers and headteachers
5. Early literacy and numeracy intervention (i.e., reading and numeracy activity)
6. Capacity development of School-Based Management Committees
7. Support of effective data collection (e.g., Annual School Censuses in GEP3 states and Local Education Sector Operational Plans)
8. Inclusion of IQSs in the Education Management Information Systems
9. Promote increased representation and participation of women (e.g., High-level Women Advocates)
10. Girls Education Steering Committee as a forum to advocate for girls' education issues at national, state and LGA levels
11. Advocacy and advice to generate planning and budgeting to sustain interventions at a larger scale
12. Advocacy engagement to support interventions

²³ Omede and Agahiu (2016) The Implications of Girl-Child Education to Nation Building in the 21st Century in Nigeria, State College of Education, Nigeria. Global Journal of HUMAN-SOCIAL SCIENCE: G Linguistics and Education Volume 16 Issue 3 Version 1.0 Year 2016 Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal Publisher: Global Journals Inc. (USA) Online ISSN: 2249-460x & Print ISSN: 0975-587X.

²⁴ UNICEF, 2019 "Research on the Impact of Violence on Girls Education".

²⁵ <https://www.aljazeera.com/tag/boko-haram/>.

Context of Impact Areas

The National Strategy to End Child Marriage in Nigeria (2016-2021)²⁶ provides a clear picture of the gender issues within the context. A summary has been provided, which also draws from relevant literature²⁷.

The status of women in Nigeria is largely influenced by patriarchal values reinforced by religious laws in the northern states of Nigeria. For example, social roles reserved for each sex are characterised by the superiority of men and the subordination of women, resulting in gender-based discrimination. Men traditionally hold decision-making power and run economic and public affairs, while women are traditionally in charge of the domestic sphere and caring for children.

In those circumstances, parents often do not see the point of spending money on schooling for female children. Their focus is to prepare their daughter to be an obedient wife and a mother. Since it is expected that a girl will eventually leave her parents' home to live with her husband, parents prefer to marry off their daughter when they feel that she has reached physical, mental and emotional maturity. An individual is thought to reach adulthood at puberty, at which point they can be contracted into marriage. This has been preferred by poor families in rural areas as it reduces family responsibilities in the short term. Cultural norms in northern Nigeria associate a girl's virginity with family honour and suggest early marriages to prevent sexual assault, out-of-wedlock pregnancies and family dishonour. In North-eastern and North-western Nigeria, where child marriage is most prevalent, poor educational outcomes, a high rate of out-of-school girls, poverty, and insecurity (e.g., kidnapping of girls from schools in the region) are also rampant. Many families resort to child marriage to protect girls from violence associated with these social ills^{13,14}.

Furthermore, child labour exacerbates the situation and prevents its victims from actively participating in the teaching-learning process, preventing female pupils from attending school regularly, coming to school early, remaining in school till dismissal, or finishing the programme²⁸. It is recognised that child labour has a substantial negative impact on children's school attendance and is, therefore, a major obstacle to the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls¹⁵.

Therefore, quantifiable indicators of success were identified and were expected to reflect the success of GEP3, considering the social, religious and economic barriers that exist in northern Nigeria for girls to enter and stay in the education system. In terms of social obstacles identified, there was pressure to marry early and the need to render household girls a source of productive income.

The focus on targeting Integrated Qur'anic Schools (IQS) aimed at tackling gender-sensitive issues in that sector of the Nigerian education system, as well as reinforcing improvement of teaching and learning practices. This was particularly relevant as Islamic/Qur'anic institutions (IQS) are often socially favoured by parents as the schooling choice to send their daughters to (as compared to formal schools), because besides the specific curricula they develop, the IQS include the core national curriculum as well.

Considering UNICEF's equity agenda; considering the contextual realities; and addressing the needs of those communities that prioritise Islamic education above other options, it became relevant to incorporate those cultural factors into the institutions' plans for girls' education.

1.3 Programme components

The programme components were identified with the previous three outputs retained, which are:

<p>Output 1: Increased enrolment and retention for girls in basic education (economic household capacity improvement through cash transfer)</p>	<p>Output 2: Improved capacity of teachers to deliver effective learning for girls (pedagogical and methodological capacity-building skills and resources)</p>	<p>Output 3: Improved governance to strengthen girls' education (administrative and education management capacity-building skills and resources)</p>
--	---	---

²⁶ National Strategy to End Child Marriage in Nigeria 2016-2021 Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development.

²⁷ Child Marriage in Nigeria: Wedded to Poverty. Yale University. Yale Global Online.

²⁸ Situation Analysis of Children and Women in Nigeria 2011. Update UNICEF Nigeria.

1.4 Geographic spread

The final evaluation of GEP3 focused on the five original states where the programme was carried out: Bauchi, Katsina, Niger, Sokoto and Zamfara; and Kano (at the expansion stage). Analysis of data recognised the late entrant to the project – as Kano state was added to the list of intervention states in the last year of implementation, 2018. An overview of national progress of education impact indicators is presented to give a bigger picture of national progress toward Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which is “Quality Education: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”.

1.5 Beneficiaries and key stakeholders

The key beneficiaries and key stakeholders of GEP3 are listed below:

Beneficiaries

- ▶ Schools
 - a. Primary.
 - b. Junior Secondary (3,758 public schools and 3,308 IQS).
- ▶ 1.2 million girls (in the pilot phase) and the additional girls added in the expansion phase.
- ▶ Households (21,400 families).
- ▶ Head teachers.
- ▶ Teachers (female teachers).
- ▶ Parents.
- ▶ Local communities.
- ▶ State Governments.

Key stakeholders

The **primary stakeholder** of GEP3 was the Government of Nigeria represented by:

- ▶ The Federal Ministry of Education (FME).
- ▶ National Mass Education Commission (NMEC).
- ▶ The Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), State Ministry of Education (SMoE), State Agency for Mass Education (SAME).
- ▶ State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB).
- ▶ Local Government Areas (LGAs).
- ▶ Local Government Education Authorities (LGEAs).
- ▶ School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs).
- ▶ Community-based Management Committees (CBMCs).

The **secondary stakeholders** included the following:

- ▶ State Colleges of Education.
- ▶ Non-government organisations (NGOs).
- ▶ Community-based organisations (CBOs).
- ▶ Project beneficiaries (this included girls both in and out of school, female teachers, parents and local communities).
- ▶ Mothers' Associations (MAs).
- ▶ The state departmental heads (level of Director or Deputy Director).
- ▶ CSOs and technical service providers.
- ▶ Development partners (e.g., UNICEF, UNESCO, FCDO).

2. EVALUATION OBJECT

Table 1: Brief presentation of the object of the evaluation

Title of the project/programme	Girls' Education Project Phase Three (GEP3) 2012 - 2022 in northern Nigeria
Country	Nigeria
Sources of project funding	FCDO
Total budget	GBP79,029,241.85 (approximately US\$109,109,762.23)
Project duration	May 2021 - September 2022
Main objective	To improve basic education, as well as social and economic opportunities for girls
Components (axes, effects, products, etc.)	Output 1: Increased enrolment and retention of girls in basic education (12.9% of the budget) Output 2: Improved capacity of teachers to deliver effective learning for girls (40.7% of the budget) Output 3: Improved governance to strengthen girls' education (26.6% of the budget)
Expected beneficiaries	1,000,000 girls
Partners (institutional, implementing agencies)	FME, SOME, SUBEB, SAME, UBEC, LGEA

2.1 Key programme milestones

Throughout its implementation phase (2012–2022), GEP3 was the object of a series of evaluations and assessments, which allowed effective steering and adjustments to take place. The more regular assessments were the annual reviews that started in 2013. In the first annual review for GEP3, conducted in June 2013, it was found that “while GEP3 has improved significantly”, it remained crucial for UNICEF to address “significant technical weaknesses within the design and implementation” if the programme was to perform to expectations.

The second annual review (2014) noted that, although GEP3 was meeting output targets in several areas, significant issues and challenges remained due to the project design. It was noted that at that point, GEP3 proposed 30 indicators (more than twice the number recommended by FCDO). Their lack of clarity and accurateness was also underlined.

The unsuccessful attempts to revise GEP3 partially in 2013 culminated in the revision of the overall logic.

Problems with the original design, among others, were:

- The geographical scope was too large.
- The technical activities were spread too broadly (lack of focused, in-depth interventions).
- There was an absence of planning on management government capacities for scaling up and evaluating the impact of the new technical approaches generated by the project.
- A lack of capacity support identification (including M&E) needed by governmental partners to sustainably support the scaling up expected from most of the interventions was evident.
- Project staffing, management and monitoring approaches did not focus enough on creating collaborative working opportunities within state governments to promote sustainable scale-up of project interventions.

Because of the above, UNICEF recognised the need to redesign GEP3 in early 2014. This led to a more concrete, focused, and systemic approach and project design, later reflected in a revised ToC. This new version aimed at focusing on fewer, more streamlined, and cohesive interventions for the improvement of girls' education.

It is worth noticing that the newly identified key outcomes in this redesigning, and for which UNICEF was accountable, meant an incremental one million additional girls as targets of good basic education.

The main factors identified and retained after this thorough analysis as playing a role in supporting girls' education were evidence-based²⁹. It mainly stated that early school enrolment does play a key role in girls' chances of getting through basic education, as is staying within the educational system (enrolment and retention, output 1). In other words, the degree of success in the early-school years (P1 to P4) is a factor in the likelihood of school retention. In addition to this, as shown in GEP3's redesign, interventions had to tackle widespread recognition that education projects for excluded groups need to prioritise literacy and numeracy skills as well as regular mentoring of teachers alongside training (output 2).

Therefore, the set of more specific interventions³⁰ retained at school level was:

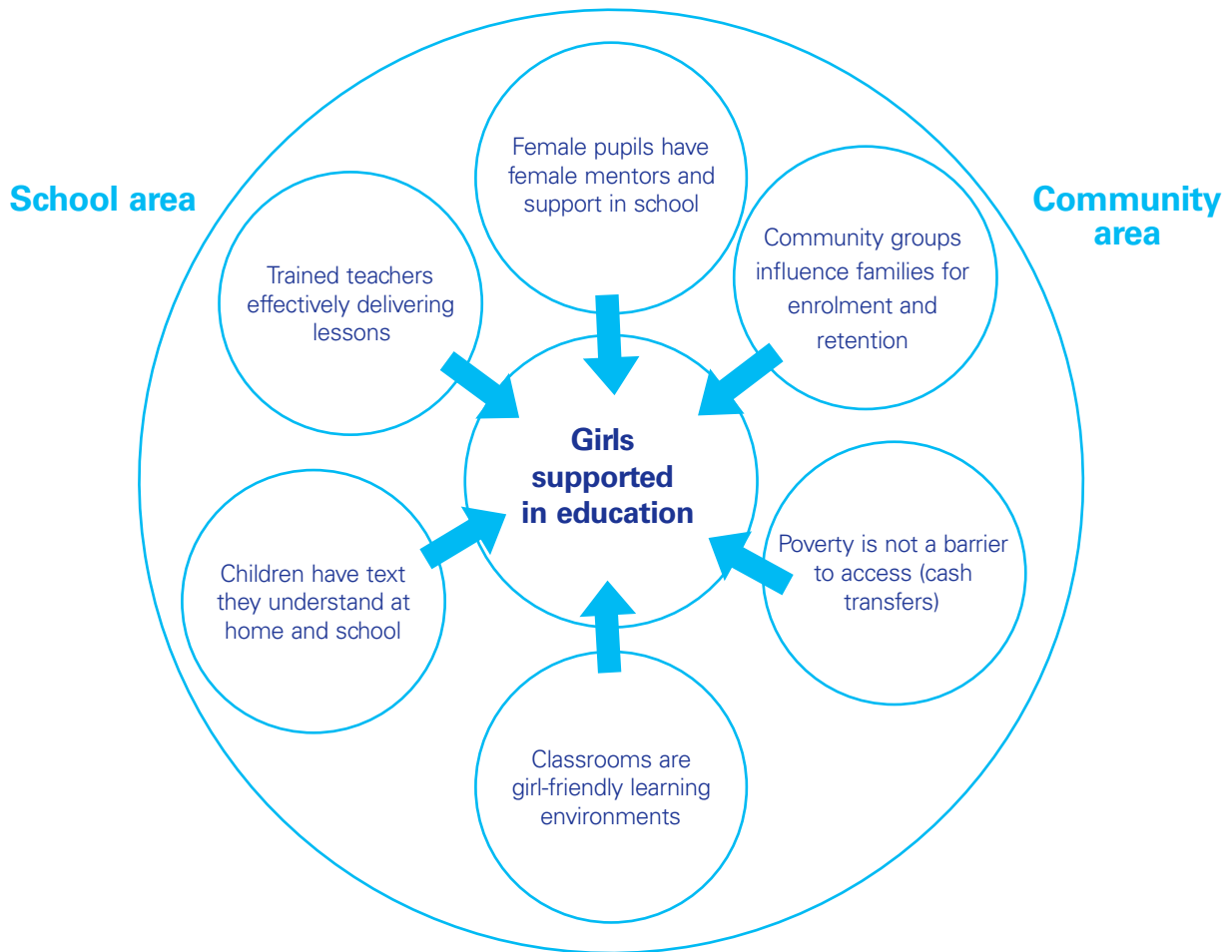
1. The local committees such as SBMCs/CBMCs, MAs and girls' groups (such as Girls for Girls) mobilise their communities in terms of enrolment and advocating to keep girls in school (aimed at addressing negative beliefs or perceptions).
2. The SBMCs/CBMCs, MAs and girls' groups mobilise resources within the local school's development plan to create safer, girl-friendly learning environments which will also strengthen teacher attendance. The aim is to improve school-based management and safety and reduce sexual harassment.
3. The poorest families receive cash to face the direct and opportunity costs of girls' education (aimed at reducing economic and child labour barriers).
4. Head teachers train teachers regularly at a local level and mentor them through advice from head teachers and regularly visiting school supervisors (aimed at improving teaching quality and teacher motivation; improving school management and safety and reducing sexual harassment).
5. Teachers learn specific strategies to boost children's foundational skills in literacy and numeracy, using languages that children understand (aimed at improving teaching quality).
6. Communities gaining support to increase the number of texts available to children in languages they understand through book banks and book boxes (overcoming poverty barriers to literacy).
7. Girls and women increasingly participate in shaping education; at a community level, in schools, in the wider education system, and in social and policy activity around education (challenging negative beliefs; promoting the better implementation of education policy and laws for girls).
8. Girls and boys attending integrated Qur'anic schools are statistically recognised as being in school through improved data collection.

²⁹ GEP3 "...has not yet adopted sufficient interventions to lay the foundations for learning in the early years of schooling. The logic of GEP3 depends on girls' learning key skills in the early years of school, for transition through later stages of education to meaningfully translate into increased life chances and economic opportunities, the intended impact of the project. " (HEART – GEP3 Annual Review 2013- Section 3.1) .Taken from UNICEF GEP3 Operational Plan, revised version of January 2015.

³⁰ UNICEF, GEP3 Operation Plan, revised version of January 2015.

Figure 2 illustrates the interlinking areas between school and community-level interventions.

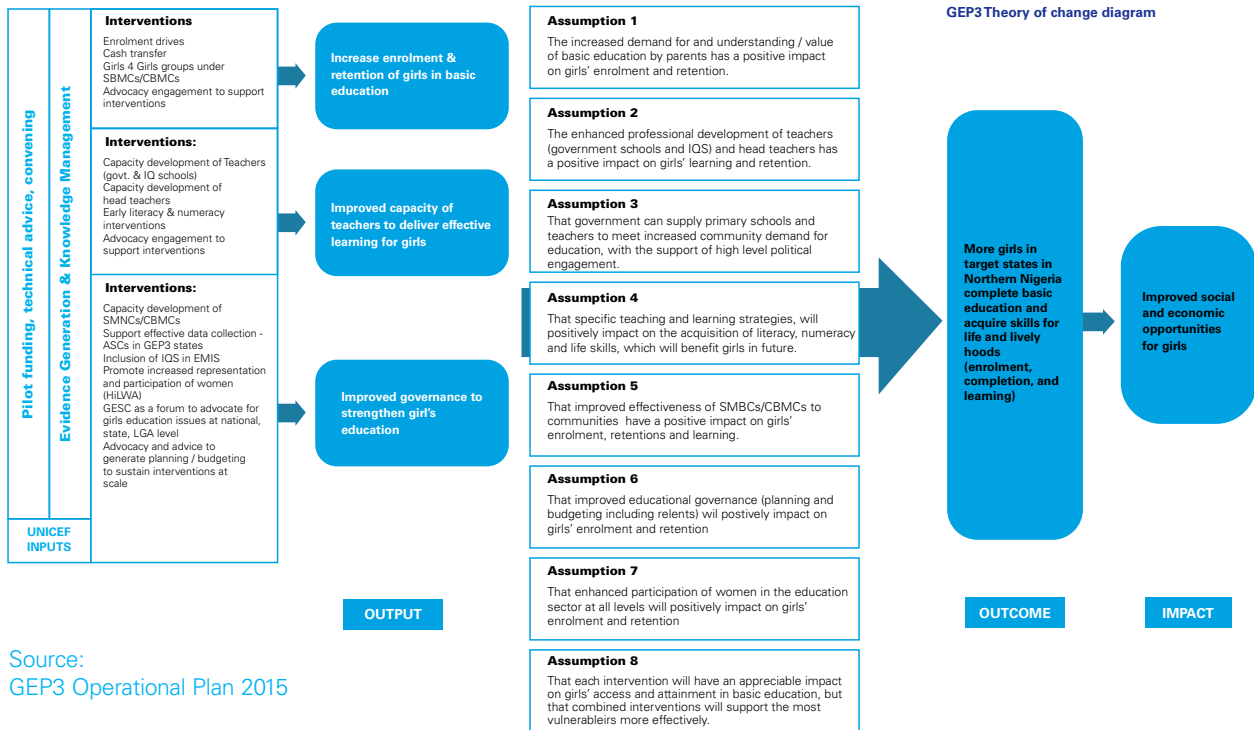
Figure 2: The interlinking areas between school and community-level interventions



2.2 Programme revised Theory of Change and Evaluation Hypothesis (core assumptions)³¹

As a result of GEP3 redesign and fine-tuning effort carried out in 2014, the final ToC model guiding the programme was finalised as illustrated in figure 3 below.

Figure 3: GEP3 Theory of Change



Source: GEP3 Operational Plan 2015

Eight assumptions that were expected to lead to the overall outcome of GEP3 were identified. They related logically to one or more outputs. They were as follows:

A. Assumptions related to output 1: Increased enrolment and retention of girls in basic education

- That increased demand for and understanding/value of basic education by parents and enhancing financial access of poor families to basic education for their daughters through CT **had a positive impact on girls' enrolment and retention.**
- That enhanced professional development of teachers (government schools and IQS) and head teachers **had a positive impact on girls' learning and retention.**

B. Assumptions related to output 2: improved capacity of teachers to deliver effective learning for girls

- That government **could supply primary schools and teachers** to meet increased community demand for education, **with the support of high-level political engagement.**
- That specific teaching and learning strategies did **positively impact the acquisition of literacy, numeracy and life skills, which benefitted girls in the future.**
- That **improved effectiveness** of SBMCs/CBMCs in communities **had a positive impact on girls' enrolment, retention, and learning.**

³¹ UNICEF GEP Operation Plan, revised January 2015, page 17.

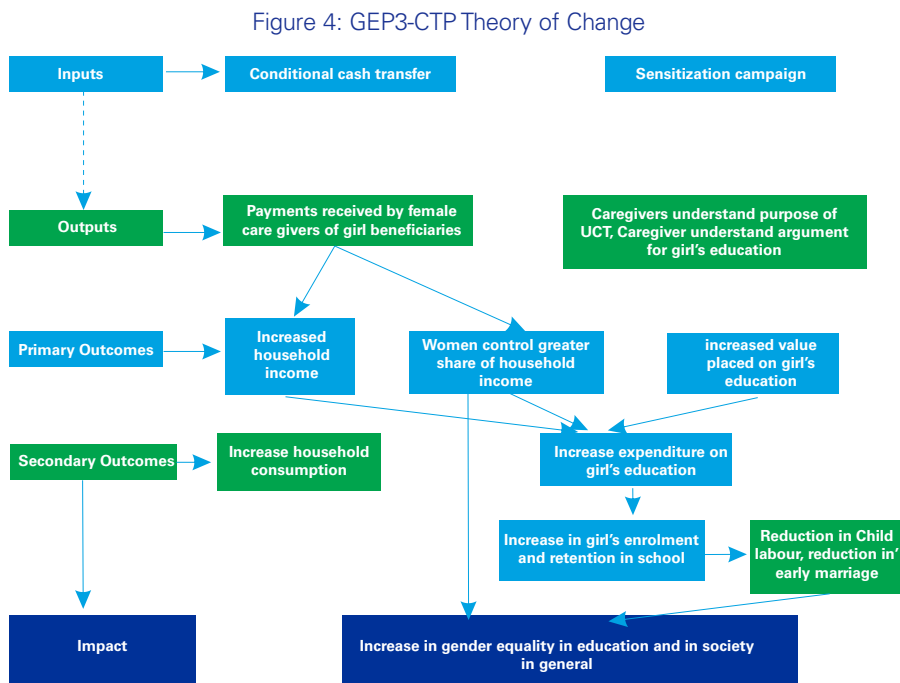
C. Assumptions related to both outputs (1 and 2): improved governance to strengthen girls' education and increased retention

- That **improved educational governance** (planning and budgeting including releases) **did positively impact girls' enrolment and retention.**
- That **enhanced participation of women in the education sector** at all levels **did positively impact girls' enrolment and retention.**

D. Comprehensive technical assumption

- Each intervention had an appreciable impact on girls' access and attainment in basic education, but the **combined interventions supported the most vulnerable girls more effectively.**

Moreover, a detailed ToC was designed specifically for GEP3-Cash Transfer Programme (CTP) as illustrated in Figure 4:



It is important to highlight that the choice for unconditional and universal cash transfer for girls' education was made in relation to assumptions more broadly targeting gender equity.

Those **key assumptions** were listed as follows:

If female caregivers of girl beneficiaries receive CT,

- (1) women would control a greater share of household income;
- (2) expenditure on education would increase as well as girls' enrolment and retention in schools;
- (3) child labour and early marriage would reduce, and
- (4) gender equity in education and society, in general, would increase.

In terms of **the intervention logic** followed by GEP3 programme, we synthesised it as follows:

Impact => Improved social and economic opportunity for girls

Outcome => More girls in target states in northern Nigeria complete basic education and acquire skills for life and livelihoods (enrolment, completion, and learning).

Results were delivered under three outputs, through the following intervention areas:

Output 1: Increased enrolment and retention of girls in basic education

- Community enrolment is driven by SBMCs, MAs with support from the state and LGEA.
- Action to build girl-friendly learning environments, creating better retention and demand for new access – SBMCs, MAs and G4G groups, using gender-sensitive whole school development plans.
- Action to improve attitudes towards girls' enrolment and completion through community campaigns, peer support to girls and family negotiation – by SBMCs, MAs and G4G groups.
- Cash transfer schemes to support families with the direct and opportunity costs of girls' basic education.

Output 2: Improved capacity of teachers to deliver effective learning for girls

- Head teacher training results in improved school management and pedagogical leadership.
- Frequent, local in-service training and mentoring improve teacher/IQS-facilitator teaching.
- Models of teacher training meet different levels of need according to context.
- Female teachers are prioritised in selection for training.
- Foundational learning is boosted through the early learning (literacy/numeracy) approach, with a focus on teaching and community support.

Output 3: Improved governance to strengthen girls' education

- Strengthen state mechanisms and capacity for collecting core education data (especially ASC) with a focus on sustainable inputs to data collection and management at federal and state levels.
- Include IQS into EMIS, consistent with project efforts to improve systematic management and monitoring of IQS.
- Promote women as role models and advocates for girls' education and women's participation in the education sector.
- Develop capacity to secure long-term structures and funding for monitoring and support to SBMCs, teachers and IQS facilitators: including increased FTSS deployment.
- Ensure that evidence from across the project is heard and acted on at State and Federal levels.
- Promote planning and decision-making processes that support evidence-based scale-up of interventions.

In addition to other criteria, the evaluation framework was organised according to the three output areas in the ToC, as well as the CTP, to support a quick and simple interpretation of results.

Among the impact areas expectations, UNICEF would have succeeded if:

- ▶ Approximately one million additional girls went to school (as compared to baseline data);
- ▶ Improved girls' survival rate was up to 80 per cent to Grade 5 by the school year 2019/20;
- ▶ 1.6 million girls were reached by improved teaching and girl-friendly learning environments;
- ▶ 42,000 primary and IQS teachers were trained and mentored in child-centred pedagogy;
- ▶ 15,300 head teachers were trained in school effectiveness, efficiency and curriculum management;
- ▶ 21,400 families had benefitted from cash transfers to encourage them to send their daughters to school and support their transition to JSS and SSS;
- ▶ Reliable and validated Annual School Censuses (ASC) existed in each state and were used for targeting resources for girls' basic education, and
- ▶ IQS was included as part of ASC.
- ▶ Additionally, as an indirect impact, an estimated 1.9 million boys would have also benefitted from GEP3's investments through improvements to teacher quality and school governance.

These indicators consistently guided the vast majority of all the interventions within the programme from 2015 on, as widely evident in yearly reviews and partial evaluations during the period. Notwithstanding, through the desk review carried out for the elaboration of the previous Inception report, evidence of early doubts on their full achievement was already pointed out by M&E staff in 2020.

Furthermore, it was already acknowledged in the Year 8 reporting period that, despite an overall scoring of A in terms of monitored indicators' achievement, the COVID-19 pandemic had already affected Nigeria as schools were closed in March 2020. It is also worth noting that there was a reduction in the intensity of the learning interventions in response to COVID-19. This meant that the planned activities to wrap up the programme in December 2020 could not be fully achieved.

In the monitoring GEP3 version of the Logical Framework (Logframe), indicators such as 1.1 (Percentage of school conducting enrolment drives according to GEP3 guidelines) it was already mentioned that "the assumption is that all schools, both from the project and the scale-up phase, follow the same guidelines. The risk was that COVID-19 could lead to the halting of various enrolment drive activities, particularly those that are school and community-based.

This was so mainly because of a prolonged closure of schools and state lockdowns³². Another example was Indicator 1.3 (number of girls receiving cash transfer) with the following added information, "schools efficiency can be accessed by their level of functionality using given criteria". With schools closed, so were the governance committees and school plan implementation committees. Cash transfers to some schools were halted as a risk mitigation measure. Or indicator 2.1 (Number of teachers and IQS facilitators trained) which is quoted as "Planned face to face training of teachers was stopped to prevent further spread of COVID-19. Alternate strategy of using ICT platforms is being met with challenges of insufficient connectivity and lack of hardware by the participants"³³.

In this sense, for the completion of key activities and a sustainable exit, the Annual Review 2020 recommended a further six-month extension of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) until the end of June 2021. This Annual Review did imply the continuation of some activities such as research and sustainability-related activities³⁴. Further extensions occurred bringing the project's duration to 2022 and the total amount contributed by the FCDO to GBP 79,029,241.85 (approximately US\$ 109,109,762.23).

³² GEP3 Reviewed Logical Framework.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ UNICEF, 2020 Annual GEP3 Report.

3. EVALUATION PURPOSE

This section **details** the evaluation purpose, objectives, evaluation criteria and evaluation questions – “**what**” **to be evaluated**, significance, stakeholders’ interests and uses, and the evaluation scope.

3.1 Evaluation purpose

The independent evaluation has two purposes, namely accountability and learning. It has provided both the donor (vertical accountability) and the expected beneficiaries (horizontal accountability) with solid evidence on the extent to which GEP3 Project fulfilled its expected results (impact, outcomes and outputs), transformations as indicated in the programmatic documents (Business Plan and Operational Plan) and results frameworks that were agreed upon with the donor before the start of implementation.

The evaluation considered the 2015 assessment report and recommendations that informed the redesign of the programme which resulted in changes to the results structure and operational plan. The evaluation will allow the dissemination of information on the actual results achieved back to those communities that were expected to benefit from this programme and the stakeholders whose tax money was used to fund this project (horizontal accountability).

With respect to learning, this evaluation should inform the education sector programme implementation strategies; provide evidence of best practices and innovations, and shed some light on potential corrective actions that may need to be explored further in the future. More specifically, this evaluation should generate evidence-based recommendations that will help UNICEF Nigeria and its partners to steer future programming in the education sector.

3.2 Overall utility of the evaluation

1. Opportunity to objectively assess and document GEP3-CTP achievements, successes, challenges, and lessons:

The evaluation provides an objective assessment of GEP3 and the results that were produced due to the interventions implemented. The evaluation proposes an external and objective view of what elements of the sector have not performed as desired and will provide recommendations for correcting systemic or future programmatic gaps. The FME is among the primary public-sector stakeholders highly interested in GEP3 impact evaluation.

2. Addresses evidence gaps identified within GEP3 M&E needs:

GEP3 Intervention Database Architecture (2019) noted that *“Past annual reviews of GEP3 highlighted the lack of reliable data and evidence for reliably assessing the achievement of the project due to weaknesses of the State and National EMIS. In addition to the challenges of delayed and unreliable quality of EMIS data, GEP3 did not invest in enough resources to develop an effective system for tracking all information and data generated within the implementation of its key inventions. This situation affects GEP3 reporting mechanisms – conflicting numbers in various reports while there is no administrative system to allow quality control and verification of data consistency.”*

While the need for a reliable M&E system to address this was indicated, this evaluation also supports the process by providing concrete evidence based on a reliable and valid assessment of GEP3.

3. Inform UNICEF and other stakeholders’ e.g. donors, CSOs, and future engagement in Nigeria:

This impact evaluation is significant for UNICEF and other stakeholders. UNICEF is the primary stakeholder, and the evaluation was commissioned to demonstrate UNICEF’s organisational commitment to accountability (by presenting results to both internal and external stakeholders) and learning. Thus, this evaluation has a substantial role to play in guiding and improving future country programming.

For donors and CSOs, the evaluation will supplement the body of knowledge available on educational learning outcomes and cash transfer programmes in Nigeria. The findings, and recommendations, will enable a better understanding of the current situation and any gaps and challenges and should inform donor and CSOs’ assistance and programmatic priorities.

3.3 Stakeholders' interests and uses of the evaluation

Tables 2 and 3 below detail the evaluation stakeholders, their interests, and possible uses of the evaluation. This write-up has been informed by the ToR, the virtual meeting with UNICEF, and the desk review.

Table 2: Primary evaluation stakeholders' interests and uses of the evaluation

Primary evaluation stakeholders			
Stakeholder	Role	Interest	Use
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Nigeria	UNICEF initiated this evaluation. Its role is to develop the ToRs of the evaluation and to recruit and manage the evaluation team. To review and finalise deliverables. To form the Evaluation Steering Committee (ESC), define its ToRs and co-chair it alongside the FME. UNICEF's responsibilities with the ESC include circulating deliverables among the ESC members to seek feedback, guiding the evaluation team, ensuring compliance with UNICEF standards/best practices, and coordinating with local stakeholders for field data collection.	To have an objective assessment of GEP3's impact as part of UNICEF's accountability to the government and the donor regarding the return on investment made by FCDO to Nigeria. In addition to this accountability objective, the evaluation also feeds into UNICEF's learning objectives. The evaluation allows for an appraisal of the strengthening of the education sector, especially in ensuring that more girls in target states in northern Nigeria complete basic education and acquire skills for life and livelihoods (enrolment, completion, and learning).	To inform the scope and scale of future assistance to the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) for Girls' Education. The evaluation shall add to the knowledge base regarding the strategic contribution of GEP3 programme in advancing the agenda of SDG 4 in marginalised localities of northern Nigeria. The evaluation is expected to generate recommendations that will inform future education sector programme implementation strategies and provide insight into potential corrective actions.
Federal Ministry of Education (FME)	The FME collaborated with UNICEF on the initiation of the evaluation, and they are as important as UNICEF. The FME is the lead public entity on the ESC. The FME's role in the evaluation is to review and provide input on the evaluation ToRs, issue the clearance for the data collection activities of the evaluation, and provide access to relevant documents and data. Additionally, FME will facilitate coordinating meetings with federal, state, and local level officials and other stakeholders.	The interests of the FME mostly match those of UNICEF. The evaluation will provide insight to the FME into the strengths and weaknesses of GEP3. To better understand the value added by UNICEF through GEP3, the FME expects to know what worked well and how and what did not work and why. In addition, the evaluation is expected to provide insights as to the extent that COVID-19 has impacted the expected results of GEP3 outputs 1, 2 and 3; and what difference the mitigation interventions deployed made.	The evaluation is expected to provide recommendations for the FME future education sector strategic and evidence-based planning, refining strategies, and leveraging partnerships and public investment for scaling up innovative approaches. The FME will use the evaluation for evidence-based public advocacy to leverage large-scale public-private partnerships and adequate investment in the education sector, scale up innovative strategies and approaches revealed by the assessment and accelerate progress toward SDG-4.

Stakeholder	Role	Interest	Use
States Ministries of Education (SMoE) SUBEB UBEC SAME	The role of the SMoE in the evaluation is to review and provide input on the evaluation ToRs, to issue the clearance for the data collection activities of the evaluation at the states' levels, and to provide access to relevant documents and data. Additionally, the SMoE will facilitate coordinating meetings with state and local level officials and other stakeholders. The SMoE, SUBEB, UBEC stakeholders may be in the ESC	Similar interests with the FME	The SMoE and other state-level agencies will use the evaluation to develop, fund, and implement evidence-informed State Education Strategic Plans; and introduce more innovative interventions as part of the acceleration strategy, including in response to the (post) COVID-19 era.
FCDO	Involved in the planning of the evaluation and holds significance as a funder and key stakeholder.	To gauge the return on investments made through UNICEF for GEP3 in Nigeria.	The evaluation will be used to inform future education programming and investment and ensure better realignment of programme support and accountability at all levels.

Table 3: Secondary Evaluation Stakeholders' interests and uses of the evaluation

Secondary evaluation stakeholders			
Stakeholder	Role	Interest	Use
Ministry of Budget and National Planning	Not involved in the planning of the evaluation. However, holds significance as a key respondent. The MBNP may be represented in the ESC.	To understand the strengths and weaknesses of the education sector in Nigeria better.	Will use the evaluation to ensure adequate evidence-based National Budget Planning for the education sector; adopt a rigorous method of use of Theory of Changes for deliberations on the budget.
Other development partners	Not involved in the planning of the evaluation. However, holds significance as a funder and key stakeholder.	To gauge the return on investments made through UNICEF for GEP3 in Nigeria.	The evaluation will be used to inform future education programming and investment and ensure better realignment of programme support and accountability at all levels.

Stakeholder	Role	Interest	Use
National Education Group; Education Development Partners Group	Not involved in the planning of the evaluation. However, holds significance to key respondents and stakeholders.	Increased knowledge on the strategic contribution of this programme in advancing the agenda of SDG4 in marginalised localities of northern Nigeria in favour of better Gender Equality for children in education.	Will use the evaluation to ensure adequate evidence-based National Budget Planning for the education sector; adopt a rigorous method of use of Theory of Changes for deliberations on the budget.
CSOs and the Nigerian Association of Evaluators (NAE)	Not involved in the planning of the evaluation. However, holds significance as a key respondent. Some of these organisations may be represented in the ESC.	To understand the strengths and weaknesses of the education sector in Nigeria better.	Follow up on findings and recommendations to inform advocacy; strengthen sensitisation among communities on the value of education against the negative vices of child labour and early marriages; strengthen advocacy within the CSO and donors towards judicious use of funds.
Private Sector	Not involved in the planning of the evaluation. However, holds significance as a key stakeholder.	To understand the strengths and weaknesses of the education sector in Nigeria better.	Inform Resource mobilisation and shared value approach (formerly Corporate Social Responsibility) strategies in favour of basic education.
Communities (parents, caregivers) girls, boys, and local leaders	Not involved in the planning of the evaluation, however, holds significance key respondents and stakeholders.	Communities, including leaders, will have an interest in knowing how far the programme has contributed to improving Girls' Education. In addition, how the programme has contributed to raising awareness and a demand for basic education for girls, including any impact on the poor and other vulnerable groups.	Social Equity strengthened – Education investments have the highest impact when directed to the poor and less privileged groups, those at risk of missing education due to a lack of opportunities.
States Ministries of Budget and National Planning	Not involved in the planning of the evaluation. However, holds significance as a key respondent. The state's MBNP may be represented in the ESC.	To understand the strengths and weaknesses of the education sector in the states and in Nigeria better.	Will use the evaluation to ensure adequate evidence-based State Budget Planning for Education Sector; adopt a rigorous method of use of the Theory of Changes for deliberations on the budget.

4. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

This section **details** the evaluation objectives.

4.1 Evaluation objectives

The evaluation focused on two components: GEP3 2012–2022 in the six focal states and GEP3-CTP in Sokoto and Niger states.

1. The evaluation of the overall GEP3 in the six focal states aimed to:
 - a. Determine the merit of GEP3 in terms of achievement of expected results related to the impact, outcomes and outputs of access and retention of girls to basic education and the quality of learning outcomes of basic education in northern Nigeria as planned within the initial business case and operational plan.
 - b. Document the resilience of communities and families in support of girls' education in northern Nigeria, particularly in support of access and retention.
 - c. Understand the most significant drivers of educational participation and performance of girls within the implementation states to enhance the effectiveness and impact of future interventions.
 - d. Analyse the value for money (VfM) regarding GEP3 programme implementation and approaches to community and gender transformation within the target areas.
 - e. Assess GEP3 preparedness and response to external setbacks such as the COVID-19 pandemic; insecurity including insurgency.
 - f. Provide strategic recommendations for future investments and initiatives to advance gender equity and equality in education.

2. The evaluation of GEP3-CTP was in line with the impact evaluation of 2017, which served as a baseline for this study, and aimed to:
 - a. Determine the relevance of GEP3-CTP in Niger and Sokoto states.
 - b. Assess the effectiveness of GEP3-CTP in Niger and Sokoto states.
 - c. Assess the impact of GEP3-CTP in Niger and Sokoto states.
 - d. Assess the efficiency of GEP3-CTP in Niger and Sokoto states.
 - e. Determine the sustainability of GEP3-CTP in Niger and Sokoto states.

5. EVALUATION SCOPE

5.1 Thematic scope

This independent evaluation assessed the contributions that GEP3 made to the education sector and explored the merits and shortfalls in the programmatic areas of access, quality and governance of education in the six focal states across northern Nigeria. In addition, it provided an objective assessment of the results obtained – what worked, what didn't and why – and the enabling factors and barriers to success. This was especially important in evaluating the impact, outcomes and outputs and in relation to the Business Plan and Results Frameworks.

Based on the initial M&E plan and the recommendations from the annual review, this resulted in an overview of all twelve strategic interventions with a focus on six prioritised programmatic components.

1. Management for school enrolment and retention
2. School grant cash transfers for learning and retention of girls in school
3. Capacity development and teacher training for improved quality and learning outcomes
4. Empowerment of communities and women to advocate for education in schools, communities and in the wider education system
5. Support for monitoring and evidence generation as part of system strengthening
6. Data generation and usage for decision-making at micro-level classroom, school and community

Selected interventions for this assessment were chosen based on recommendations from the annual report and previous evaluations.

5.2 Geographical scope

The evaluation of GEP3 focused on the six states of the project: **Bauchi, Katsina, Niger, Sokoto, Zamfara and Kano**. Analysis of data took cognisance of late entrants to the project like Kano state, which was added to the list of intervention states in the last year of implementation.

An overview of national progress of education impact indicators is also presented to provide the context (a big picture) of national progress toward SDG 4. For GEP3-CTP, the focus was on Sokoto and Niger states.

5.3 Chronological scope

This evaluation covered the duration of the investment from 2012 to June 2021 and not the entire implementation period for GEP3, which was extended to 2022³⁵.

A recapitulation of findings and lessons learned from previous partial evaluations were capitalised in line with the independent evaluation of GEP3-CTP component completed in 2017 and the mid-term evaluation of GEP3 in 2017.

³⁵The GEP3 costed extension (August 2021 to September 2022) was approved after 19 months of the inception of the GEP3 evaluation. The programme for the costed extension phase maintained the GEP3 outputs, but new activities have been developed to consolidate the gains and build-on previous interventions, with some specifically targeting adolescent girls in junior secondary schools instead of s in primary schools. The programmatic shift was meant to build the foundation for potential future FCDO/UNICEF partnerships and programming on girls' education specifically focused on learning and transition for adolescent girls. Key interventions under Output One include: 1) Support Safe Schools Mechanism through community-school partnerships; 2) Develop a national life skill framework for adolescents and young people; 3) Provide girls with Education Support Kits and Menstrual Hygiene Management skills; and 4) Support transitions for girls through establishing G4G and He for She, and community-based adolescent girls transition champions. Interventions under Output Two include: 1) Develop the teacher management and support mechanism; 2) develop responsive assessment framework; and 3) Conduct RANA impact assessment. Output Three interventions include: 1) Roll out Education Sector Performance Assessment Tool; and 2) Support demonstration of digitizing EMIS real-time data generation.

6. CRITERIA AND EVALUATION QUESTIONS

6.1 Evaluation criteria

The overall evaluation design and approach have been closely informed by the ToR and by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD), Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria that have been integrated into the evaluation framework.

The OECD/DAC evaluation criteria of **relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability** were used for GEP3 evaluation. In addition, the criteria of **equity, gender equality and resilience** were used in the assessment to fit the programming context and UNICEF's commitment to advance the agenda on the equal chance of child rights.

At the **strategic level** in the assessment of **relevance**, special attention was given to the design of GEP3 and its correspondence with global and national priorities, national policymaking on education, poverty reduction and social protection. Particular attention was given to the education needs of the beneficiaries in the community, including integrating considerations for gender equality.

At the **operational level, an assessment of the programme's effectiveness, impact and sustainability** ensured there was **equity** for the most vulnerable children to access GEP3. CTP services, gender and other factors related to the underserved population were also reviewed.

The extent to which the programmes were **resilient** to internal and external setbacks was also assessed, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. **The governance of education** in northern Nigeria was also explored.

An inventory of **good practices** and **lessons learned** has also been compiled to enable evidence-based decisions for implementation and policymaking.

Furthermore, the additional criteria of independence, objectivity, transparency, validity, reliability, partnership, and usability were safeguarded in the evaluation by ensuring that:

- None of the evaluation members has been closely involved in GEP3 (including CTP) initiative, there are no conflicts of interest, and the team guarantees its independence;
- Verifiable facts were collected towards measurable indicators;
- Robust methods of measurement were used over time to ensure the validity of measurements and reliability of findings;
- A clear distinction has been made in the evaluation report between facts and opinions of the evaluation team;
- Results have been shared in a timely and transparent fashion;
- The methodology, findings, conclusions, and recommendations have been clearly described;
- The results, questions and methodology were clearly described and agreed upon with key stakeholders before the evaluation activities started;
- There was the involvement of key stakeholders in the establishment of the theory of change, contextual analysis, implementation, and policy-making issues – and they were invited to present their perspectives and views through participatory workshops at different levels;
- There was regular and structured consultation with the Evaluation Reference Group;
- There was a close partnership with national field researchers, and
- The formulation of conclusions and recommendations were designed to be clear and useful for GEP3.

The evaluation team, which is made up of professionals from different disciplines and different backgrounds such as Education, Child Protection, Public Health, Evaluation, Social Sciences and Finance, has ensured that the evaluation was conducted to high professional standards, with open and enquiring minds, and free from any form of discrimination or prejudice.

6.2 Evaluation questions

The evaluation questions for each criterion of GEP3, are as follows:

Relevance and Coherence

- i. To what extent has the Girls' Education Project Phase Three (GEP3) expected results (impact, outcomes and outputs) and design responded to beneficiaries' global, country and partner/institution needs, policies and priorities considering the evolving circumstances? (Is GEP3 doing the right thing?)
- ii. To what extent did other interventions (particularly policies) support or undermine GEP3 intervention, including internal and external coherence? (How well does the programme fit?)
- iii. To what extent is the CTP coherent with the broader policy environment at state and federal levels including education, social protection, gender policies and other interventions (e.g., supply-side improvements in the education sector)?
- iv. Is the CTP intervention appropriate in terms of design and delivery approach, given the contextual realities in Niger and Sokoto states and to what extent were the needs and priorities of targeted beneficiaries/local partners consistent with the CTP objectives and deliverables?

Effectiveness

- i. To what extent did GEP3 achieve its expected results (outcomes and outputs) agreed within the business plan including any differential results across states in the three main strategic areas of access, quality and governance of the education sector?
- ii. What are the factors (internal and external to UNICEF) that contributed the most to the attainment of GEP3 programme, and results?
- iii. What are the factors (internal and external to UNICEF) that hindered the attainment of GEP3 programme results?

Impact

- i. To what extent has GEP3 achieved the expected results related to impact defined in the business plan?
- ii. Has GEP3 generated significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects at the community and state levels?
- iii. What long-term transformative change or difference did the programmes have on communities, institutions and children?

Efficiency

- i. To what extent has GEP3 delivered results in an economic and timely way (How well were resources used?)
- ii. To what extent were the results delivered cost-effectively with the available resources?
- iii. Does the impact justify the cost of the programme?

Sustainability

- i. To what extent are the net benefits of interventions likely to continue after the UNICEF support has stopped?
- ii. How likely are the benefits (including resilience to risk) to last and under which conditions?
- iii. Is there sufficient government capacity to implement and monitor a government-supported CTP in Niger and Sokoto states?
- iv. Should the CTP, or a variant of it, be scaled up to the state level? If the programme is to be scaled up, which aspects of the operation must be modified and strengthened for it to operate effectively at the state level? Which aspects of the programme should remain the same?

Equity and Gender Equality

- i. To what extent has GEP3 addressed inequalities in education and incorporated gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls into the design, implementation and results achieved?

Resilience

- i. To what extent was the project resilient to internal and external setbacks (economic, conflicts, the pandemic, etc.)?
- ii. To what extent has GEP3 programme responded effectively to risks and threats?

In addition, Annex 1 displays the **Evaluation Matrix** which details the objectives, questions, indicators, sources of information and analytical methods of GEP3 evaluation.

7. METHODOLOGY

7.1 Design of the evaluation

The goal of the evaluation was to determine **if, how, where, why and for whom** the interventions worked. Understanding these aspects can then inform the sustainability and future of the programme and provide guidance for national policymakers and decision makers. The best way to respond to this was to use a mixed-methods approach that combined qualitative and quantitative methods.

A quasi-experimental **longitudinal panel design** was used that tracked a cohort of schools over the project's life. The design was developed to simulate a **"before-and-after"** approach as well as **with/without** comparison.

- To create the **"before"** component, we used the available baseline studies relating to the cohort. Baseline data from previous learning outcomes assessments and HH surveys were used for this evaluation. For Niger and Sokoto states, we used baseline data from the impact evaluation of the 2014-2016 Cash Transfer Programme. For Bauchi, Katsina, Zamfara and Niger states, we used the EDOREN Baseline and Midline Evaluations of GEP3 as the baseline in the assessment of learning outcomes. For Kano, baseline studies were not available. Secondary analysis of the 2013 National Demographic health survey (NDHS) and the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) of 2011 was analysed to establish "tracer's indicators" at state levels.
- To create the **"after"** component, we conducted school-based surveys for the six focal states of GEP3 programme areas and HH surveys in four focal states. Comparison sites at LGA level were identified, though previous (survivor) beneficiaries at the school level could not be tracked since many had moved on from the schools. However, beneficiaries and their caregivers at HH level could be tracked. The study involved the ultimate and indirect beneficiaries ("Was there a change? What were the enabling factors? What were the disabling factors?"). Besides the secondary analysis of project/programme data, to determine whether there was an effect on the access and retention of girls to basic education, secondary analysis of the NDHS (2018) and MICS (2016 and 2021) data were carried out to identify effects on educational outcomes.
- To understand the impact of GEP3, we assessed trends and associations via secondary data analysis of the MICS (2011; 2016; and 2021) and where necessary, the NDHS (2013 and 2018). The HH survey data from the Evaluation Primary Data Collection was used to assess the outcomes and impact of CTP on girls' education – specifically related to access, retention and completion; and household consumption and expenditure. For quality of learning outcomes and impact, we carried out a pupil school-based assessment survey to measure the learning outcomes of learners in Hausa and English Literacy. Data from baseline and midline evaluations of GEP3 were compared.
- A **"with/without"** comparison of intervention areas versus non-intervention areas was carried out. Intervention LGAs and schools, as well as comparison schools, were sampled. A **non-experimental statistical method** – Propensity Score Matching (PSM) – was used to evaluate the effect of the GEP3 on outcomes. The household and school survey data were used to create reasonable comparison populations based on the propensity scores and address the issue of observed selection bias. The robustness and correctness of the matching results were checked by conducting balance diagnostics and common support analyses as well as through estimation of a weighted least square (WLS) with propensity score as the weights. Using the PSM enabled us to generate a comparison of household heads/caregivers and pupils that had similar characteristics to the selected intervention household heads/caregivers and pupils to allow comparisons to be made between these "matched" populations.
- Further, we estimated the causal outcome links by comparing the intervention and counterfactual areas. The **difference-in-differences (DID)** method was used to compare changes and trends in the project's key results over time between the intervention and comparison groups. This allowed for the correction of any differences between the intervention and comparison groups that remained constant over time. This approach assumes that the primary outcomes of interest in the intervention and comparison groups would move in tandem in the absence of the project. All DID estimates were adjusted for baseline characteristics illustrated with attribution and magnitudes of the changes observed.

- A **concurrent design** was employed for the systematic use of **mixed methods**. The **qualitative research** component provided a rich understanding of relationships, trends, and patterns emerging from the quantitative component and helped triangulate survey results to confirm, dispute, or provide answers to contradictory and unexpected results from the quantitative evaluation. Using this mixed-methods approach, **quantitative outcome/impact evidence** was complemented by narrative causal statements collected directly from parents, head teachers, teachers, girl beneficiaries, the Ministry of Education and relevant government stakeholders, and communities via focus group discussions (FGDs) and semi-structured and key informant interviews (KII). The respondents were asked about the main changes during the relevant recall period. They were prompted to share what they perceived to be the main drivers of these changes and to whom or to what they attributed these changes. Since these drivers were complex and from multiple sources, these narrative causal statements were suitable for identifying linkages of intervention with their impacts and their complex relationships.
- The **Most Significant Change (MSC)** tool was used with direct, indirect and ultimate beneficiaries. The MSC's purpose is to facilitate programme improvement by focusing on the directions and changes as valued by the various stakeholders. It is also called the "story approach" and "evolutionary approach to organisational learning." Stakeholders were involved in selecting the changes to be followed up, over time, changes may be appreciated. Storytelling was used to evoke stakeholders' answers of the key question:

"Looking back over this period, in your perception, what do you think the most significant change was due to GEP3 and the Cash Transfer Programme?"

7.2 Methods and data collection tools

7.2.1 Quantitative methods

7.2.1.1 Household survey for cash transfer and performance on access

Household surveys measured the effectiveness and impact of cash transfers during the implementation of GEP3-CTP interventions. The aim of the household data questionnaire was to collect data on household income and expenditure, girls' contribution to household income, rationales for schooling and benefits from the cash grant allocation. Retrospective recall was used by asking **before and after** questions to assess the impact of the cash transfers. The household survey also provided an opportunity to measure the indicators related to access to education (e.g., completion rate, retention, transition, net enrolment ratio, gender parity, equity analysis and the presence of disabilities) (see Annex 2).

7.2.1.2 School survey for assessing pupils' learning outcomes and teachers' opinions

To measure pupils' numeracy, Hausa and English literacy skills, we conducted interviews with head teachers, classroom observations and head counts and assessments of pupils' learning outcomes in the six focal states. Trends in literacy and numeracy outcomes were analysed and baselines were established for subsequent evaluations in Kano and Sokoto. School-based assessment surveys of pupils were undertaken to measure the learning outcomes in English and Hausa literacy at baseline for Zamfara, Katsina, Bauchi and Niger. No learning assessments were conducted in Kano or Sokoto during the two previous EDOREN learning outcomes evaluations and Bauchi and Niger states had previous numeracy assessments conducted at baseline but not midline. Unfortunately, the increased insecurity risks in most of the target states impacted data collection. Out of a total target sample of 9,898 pupils, 5,450 pupils were evaluated in the school-based pupil learning assessment survey.

Teachers and school characteristics were captured during interviews with head teachers to understand the effects of teacher and school-related inputs on the learning outcomes of children (see Annex 3: Head teacher questionnaire).

Various tools used in previous GEP3 evaluations were reviewed to determine the most appropriate tools to be used for the end-line evaluation. The most appropriate for this evaluation was the baseline and midline evaluations of GEP3 which used the Pupil English Literacy Assessment for P2

and Pupil Hausa Literacy Assessment for P2 to measure the learning outcomes of pupils.

The Pupil English Literacy Assessment for P2 and Pupil Hausa Literacy Assessment for P2 were replicated and the Numeracy Assessment tools was used at the baseline and midline GEP3 evaluations. This enabled standardisation, harmonisation, coherence and comparison with previous measurements. It also enabled a clear trend analysis from baseline to end-line of GEP3. The learning outcomes assessment tools are presented in Annex 5.

7.2.1.3. Value for money – financial data analysis

To appreciate the efficiency, or Value for Money (VfM) of the programme, financial data collection on inputs and expenses was carried out at programme level, to indicate the costs at which the eventual results have been delivered. To analyse the VfM of GEP3, the requirements included:

- GEP3 standard operational procedure (SOP) and guidelines for GEP3 management;
- Procurement policy for the programme;
- Budget follow-up for each programme component/intervention and the consolidated version at national and state levels;
- Guidelines for preparing the budgets for the programme and components at national and state levels; and
- Financial reports for the programme for all the components and the consolidated version at state and national levels.

7.2.1.4. Secondary quantitative data analysis

Secondary data from population surveys like MICS 2011 and 2016-2017 were used to analyse trends of relevant outcomes and impact indicators at national and state levels. This included data to assess changes attributable to the project in terms of expected outcomes, to fulfil the fundamental requirements of assessing **learning, transition and sustainability**, as well as to generate **meaningful learning**. Results of the estimated indicators from MICS 2021 will be included in this report when the 2021 MICS report is released.

7.2.2. Qualitative methods

7.2.2.1. Desk review

To develop an appropriate evaluation design, data collection tools and data collection process, we conducted an extensive review of GEP3 programme and project documents, including but not limited to:

- UNICEF project monitoring data, annual reports
- GEP3 Theory of Change
- GEP3 monitoring evaluation and learning (MEL) framework and operational plan
- GEP3 log frame
- Baseline and midline reports
- Cash transfer impact evaluation reports
- Nigeria Poverty Reduction Strategy
- Other relevant documents that were made available during the inception phase

The desk research also helped to establish contextual nuances within which GEP3 was implemented that may have determined programme outcomes.

Other documents reviewed include MICS 2011, MICS 2016, MICS 2021, NDHS 2013, NDHS 2018, Project Intervention Monitoring Data-Donor Report, State EMIS Report, Learning Assessment 2015 and Evaluation School Survey Learning Assessment 2020 and the Education Census. A comprehensive list of documents reviewed is included in Annex 4.

7.2.2.2. Key informant interviews

These semi-structured interviews (SSI) of key partnership stakeholders included GEP3 officials, training facilitators, head teachers, project staff and ministry staff at federal and state levels. UNICEF and other stakeholders of interest were interviewed to explore relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, equity, gender and equality, as well as resilience and sustainability. They also reflected on how the programme worked in different contexts and with the planned implementation structures and processes.

7.2.2.3. Focus group discussions (FGDs)

Participatory FGDs with parents and caregivers (men and women), SBMCs and CMBCs, women's associations such as HiLWA, adolescents such as participants from Girls 4 Girls, teachers, community leaders and religious groups reflected on the uptake of GEP3 interventions. These groups explored emerging trends, tensions, enablers and barriers to the programme's effectiveness, process and successes. Qualitative interviews assessed beneficiaries' satisfaction with GEP3. We also conducted participatory focus group discussions with school children and out-of-school children to capture children's voices and perceptions. Teachers recruited FGD participants (girls and boys) from GEP3 schools. Out-of-school girls and boys were also recruited to identify the barriers to access and retention for those groups. For men and women from the communities, community mobilisers in the data collection team worked with the community leaders (the gatekeepers) to identify suitable respondents. Informed consent forms and topic guides for FGDs and KIIs can be found in Annexes 6, 7 and 8.

Classroom observations were carried out in the intervention schools. The classroom observation tool was used during the baseline and midline evaluations. The observation tool was used to assess the quality of teaching practices, supportive environment, lesson facilitation and checks for understanding (see Annex 9).

7.3 Sampling strategy

7.3.1. Identification of treatment and comparison groups

In each of the initial five GEP3 pilot states (Bauchi, Katsina, Niger, Sokoto and Zamfara), the six LGAs were purposively selected for the evaluation of early learning intervention (treatment) using the criteria of length of GEP3 intervention. Kano state, as a late entrant into the programme, was included primarily as an expansion location in this study. (See Table 4 below).

Table 4: Project states and selected LGAs

State	GEP3-CTP (Pilot)			GEP3 (Pilot)		GEP3 (Expansion)
	Niger	Sokoto	Bauchi	Katsina	Zamfara	Kano
	Agaie	Binji	Alkaleri	Batsari	Anka	Gwale
	Gbako	Bodinga	Ganjuwa	Baure	Bungudu	Nassarawa
	Mariga	Goronyo	Ningi	Faskari	Kaura Namoda	Ungongo
	Mashegu	Gudu	Shira	Kankara	Shinkafi	Sumaila
	Munya	Kebbe	Toro	Kankia	Talata Mafara	Dambatta
LGAs	Rafi	Wurno	Zaki	Rimi	Tsafe	Kano Municipal

Sampled GEP3 schools for the evaluation were drawn from the 210 schools and 200 IQS in each LGA across the pilot states. In Niger and Sokoto states three study groups were used where the CTP was implemented, namely GEP3 learning-CTP group; GEP3 learning-only group and the non-GEP3 group. The first two groups were treatment groups whilst the last one served as a comparison group. This allowed us to measure the combined impact of both the early learning intervention and CTP in addition to assessing the impact of the early learning intervention only, where necessary. In three pilot states of Bauchi, Katsina and Zamfara where there was no CTP intervention, we had two study groups, namely GEP3 learning-only group and the non-GEP3 group.

In all the comparison groups, a random selection of schools was drawn mainly from the pool of non-GEP3 schools within the same GEP3 LGAs. In situations where GEP3's early learning interventions were expanded to most other schools within the same LGA (e.g., Binji and Wurno LGAs in Sokoto state; and Anka, Bungudu, Shinkafi, Talata Mafara and Tsafe LGAs in Zamfara state), non-contaminating school lists from a non-GEP3 LGA was utilised for random selection into comparison groups. To avoid contamination, any non-GEP3 schools receiving similar learning programmes from other partners were dropped from the pool before a random selection was made.

7.4. Quantitative sampling strategies

In estimating the appropriate sample size for this evaluation, we explored two well-known approaches namely, the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) standardised formula; and Power Calculations.

7.4.1. Determination of sample size of pupils using MICS sample Determination Formula

For the pupil school-based assessment survey, we used the literacy proficiency level of pupils as the primary indicator for the calculation of sample size to measure the learning outcomes of pupils against the baseline. The pupil literacy proficiency level reported by the 2010 Nigeria Education Data Survey (NEDS), which is a nationally representative survey, was employed as baseline values in estimating the sample size using the MICS sample size formula below:

$$n = \frac{4 * r * (1-r) * deff}{(RME * r)^2 * pb * AveSize * RR}$$

Where:

- n = Sample size
- r = Predicted value of the indicator (in target/base population), also usually noted as “p”
- deff = Design effect, set at 1.5
- RME = Relative margin of error at 95 per cent confidence level (CL)³⁶
- pb = Proportion of target/base population in total population. This is estimated as 0.18 from the 2018 NEMIS report.
- AveSize = In this study, this is the average school size for P2, estimated at 64.2.
- RR = Student response (completion) rate set at 95 per cent

The above formula was used to examine the sample sizes for each state using literacy proficiency rate as the primary indicator (“r” or “p”). Due to their similarities in context, we adapted the literacy rate in Sokoto state for Katsina, Zamfara and Kano states while we maintained reported literacy rates for Bauchi and Niger states respectively as obtained from the 2010 NEDS report. The total estimated sample sizes for the six states are 9,515 pupils, using the above formula. The distribution of the sample size, as obtained from the formula for each state, is presented in Table 5 as follows:

Table 5: Sample size distributions of pupils and schools by state

State	# Pilot LGAs per state	# Student sample size (for P2)	# Sample pupils per school	# Sample schools	# Study groups per state	# Estimated sample schools per group
Niger	6	1.066	13	82	3	27
Sokoto	6	1 689	13	130	3	43
Bauchi	6	2.527	13	194	2	97
Katsina	6	1 092	13	84	2	42
Zamfara	6	1 694	13	130	2	65
Kano	6	1 447	13	111	2	56
Total	36	9.515	13	732	14	331

7.4.2. Determination of sample size of the pupils using power calculation

For the pupil school-based assessment survey, we used the proficiency level of the pupil as the primary indicator for the calculation of sample size to measure the learning outcomes of pupils against the baseline. Similarly, the pupil proficiency level reported by the 2010 Nigeria Education Data Survey (NEDS), which is a nationally representative survey, was employed as baseline values in estimating the sample size using the power calculation method.

Since impact evaluation requires estimating changes in outcomes between two groups (treatment and comparison), we employed the power calculation programming approach which provides estimates of how large samples need to be in each of the study groups. In practice, power calculations are usually performed using statistical packages³⁷, and researchers are particularly

³⁶The confidence level indicates the probability with which the estimation of the location of a statistical parameter in a sample survey is also true for the population.

advised to use any of the available statistical software for estimating the required samples³⁸. In most education research including impact evaluation, multi-stage designs are mostly used, which requires accounting for the clustering effect on the standard errors (SE)³⁹ of programme impact estimates⁴⁰. In this end-line evaluation, the schools constituted the clusters from which samples of pupils were selected. As a result, in running the power calculation programme, we used STATA “cluster sampsi” based on the following parameters:

- α = 5 per cent alpha (acceptable error rate)
- β = 80 per cent power
- rho = Intra-cluster correlation of 0.1
- base correl = Coefficient of variation of 0.5
- SD = 2.5 standard deviation per arm

In addition, we also indicated a required average cluster size of 13 pupils (as stated in the ToR). This produced a sample size of 533 pupils per study group and a minimum of 41 clusters/schools recommended per group in each of the states.

Table 6: Sample distributions of schools and pupils by state

State	# Pilot LGAs per state	# Total study groups per state	# Sample school per treatment group	# Sample school per comparison	# Total sample schools per state	# Sample pupils per school (average)	# Sample pupils per state
Niger	6	3	48	63	159	13	2,065
Sokoto	6	3	48	63	159	13	2,065
Bauchi	6	2	48	63	111	13	1,442
Katsina	6	2	48	63	111	13	1,442
Zamfara	6	2	48	63	111	13	1,442
Kano*	6	2	48	63	111	13	1,442
Total	36	14			762	13	9,898

*Expansion state. There are two treatment groups in Niger and Sokoto states. Please see Table 5.

Since Propensity Scores Matching (PSM) is employed to match treatment and comparison groups at school-level, experts have recommended that samples for both the treatment group and the comparison group must be larger than the suggested sample size by power calculations and that the over-sampling must be greater for the comparison than the treatment group.

Consequently, given the available resources for this survey, the final school sample size for the treatment groups comprised 48 schools while the comparison group comprised 63 schools per group in each state as shown in Table 4. This gave a total of **762 schools and 9,898 pupils** for the school survey. More specifically, the distributions of sample schools and pupils per group and state are provided in Table 7.

Table 7: Breakdown of sample distributions of schools and pupils by study group and state

State	Treatment group (Early learning intervention only)		Treatment group (Early learning + CTP intervention)		Comparison group	
	# Sample	# Sample	# Sample schools	# Sample	# Sample	# Sample
Niger	48	624	48	624	63	817
Sokoto	48	624	48	624	63	817
Bauchi	48	624	NA	NA	63	818
Katsina	48	624	NA	NA	63	818
Zamfara	48	624	NA	NA	63	818
Kano*	48	624	NA	NA	63	818
Total	288	3,744	96	1,248	378	4,906

*Expansion state. There are two treatment groups in Niger and Sokoto states. Please see Table 5.

³⁷ White, Howard and S. Sabarwal (2014). Quasi-experimental Design and Methods.

³⁸ Charan J., Biswas T (2013). How to calculate sample size for different study designs in medical research? Indian J. Psychol. Med. 2013;35(2):121.

³⁹ The standard error of a statistic is the standard deviation of its sampling distribution or an estimate of that standard deviation.

⁴⁰ Hedges, L. V., & Rhoads, C. (2010). Statistical power analysis in education research (NCSE 2010-3006). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute for Education Sciences.

7.4.3. Justifications for adapting the power calculation sampling approach over MICS survey sampling formula

Estimating the exact sample size of a survey is an important part of research design and evidence has shown that different study designs (e.g., cross-sectional, case-control or clinical trials/experimental design study, etc.) require different methods of sample size calculation and one formula cannot be used in all designs²². MICS, like DHS, is a cross-sectional survey that involves looking at data from a population at one specific point in time. Therefore, it is not known to establish causal or relational effects, as desired in impact evaluations. However, impact evaluation designs generally involve the evaluation of changes over time or the comparison of two groups to establish a causal link. Unlike a cross-section survey sample which is designed to have high external validity, experimental surveys usually have low-moderate external validity.

Given the above reasons, we chose to implement the samples generated by power calculation which is a most recognised and recommended approach for estimating experimental survey samples in most studies,^{22,41} including World Bank and UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti²¹.

7.4.4. Determination of sample size of households/caregivers using Power Calculation

GEP3-CTP intervention was implemented in Niger and Sokoto states with 72 and 62 CTP benefitting schools respectively. The CTP benefitting schools were selected from GEP3 school list based on the results of the community mapping which identified the communities with a relatively high number of out-of-school girls (impact evaluation of UNICEF GEP3-CTP, 2017). Since all the CTP benefitting schools were included in the impact evaluation (which serves as a baseline for this evaluation) and because the CTP benefitting schools are not so many, all the CTP schools were purposively selected for this end-line evaluation (Niger 72 schools; Sokoto: 62 schools).

As the sample size estimation for school surveys, we used power calculation to estimate the required sample size for the household survey. The primary indicator in power calculations was the household expenditure on girls' education per term. For Bauchi and Katsina states, the baseline data on the indicator was obtained from the 2010 NEDS report for those states, while the indicators values for Niger and Sokoto states were obtained from the UNICEF-CTP impact evaluation report. The result of the power calculation produced 465 samples of caregivers and a minimum of 31 clusters per study group in each state.

Table 8: Sample distributions of clusters/communities and households/caregivers by state

State	# Pilot LGAs per state	# Study groups per state	# Sample clusters per treatment group	# Sample clusters per comparison group	# Clusters per state	# Average sample Households per cluster	# Sample Households/ Caregivers per state
Niger	6	3	35	41	111	15	1,670
Sokoto	6	3	35	41	111	15	1,670
Bauchi	6	2	35	41	76	15	1,140
Katsina	6	2	35	41	76	15	1,140
Total	24	10			374	15	5,620

The parameters used for the power calculation are as follows:

- α = 5 per cent alpha (acceptable error rate)
- β = 80 per cent power
- rho = Intra-cluster correlation of 0.1
- base-correl = Coefficient of variation of 0.5
- SD = 2.2 standard deviation per arm
- Average cluster size = 15 households/caregivers per cluster

⁴¹ Angeles, G., Khan, S.K., Rahman, M., Chakraborty, N., Bartaki, S., & Escudero, G. (2019). Improving Nutrition through Community-Based Approaches in Bangladesh: 2017 Baseline Survey. Chapel Hill, NC, USA: MEASURE Evaluation, University of North Carolina.

To ensure oversampling as required by PSM for household-level matching, the sample size was increased to 35 and 41 clusters in treatment and comparison groups respectively, which also led to an increase in the number of caregivers to be interviewed per cluster as shown in Table 8.

The final sample sizes of 374 clusters and **5,620 households** in total for the final evaluation.

Table 9: Breakdown of sample distributions of clusters/communities and households/caregivers by study group and state

State	# Average sample Households per cluster	Treatment group (Early learning intervention)		Treatment group (Early learning intervention) CTP)		Control group	
		# Sample clusters	# Sample Households/ Caregivers	# Sample clusters	# Sample Households/ Caregivers	# Sample clusters	# Sample Households/ Caregivers
Niger	15	35	525	35	530	41	615
Sokoto	15	35	525	35	530	41	615
Bauchi	15	35	525	NA	NA	41	615
Katsina	15	35	525	NA	NA	41	615
Total		140	2,100	70	1,060	164	2,460

7.4.5. Sampling technique for school and household surveys

7.4.5.1. School survey sampling procedures

At the school (cluster) level, the desired sample size for GEP3 learning-CTP treatment group followed a random selection of schools from the list of GEP3 pilot schools that benefitted from GEP3-CTP interventions in each LGA in Niger and Sokoto states. For GEP3 learning-only group, sampled schools were selected randomly from the list of non-CTP GEP schools in Niger and Sokoto states, all GEP3 pilot schools in Bauchi, Katsina and Zamfara states, as well as GEP3 expansion schools in Kano state.

At the pupil selection level, school admission and daily attendance registers of Primary 2 pupils were obtained from schools' head teachers at the sampled schools in GEP3 learning-only group of schools across the six states and in GEP3 learning-CTP treatment group in Niger and Sokoto states. This was followed by the random selection of 13 pupils for pupil surveys in each of the sampled schools in both treatment groups. Where adequate or updated school records were not in place, headcounts of pupils were taken in P2 class to make a random sample of the 13 participating pupils (seven females and six males) in the pupil survey. The same procedures were followed within the selected schools in comparison groups across the states.

7.4.5.2. Sampling technique for household survey

The households/caregivers in GEP3 learning-CTP treatment group (as described above) were sampled from the list of CTP benefitting pupils/caregivers obtained from UNICEF. For GEP3 learning-only and control groups, a total of 15 pupils were sampled from the list of randomly selected schools. They were later traced to their various houses for the household surveys. For both school and community sampling, the sampling procedures as discussed were executed using Stata software or MS Excel package using RAND function, as appropriate.

Number of sampled and surveyed pupils and households/caregivers

As presented in Tables 9, 10 and 11, the field teams were able to cover and complete surveys in about 55 per cent of the total number of sampled pupils and households. The coverage rate also varies by evaluation treatment type. The gap in survey coverage was mainly due to the increased security risks, especially Niger, Zamfara, Katsina and Sokoto states. Consequently, most of the schools were not accessible, and therefore data collection could not take place. Alternative means of data collection, such as telephone surveys, could not be deployed since a list of phone numbers of sampled pupils and households did not exist. Most of the learning assessments were also designed for face-to-face data collection.

Table 10: Comparing number of sample and actual survey coverage of pupils by state

State	Treatment group (Early learning intervention only)		Treatment group (Early learning + CTP Intervention)		Comparison group		Total		
	#Sample students	#Actual student surveyed	#Sample students	#Actual student surveyed	#Sample students	#Actual student surveyed	#Sample students	#Actual student surveyed	% Total coverage
Niger	624	381	624	77	817	333	2,065	791	38.3
Sokoto	624	403	624	273	817	377	2,065	1,053	51.0
Bauchi	624	403	NA	NA	818	438	1,442	841	58.3
Katsina	624	535	NA	NA	818	129	1,442	664	46.0
Zamfara	624	521	NA	NA	818	218	1,442	739	51.2
*Kano	624	714	NA	NA	818	648	1,442	1,362	94.5
Total	3,744	2957	1,248	350	4,906	2,143	9,898	5,450	55.1

*Expansion state/LGAs.

Table 11: Comparing number of sample and actual survey coverage of households/caregivers by state

State	Treatment group (Early learning intervention only)		Treatment group (Early learning + CTP Intervention)		Control group		Total		
	#Sample Households/ Caregivers	#Actual Households /caregivers surveyed	#Sample students	#Actual student surveyed	#Sample students	#Actual student surveyed	#Sample students	#Actual student surveyed	% Total coverage
Niger	525	88	530	204	615	182	1,,670	476	28.5
Sokoto	525	301	530	254	615	237	1,670	792	47.4
Bauchi	525	515	NA	NA	615	610	1,140	1,125	98.7
Katsina	525	509	NA	NA	615	135	1,140	644	56.5
Total	2,100	1,413	1,060	458	2,460	1,166	4,560	2,579	56.6

7.5. Qualitative sampling

For the qualitative side of the evaluation, purposive sampling was employed to select appropriate respondents for in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. For the Semi-Structured Interviews (SSI) a total of 41 interviews were conducted with key stakeholders. The criteria for selection were geographical location; function in UNICEF, the education sector, LGA and at community level; and levels of involvement or interaction with GEP3.

For the Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with the different groups of stakeholders, we conducted a total of 48 FGDs. These included 12 community men and women FGDs (six per group) in the intervention areas with six to eight participants per focus group. The men and women had separate focus groups to ensure that there is no reticence due to gender socio-cultural dynamics. Beneficiaries of the CTP were recruited for the community FGDs in the intervention areas. FGDs of the headteachers, CMBC, SBMCs, HiLWA, Girls for Girls, etc. were carried out in the focal LGAs. Respondents were selected using the criteria of function in the various committees and types, as well as the level of interaction with GEP3 (including the CTP in Niger and Sokoto states). Table 12 shows the sample sizes for the qualitative interviews.

Table 12: Sample sizes for the qualitative interviews

K1	Key informants	National key stakeholder interviews	Federal Ministry of Education (FME)	2
K2			Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC)	1
K3			National Mass Education Commission (NMEC)	1
K4			UNICEF staff – national officer	1
K5			Project Management Committee (PMC)	1
K6		State key stakeholder interviews	State Ministries of Education (SMoE)	1 per state = 6
K7				State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB)
K8			State agency for mass education (SAME)	1 per CTP state = 2
K9			UNICEF staff – field offices	1 per state = 6
K10			Teacher facilitators	3
K11			Local Government Education Authorities	1 per State = 6
K12			Community-level Stakeholders	Community leaders
FGD1	Focus Group Discussions	Community level Stakeholders	Parents/ aregivers community men and women (in different groups)	2 groups per State = 12
FGD2			Teachers	1 group per State = 6
FGD3			SBMCs/CBMCs	1 per State = 6
FGD4		HiLWA	1 per State = 6	
FGD5		Girls for Girls	1 per State = 6	
FGD6		Beneficiaries and contemporaries	Boys (including boys out of school)	1 per State = 6
FGD7			Girls (including girls out of school)	1 per State = 6

7.6. Field staff training, pre-testing, and field data collection

7.6.1. Recruitment of enumerators

For the effective and efficient collection of data for this evaluation, we enlisted the services of field researchers at state levels. This was done by The Education Partnership (TEP) Centre, the local research institution that partnered with OAG on this evaluation. The data collectors were selected based on their demonstrated experience in collecting qualitative data via virtual platforms and quantitative data using Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) methods (i.e., CommCare), educational background and language proficiency. A team with an equal gender mix was recruited. These enumerators were recruited within the evaluation states.

7.6.2. Training of enumerators

A five-day central training (including a one-day pilot) was conducted with key field personnel. This training involved supervisors and project managers who later served as trainers in the cascade training in the six states. A training agenda was developed capturing the different skill sets to be acquired during the training. There was classroom training for the first four days and a pilot exercise and debrief on the fifth day. The training was held in a central location in Abuja and a combination of classroom training and practical experiences were used. The training involved a detailed review of the questionnaire, fieldwork protocols, practicing mock interviews, and using CAPI. The training materials were designed to include participatory methods for learning. Such methods allowed team members to learn from each other by sharing insights and lessons learned from previous experiences. In the end, team members had a common understanding of the scope of work, expected deliverables, data collection tools and deadlines to be adhered to, as well as ethics of research with consideration to all stakeholders involved. The training was carried out by OAG and TEP. The central training in Abuja was conducted as both in-person and virtual training.

The training was cascaded to the six focal states and replicated over another five days. **A total of 77 enumerators/qualitative research assistants and seven supervisors were trained.**

7.6.3. Pre-testing of tools

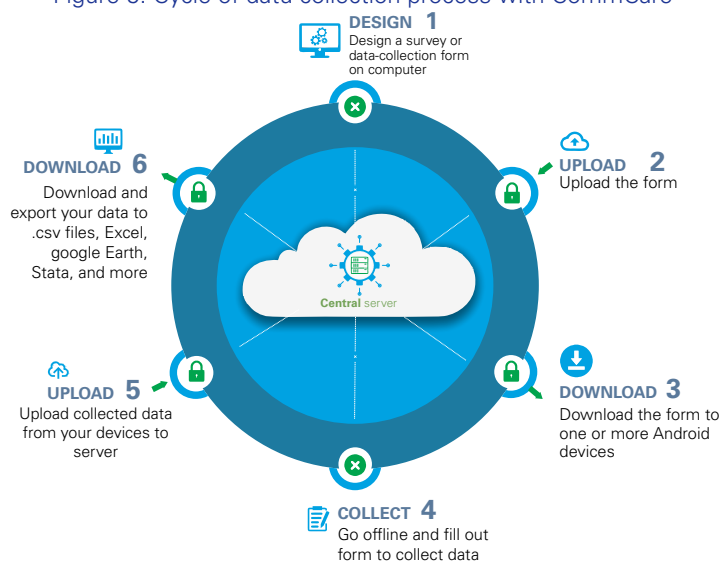
After the training, the team tested the tools and response procedures for each question, probing, recording, and storing data following agreed procedures. After testing the tools, the team received feedback from and discussed difficulties/issues encountered and implemented context-specific and/or country-specific solutions to the challenges. All feedback was used to refine data collection tools where necessary. Pre-testing of tools took place at the central level of training and within the six focal states.

7.6.4. Fieldwork Implementation

A total of 77 enumerators/qualitative research assistants and seven supervisors were deployed for the surveys and qualitative interviews across the six focal states. The seven supervisors supported the data quality assurance process for the study through the provision of validation for the different interviews during the survey implementation. The school and household surveys were conducted by enumerators who had been trained by TEP on the use of the CAPI data entry programme for running complex large-scale surveys.

Administering the questionnaire: Primary data were collected for the quantitative research through interviewer-administered questionnaires. A scoring technique was applied, especially for producing indicator scores. Questionnaires were designed in English and then translated into local languages where necessary for the assessment. Data collection was carried out using CAPI on Android phones. Consultants used the digital data collection approach applying CommCare as shown in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Cycle of data collection process with CommCare



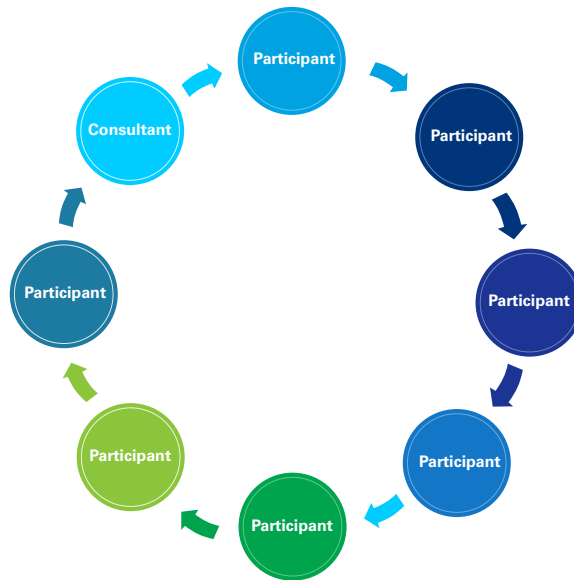
7.6.5. Strategy to deal with COVID-19

The outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) was a serious threat at the time of the data collection. To be successful, this consultancy assignment integrated COVID-19 protection and preventive-related guidelines into fieldwork plans. This was important to not only protect participants but also researchers and not to expose them to risks of coronavirus infection. In building on this reality, we incorporated several precautionary steps, including:

1. **Social distancing:** During fieldwork, we ensured social distancing for interviews and FGDs by implementing the following measures:

- a) **Sitting arrangement:** Employing a circular type of sitting arrangement where participants of focus group discussions were asked to sit one meter (3 feet) apart from each other as illustrated in Figure 6. A maximum of seven participants per focus group was allowed.

Figure 6: Circular type of sitting arrangement



- b) **Avoiding handshakes:** Participants were asked to avoid common greetings such as handshakes; and instead encouraged them to greet with a wave, nod or bow among other locally acceptable gestures.

2. **Hand washing:** A portable hand washing kit was provided and included clean water, soap or alcohol-based hand sanitisers at all meeting venues to permit the participants to frequently wash their hands for at least 20 seconds each time.
3. **Provision of face masks:** Participants were provided with re-usable face masks to wear during meetings and interviews. Participants were encouraged to cough or sneeze into their elbow, tissue or a handkerchief.
4. **Managing time during FGDs:** As per the guidelines provided by the government and public health experts, all meetings involving small groups of people (e.g., FGDs) were conducted within an hour as per public health guidance.

The outlined measures were observed together to ensure maximum protection of the participants, consultants and the project staff that were part of this study. Throughout the data collection process, the meetings started and ended with some information sharing around COVID-19 and why it was important to adhere to the public health advice on preventive and protective measures against the spread of the coronavirus.

Regarding other key issues such as insecurity and logistical difficulties during data collection, several protocols were put in place by TEP. Table 13 details the overall risks kept in view by the field researchers and the protocols to mitigate them.

7.7. Data analysis and quality assurance

7.7.1. Data storage and cleaning

To capture data, the enumerators used a tablet using CommCare which made it easy to design forms and collect data. As we used the CAPI (in-field data entry), data collected were transferred electronically by the field supervisors to the data processing staff at the TEP Lagos office daily. Therefore, the supervisor in each state retrieved all the tablets and reviewed each tablet for completeness daily. The data were synchronised to an online server and into a shared Google Drive. From there, the data manager at TEP Centre downloaded the data and undertook additional consistency checks and saved the data locally and in a backup folder.

In data cleaning, we dealt with data problems as they occurred. Error-prevention strategies reduced many problems but cannot eliminate them. Data cleaning in this evaluation involved repeated cycles of screening, diagnosing, and editing of suspected data abnormalities executed first by TEP and OAG. Four basic types of data issues were reviewed: lack or excess of data; outliers, including inconsistencies; strange patterns in (joint) distributions; and unexpected analysis results and other types of inferences and abstractions. Many outliers were detected by perceiving nonconformity with prior expectations, based on the evaluation team's experience, pilot studies, evidence in the literature, or common sense. Variable coding and labelling of the end-line database were aligned with those used at the baseline and end-line databases.

7.7.2. Quantitative data analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using both Stata and IBM SPSS software exported as Comma Separated Values (CSV) in Excel from the mobile devices. The most critical analysis techniques included frequency distributions with percentages; Online analytical processing (OLAP) cubes reports for measures of central tendency, cross-tabulations with Chi Square (χ^2) for nominal and ordinal-scaled variables, regressions, as well as Independent T-test and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)⁴² for interval-scaled variables and bivariate analyses.

7.7.2.1. Measurement of pupils' proficiency in literacy and numeracy

The percentage of pupils who were proficient in numeracy and literacy (separately and both) were calculated and disaggregated by sex for each of the six states.

Learning outcomes data collected from the sampled schools and pupils were analysed using SPSS. First, we completed a descriptive analysis using univariate and bivariate statistical tools. This enabled us to provide a snapshot of the learning outcomes and pupils' composition across intervention and comparison groups. For this level of analysis, we reported literacy and numeracy assessment scores. Then we completed a multivariate regression analysis to estimate the relative mean differences between the intervention and comparison groups while accounting for differences in the composition of the pupil populations served. However, though multivariate regression provided estimates that control for pupil and school-level differences in observed characteristics, it did not account for the non-random nature of the intervention assignment mechanism.

For the next level of analysis, we considered the baseline learning outcomes of the sampled schools before the interventions' implementation – in Bauchi, Niger, Zamfara and Katsina where these were available. This enabled inferences about the relative performance of the interventions relative to the comparison groups which could be construed as causal.

In essence, the analysis began with a descriptive analysis of how schools in the treatment group have changed between baseline, midline and end-line. This was followed by the results of the impact analysis, which exploited the random assignment of schools into intervention and comparison groups to examine whether descriptive trends observed in the intervention group over time likely occurred because of GEP3 interventions.

Similar to the baseline, the literacy, and numeracy assessments were constructed following six steps, namely clarifying constructs, test targeting, administration, psychometric analysis, drawing benchmarks and secondary data analysis.

The constructs that were measured through the learning achievement tests in GEP3 evaluation were English literacy/language and Hausa literacy/language and numeracy. GEP3 evaluation used the broader constructs of literacy and numeracy, rather than reading and Mathematics, as discussions with stakeholders held at baseline highlighted that the programme expected children to improve learning in areas that fit into these broader areas of competencies covered by literacy and numeracy. They include understanding texts, using reading to understand the world, drawing inferences and communicating in writing, using money in everyday life problem-solving situations, adding, subtracting, multiplying simple numbers and reading a clock.

The primary analysis produced two variables for each learning construct per pupil. The first was a scale score. The scale score is a precise measure of where, along the achievement scale, the pupil sits. The scale score is useful for fine-grained analysis like multi-level modelling, regressions and correlations. The second variable proficiency band is useful for describing what learning the pupils have achieved, how and what the children know and can do and what has changed with time.

⁴² The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used to determine whether there are any statistically significant differences between the means of two or more independent (unrelated) groups.

As in the baseline and midline, we analysed pupil achievement based on Rasch modelling (IRT). This psychometric analysis was carried out using fit-for-purpose software. This approach allowed for valid comparisons to be drawn across learning assessments administered over different years. As such, a scaled score is the mathematical transformation of a pupil's raw scores to report her/his score on a continuum consistently over the years, and across different versions of the assessment^{43,44}. Rasch analysis also allowed for test difficulty and pupil ability to be reported independently on the same scale.

7.7.2.2. Attribution analysis of measurement of DID or PSM

Counterfactual analysis was used, involving a comparison between what occurred and what would have happened in the absence of GEP3 intervention. This is the logic for including households (caregivers) with no CTP benefits and non-targeted schools as comparison groups. The assessment of GEP3, including CTP outcomes, involved addressing the basic impact questions and disentangling CTP effects from intervening factors. To show attribution (cause-effect), in Niger and Sokoto states, we focused on the impact of CTP in primary schools located in CTP-targeted communities represented by the LGAs in Niger State and the LGAs in Sokoto State that have benefitted from the programme.

PSM was employed during the empirical analysis stage to match treatment groups and comparison groups at both the school-level data and household-level data. Propensity score methods attempt to simulate the conditions of an experiment in which recipients and non-recipients are randomly assigned, allowing for the identification of a causal link between treatment and outcome variables. The PSM identified groups with the same observable socio-demographic characteristics (e.g., age, sex, years of education, income, marital status, location and household size) as those participating in the programme. This was done by estimating a statistical model of the probability of participating (propensity to participate) using a regression model with participation as the zero-one dependent variable and a set of observable characteristics, which were unaffected by the intervention, as the explanatory variables. The coefficients were used to calculate a propensity score, and participants were matched with non-participants based on having similar propensity scores. To address any confounding issues such as unobservable characteristics, PSM was completed by DID regression analysis.

7.7.2.3. Analysis of HH income from cash transfer HH survey

Analysis of household data, including cash transfer survey data, was conducted using Stata version 14.0. First, descriptive analysis of household data by state across CTP and non-CTP intervention areas was conducted using univariate and bivariate statistical tools.

7.7.2.4. Cost benefit analysis of GEP3 programme

The VfM assessment compared “without GEP3 scenario” against “GEP3 scenario” to determine the cost-benefit ratio of implementing the project. The assessment covered six states which participated in GEP3 programme. An **economic perspective** of the cost-benefit of implementing the project was taken by considering the opportunity costs of implementation and not just the financial costs. This perspective considers private (costs and benefits impacting the pupil) and social costs and benefits (those relating to the society at large). **In terms of the policy time horizon**, the analysis estimated costs and benefits over a time horizon of 45 years, considering the age of a primary school-age girl from six to nine years and the life expectancy of an average woman in Nigeria (World Bank, 2021). Regarding the **time effects**, as costs and benefits were distributed over different periods from 2013–2020, the benefits and cost streams were discounted into the 2015 present value to aggregate the cost and benefits throughout the analysis. Costs inputs for 2013 and 2014 were not available. A nominal discount rate of 10 per cent was applied based on the opportunity cost of capital in developing countries (Levin; Levin, 1983). To account for inflation, the nominal discount rate was adjusted to a real discount rate of 5 per cent using 2015 as the base year.

Costs and benefits

There are consequences or impacts both positive and negative associated with implementing GEP3. These either accrue directly or indirectly to the individual and their immediate family, also known as private costs or benefits. Those accruing to the society at large, either directly or indirectly, are also known as public or social.

These can be further categorised as either market (monetary) or non-market-based returns or impacts. To arrive

⁴³ Tpellens, T., Outhred, R., Majeed, Z., Kveder, A., Binci, M., Wallin, J., Kelleher, F., Beavis, A. and Rai, S. (2016b) 'Evaluation of UNICEF Girls' Education Project Phase 3 (GEP3), Baseline Technical Report', prepared by EDOREN on behalf of UNICEF GEP3.

⁴⁴ Bangladesh Directorate of Primary Education, 2013.

at estimates of the unit costs or benefits, project documents such as financial reports, log frame reports, annual GEP 3 review reports, and GEP 3 business case reports among others were reviewed. Also, relevant literature documents were reviewed.

For girls not attending school, the consequences are more negative than positive. The direct benefit will be immediate earnings from the labour market while the direct cost will be the lost opportunity of attending school. There are also indirect costs to non-schooling for girls. Some of these include early marriage; ill health due to poor physical and emotional maturity in marriage, such as vesicovaginal fistula; intimate partner abuse; lack of decision-making within the household; higher rates of poverty for the household due to lower earnings in adulthood; and higher rates of infertility. For the society at large, there are also costs related to directly and indirectly weakened solidarity in communities and reduced women's participation in society.

Private impacts

The costs to a girl and her family for participating in this project are mainly market-based and include costs of transportation to school, uniforms, meals at school, and books, which are direct while indirect costs include earnings forgone from the labour market to attend school. Private benefits include the direct benefit of increased earnings from the labour market due to being educated. Indirect benefits include the satisfaction of being educated, improved decision-making ability, improved health-seeking behaviour, reduced family size, better productivity within the community, better financial literacy⁴⁵. These benefits are difficult to monetize and are not included in this analysis⁴⁶. Estimated indirect benefits account for about 80 per cent of the direct market returns to education⁴⁷.

Social impacts

These social consequences are also known as externalities. They include market (monetary) and non-market returns to the society and public benefits derived by other individuals both in the current and future generations from the education of another individual. They are often positive. Direct non-market returns on the economy include higher investment rates in physical capital and education due to increased income growth, education's contribution to innovation, research and development. While indirect non-market effects include better public health; lower net population growth rates; strengthening of civic institutions, rule of law, democratisation and human rights; lower crime rates; poverty reduction due to smaller families; and less deforestation and water pollution. Some negative externalities include more air pollution, noise pollution and more emigration of workers. However, all these externalities are difficult to monetise. In Africa, it is estimated that these externalities account for between 45 per cent and 58 per cent of the total social returns to education³⁸. There are however debates on their extent and their rates of returns are not included in the analysis.

Analysis of market-based returns

To determine the cost-benefit ratio of implementing GEP3, the economic returns of each additional girl enrolled in school in relation to the total cost of enrolling and retaining each girl in school, were considered. The relevant market costs and benefits of an individual girl enrolled, from both the girl's and government's perspectives are summarised below:

- Over the six-year period of her primary education a girl and her family can incur an opportunity cost, which is forgone earning, due to her absence from the labour market. This was set at 50 per cent of the salary of a Grade Level 1 staff of the Nigerian public service. There is no educational requirement for this Grade Level. An individual only needs to be able-bodied.
- A girl and her family incur the direct cost of school uniform, textbooks, transportation to school and meals at school for six years. It is estimated that this would cost a Nigerian family, US\$7.7 per girl (World Bank, 2008). This was adjusted for inflation using the US GDP deflator as of 2015. This resulted in an estimate of \$8.5 in 2015 US constant prices.
- The Nigerian Government also incurs direct costs for the education of this girl for six years. This includes personnel salaries, training, infrastructure – building and maintenance and overhead costs. However, there is a dearth of the actual unit cost of educating a female children by the Nigerian government. A background paper for the 2010 EFA Global Monitoring estimates an average unit cost of US\$190 for

⁴⁵ WODON, Q. M. (2018). MISSED OPPORTUNITIES: The High Cost of Not Educating Girls Series. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/29956> License: CC BY 3.0 IGO.: World Bank Washington D.C

⁴⁶ McMahon, W. (2004). The social and external benefits of education. In International Handbook on the Economics of Education (p. Ch. 6).

⁴⁷ Psacharopoulos and Patrinos. (2004).

combined recurrent and capital resources a primary school pupil incurs in accordance with the EFA-FTI guidelines⁴⁸. These estimates are higher than international unit costs for education in developing countries as they incorporate capital costs in addition to recurrent costs used by international standards. The World Bank benchmarks US\$76 for primary education⁴⁹. This estimate is also adjusted for inflation and comes to US\$209 in 2015 US constant prices.

- Based on the survival rate to Grade 5, it was assumed that only 79 per cent of the pupils who enrolled graduated. It was assumed that those who did not graduate entered the labour market and earned the wage of a Grade Level 1 civil servant.
- It is assumed that a girl will enter the labour market immediately after completing primary education, and she will be entering the child labour market which is informal. The girl and her family for the period of her primary education, six years, incur an opportunity cost from her not working. This was set at 50 per cent of the salary of a Grade Level 3 staff of the Nigerian public service. The educational requirement is the first school leaving certificate which is the primary school certificate.
- For the next 45 years, she will earn a higher salary than had she not attended primary school.
- There will be private and social non-market returns for the rest of her life because of her primary education. However, these were included in this monetary analysis.
- The cost of the project of getting a girl into primary school and retaining her there is the total annual cost spent by the project.

7.7.3. Qualitative data analysis

Qualitative transcripts were analysed using the qualitative data analysis software, NVivo 12 Pro. An inductive approach and open thematic coding were then used. Transcripts were read and coded using and exploring common themes, sub-themes, patterns and contradictions, according to the evaluation framework. Analysis was conducted iteratively using a three-pronged approach: "noticing, collecting, and thinking". During analysis, cross-thematization was done to compare the emerging information with quantitative data to ensure that any outliers are captured. The qualitative and quantitative data regarding all criteria identified was analysed and triangulated.

Data was also triangulated to compare data sources for reliability and to identify areas of agreement and disagreement across data sources and interview respondents. Theme identification enabled us to manage large volumes of data effectively by grouping them into manageable categories⁵⁰. Data were organised to develop a detailed understanding of each intervention component, its context, implementation and outcome. All qualitative data sources were systematically coded. The coding scheme aligned with the research questions and themes for each domain in the evaluation. Codes for themes and sub-domains were defined and refined during the initial data analysis workshop. To ensure reliability across coders, all project team members involved in coding qualitative data compared codes from a similar source to identify and rectify inconsistencies. In addition, one team member reviewed a sub-sample of coded data for all sources to check reliability as coding proceeded. A qualitative analysis software package, NVivo 12 Pro, made it easier to organize and synthesize transcripts and interview write-ups, especially those including narratives. This enabled a structured coding system and enhanced the organization and categorization of data.

7.8. Quality assurance – data collection procedures and evaluation processes

⁴⁸ Chang et al. (2009). Estimating the costs of education development- case study for DRC, Nigeria and Sudan for EFA GMR, 201. Background Paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2010.

⁴⁹ DFID. (2009). Education Portfolio Review.

⁵⁰ Coffey A, Beverley H, Paul A. Qualitative Data Analysis: Technologies and Representations. *Sociological Research Online*. 1996;1(1):80-91. doi:[10.5153/sro.1](https://doi.org/10.5153/sro.1)

78.1. Data quality assurance plans

Data quality control measures included reviewing the study tools, having interview schedules and data collection movement plans, translating the tools into the local language when necessary, and standardisation of the training (pre-testing and ensuring that the enumerators are familiar with terminologies used in the survey tool), regular supervision and cross-checking of the uploaded data. The tools were pre-tested during the central training in Abuja and during the cascade training at state levels. The mobile data capture enabled hints, strict sequencing, skip patterns, repeats, constraints, relevancy, formulas, calculations, grouping and nesting instructions to be digitised.

The Field Manager was responsible for the quality assurance of the survey protocols and final outputs. To ensure the data collection was of the highest possible quality, the following procedures were followed:

- The field managers provided regular updates to the evaluation team via the OAG Country Lead.
- The field managers provided close supervision to the field team throughout the fieldwork.
- TEP had a full-time supervisor for each fieldwork team dedicated solely to oversight, mentoring and assistance, and they were in daily contact with the Field Manager.
- Daily field reports (e.g., number of interviews conducted, etc.) were sent by field supervisors to the survey coordinator.
- The supervisors checked all data entries at the end of each survey day, aided by the built-in consistency checks written into the data capture software.
- There was a daily electronic transfer of data to the cloud for the data processing team to check the data entry for inconsistent, impossible, or unlikely data points.
- Time was allocated for re-visiting interviewees in the case of queries over the data.
- Each team had a daily meeting where the day's experiences were discussed, and corrections made.
- Ten percent of each interviewer's responses were checked by the field supervisors using a "back-check" tool. Back checks are when a sub-sample of interviewed households/individuals is revisited after their initial interview. During the re-visit, a sub-sample of questions is asked, and their answers are checked with the answers given in the initial interview. A log of differences was kept, and any systematic issues were reported to the relevant team. The benefit of back checking is that it can identify interviewers who may be asking the questions incorrectly, but mostly its benefit comes from incentivising the interviewers to correct inaccurate data because they know that a random selection of their work will be verified.

78.2. Supervision omitted

At the time of interviews, enumerators and qualitative research assistants were monitored by supervisors to ensure that they followed the schedule strictly. After deploying enumerators, the supervisors randomly travelled around the cluster to track and confirm that all enumerators were gathering the information from identified stakeholders. The supervisor had a list of all interviewees for the day and made arrangements and timetables to see them. Most of the key informant interviews at national and state levels were conducted via virtual platforms, where agreed but community-level interviews and FGDs were conducted face-to-face. Qualitative interviews were audio-taped, transcribed, and translated when necessary.

At the end of each workday, all interviewers submitted their completed interview schedule forms to the supervisor. The supervisor confirmed that the coding of all sheets had been done correctly. Following this cross-check, the enumerators sent the completed questionnaires of the day to the server. the following day the data manager gave feedback on the quality of data and the progress of the work towards the planned time of data collection.

7.8.3. Selection bias

The evaluation team committed to:

1. Programme placement or targeting bias, in which the location of the target population of the programme was not random, (GEP3 intervention sites were purposively targeted by the programme); and
2. Self-selection bias, in which for the CTP, households chose whether to participate and thus could have been different in their experiences, endowments and abilities. The least biased way to deal with this problem is to use an experimental approach to construct a counterfactual situation by randomly assigning households to treatment (beneficiary) and control (non-beneficiary) groups. This was not feasible for this evaluation, because the choice of GEP3 intervention sites and CTP participation decisions were made before the design of the evaluation and were not randomised.

A core aim of the evaluation was to know the difference between the participants' outcomes with and without treatment (the relevant GEP3 intervention). However, both outcomes could not be observed for the same individuals or households at the same time. Taking the mean outcome of non-participants as an approximation is not advisable, since participants and non-participants usually differ in other issues besides the absence of treatment. This problem is known as selection bias.

The matching approach was used as a solution to selection bias. It showed a close link to the experimental context⁵¹. Its basic idea was to find a large group of non-participants who were similar to the participants in all relevant pre-treatment characteristics. That being done, differences in outcomes of this well-selected and thus adequate control/comparison group and participants could be attributed to the programme.

Therefore, as mentioned before, the PSM method was used in this evaluation to establish the counterfactual and attribution to the intervention.

7.9. Ethical considerations and evaluation principles

Ethical clearance for this study was obtained from the Ethics Review Committee (ERC) of the FME and the Nigerian Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC). Appropriate government approvals for the study were also obtained from relevant state, local government, and community authorities.

In compliance with UNICEF's research policy, we endeavoured to ensure that the evaluation was designed and conducted in a manner that respected and protected the rights, confidentiality, impartiality, privacy, accountability, respect and welfare of respondents. In addition, the data were technically accurate and reliable and was collected transparently and impartially, which contributed to reliability and validity.

GEP3 evaluation followed UNICEF guidelines on the ethical participation of adults and children. In addition, all participants in the evaluation were fully informed about the nature and purpose of the evaluation and their requested involvement. Only participants who have given their written or verbal consent (documented) were included in the evaluation. Particular attention was paid to the avoidance of harm and stress to evaluation participants, especially children and other vulnerable populations; obtaining informed consent/verbal assent from them; absence of benefit or compensation offered to them; protection of their privacy; confidentiality and anonymity of data collected; security matters and protection protocols both for enumerators and key informants; training of enumerators in ethical issues and on enumeration and communication skills.

All the documents, including data collection, entry and analysis tools, and all the data developed or collected for this evaluation are the intellectual property of the Government of Nigeria, FCDO and UNICEF. The evaluation team members may not publish or disseminate the Evaluation Report, data collection tools, collected data, or any other documents produced from this consultancy without the express permission and acknowledgement of UNICEF. The evaluation has been conducted according to the ethical principles and standards defined by the United Nations Evaluation Group:

⁵¹ Rubin (1974), Rosenbaum and Rubin (1983, 1985a); Lechner (1998).

- **Anonymity and confidentiality:** The evaluation respected the rights of the people who provided information, guaranteeing their anonymity and confidentiality.
- **Responsibility:** The entire team confirmed the results presented in the report, there were no disagreements, conflicts, or differences of opinion regarding the conclusions and/or recommendations of the evaluation.
- **Integrity:** The evaluator highlighted issues that were not specifically mentioned in the ToR, to carry out a complete analysis of the programme.
- **Independence:** The consultants were independent with respect to the programme under review, and we were not involved in its implementation or any other phase.
- **Incidents:** All problems that arose during fieldwork or at any other point of the evaluation, such as insecurity issues, difficulties in obtaining information, etc. were immediately reported to the UNICEF Evaluation Manager.
- **Validation of information:** The evaluation team assured the accuracy of the information gathered during the preparation of the reports and was responsible for the information presented in the final report.
- **Intellectual property:** Using the different sources of information, we respected the intellectual property rights of the institutions and communities involved in the evaluation.
- **Submission of reports:** If the reports are submitted after agreed deadlines, or if the quality of the submitted reports is significantly lower than agreed, the sanctions provided in these terms of reference will apply.

Two possible sources of bias in this evaluation were:

- Supervise data collectors and data collection checking in the field.
- Report any safeguarding or child protection concerns as soon as possible and within 24 hours to the UNICEF Safeguarding Focal Points; administrative, technical and physical safeguards to protect the confidentiality of those participating in research.
- Do No Harm safeguards for children participating in research, including child-safe physical safeguards, as well as emotional/psychosocial safeguards and safeguarding against the risk of sexual exploitation or abuse during the evaluation.
- Good practice guidelines for conducting research with children and vulnerable groups.
- Allocate an appropriate time to engage with children participating in the research.
- Data protection protocols and maintenance procedures to secure personal information.
- Confirm parental or caregiver consent for data collection from children or about children.
- Age and ability-appropriate consent processes based on reasonable assumptions about comprehension for the ages and disabilities of the children involved in the research.
- Appropriate spaces and methodologies tailored to the unique needs of girls and boys, including those with disabilities and vulnerable adults.
- Appropriate language and communication for different ages and abilities of children involved in the research. Ethical approval will be secured from the Nigerian Institutional Review Board (NIRB) and Nigeria Education Services before data collection activities can commence. This will include the submission of complete research tools and protocols.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, countries were practicing social distancing and placing restrictions on travel and face-to-face interactions in line with World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines. Hence, special measures were required when considering participatory methods and research with project stakeholders to ensure the safety of all stakeholders. This meant staying as close to the principles of participation and inclusion as possible without harming respondents or requiring them to put themselves in risky situations. Our approach outlined the best-case scenario in response to the ToR. Adjustments could be made during the data collection depending on the prevailing situation regarding COVID-19 in Nigeria. Overall, we complied with United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation 2017; UNICEF Ethical Standards Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis, and UNEG Guidance on Impact Evaluation in UN Agency Evaluation Systems: Guidance on Selection, Planning and Management.

7.10. Limitations and mitigations measures of the evaluation

Table 13 describes several limitations faced by the project and how risks were mitigated or dealt with.

Table 13: Limitations and mitigation measures of the evaluation

S/N	Risk	Risk Mitigation
1	Security risk of kidnapping, etc.	Organised security for enumerators across the implementation states with high security risks (i.e., Zamfara, Katsina and Niger).
		Evacuation vehicle on standby for field team in a situation of kidnap danger. The field team provided periodic reports on security with their field reports to TEP centre's designated logistics officer.
		The field implementation plan was guided by security briefings from UNICEF and the network of development agencies.
		Phone calls were used to ascertain security situations in the communities, if enumerators could visit, and the willingness of respondents to participate in the research.
		UNICEF and steering committee members vetted the LGA lists for data collection and identified LGAs or schools which had security concerns.
		OAG/TEP worked together with UNICEF and stakeholders to provide replacement sample lists for the field team.
		Use of CAPI for data collection.
2	Incomplete or unavailable phone numbers and addresses of respondents	Extended data collection timeframe.
3	COVID-19 risk and restriction of movement	COVID-19 protocols were observed during training and data collection. Provision of face masks and sanitisers for enumerators, social distancing during data collection.
		Virtual interviews with stakeholders where face-to-face interviews could not be held.
		Replaced half the sample size for the KII face-to-face interviews with Zoom interviews
4	Delayed learning outcomes assessment questionnaire	Extension of the date for training enumerators to provide more time for data scripting.
5	Public holidays/school holidays	Several public holidays fell into the planned training and data collection period. Training started after the Easter holidays. The days of data collection increased significantly because of school holidays and public holidays.

6	High respondent refusal rate to participate in the survey (above 10%)	This occurred more due to insecurity including banditry and kidnappings which discouraged parents from sending their children to school. OAG/TEP worked together with UNICEF and stakeholders to provide a replacement sample list for the field team.
7	Social desirability and recall bias in qualitative interviews and self-reported quantitative data	Sufficient probing and asking of the same questions using different tools and across different types of respondents/participants. Proper training of data collection teams. Careful focus on word choices and indirect questioning techniques.

8. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This section presents the findings and preliminary conclusions of the evaluation criteria and questions that guided GEP3 evaluation. Findings rely upon both primary and secondary data and, in particular, draw from the learning outcomes assessment survey, household survey, head teacher survey, classroom observation survey, secondary data sources – EMIS; NDHS; MICS, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.

Where appropriate, findings for discussion and questions due to their interrelatedness were considered. The strength of the evidence that informs the response for the evaluation criteria and questions was also categorized. Table 14 describes the ratings used to establish the strength of the evidence.

Table 14: Evidence rating

Evidence rating	Description
Strong	Strong evidence is characterised by having definitive sources of information that corroborate it, including an independent assessment that meets established quality criteria for the data collected. Evidence includes convincing and rigorous sources outside of the present study. It is clear and definitive on perspectives and positions gathered from key stakeholders.
Medium	Medium evidence is characterised by having corroborative sources of evidence, including triangulation of interviews and survey data collected systematically with documented evidence. It is typified by having more range and difference in the perspectives and positions gathered from key stakeholders. Some external evidence exists on this topic that supports claims from the present study.
Weak	Weak evidence is characterised by having limited sources of evidence that are subjective (i.e. only a small number of interviews/survey data). There is little substantive clarity on perspective and positions gathered from key stakeholders. There is no evidence of other studies that support findings.



Picture 1: Focus group discussion with schoolgirls

8.1. Relevance of GEP3 2012–2022 (Is GEP3 doing the right things for children?)

Overall finding: GEP3 2012–2022 is highly relevant in addressing the needs and barriers of girls' education in northern Nigeria

Quality of the evidence: Strong

According to the OECD, the DAC criterion of relevance addresses the “extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries, global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.”

The evaluation questions used for assessing the relevance of GEP3 are summarised below:

QR 1. To what extent has the Girls' Education Project Phase 3 (GEP3) Expected Results (Impact, Outcomes and Outputs) and design responded to beneficiaries' global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities considering the evolving circumstances (Is GEP3 doing the right things?)

QR 2. Is the CTP intervention appropriate in terms of design and delivery approach, given the contextual realities in Niger and Sokoto states; and to what extent were the needs and priorities of targeted beneficiaries/local partners consistent with the CTP objectives and deliverables?

The questions related to relevance were answered by triangulating the findings from the extensive document review (which includes convincing and rigorous sources outside of the present study) and the qualitative interviews (KIIs and FGDs).

The overall conclusions of the independent evaluation team on the relevance of GEP3 are summarised below:

Preliminary Conclusions on Relevance of GEP3

REL 1: The project tackled relevance by addressing increased enrolment and retention of girls in northern Nigeria from a comprehensive and systemic approach (considering financial, social and identity components), which proved to be successful. (Para 7–22)

REL 2: The evidence-based criteria in the design of GEP3-CTP Theory of Change (ToC) proved relevant and appropriate and most of the assumptions held true. The ToC was robust – structurally sound and plausible. (Para 1–6)

REL 3: A comprehensive situational analysis of basic education in northern Nigeria was undertaken to support the programmatic design and proper prioritisation of relevant needs and causal determinant factors/barriers of girls' and boys' education in northern Nigeria. (Para 10)

REL 4: The programme displayed an adequate application of the Results-based Planning and Management (RBM) approach. The monitoring and evaluation framework contained adequate vertical logic of results chains and horizontal logic of measurement of results (indicators, base line, targets, etc.) to successfully track and adjust the project. (Para 10–11)

REL 5: GEP3 initiatives, such as CTP, were perceived as the right incentive-inspired approach as it responded to tangible needs. The CTP was appropriate in terms of design and delivery approach addressing the three dimensions of demand bottlenecks, given the contextual realities in Niger and Sokoto states regarding girls' education. (Para 23–26)

REL 6: The effort to consider parallel capacity building initiatives in order to reinforce the pedagogical ones, such as data collection and management-skills at local level, was useful and appropriate. (Para 13 and 20)

REL 7: The anticipated "imitation strategies" identified such as Girls for Girls or the role of HiLWA or MAs were influential, even beyond girls. (Para 8)

REL 8: There was evidence of strong and sensible synergies between the community level stakeholders (SBMCs, MAs, HiLWA, CBMCs) involved in the programme. (Para 12 and 17)

REL 9: Although the CTP targeting approach was able to avoid inclusion errors through monitoring visits to beneficiaries' homes, this was not the case for exclusion errors. More strategic community participation in targeting could have reduced exclusion errors and improved equity. (Para 24)

REL 10: Most of the assumptions in the ToC were proven by evidence, but the assumption related to effective learning through infrastructure and teachers provided by local and central authorities was not fully proven. Although materials were available, and infrastructure was globally provided by authorities (though not always sufficient and with some need for repairs), the lack of newly recruited teachers to fulfil the pressing staffing needs given the increasing number of children enrolled, was evidenced early in the project and hindered impact in quality learning outcomes. (Para 6)

QR 1. To what extent have the Girls' Education Project Phase 3 (GEP3) expected results (Impact, Outcomes and Outputs) and design responded to beneficiaries' global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities considering the evolving circumstances (Is GEP3 doing the right things?)?

8.1.1. Appropriateness of the programme's Theory of Change

1. **The evidence-based criteria in the redesign of GEP3 ToC in 2015 and in retaining key factors in supporting girls' education have proved relevant and appropriate.** Relevant demand and supply-side barriers to girls' education were clearly outlined in GEP3 Business Case. The comprehensive approach in the three main pillars of the ToC were effectively implemented through the various interventions:
 - Early school enrolment, retention and literacy (Output 1)
 - Regular mentoring and training of teachers (Output 2)
 - Improving governance (Output 3)
2. **The interventions considered different stakeholders' needs and interests as well as long-term results through the improved capacity-building efforts, therefore creating a potential for sustainability.** The indicators elaborated in the log frame/results framework were appropriate to track the programme's progress. The results chain for GEP3 sought to address the barriers that keep children (especially girls) from attending school and learning. Interventions were selected to address these barriers in an integrated way, using a pilot-to-scale approach. Following the pilot phase, where project funds were used to test the relevance and value of the interventions, scale-up of the refined models tested was envisaged, drawing on evidence of what works and the availability of state funds. interventions:
3. **The current trajectory of GEP3 and progress made to the output and outcome indicators, the involvement in and ownership of GEP3 interventions by state governments and partners and the scale-up achieved (though more limited than envisaged) highlight the relevance of the ToC⁵².** For the CTP aspect of the programme theory, a clear understanding of the patriarchal structure of the various contexts was displayed. The social gender roles characterised by men traditionally holding decision-making power and running economic and public affairs while the women mainly took charge of the domestic sphere and caring for children were taken into consideration in the CTP design. In such a scenario, schooling is pro-boy rather than pro-girl, since the most common socio-cultural pattern is for boys to be in charge of the household economy while girls are devoted to the home and motherhood. Poverty was another factor in girls' non-enrolment in school. When parents found it difficult to afford the indirect costs of schooling – such as school materials and transport costs, and the loss of income from an out-of-school girl selling goods for her mother – they would prioritise the education of boys over girls. Furthermore, parents believed that marriage provided a financially stable future for girls.
4. **The detailed ToC specially designed for GEP3-CTP took all of these causal factors into account in formulating the hypotheses underlying the design of the interventions⁵³:** "If female caregivers of girl beneficiaries receive cash transfers and caregivers understand the purpose of the unconditional cash transfer and the argument for girl education" then (1) women will control a greater share of household income, (2) expenditure on education will increase as well as girls' enrolment and retention in school, (3) child labour and early marriage will be reduced, and (4) gender equity in education and society, in general, will increase. The cash was provided to female caregivers, thereby addressing the bottlenecks in the demand for education: (1) the financial access recognising indirect cost, (2) the socio-cultural practices empowering women who would have a better say in decision making regarding the schooling of their daughters as they are the ones receiving and therefore managing the use of the unconditional cash transfer, (3) the continuity of use through the sensitisation promoting a positive impact of girl education and encouraging women to use the one-time cash transfer to invest in income generating activities that would enable them to continue to support their daughters' education.

"It really has influence on women, because women value women ... Women were given 20,000 Naira for their daughters to go to school. They always remember, they always have it in mind that it is for their children, so this motivation will remain in their mind. Some have never got this kind of assistance before... there are some that instead of them to spend all the money, they will use it to buy cattle with it and raise the cattle, it is so, even today they are doing it. So, there is really achievement in these things." **Mothers, Sokoto**

⁵² UNICEF, GEP Operational plan, Revised version of January 2015, p.15.

⁵³ Ibid, p. 17.

5. **Overall, the ToC of GEP3 proved to be relevant and consistent** with the complexity of the existing context. It reflected the concrete evidence in the field well. **It was a sound and adequate approach to articulate the global intervention, particularly considering its multifactorial nature and the long-term perspective of expected changes.**
6. The plausibility of GEP3's ToC was largely supported by the stakeholders' common understanding and adherence to its objectives; thanks, partly due to its redesign and simplification in 2015. **This decision proved to have a great added value in terms of the operationalisation of the intervention.** The focus of the ToC on girls' enrolment and retention is almost unanimously agreed upon by all levels and types of stakeholders. Moreover, stakeholders confirm a palpable evolution in these aspects and mention some unexpected effects such as overcrowded classrooms, which can hinder the expected improvement in learning. The assumptions included in the ToC in respect of the provision of staff and schools to meet the increasing demand, as well as sufficient funding for related aspects (materials, infrastructure) are yet to be proven. As already identified in previous evaluations⁵⁴, improving the quality of education in IQSs continues to be particularly undermined by underfunding even though institutional capacities have been reinforced.

8.1.2. Review of the Assumptions in the Theory of Change

8.1.2.1 General review of the assumptions

A general review of the assumptions proposed in the ToC⁵⁵ against findings and evidence is briefly described as follows:

Assumptions related to output 1: Increased enrolment and retention of girls in basic education.

1. That increased demand for and understanding/value of basic education by parents and enhancing financial access of poor families to basic education for their daughters through CT **had a positive impact on girls' enrolment and retention**.
2. That enhanced professional development of teachers (government schools and IQSs) and head teachers **had a positive impact on girls' learning and retention**.

Both above-mentioned assumptions related to girls' enrolment and retention were proven correct by evidence collected and based on the results obtained. As analysed through impact and effectiveness, the CTP and the improvement of teachers' skills had a positive impact on output N1.

Assumptions related to output 2: Improved capacity of teachers to deliver effective learning for girls.

3. That government **could supply primary schools and teachers** to meet increased community demand for education, with the support of high-level political engagement.
4. That specific teaching and learning strategies did **positively impact the acquisition of literacy, numeracy and life skills, which benefitted girls in the future**.
5. That **improved effectiveness of SBMCs/CBMCs in communities** had a positive impact on girls' enrolment, retention and learning.

⁵⁴EDOREN, Midline Evaluation of UNICEF's DFID-funded Girls' Education Project Phase , FHI360, 2019-2020 Learning outcomes assessment of the Girls Education project, June 2019.

⁵⁵Presented in section 2.2 Programme revised Theory of Change and Evaluation Hypothesis (p.11)

Assumption 3 related to effective learning through infrastructure and teachers provided by local and central authorities was not fully proven by the evidence. Although materials were available, and infrastructure was globally provided by authorities (though not always sufficient and with some need for repairs), the lack of newly recruited teachers to fulfil the pressing staffing needs given the increasing number of children enrolled was evidenced early in the project and partially hindered impact on quality learning outcomes.

In terms of the impact on learning outcomes of the improved teaching and learning strategies (assumption 4), the evidence points to overall more child-centred and interactive practices in the classroom.

Assumption 5 proved extremely valid as the roles of the local and community school-related instances were a pivotal element in adhering, informing, communicating, and validating the project for communities included in the project. The fact that local and community authorities recognised by the social structures were in favour and actively involved in the interventions greatly legitimised the enrolment, retention and learning efforts towards girls. It is undeniable that this powerful assumption had a very important impact on the overall level of outcome.

Assumptions related to both outputs 1 and 2: Improved governance to strengthen girls' education and increased retention.

6. That **improved educational governance** (planning and budgeting, including releases) **did positively impact girls' enrolment and retention.**
7. That **enhanced participation of women in the education sector** at all levels **did positively impact girls' enrolment and retention.**

These two assumptions also proved valid as the improvement in management capacities at local and state reflected in a better level of handling of the project protocols, including the CT component. This improved educational governance level, combined with important **institutional ownership** of the outputs, is quite promising in terms of the potential sustainability effects of GEP3 at an institutional level.

Moreover, the visibility and relevance of females within several educational sectors were highly impactful in the outputs of the project, too. HiLWA, MAs, female teachers and head mistresses, as well as female members of the SBMCs or CBMCs, were consistently perceived by most of the stakeholders as role models and positive drivers of changes in perceptions. Their collective role seemed to be the key to supporting the underlying cultural transformation intended to introduce education in girls' current social script and place.

Comprehensive technical assumption

8. **Each intervention had an appreciable impact** on girls' access and attainment in basic education, but **those combined interventions supported the most vulnerable girls more effectively.**

This last assumption, which encompasses very ambitious expectations in terms of outcomes, proved partially valid as is thoroughly explained under the effectiveness and impact sections of the current report. In summary, evidence-based analysis supports that each intervention was impactful at different levels and with different scopes but tackling the most vulnerable population most effectively was not always achieved.

8.1.2.2 Specific findings on relevance related to the ToC

7. **The implementation strategy of the project fits well within the existing government and community strategies and their logic.** Most of the instances mobilised within GEP3 interventions at all levels existed already and have been given an even more relevant role by the project. At local and regional levels, the government possessed before the project the right and sufficient number of human resources to carry on and monitor activities aimed at increasing the inclusion and retention of girls at school. In the same sense, empowerment of locally based instances such as the School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) or the many community-

based organisations (HiLWA and churches) proved to be relevant for the organisations involved, and therefore, highly effective. Nevertheless, the capacity of exploiting these important institutional and sociological platforms must be reinforced by fluent communication and sustainability in financial resources, as these very promising existing conditions are not evenly distributed across all regions or government levels.

8. **The focus of GEP3 on contextualised barriers to basic education for girls within its sphere of influence proved to be relevant.** Considering a broader scope of factual aspects hindering girls' inclusion and retention allowed tackling and understanding of the problem in its complexity. Initiatives such as CTP or the teachers' capacity improvement proved undoubtedly that a comprehensive approach pays off, including clearly known side barriers such as poverty, teachers' actual competencies and cultural stereotypes. Teacher capacity development, as well as deeply entrenched attitudes about the role of girls and women in the northern Nigerian society proved hard to change at the beginning of the project. Progressively, the expected "imitation strategies" based on positive female role models at a community level were very influential, even beyond girls. The project's emerging gender strategy was an important asset to it, enabling a more coherent approach by reinforcing each of the already ongoing efforts (G4G, HiLWA, He for She, MAs and female teachers' training).
9. **The systemic approach given to the capacity-building dimension improved the coherence and reinforced the consistency of the results.** Indeed, the effort to design and implement parallel, yet articulated supportive capacity-building initiatives (through strategic areas such as quality education and governance) to reinforce the pedagogical ones, such as data collection competencies and management-skills reinforcement at a local level, was adequate, effective and impactful. The effect of improved capacities at a local level to monitor, manage and use educational information data has had a direct impact on improved decision-making practices, thus reinforcing the quality and effectiveness of local educational management.
10. **In this sense, the comprehensive situational analysis** undertaken to support the programmatic design and proper prioritisation of relevant needs and causal determinant factors and barriers of pupil's education in northern Nigeria proved highly adequate. For instance, the analysis highlighted that 9 out of 10 children with no education were found in the North-West (46 percent) and North-East geopolitical zones. Hausa girls in northern Nigeria were also noted as facing some of the world's most severe education deprivation. Just 12 percent of Hausa girls of primary school age attended primary school, and 97 percent of 17 to 22-year-olds had fewer than two years of education⁵⁶.
11. **Furthermore, the programme displayed an adequate application of the Results-based Planning and Management (RBM) approach.** The monitoring and evaluation framework contained adequate vertical logic of results chains and horizontal logic of measurement of results (indicators, baseline, targets, etc.) to successfully track and adjust the project.

In a related sense, there is increasing evidence among local level stakeholders of an emerging new "accountability culture" relating to the project's results. This is coherent with a high level of adhesion from the different levels and types of stakeholders already mentioned. As the effort and results are seen as achieved collectively, the measures and means put in place to follow up and monitor this progress and the achievement are too. The accepted and shared perception that GEP3 upholds a noble commonly owned goal renders its accountability also relevant and strongly relevant. From local authorities through their newly acquired managing skills, to the civil society organisations, all stakeholders consulted feel strongly involved and accountable for their part in the process, whether the role is financial, awareness-raising, or capacity-building oriented. This shared accountability mentality is reflected in the sought-after transparency, collaborative decision-making processes, and dialogue as the main sensitising tool. All results achieved are seen as commonly owned and potentially beneficial for everyone, in one way or the other, reflecting the meaningfulness of the initiative.

12. **Synergies emerged stronger and more organically than expected as they were respectful of existing values, social structures and roles. This made them more relevant since they all shared a common objective.** The empowerment of local instances and the grassroots sensitising strategies (such as word-of-mouth and door-to-door information) were effectively combined to create a change perceived as endogenous, from within. In this sense, stakeholders consistently declare the fruitful evidence-based synergies created around GEP3 (CBOs, HiLWA and CBMCs).

⁵⁶ UNICEF. Situation Analysis of Children and Women in Nigeria. 2011 Update. Referring to UNESCO 2010.

13. **From all initiatives analysed, the teachers' training component seemed to be key in improving the quality of teaching and learning.** Early learning strongly improved with better-trained teachers and girls' inclusion and participation in the learning process also increased, especially with female teachers. Better-trained teachers also helped to raise awareness of the relevance of the core problem tackled by GEP3 (girls' access to education) and became respected advocates of the project between the schools and communities.

8.1.3 Review - Value of the strategies and activities of GEP3

14. Findings from the document review⁵⁷ and the perceptions of the key informants and the FGD participants displayed the appropriateness of the strategies and activities of GEP3. All through the several assessments led by UNICEF to support the implementation of different stages/components of the programme (midline, partial learning outcomes and teachers' training impact, among others), there was consistent evidence that the programme responded to beneficiaries' (country, and partner/institution) needs, policies, and priorities considering the evolving circumstances.
15. The programme demonstrated strong buy-in from the state (SUBEB, SMoE, SAME) and LGA government partners, as well as community-level entities – community members, key community and political stakeholders, community-level associations, teachers, radio and television stations, etc. This was demonstrated by the replication of selected GEP3 interventions such as the SDG Joint Fund Programme in Sokoto state which continued GEP3-CTP with state funds from 2017, which led to an increase in enrolment gains; albeit the (limited) funding leveraged from these partnerships.
16. **Value of strategies and activities related to output I: How enrolment and retention of girls in basic education was operationally addressed by the programme. Overall, the key informants and the FGD participants denoted that the programme had been relevant in addressing the needs of the populations served.** The overall perceptions were that enrolment and retention-related goals were achieved at both local and state levels. CTP was perceived as the right incentive-inspired approach. There were effective imitation strategies such as the G4G which displayed positive influences beyond the girls. There was evidence of synergies between and within the stakeholders (SBMCs, MAs, HiLWA, CBMCs, He for She and CBOs).
17. It became clear that **education was considered the business of all.** The involvement of all the relevant stakeholders was seen as key to undertaking the challenge. Respondents noted that it was not solely the role of the ministries and agencies of education, it was also the responsibility of the MAs, SBMC, traditional and religious leaders, and civic society at the grass root community levels to ensure that the education mandate was accomplished. Respondents indicated that the programme had carried out extensive advocacy activities to ensure the buy-in of a wide variety of community-level stakeholders. Activities by specific stakeholder groups were mentioned frequently in the KIIs and FGDs. For instance, HiLWA's advocacy and mentorship roles were considered useful for stimulating increased enrolment and retention of girls in schools. Many of the women were seen as role models; they were well known to the communities and therefore trusted.

"HiLWA advocate for policy making in favour of girls' education and they also advocate for women to be part of decision making in the educational setting. For example, formerly we didn't have women as directors, head teachers but with the help of HiLWA we now starting to have women in decision making positions. They also advocate for stakeholders in the House of Assembly to see that laws are been passed in favour of girl's education. HiLWA also serve as mentors to the girls, they organize programmes for the girls, they motivate the girls. They also serve as mentors to the Mothers' Association. The Mothers' Associations serve in the community while HiLWA serves at the top." SUBEB stakeholder, Kano

⁵⁷ EDOREN, Evaluation of UNICEF Girls' Education Project Phase 3 (GEP3), Sept. 2016 p.10, EDOREN, Midline Evaluation of UNICEF's DFID-funded Girls' Education Project Phase 3, Synthesis report, June 2018, FHI360, 2019-2020 Learning Outcomes assessment of Girl's Education Project Phase 3 (GEP3), p. 3.

18. Similarly, **the SBMCs were considered an integral part of GEP3 – their sensitisation role and its value in changing the attitude of the male and female caregivers towards the education of female children were frequently reported.** In the FGDs, participants in different states frequently indicated that the roles played by the SBMCs were critical and had resulted in a reduction of early marriages for girls and increased enrolment and retention of girls in schools in the communities. In addition to sensitisation of the communities about the importance of female children's education, the SBMCs played mediatory roles in families – convincing the men to release their daughters to go back to school when they noticed absenteeism of girls from school that could signal imminent dropouts. Additionally, an “accountability culture” due to the monitoring role played by the SBMCs was highlighted in the KIIs and FGDs. This **social accountability element** is related to the SBMCs role in ensuring the availability of teachers in schools at the appropriate times via monitoring activities. Sometimes the SBMCs also led the planning and implementation of activities funded by micro-grants given to schools in GEP3.

“UNICEF supported four or five times through micro grants sometimes 1.5 million Naira, sometimes 250, 000 sometimes 700,000 were given to the schools and SBMCs were involved. The money goes directly to the SBMC's account not even the LGEA, not even the SUBEB. The community develops their work plan based on their priorities – the problems within a particular school, to bring success within those particular schools. These funds have tremendously helped the GEP sustainability in this LGA.” LGEA stakeholder, Bauchi

19. **The activities of the MAs were also frequently reported as critical in reducing the number of out-of-school children.** They also made financial commitments during their weekly, or monthly, meetings – contributing 50 or 100 Naira – for buying school sandals and uniforms for children. Furthermore, the parents, the community members, and the traditional and religious leaders were key advocates themselves. They were considered in the programme so that they could ensure that girls would go to school.
20. Then the girls were able to get their peers back to school. **Regular mentoring and training of teachers (output 2) were described by the key informants as useful in improving the capacity needed to deliver quality learning.** The interventions under this output targeted the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning of school-aged girls in marginalised and disadvantaged communities. This was pursued in the states through the Female Teachers Trainee Scholarship Scheme (FTTSS) and the Head Teachers Capacity Training Programme. The key informants perceived GEP3 as instrumental in ensuring that children could have quality learning through the improvement of the quality of teaching which occurred as the capacities of teachers were built. The focus was also on building the capacities of the head teachers around leadership to ensure more efficient coordination of the teachers. The training was considered useful and vital in improving the quality of teaching and learning, as well as raising awareness of the core problem (girls' access to education). The comprehensive nature of capacity building carried out was highlighted frequently by the stakeholders. At the state level, respondents agreed that many stakeholders had been trained so that they were proactive in discharging their duties and working towards the achievement of the project's goals. Nevertheless, the teacher training element was considered a weakness in the system in terms of quality practices (methods, strategies and pedagogical competencies). The approach to training was considered by stakeholders as not always fully effective or systematic enough. Several reasons were given for this including a lack of suitable entry profiles (basic skills) which made assimilation of training difficult and faulty geographical coverage of the training. Some stakeholders perceived that the sociodemographic differences between urban and rural in GEP3 states were sometimes underestimated and this influenced outcome negatively.

“You see a lot of concentration of teachers in urban centres and less in rural areas due to one reason or the other. The capacity is there but there is a wide gap in terms of staffing ratio – ratio of teacher to pupil. That really derails and that slows the issues of getting the desired results.” State Ministry of Education stakeholder, Niger

21. **Relating to governance (output 3)**, GEP3 aimed at strengthening girls' education by influencing key areas of governance in the state education system to support basic education. **An element that was well considered was the educational data consolidation needs, and the lack of quality quantitative educational information.** GEP3 supported the implementation of the Annual School Census which helped to identify the changes and gaps in pupils' annual enrolment in schools (boys and girls) for necessary government or donor actions. The programme also aimed at improving the EMIS, and this was perceived by many stakeholders as having been achieved thoroughly, as GEP3 had focused on and built on data over the years.

“Through this programme, I think the impact on data have gone far beyond the six focus states and has impacted the entire system, in a very positive way – in terms of building capacity, collecting education management information system data which are typically in the annual census. Through the evidence generated on enrolment right, we have, the universal basic education commission, that has worked and taken enrolment right as a major strategy, across the entire country so GEP3 enrolment right is a reality.” National Local Staff, UNICEF

22. **Governance was also improved by strengthening the School-Based Management Committees. Additionally, the focus on infrastructure improvements rendered learning more feasible and more accessible.** Enrolment drivers were well perceived about the infrastructure and material conditions of learning. It seemed to have made schools more conducive, more suitable, and modern for activities planned by the local government. Several improvements such as the renovation of classrooms, water sources and toilets; the purchase of books, chalks, and an array of learning materials, including uniforms for the pupils were reported as having contributed considerably towards the improvement of teaching and learning, girls' attendance, pupil's attendance, and community participation.

QR 2. Is the CTP intervention appropriate in terms of design and delivery approach, given the contextual realities in Niger and Sokoto states; and to what extent were the needs and priorities of targeted beneficiaries/local partners consistent with the CTP objectives and deliverables?

8.1.4. Appropriateness of the CTP design in Niger and Sokoto states

23. The design of GEP3-CTP used a **combined geographical-categorical targeting approach**. In this targeting approach, the catchment areas of schools with the highest proportion of out-of-school girls are targeted (geographic targeting). Within these catchment areas, the female caregivers of all girls between the ages of six and 15 were eligible for a transfer with female children as the intended beneficiary (categorical targeting)⁵⁸. A quarterly benefit of 5,000 Naira (about US\$30) per girl was paid in cash to the caregiver at a pay point at a cluster school each quarter. Payments were exclusively channelled through these pay points and administrated by a contracted bank.

Caregivers had to show their programme identity card, which they had received upon enrolment into GEP3-CTP, to the payment official who would then hand over the transfer.

Respondents from FGD and KII⁵⁹ in Sokoto and Niger, the only two states where cash transfers were provided, confirmed that geographical targeting was carried out, mentioning that not all communities and schools benefitted from the CTP. They explained that categorical targeting for girls was carried out by assessing the economic situation of the household:

“They look at the condition of the child with his parents, whether the parents can afford his education or not, so they will know whether he should be assisted or not ... they look at the living conditions ... whereas some parents want their children to go to school but because they don't have the resources to provide them with a uniform and other thing. So, they look at this thing.” Female caregivers, Sokoto

⁵⁸ Evaluability Assessment Report. Impact Evaluation of UNICEF Nigeria Girls' Education Project Phase 3 (GEP3) cash transfer Programme (CTP) in Niger and Sokoto States. November 2016, UNICEF Nigeria Country Office.

⁵⁹ From Niger and Sokoto states where CTP was implemented.

24. However, the impact evaluation of GEP3-CTP⁶⁰ highlighted that the **targeting process did not select the poorest caregivers as CTP beneficiaries in GEP3 communities**. The results indicated that CTP beneficiaries have an average weekly income of almost four times those of the control communities in each of the two states. Nevertheless, the beneficiaries were chosen from the low-income group bracket. Also, it highlighted **the inability of local authorities to pay the CT on time and the irregularity of the CT payment**. Furthermore, in Niger state the 2015 general election campaign impacted the CT payment that was delayed in the first year. While respondents from Sokoto state mentioned having received the CT in four instalments, some respondents from Niger state have mentioned a one-time instalment of the total amount of the one-year CT. However, the findings from the 2017 Impact Evaluation of GEP3-CTP displayed that the last two tranches of the CT were paid simultaneously due to the cumulative delay. As a result, the women who received two payments simultaneously decided to use the money for small businesses to avoid wasting it and to keep the profit to use for the children's needs. Fathers and mothers explained during the FGDs that the community had been informed that parents had to enrol their daughters in school to be considered for a cash transfer to cover related costs. Visits were then made to the homes based on the registration list. Complaints from parents who did not receive a CT were mentioned, but it was acknowledged that the **school authorities were indeed using vulnerability criteria in selecting orphans and children from poor families**. On the other hand, it was reported during FGDs with SBMCs that no specific information on the targeting of CTP was provided to individuals or community committees, nor to HiLWA, and that the information reported was based on personal observations.
25. **The unconditionality of the CTP was considered appropriate in its design given the contextual realities in the two states**. No condition was given on how to use the transfer. However, to ensure that caregivers used the money for the purpose for which it was meant, the transfer was accompanied by sensitisation campaigns during and after payments. This persuaded caregivers to use the money for the purpose for which it was intended. An advantage regarding the unconditional nature of the programme, was the relatively low monitoring costs. In the case of education, for example, it is recognised in the related literature⁶¹ that the system of monitoring the conditionality compliance of a conditional cash transfer implies burdens both for schools and the institution managing the conditional cash transfer itself. On one side, reporting on the regular attendance of pupils place an administrative and financial burden on schools. On the other, the conditional cash transfer programme sustains a high cost for verifying compliance and defining administrative procedures for warning or suspending non-compliers from the payment of the transfer.
26. The previous evaluation of the CTP in 2017 revealed that there was some negative perception in the qualitative study on the misuse of cash transfers – that in some cases, caregivers did not consider the schooling of girls. However, the quantitative data revealed that this was not true and that, despite the non-conditionality, the cash had contributed to girls' schooling. **In this evaluation, there were both qualitative and quantitative evidence to support that cash transfers contributed considerably to increasing the enrolment and retention of girls in schools**. This finding is also supported by literature on the non-conditionality of cash transfers⁶². It is recognised that the misuse of cash in unconditional cash transfers is usually minimal and in no way justifies the costly expenses of a control system that would need to be put in place to monitor the provision of conditional cash.

The unconditionality of the cash transfers had its disadvantages. As reported in the interviews, parents sometimes did not invest the money to generate more income because they felt that the stipends were free and would keep coming. Because the cash was given unconditionally and the people benefitting from it knew they would not have to repay the money, some of them did not protect the money.

“And for me if you are not investing, how do you intend to assist these children? In one of the programmes I attended on cash transfer, when the parents were asked what will happen when this money stops coming, they asked a question: will it stop coming? and that is because they think the money is free, they feel that they will continue to receive that money. If that money is made conditional cash transfer, they will know that they will have to return the money through one way or the other, so they will have to invest in money.” FME stakeholder

⁶⁰ Impact Evaluation Report. Impact Evaluation of UNICEF Nigeria Girls' Education Project Phase 3 (GEP3) cash transfer Programme (CTP) in Niger and Sokoto States. June 2017, UNICEF Nigeria Country Office.

⁶¹ “Does one size fit all? The conditions for conditionality in cash transfers. Luca Pellerano and Valentina Barca. Oxford Policy Management, January 2014

⁶² Ibid.

8.2. Coherence of GEP3 2012–2022

Overall finding: GEP3 2012–2022 is highly coherent with global and national priorities of the education sector in Nigeria

Quality of the evidence: Strong

According to the OECD, the DAC criterion of coherence addresses “the compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution.” In other words, how well does the intervention fit?

The evaluation questions used for assessing coherence of GEP3 are recapitulated below:

QC 1. To what extent did other interventions (particularly policies) support or undermine the GEP3 intervention, including internal and external coherence (How well does the programme fit?)?

QC 2. To what extent is the CTP coherent with the broader policy environment at state and federal levels (including education, social protection and gender policies; other interventions, e.g., supply-side improvements in the education sector)?

The questions related to coherence were answered by triangulating the findings from the extensive document review and the qualitative interviews (KIIs and FGDs).

The two questions on coherence were addressed together due to their intertwined nature to avoid redundancy and ensure a logical flow.

The overall conclusions of the independent evaluation team on the coherence of GEP3 are summarised below:

Preliminary conclusions on coherence of GEP3

COH 1: GEP3-CTP was intentionally structured to align with global strategies on girls' education – integrating elements from evidence used globally in designing interventions for girls' education. (Para 27)

COH 2: GEP3 as implemented in the six focal states, was coherent with education and the broader policy environment at federal and state levels. The Programme was aligned with the national strategic policy on education as well as the national social protection and gender policies, and the adapted policies at state levels. (Para 28–34)

COH 3: GEP3 considered key contextual elements and causal factors in formulating the hypotheses underlying the design of GEP3 interventions. Consideration for the contextual issues relating to financial access, socio-cultural practices and continuity of use was also seen clearly in the CTP design. (Para 35 and 36)

COH 4: As far as alignment of the GEP-CTP with the local and contextual realities is concerned, some sociocultural elements still must be addressed, especially those aspects which are so deeply entrenched in societal and cultural norms that they are likely beyond the scope of one programme or one sector. (Para 36)



Picture 2 : Head teacher interview

8.2.1. Coherence alignment with global strategies and priorities on girls' education

27. **The programme was intentionally structured to align with global strategies on girls' education.** The multiplication of benefits to the next generation of girls through mentoring by programme alumnae (as seen in Girls 4 Girls) was a crucial component. Another programme element that reflected global evidence included the role of men and boys in reducing barriers that girls face through their collaboration with SBMCs/CBMCs, He for She, religious and community leaders and others.

GEP3 redesign and the fine-tuning effort carried out in 2015 resulted in a revised ToC more in line with global strategies and priorities. The main factors identified and retained as playing a role in supporting girls' education were evidence-based. Coherence was also demonstrated in the alignment of GEP3 to the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage⁶³ which promotes the rights of adolescent girls to avert marriage and achieve their aspirations through education.

8.2.2. Alignment with national and state strategies and priorities

28. **GEP3 as implemented in the six focal states was coherent with education and the broader policy environment at federal and state levels.** The programme was aligned with the national strategic policy on education, the national social protection and gender policies and the adapted policies at state levels. The CTP was viewed by the state government stakeholders in Niger and Sokoto states as useful for achieving the policy objectives of increasing girls' enrolment in schools and improving women's participation in social and economic development activities.
29. **Alignment of GEP3 with the national and state priorities on education** was considered key to its influence around governance of the education sector. Nigeria has a strategic plan for education which has received the buy-in of most of the states in the federation. Out of the 36 states and FCT, 30 states have their priorities for the education sector fairly aligned to the national priorities. This was considered a strength of the programme by the stakeholders.

GEP3 was aligned with the major policy goal of reduction in the number of out-of-school children, especially for girls in northern Nigeria, which is well articulated in the Strategic Plans for Development of Education Section in Nigeria (2011–2015 and 2016–2020). GEP3 also had the target of achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Basic Education (UBE) as stipulated in the six Education for All (EFA) goals⁶⁴.

30. GEP3 strategy was focused on the most vulnerable and marginalised groups, including girls. The inclusion of children that were disabled, in some cases boys, was considered very positive. The alignment of the programme with the priorities of the Strategic Plan⁶⁵ to ensure that there is equity in access, participation, completion, and access to different levels of education was also an asset.

⁶³ UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage
<https://www.unicef.org/protection/unfpa-unicef-global-programme-end-child-marriage>.

⁶⁴ UNESCO, 2015 ; UNICEF, 2016 ; Pellens et al. ; 2016.

⁶⁵ Education National Strategy of Nigeria, especially Section 1 (out-of-school children) and Section 2 (Basic Education).
 It is worth noting that six out of seven targets concerning SDG 4 are relevant to achieving basic education for all.

In terms of integrating Islamic schools with formal education, there was evidence of coherence with the state priorities on education. Also, the design of GEP3-CTP used a combined geographical-categorical targeting approach. The catchment areas of schools with the highest proportion of out-of-school girls were targeted.

31. Furthermore, considering that lack of access to education is a key dimension of child poverty, GEP3-CTP programme also aligns with the Government's Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) from 2017 to 2020 which has now been replaced by Nigeria's Medium-term National Development Plan (2021–2025) of which **poverty reduction and social inclusion** remain among the nine highlighted government priorities. In 2017, the National Social Protection Policy (NSPP) was approved by the Federal Executive Council, and it was developed within the framework of the ERGP. The overall goal of the policy mentions gender sensitivity explicitly.
32. Sokoto state's ranking among Nigerian states is among the lowest human development indices, particularly for health, nutrition and education. Sokoto's success with the cash transfer scheme from the GEP to reduce gender gaps in public primary schooling has resulted in a state-run programme. In 2020, the Joint SDG Fund selected Sokoto state to implement a two-year joint programme named "Institutionalizing Social Protection for Accelerated SDG Implementation in Nigeria"⁶⁶. The programme aims to accelerate the policy implementation by focusing on reinforcing legal, institutional and financial sustainability of the system at federal level. Mainstreaming of social protection interventions in the Sokoto Development Plan should sustain well-resourced state-led social protection interventions beyond the joint programme duration, which in return serves as a model for other states.
33. The 2006 gender policy priorities of the Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs were derived from an analysis of the gender equality situation at the national level and include, in particular, two issues commonly considered by GEP3, namely (1) gender disparity in enrolment, attrition, and retention at all levels – primary, secondary, and tertiary; and (2) gender-based cultural/religious biases and harmful cultural and religious practices that reproduce inequalities in gender role relations in Nigeria.

"When we look at data in Nigeria, and we are looking at children in school, all the children who are in Islamic schools are not considered children in school, because they don't follow traditional curriculum, they follow the religious, and GEP3 is one of those projects that really invested heavily in ensuring that Islamic schools became integrated and has really set for what a real integration means." UNICEF staff

"I will say that it is very aligned, because if you look at the ministry of education road map by the Minister, one of the foci that he has really, been embarking on is to ensure that Nigeria reduces the number of out of school children." UNICEF National Level Stakeholder

8.2.2.1. Alignment of GEP3 with the National Policy of Education (Education Act 2014)

34. Furthermore, GEP3 strengthens a series of objectives stated in the National Policy Act to accomplish the Universal Basic Education goal (UBE). The alignment of GEP3 initiative to the general vision and improvements expected in basic education lies mainly on three objectives:
 - Developing a strong citizen-based consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion, clearly achieved by the strong community involvement and empowerment through GEP3 initiatives undertaken (mostly encompassed in output 3 of the ToC)
 - Providing compulsory, **free and universal basic education** for every Nigerian child of school age
 - Reducing the incidence of **drop-out from the formal school system**, through improved relevance, quality and efficiency, tackled by the enrolment and retention, and teacher's training initiatives (outputs 1 and 2)

⁶⁶ Nigeria-Pro Doc-PSP 2019 NIG-GW. Joint programme document, joint SDG fund: Institutionalizing Social Protection for Accelerated SDG Implementation in Nigeria.

Additionally, it can be said that GEP3 supports and aligns other objectives and integrates complementary approaches to promote basic education. For example, GEP3 can cater to the learning needs of young persons who for some reason have had to interrupt their schooling. It also aligns with the priority of ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, communicative and life skills, as well as the ethical, moral, security and civic values needed to establish a solid foundation for life-long learning⁶⁷.

8.2.3. Alignment with local and contextual realities

35. **The programme considered key contextual elements and causal factors in formulating the hypotheses underlying the design of GEP3 interventions.** It emerged clearly from the KII and FGDS that a host of players at local and grassroots levels (e.g., SBMC, CBMC, MAs, HiLWA, male youth advocates (He for She) traditional and religious leaders and NGOs) were meaningfully involved in achieving the programme goals. Consideration for the contextual issues was also seen clearly in the CTP design. For instance, the cash was provided to female caregivers, thereby addressing the bottlenecks in the demand for education such as:

- Financial access: recognising the indirect cost of education.
- Socio-cultural practices: empowering women to have a better say in decision-making regarding the schooling of their daughters as they were the ones who received and managed the use of the unconditional cash transfers.
- Continuity of use through sensitisation: promoting a positive impact on girls' education and encouraging women to use the cash transfers to invest in income-generating activities would enable them to continue to support their daughters' studies.

Poverty plays a vital role in human development and the perception about what boys and girls should do and become (e.g., girls get married and boys manage economic resources). The programme considered the need for families to send their daughters to work to increase income. The cash transfer was considered by the community members as a good incentive to promote girls' education.

36. As far as the coherence of the GEP-CTP with the local and contextual realities is concerned, some sociocultural elements must still be addressed. In Nigeria, as in many African countries, the social roles associated with each of the two sexes are delimited by hierarchical and patriarchal values which promote discrimination based on gender. The traditional family is therefore based on a patriarchal structure, within which women are often seen as being subject to men. Therefore, social gender roles are mainly characterised by the superiority of men and the subordination of women. Moreover, a woman is primarily valued in her role as wife and mother after the birth of a child. She is a visitor to her parent's home since she will go to live with her husband's family – facing inwards while her husband is facing outwards. The high value of virginity in marriage also favours child marriage which in most cases results in dropping out of school. For some parents, marrying their daughter soon after her first menstruation is a way to prevent the dishonour of pregnancy outside wedlock. These issues were taken into consideration by the programme but are so deeply entrenched in societal and cultural norms that they are beyond the scope of one programme or one sector.

8.3. Effectiveness of GEP3

Overall finding: GEP3 displayed strong effectiveness in the achievement of the programme's expected results.

Quality of the evidence: Strong

The DAC criterion of effectiveness is defined here as "the extent to which the interventions achieved, or were expected to achieve, their objectives, and results, including any differential results across groups." Effectiveness focuses more closely on outputs and attributable results than impact.

⁶⁷ 2013, National Policy on education, 6th edition, pp. 4-5.



Picture 3: Teacher explaining to pupils in the classroom

The evaluation questions used for assessing the effectiveness of GEP3 are summarized below:

QE 1. To what extent did GEP3 achieve its expected results (outcomes and outputs) agreed within the business plan, including any differential results across states in the three main strategic areas of access, quality and governance of the education sector?

QE 2. What are the factors (internal and external to UNICEF) that contributed to the attainment of the GEP3 programme and results the most?

QE 3. What are the factors (internal and external to UNICEF) that hindered the attainment of GEP3 (including CTP) programme and results the most?

The questions on effectiveness were answered by triangulating quantitative and qualitative information from different data sources, including the learning outcomes assessment survey, household survey, head teacher survey, classroom observation survey, secondary data sources (EMIS, NDHS, MICS), semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The specific data sources used for specific evaluation questions are detailed in subsequent sections.

This section details the progress made against the output, outcome and impact indicators, key achievements of GEP3; the drivers of change (DOC) and the factors that hindered change. The evidence rating applied to the different questions related to effectiveness, impact and efficiency (see Table 14).

The overall conclusions of the independent evaluation team on the effectiveness of GEP3 are summarised below:

Conclusions on the effectiveness of GEP3 vis-a-vis the expected results (outcomes and outputs)

EFFE 1: GEP3 achieved its expected results (outcomes and outputs) agreed within the Business Plan in the strategic area of access to an exceptional extent and in the two other strategic areas of quality and governance of education sector to fairly more limited extents (see Table 15: Detailing performance evaluation of results framework). (Para 37–38)

EFFE 2: The programme was highly effective in achieving enrolment and retention of girls in schools. It enabled a definite shift in mindset regarding the importance of education for girls and created a norm in many communities of a raised profile for educated girls. (Para 38–43 and 69)

EFFE 3: The combination of the early learning and the cash transfer interventions significantly displayed the most effectiveness, with the highest proportion of households with 1-2 or more girls who had completed nine years of schooling compared to the early learning intervention only and control groups. (Para 43)

EFFE 4: The CTP specifically was effective in improving household consumption and welfare for the beneficiary households in Niger and Sokoto states. The cash transfer significantly influenced increased expenditure on girls' education and the decisions to send and retain girls in school in the two states. (Para 44–46)

EFFE 5: Pupils who benefitted from GEP3-RANA programme performed better than the control groups in English and Hausa literacy as well as numeracy. For instance, pupils who benefitted from GEP3-RANA programme scored significantly higher in English literacy than their counterparts in the control group ($p < 0.01$). Girls' performances were higher on average than boys' in both English and Hausa literacy in public primary schools at end-line (Para 48–57)

EFFE 6: Training was key to improving the quality of teaching and learning, as well as raising awareness on the relevance of the core problem (girls' access to education). However, despite the fact that the capacity building and improvement of teacher capacity were noted as a strength of the programme, evidence from classroom observations and qualitative interviews indicated gaps in the quality of teaching. This was partly attributed to inadequate teaching aids or poor comprehension of the teaching material by teachers – and indicated a need to better train people with the appropriate capabilities. (Para 59–64)

EFFE 7: Capacity building of head teachers in management processes improved school governance. There was evidence of improved monitoring of school teachers. Governance was also improved by strengthening the SBMCs. Additionally, the focus on infrastructure improvements rendered learning more feasible and more accessible. Improvement in data quality

8.3.1. Overall performance evaluation of effectiveness of GEP3

37. The overall findings of effectiveness of planned results impact, outcomes and output indicators in GEP3 results framework with findings from available secondary data are summarized in Table 15⁶⁸.

⁶⁸ Most data for the outcome and output indicators were not available at the time the final evaluation. Data that are available have been reflected in the GEP3 final Logframe dated November 2022.

Table 15: Assessment of output, outcome and impact indicators against GEP3 results framework

Level of results	Results statement	Key indicator	Baseline (2011-2012)	Midline (2015-2016)	Target (2019)	Actual status of results in 2021
Impact	Improved social and economic opportunities for girls	I.1. Literacy rate of young women (15-24 years)	Bauchi: 12.6% Katsina: 27.1% Niger: 28.3% Sokoto: 28.3% Zamfara: 15.8% Kano: 40.7% Mean: 25.5% (Source: MICS 2011)	Bauchi: 25.6% Katsina: 32.6% Niger: 37.6% Sokoto: 20.1% Zamfara: 31.0% Kano: 46.1% Mean: 32.2% (Source: MICS 2016)	Bauchi: 27.6% Katsina: 42.1% Niger: 43.3% Sokoto: 43.3% Zamfara: 30.8% Mean: 37.6% (2019)	Bauchi: 18.7 Katsina: 26.9 Niger: 38.4 Sokoto: 17.7 Zamfara: 19.3 Kano: 50 Mean: 24.6 (Source: MICS 2021) ⁶⁹
		I.2. Rate of early marriage (under 19) in target states	Bauchi: 57.2% Katsina: 60.8% Niger: 24.2% Sokoto: 65.8% Zamfara: 63.6% Kano: 41.5% Mean: 52.2% (Source: MICS 2011)	Bauchi: 47.3% Katsina: 49.3% Niger: 18.4% Sokoto: 54.9% Zamfara: 53.5% Kano: 30.8% Mean: 42.4% (Source: MICS 2016)	Bauchi: 50.2% Katsina: 53.8% Niger: 17.2% Sokoto: 58.8% Zamfara: 56.6% Kano: 23.0% Mean: 47.7% (2019)	Bauchi: 34.8% Katsina: 30.1% Niger: 10.0% Sokoto: 19.9% Zamfara: 27.5% Kano: 15.8% Mean: 23.0% (Source: MICS 2021)
		I.3. Early childbearing (have had a live birth before age 15)	Bauchi: 3.0% Katsina: 11.0% Niger: 2.7% Sokoto: 8.4% Zamfara: 8.8% Kano: 6.5% Mean: 6.7% (Source: MICS 2011)	Bauchi: 3.3% Katsina: 4.3% Niger: 1.3% Sokoto: 7.2% Zamfara: 13.9% Kano: 4.3% Mean: 5.6% (Source: MICS 2016)	Bauchi: 1.9% Katsina: 1.9% Niger: 1.9% Sokoto: 1.9% Zamfara: 1.9% Kano: 1.9% Mean: 1.9% (2019)	Bauchi: 2.4% Katsina: 4.9% Niger: 0.2% Sokoto: 0.7% Zamfara: 2.2% Kano: 0.4% Mean: 10.8% (Source: MICS 2021)
Outcome	More girls in the target states in northern Nigeria complete basic education and acquire skills for life and livelihoods (enrolment, completion and learning)	OC1. Percentage increase in the number of girls enrolled (gross) in primary education (public and private)	NA (2013-2014)		1% increase in baseline (2019-2020)	Bauchi: 34.3% Katsina: 15.6% Niger: 1.3% Sokoto: 39.3% Zamfara: 9.4% Kano: 3.7% Mean: 17.3% (Source: EMIS 2018-2019)
		OC2. Gender parity index (primary) (VfM equity)	Primary – NA JSS – NA (2013/2014)		P – 0.73 (2019-2020)	Pry – 0.76 excluding Kano state (Source: EMIS 2018-2019) Pry – 0.84 including Kano state (Source: EMIS 2018-2019)

⁶⁹The MICS 2021 data on the literacy rate of women covers ages 15 and 49 years which is different from the age range defined for this indicator. The MICS 2021 data reported in this table are for information only and should be interpreted with caution. They are not comparable with the data points in the baseline and midline and are not considered actual achievements for end-line.

Level of results	Results statement	Key indicator	Baseline (2011-2012)	Midline (2015-2016)	Target (2019)	Actual status of results in 2021
Outcome	More girls in the target states in northern Nigeria complete basic education and acquire skills for life and livelihoods (enrolment, completion and learning)	OC1. Percentage increase in the number of girls enrolled (gross) in primary education (public and private)	NA (2013-2014)		1% increase in baseline (2019-2020)	Bauchi: 34.3% Katsina:15.6% Niger:1.3% Sokoto:39.3% Zamfara: 9.4% Kano: 3.7% Mean:17.3% (Source: EMIS 2018-2019)
		OC2. Gender parity index (primary) (VfM equity)	Primary – NA JSS – NA (2013/2014)		P – 0.73 (2019-2020)	Pry – 0.76 excluding Kano state (Source: EMIS 2018-2019) Pry – 0.84 including Kano state (Source: EMIS 2018-2019)
		OC3. Girls' survival rate to Grade 5	NA (2013-2014)		80% (2019-2020)	EMIS data not available
		OC4. Percentage of girls achieving basic literacy (VfM effectiveness)	NA (2015)		4% increase (2019-2020)	English: 30.2% Hausa:1.3% (Source: Final Evaluation 2021)
		OC5. Percentage of girls achieving basic numeracy (VfM effectiveness)	NA (2015)		4% increase (2019-2020)	29.5 (Source: Final Evaluation 2021)
Output 1	Increased enrolment and retention of girls in basic education	P1.1 Number of girls in Grade 1 linked to enrolment drives (cumulative)	0 (2011)		901,758 (2019-2020)	Data not available
		P1.2 Number of additional girls enrolled in focus IQS (cumulative)	0 (2011)		186,000 (2019-2020)	Data not available
		P1.3 Girls' attendance rate (female pupils present on the day of visit/pupils enrolled)	Primary – 77% IQE – NA (2010-2011)		Primary – 90% IQE – 87% (2019-2020)	Data not available
		P1.4 Percentage of parents in focus communities who prioritise girls' education	NA (2015-2016)		30% increase (2019-2020)	Data not available

Level of results	Results statement	Key indicator	Baseline (2011-2012)	Midline (2015-2016)	Target (2019)	Actual status of results in 2021
		P2.2 Percentage of teachers in IQS who demonstrate minimum teaching competencies (Linked to VfM efficiency: unit cost per competent teacher)	NA (2015-2016)		30% increase on baseline (2019-2020)	Data not available
		P2.3 Percentage of girls achieving basic literacy in pilot early learning schools (VfM effectiveness)	NA (2015-2016)		2% increase (2019-2020)	Data not available
		P2.4 Percentage of girls achieving basic numeracy in pilot early learning schools (VfM effectiveness)	NA (2015-2016)		2% increase (2019-2020)	Data not available
Output 3	Improved governance to strengthen girls' education	P3.1 Number of states with accurate Annual School Census (validated at 90% accuracy)	0 (2010-2011)		5 (2019-2020)	Data not available
		P3.2 Number of states including IQS in EMIS with accurate data (validated at 90% accuracy)	0 (2013-2014)		4 (2019-2020)	Data not available
		P3.3 Percentage and number of focus schools/IQEs with functioning SBMCs/CBMCs	30% (SBMCs pilot, 2010-2011)		100% (SBMCs pilot) 100%/600 (CBMCs pilot, 2019-2020) 80%/4919 (SBMCs scale up) 80%/3600 (CBMCs scale up 2019-2020)	Data not available
		P3.4 Percentage and number of FTTSS graduates deployed	NA (2013-2014)		60%/638 (2019-2020)	Data not available

Level of results	Results statement	Key indicator	Baseline (2011-2012)	Midline (2015-2016)	Target (2019)	Actual status of results in 2021
		P3.4 Number of GEP3 interventions adopted by any focus state (cumulative)	0 (2010-2011)		7 (2019-2020)	Data not available

The achievement of outputs and outcomes showed a picture that was consistent across the focal states: differences in outcomes existed more on a thematic level. The strength of the evidence is shown in Table 16. The evidence for QE.1 is strong and supported with a variety of data sources including surveys on learning outcomes, head teachers, classroom observations and interviews, and focus group discussions. The evidence for QE.2 and Q3.3 is less strong and was provided with desk review, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.

Table 16: The strength of evidence on the effectiveness

Evaluation questions on effectiveness	Strength of evidence	Data sources
QE.1 To what extent did the GEP3 achieve its expected results (outcomes and outputs) agreed within the business plan including any differential results across states in the three main strategic areas of access, quality, and governance of education sector?	Strong	Learning outcomes assessment survey Household survey Head teacher survey Classroom observation survey Secondary data sources (EMIS, NDHS, MICS) Semi-structured interviews Focus group discussions
QE.2 What are the factors (internal and external to UNICEF) that contributed to the attainment of GEP3 programme and results the most?	Medium	Desk review Semi-structured interviews Focus group discussions
QE.3 What are the factors (internal and external to UNICEF) that hindered the attainment of GEP3 programme (including CTP) and results the most?	Medium	Desk review Semi-structured interviews Focus group discussions

QE 1. To what extent did GEP3 achieve its expected results (outcomes and outputs) agreed within the business plan, including any differential results across states in the three main strategic areas of access, quality and governance of the education sector?

8.3.2. Key achievements in girls' enrolment, retention and completion of basic education

This section reviews the findings related to output and outcome indicators on the enrolment, retention and completion of girls' education. The programme's effectiveness was assessed by tracking indicators over time (using mixed methods) as defined within the logical and results framework of GEP3.

38. **Overall, the effectiveness of GEP3 was good vis-à-vis the intended outcomes and outputs indicated in the logical and results framework.**

Using the available EMIS data for 2018 and 2019, increases in girls' gross enrolment in primary education in both public and private schools was analysed and estimated. The GPI between 2018 and 2019 in each of the programme target states was also analysed.

Secondary data analysis provided evidence of an increase in gross enrolment for girls and improved GPI across all the states. Niger state was the exception where the GPI remained approximately the same between the two periods. Figure 7 displays the percentage increase in school enrolment of girls in public and private schools in each GEP3 state. The results show that Sokoto and Bauchi states had the highest increase in enrolment (39.3 per cent and 34.3 per cent respectively) while an increase in girls' enrolment in primary education was marginal in Kano (3.7 per cent) and Niger (1.3 per cent). The differences in the overall enrolment results can be attributed to the clear political will and improved governance of the programme components

(especially concerning output 3) in Sokoto and Bauchi as compared to Niger and Kano. Moreover, Niger and Kano states experienced ongoing security risks during the period of GEP3. Data on gender parity in primary school enrolment in target states between 2018 and 2019 showed improved GPI across all the states except for Niger where the GPI remained nearly the same between the two periods (see Figure 8).

Figure 7: Percentage increase in the number of girls enrolled (gross) in primary education (public and private) between 2018 and 2019 (Source: Analysis of 2018 and 2019 EMIS Data)

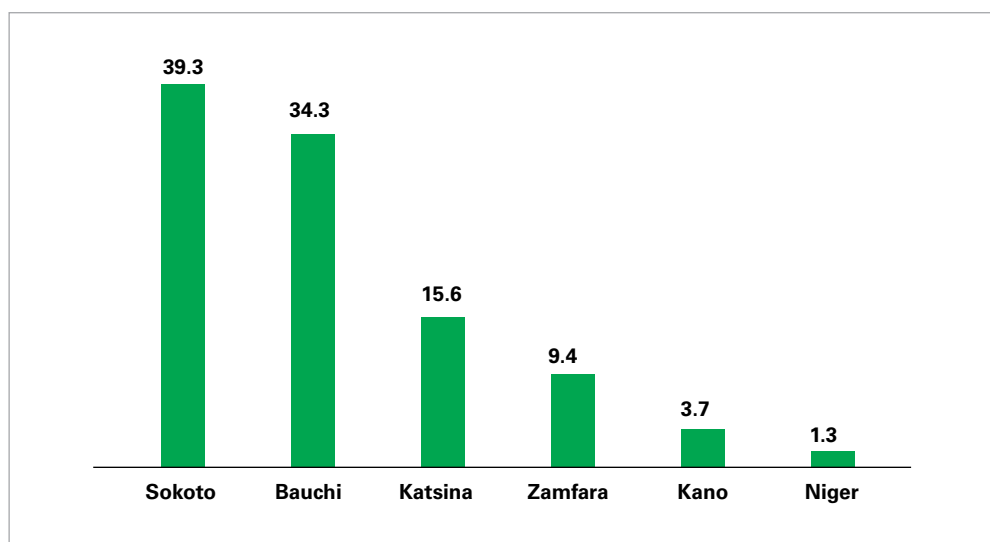
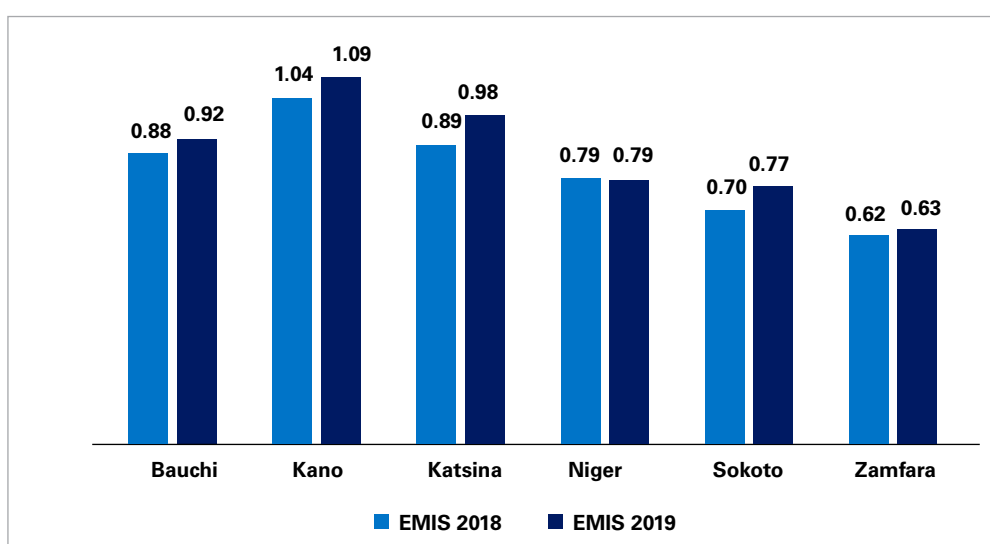


Figure 8 : Gender Parity Index (primary) (VfM equity) (Source: Analysis of 2018 and 2019 EMIS Data)



8.3.2. Key achievements in girls' enrolment, retention and completion of basic education

39. **Enrolment and retention were also assessed via the head teacher survey.** The head teacher questionnaire was administered in 359 public primary schools and 61 IQSs across six states (Bauchi 65, Kano 105, Katsina 52, Niger 63, Sokoto 77 and Zamfara 58) at the end-line (2021) as shown in Table 17. The questionnaire had also been administered at baseline (2012) and midline (2018).

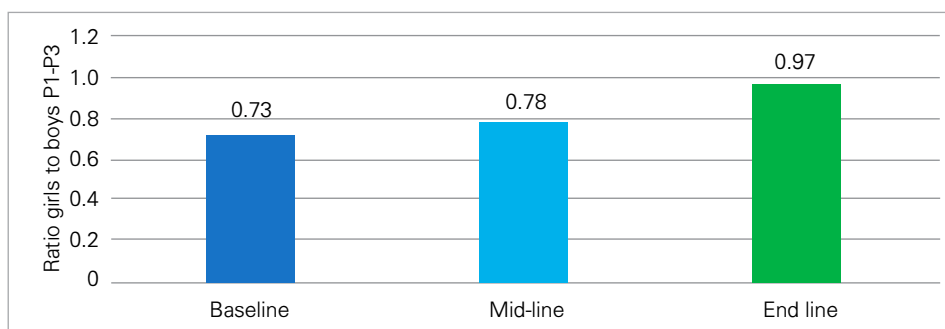
Table 17: Number of schools in the head teacher survey

Name of State	Type of School		Total
	Islamic Qur'anic School	Public primary school	
Bauchi	6	59	65
Kano	30	75	105
Katsina	6	46	52
Niger	5	58	63
Sokoto	9	68	77
Zamfara	5	53	58
Total	61	359	420

Public primary schools had an average of 591 pupils compared to 326 in IQSs. The average ratio of girls to boys currently enrolled in P1–P3 was recorded as 0.97. The impact of COVID-19 on school enrolment by boys and girls was found not to be significant. The average ratio of girls to boys was 0.97. This is similar to the period after COVID-19 which was also 0.97. However, the enrolment of girls to boys in P1 was higher before COVID-19 at a ratio 1.01 against 0.99 during the period of evaluation. Comparing the average ratio of girls to boys in P1–P3 across the states indicate a higher ratio in Kano at 1.08, followed by Katsina 0.96, Bauchi 0.94, Sokoto 0.93, Niger 0.83 and Zamfara 0.77. Analysis by school type indicates a higher enrolment ratio of girls to boys in IQSs P1–P3 of 1.09 compared to 0.95 in public primary schools.

40. **In comparison to baseline (BL) and midline (ML), the enrolment ratio for girls to boys is recorded as highest at end-line with a mean of (0.97). This was an increase from the baseline rate of 0.73 and a midline of 0.78** (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: School enrolment ratio comparison of baseline, midline and end-line



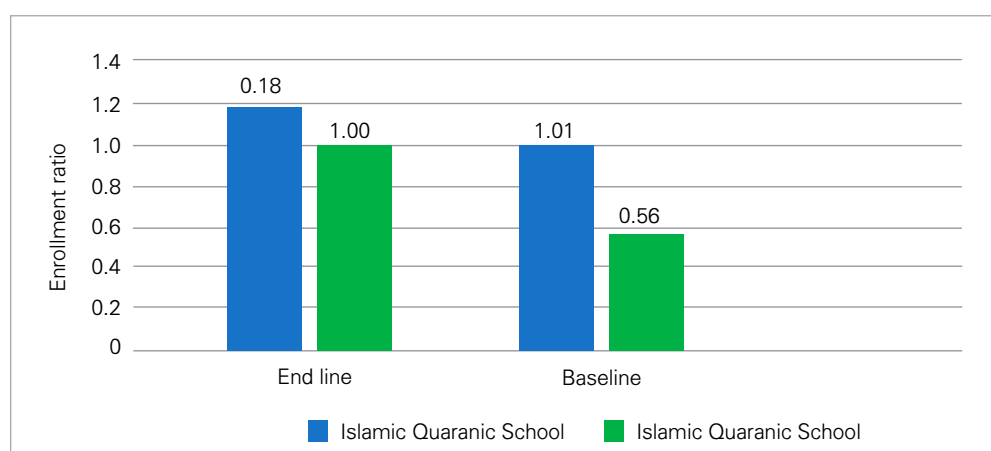
The ratio of girls to boys currently attending P1–P3 classes was 0.96. This was lower (but not significantly) compared to a ratio of 0.97 before COVID-19. Analysis by the state on current P1–P3 class attendance indicated a higher ratio in Bauchi and Kano at 1.02 each followed by Sokoto 1.00, Katsina 0.93, Niger 0.82 and Zamfara 0.81. At end-line, the ratio of P1–P2 class attendance for girls to boys in IQSs was 1.1 which is high compared to 0.94 in public primary schools. The results corroborate the enrolment ratio where IQSs were higher than public primary schools.

The results above indicate the insignificant impact of COVID-19 on school enrolment and attendance of P1-P3 pupils. This could further be attributed to the higher proportion (82 per cent) of schools that implemented COVID-19 protocols and a further 71 per cent of schools that were involved in back-to-school campaigns.

Variables	Std error	stat-T	P-value
Boys' enrolment P1–P3	14.371	0.750	0.453
Girls' enrolment P1–P3	13.916	2.187	0.029
Enrolment ratio P1–P3	0.051	3.375	0.001
School enrolment ratio	0.4616	3.201	0.001

41. **The programme experienced an increased enrolment of girls in both IQS and public schools.** The enrolment ratio (girls:boys) for IQS increased from 1.01 at baseline to 1.18 at end-line: an insignificant difference $p=0.519$). However, the enrolment ratio for public schools increased significantly from 0.56 to 1.00 ($p=0.000$) as shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10: School enrolment ratio – P2



The level of increased enrolment in IQS was not significant while the increase in public school enrolment was significant.

42. **Enrolment and completion were also assessed via the household survey.** The household survey was carried out in four of the pilot states, Katsina, Bauchi, Niger and Sokoto. About 15 per cent of the 3,037 households were CTP beneficiary households while nearly 47 per cent of the households had benefitted from the early learning intervention (RANA) only. The control group consisted of 38.4 per cent of the households covered.

In estimating the influence of CTP on the female children's school enrolment and completion at end-line, **the proportion of households with two or more female children enrolled in school was the highest among GEP3-CTP benefitting households (25 per cent)** followed by GEP3-only early learning benefitting households (21.7 per cent) and 17.9 per cent for the control. Following the result of one-way ANOVA shown in Table 18, the differences in the percentages of households with two or more female children are statistically significant ($p<0.001$) between treatment and control groups.

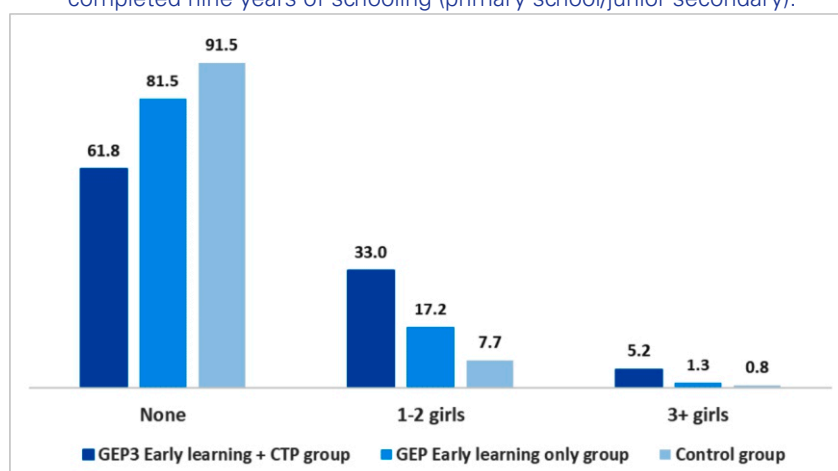
Table 18: Examining the distribution of the number of female children enrolled in P1–P3 in households by evaluation treatment type

Source	SS	Df	MS	F-test	P-value
Between groups	2.579	2	1.289	1.41	0.000
Within groups	571.986	627	0.912		
Total	574.565	629	0.913		

Similarly, in assessing the proportion of households with female children aged 15 years who had completed nine years of schooling (basic school/junior secondary), **GEP3-CTP treatment group had the highest proportion of households with one to two girls (33.0 per cent) and households with three or more girls (5.2 per cent) who had completed nine years of schooling compared to the other two groups. This difference was statistically significant (p=0.000).** Correspondingly, when reviewed from the angle of households for which none of the children aged 15 years had completed nine years of schooling (basic school/junior secondary), the control group had the highest proportion (91.5 per cent) compared to 61.8 per cent of GEP3-CTP group (see Figure 11).

43. **These findings underscore the effectiveness of GEP3 early learning intervention, especially when combined with CTP in enabling the enrolment and completion of education for girls in the focal states.**

Figure 11: Percentage of households with female children aged 15 years who have completed nine years of schooling (primary school/junior secondary).

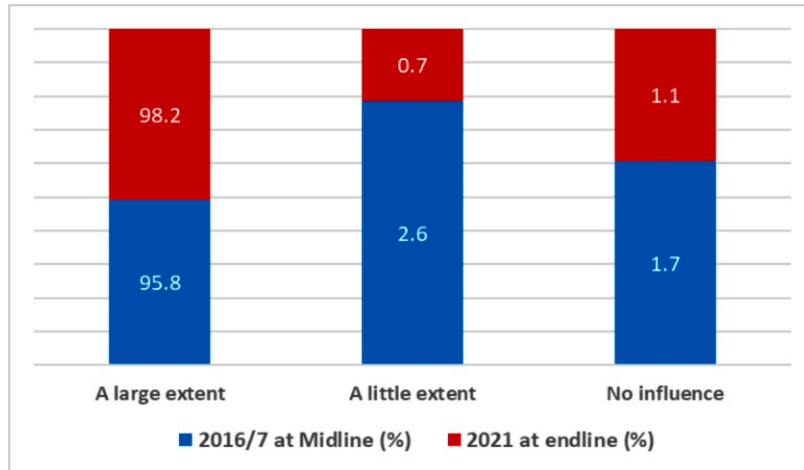


The remarkable increase in enrolment seen when GEP3 is combined with CTP is explained by the influence of the cash transfers on household decision-making. Caregivers in the survey (and in the qualitative interviews) indicated that the cash transfers together with the CTP sensitisation efforts were important motivations for sending their daughters to school and for ensuring that they complete their schooling. The removal of financial barriers by the cash transfers enabled this. Figures 12 and 13 display the survey results.

Figure 12: Extent of CTP removal of financial barriers on girls' enrolment, attendance and completion in school



Figure 13: Caregivers' perception of the extent of influence of CTP sensitisation's efforts on the decision to send female children to school



8.3.3. Influence of CTP on expenditure on education and household consumption and welfare

44. Figure 14 displays the estimates of the influence of CTP on schooling and household consumption and welfare (in Naira) over time: before CTP, after receiving CTP and the current estimate in 2021 measured by the average expenditure in each term. The results show that average expenditure consistently increased before and after CTP was received in the households. This difference in the household average expenditure on boys' schooling, girls' schooling, health and food increased more significantly when the baseline amount is compared to the current household expenditure in 2021, about five years after CTP ended.

Examining CTP influence on household consumption and welfare by comparing before and after receiving CTP in 2016-2017, the findings in Figure 15 show that the **increase in household spending on girls' education (30.5 per cent) was nearly double that of the spending on boys' education (16.4 per cent)**. Comparing the spending on children's education between 2015–2016 (after receiving CTP) and currently in 2021 (towards the end of GEP3), both girls' and boys' household education financing had further increased, though spending on boys' education had a higher percentage increase than that of girls.

Figure 14: Estimates of reported influence of CTP on schooling and household consumption and welfare (in Naira)

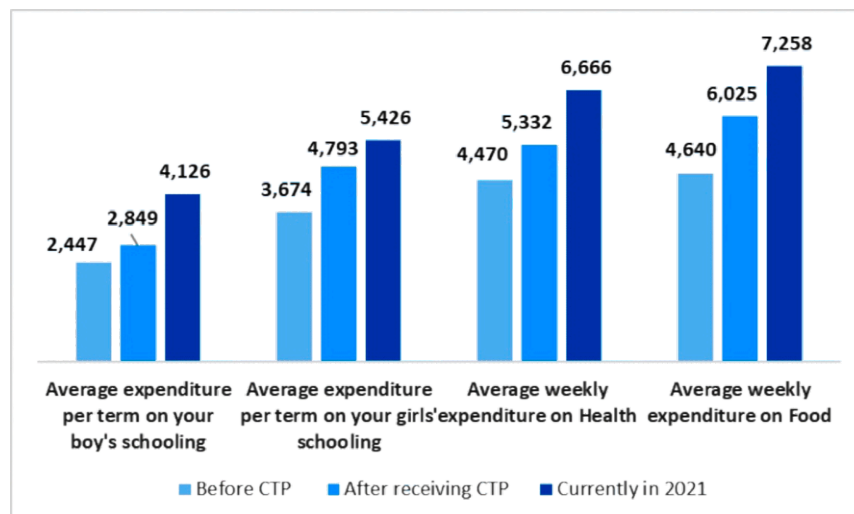
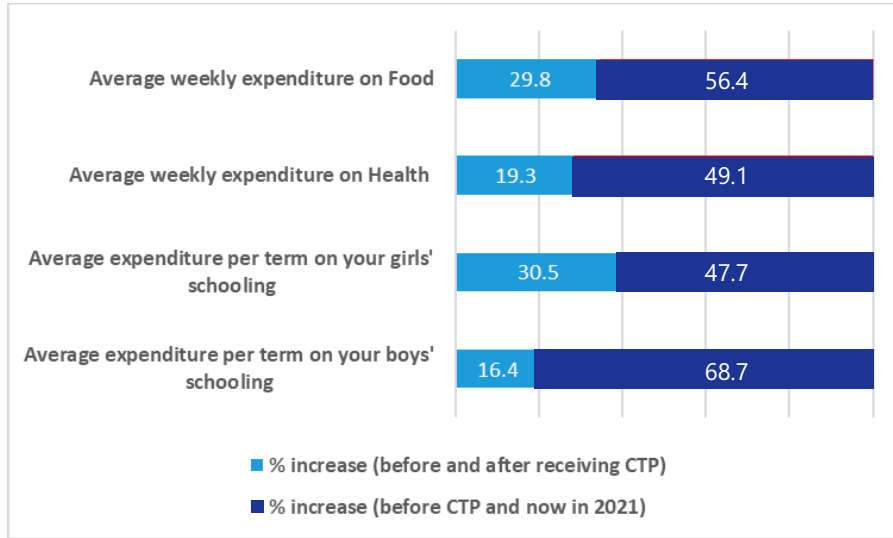


Figure 15: Percent increase in estimated expenditure on household consumption and schooling



45. There was evidence of a substantial influence of the cash transfers on household consumption and welfare at the end of the programme. To estimate the influence of CTP on household consumption and welfare, respondents were asked whether the CTP money they received helped in improving the quality of nutrition in their households. Nearly all the respondents (98.7 per cent) claimed that CTP money helped to improve the quality of nutrition in their households. Figure 16 displays the extent of the influence of the cash transfers to caregivers on household consumption. More than seven out of 10 reported that the influence was to a very large extent and one out of four claimed that the cash transfers influenced household consumption to a large extent. Likewise, 68.8 per cent of households of CTP beneficiaries reported regular consumption of three cooked meals per day compared to about 47.3 per cent recorded for the control group (Figure 17).

Figure 16: Extent of the influence of cash transfers to caregiver on household consumption

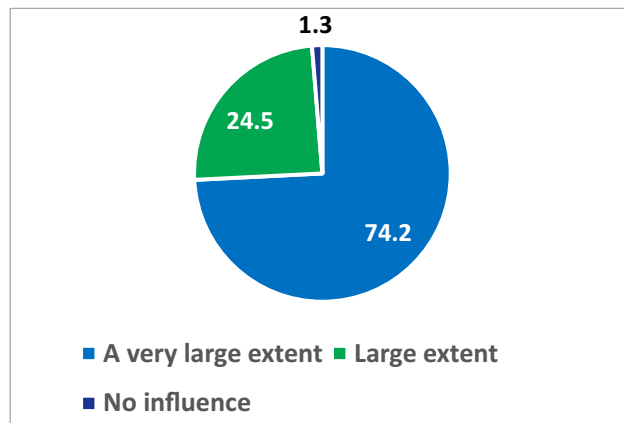
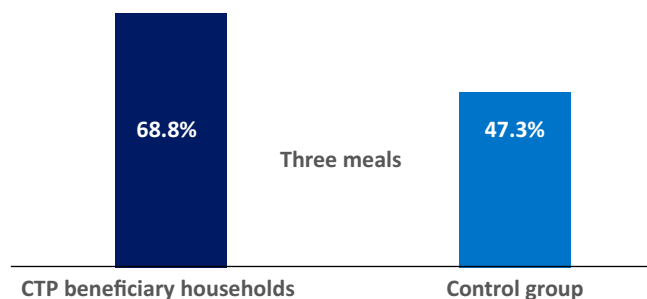


Figure 17: Percent of households that regularly cooked three meals per day by CTP status



46. GEP3-CTP was an unconditional cash transfer programme, meaning that enrolment into school was not a condition for transfer receipt. However, a sensitisation campaign aimed at changing the perception on girls' education was carried out to increase the willingness of parents to enrol their girls in school. In addition, a school enrolment campaign was also carried out to promote and facilitate households to enrol their children..rls in the same way as boys.

Respondents from Niger state reported that the money was disbursed at the school premises and given to the mother. In some cases, as noted earlier, the amount of 20,000 Naira was given in one go at the beginning of the school year, which represented a significant amount of cash that could be used as capital.

Testimonies from the FGDs indicated that, given the relatively high amount of the CT (20,000 Naira), parents utilized it as **seed money** to invest in a small business. This was especially true when the CT was only allocated for one school year. Mothers used this money to invest in small businesses to generate regular profits to continue their daughter's education after primary school or even beyond secondary school.

47. The **SBMC played a crucial role in informing the communities about GEP3-CTP programme**, particularly the importance of enrolling girls in school. The committee members not only facilitated the mobilisation of parents to participate in information and sensitisation meetings but **also went door to door to take the time to convince reluctant fathers**. The fact that the management of the CT money was entrusted to the mother and not to the father included a potential risk of conflict within the couple regarding the use of this money or the claim of part of it by the father. It was during the awareness sessions and home visits that this choice was explained, emphasising the objective of promoting the schooling of girls in the same way as boys.

*"You see they are some that have never seen 5,000 Naira, but you see now they have been given 20,000 Naira. Getting this money has helped women to support their children to go to school. Why? Because they see that this money they get, they use it in a business and make profit from it. They always think how to make this money grow so this girl can go to school... Also, these parents are happy with the things that have been given to them because that has really helped them and reduced poverty." **Mother, Sokoto.***

*"Even before they give the money, they will say that the money is for the child and not for the father/because most of the time mothers are better at helping than fathers, if it's a mother, she will know how to look after the girl." **Father, Sokoto.***

8.3.4. Pupils' learning outcomes

Results of the RANA and early learning intervention indicators at outcome levels highlighted the details and trends of pupil learning outcomes between baseline and end-line in intervention schools. The instruments used to collect the learning outcomes data were the same instruments used during the baseline and midline evaluations. The assessed pupils were registered using a pupil questionnaire that collected information about their age, gender, language spoken at home and their household assets. They were assessed using the English and Hausa Literacy assessment instruments. The numeracy instrument had only been administered in two of the states (Bauchi and Niger) at baseline, no midline assessment was done. A numeracy assessment in this evaluation was therefore carried out to establish a baseline for the six states. The literacy and numeracy proficiency level descriptions are displayed in Annex 10.

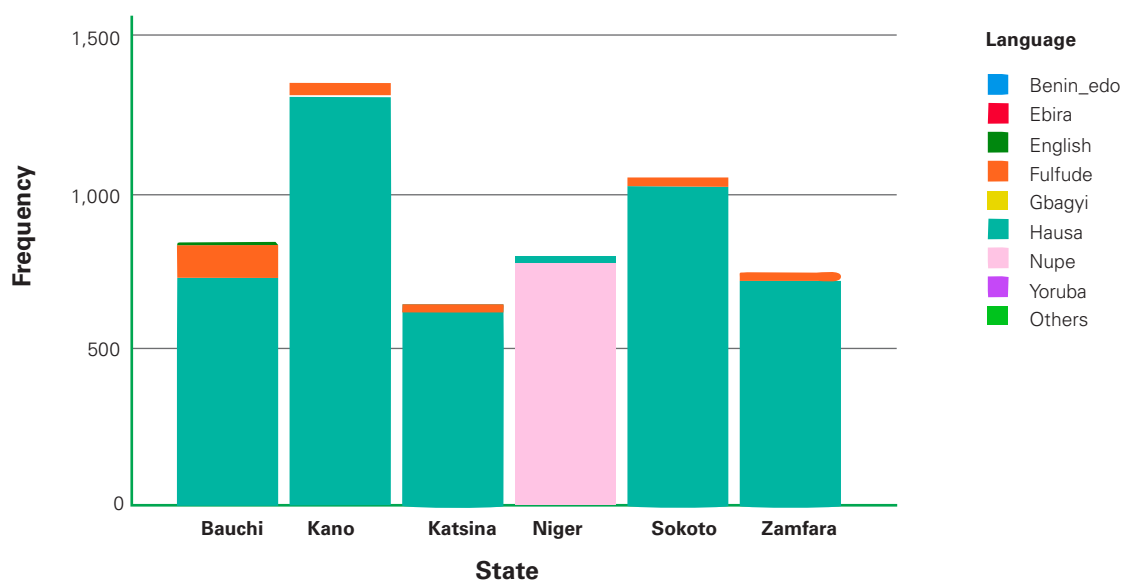
Pupil literacy assessments were completed for a total of 5,450 pupils across the study locations in the six states. Public primary schools constituted about 84.6 per cent of the total coverage while 15.4 per cent comprised IQS. This was in line with the sampling plan for the survey.

8.3.4.1 Pupil characteristics

The age distribution of the pupils (see Annex 11) shows that most of the pupils were eight years old with a percentage of 9.9 per cent for female pupils and 9.1 per cent for male pupils. Also, pupils aged seven years were the second most populous (8.1 per cent and 5.4 per cent for female and male pupils respectively). Pupils aged between 14 and 15 years of age were the least populated in the study. IQS pupils were older on average than public primary school pupils.

In terms of languages spoken at home, the majority (81.3 per cent) of the pupils assessed, speak Hausa at home, followed by the languages Nupe (14.1 per cent) and Fulfulde (3.6 per cent). Overall, very few of the pupils (0.5 per cent) reported speaking English at home across the six states, as compared to none speaking English at home at the baseline. Kano state recorded the highest number of Hausa speakers, while all the Nupe speakers were concentrated in Niger state. All states recorded English speakers at home, except Zamfara state. Bauchi state had the highest number of English speakers. Figure 18 depicts the distribution of languages spoken at home by state.

Figure 18: Distribution of languages spoken at home by state



8.3.4.2 English and Hausa literacy assessments

The survey coverage of an English literacy assessment by intervention type is displayed in Table 19 and indicates that more than half of the pupils covered during the end-line survey belonged to GEP3 early learning (RANA) schools compared to about 6.4 per cent assessed in GEP3-CTP schools, mainly in Niger and Sokoto states. More than one-third of the assessed pupils were from the control group. Survey coverage by the school and intervention type using the Hausa literacy assessment tool (Table 20) showed a similar pattern.

Table 19: Number of pupils covered during an English literacy assessment by GEP3 intervention type

Intervention Type	Frequency	Percent
Early learning + CTP	350	6.4
Early learning only	2957	54.3
Control	2143	39.3
Total	5450	100.0

Table 20: Number of pupils covered during a Hausa literacy assessment by GEP3 intervention type

Intervention Type	Frequency	Percent
Early learning + CTP	350	6.4
Early learning only	2957	54.2
Control	2146	39.4
Total	5453	100.0

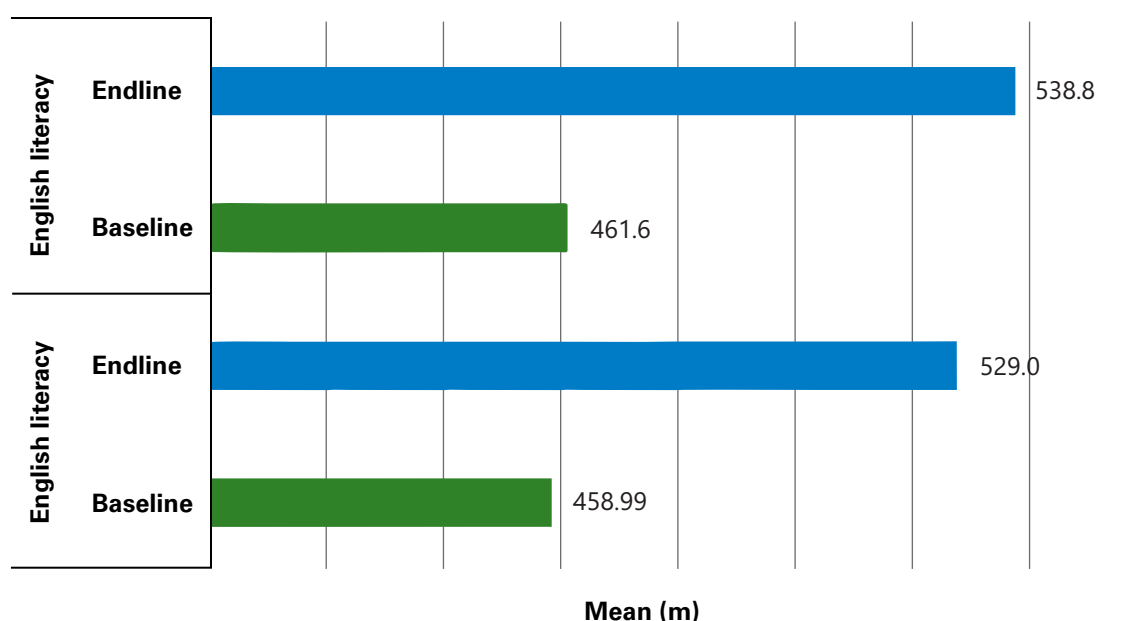
This final evaluation adopted a Rasch modelling approach which was also used in both baseline and midline evaluations to analyse pupils' learning outcomes. The Rasch modelling approach allows for independent reporting of pupil ability and academic test difficulty on the same scale, thereby allowing valid comparisons to be drawn across learning assessments administered to different study groups at baseline, midline and end-line. The computed scores from the Rasch model for all pupils were then converted into a scale with a mean of 500 and a standard deviation of 100, also in line with the baseline and midline analysis plan. The scale scores are precise measures of where pupils sit along the achievement scale, over time.

48. The estimated means and standard deviations of scale scores for both English and Hausa literacy are presented in Table 21. The results show that girls' performances were higher on average than boys' in both English and Hausa literacy in formal primary schools at end-line. However, in IQSs, boys performed better than girls in both English and Hausa literacy assessments at end-line. Figure 19 shows trends in English and Hausa literacy scale scores of pupils in GEP3 schools at baseline, and end-line. **The results indicate a significant improvement in both English and Hausa literacy of pupils in GEP3 schools at the end of GEP3 intervention.**

Table 21: Means of Hausa and English scale scores in treatment school type at end-line

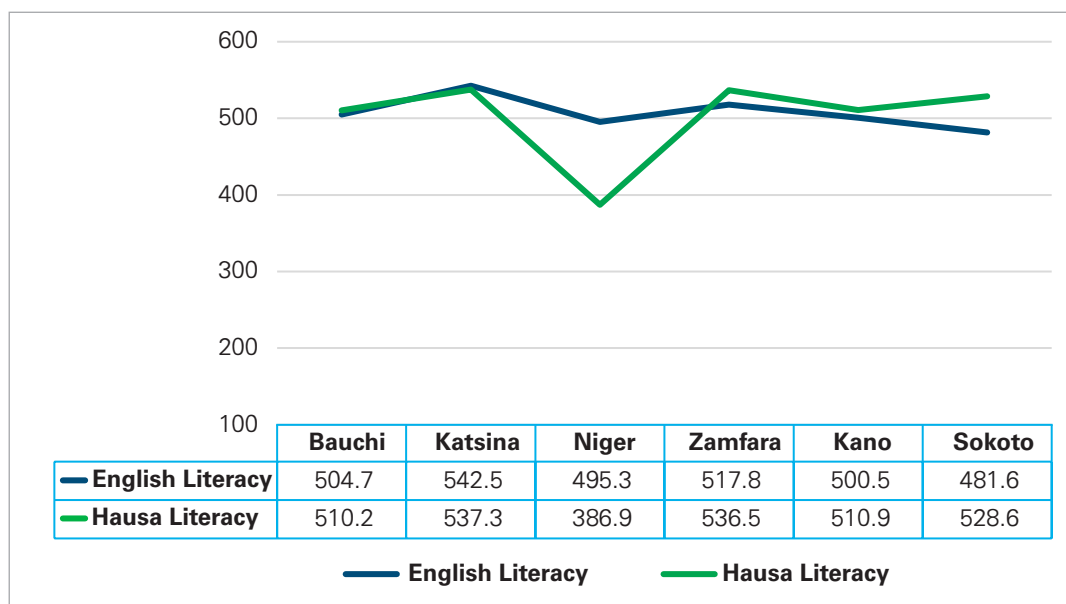
	Means and standard deviation of English and Hausa scale scores in treatment by gender at endline							
	English Literacy (PS)		English Literacy (IQS)		Hausa Literacy (PS)		Hausa Literacy (IQS)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Girls	509.1	103.3	497.7	100.9	506.9	99.6	514.9	92.5
Boys	503.2	101	507.1	104.6	501.1	102.1	519	96.2

Figure 19: Means of Hausa and English scale scores in treatment (GEP3 beneficiaries – public schools and IQSs) at baseline and end-line



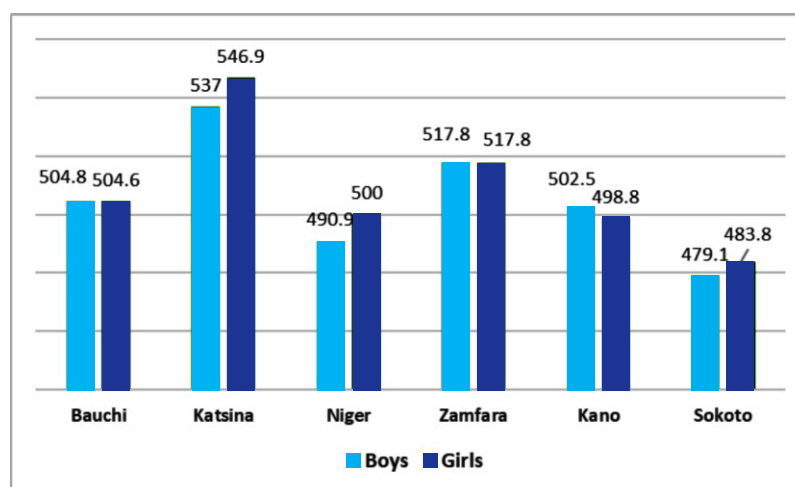
49. Findings from the scaled Rasch scores reveal varied literacy scales across states and by language tests (English and Hausa). As shown in Figure 20, literacy scales in English and Hausa languages were highest in Katsina and Zamfara states while Niger and Sokoto states had the lowest rates in English literacy. Niger state scored the lowest Hausa literacy as well which could be related to the already mentioned level of non-Hausa school speaker's population (Nupe with <14 per cent).

Figure 20: Means of Hausa and English scale scores in treatment group by state at end-line



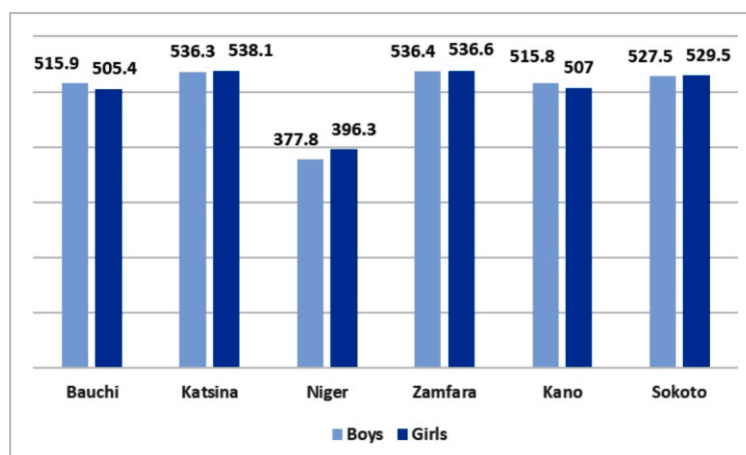
50. The assessment of gender differences in English and Hausa literacy scores in Figures 21 and 22 shows the results of gender differentials in the distributions of literacy scores in the two languages by intervention states. The results in Figure 21 show that while the disaggregation of English literacy scores by gender show even levels in Bauchi and Zamfara states, English literacy scores are higher for girls than boys in both Katsina and Niger by about 10 points, and by about a 5-point difference in Sokoto. On average, boys in Kano state have a higher score than girls with an approximate 4-point difference.

Figure 21: English literacy scores at end-line by state and gender



51. Findings show that learning outcome scores in Hausa literacy are higher for girls than boys in three (Niger, Katsina and Sokoto) of the six states. This difference is minimal in Sokoto and Katsina, but much higher in Niger with a difference of roughly 19 points. On average, boys in Kano and Bauchi states have a higher score on than girls on the Hausa language scale (7 and 10 points difference), while no marked difference in the performance of boys and girls in the Hausa literacy scores is observed in Zamfara (see Figure 22).

Figure 22: Hausa literacy scores at end-line by state and gender



However, most of the gender differentials in learning outcome scores were not of significance, as can be seen in Tables 22 and 23.

52. **Independent T-test analysis shows that pupils who benefitted from GEP3-RANA programme scored significantly higher in English literacy than their counterparts in the control group ($p < 0.01$).** Likewise, pupils in IQS were more literate in the English language than in primary schools, and this is significant at a level of 1 per cent. More females than males are more literate in English in public primary schools, though not statistically significant. However, males were found to be more literate than females in IQSs and this difference is significant at a level of 0.05 per cent. An explanation among others of these differences in English literacy between boys and girls in public and IQSs could be the more traditional gender-related social roles in IQSs. Nevertheless, the difference between male and female English literacy scores was not

Table 22: Distribution of pupils' English literacy by background variables

	Mean	SE	CI	P-value
School type				
IQS	509.6	3.6	105.1 502.5	
Public school	498.2	1.5	98.9 – 495.4	
Difference	11.4	3.7	4.1 – 18.8	0.002
Gender				
Male	500.1	1.98	496.2 – 503.9	
Female	499.9	1.9	496.3 – 503.6	
Difference	0.1	2.7	-5.2 – 5.4	0.964
Treatment type				
Treatment	505.96	1.8	502.5 – 509.4	
Control	490.8	2.1	4886.8 – 494.9	
Difference	15.1	2.8	9.7 – 20.6	0.00
Gender (in PS only)				
Male	496.6	2.1	492.4 500.7	
Female	499.7	2.0	495.8 – 503.6	
Difference	3.1	2.9	-8.8 – 2.6	0.287
Gender (in IQS only)				
Male	518.9	5.4	508.4 – 529.5	
Female	501.4	4.9	491.0 – 510.0	
Difference	17.6	3.6	3.4 – 31.8	0.015

53. **Pupils in GEP3 schools outperformed their peers in non-GEP3 schools at a 1 per cent significant level. As observed for English literacy,** pupils in IQSs were also significantly more literate in Hausa language versus pupils in public primary schools ($p < 0.01$) (see Table 23). The findings at the end-line evaluation indicate no significant difference between genders, both in general and within school types. Overall, pupils in IQSs performed better than those in public primary schools. This may also be attributed to them being relatively older than the pupils from public primary schools.

Table 23: Distribution of pupils' Hausa literacy by background variables

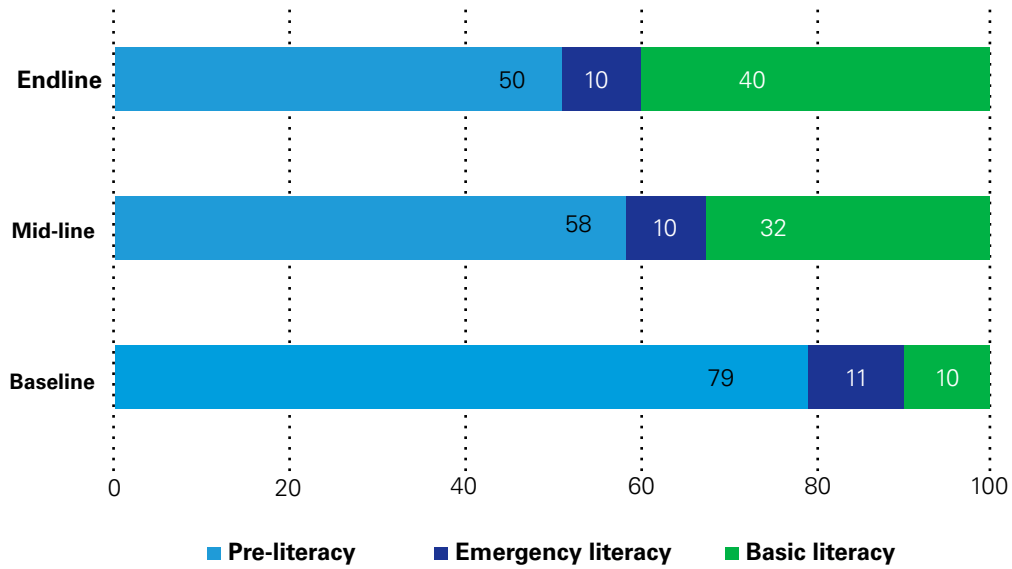
	Mean	SE	CI	P-value
School type				
IQS	521.4	3.2	515.0 – 527.7	
Public school	496.2	1.5	493.3 – 499.1	
Difference	25.2	3.8	17.8 – 32.5	0.000
Gender				
Male	499.4	2.0	495.5 – 503.4	
Female	500.5	1.8	496.9 – .1	
Difference	-1.1	2.7	6.4 – 4.2	0.686
Treatment type				
Treatment	505.96	1.7	502.1 – 508.9	
Control	491.5	2.1	487.3 – 495.7	
Difference	14.1	2.8	8.6 – 19.4	0.000
Gender (in PS only)				
Male	494.9	2.2	490.6 – 499.2	
Female	497.3	2.0	493.2 – 501.2	
Difference	-2.3	2.9	-8.2 – 3.5	0.4
Gender (in IQS only)				
Male	524.2	4.9	514.6 – 533.8	
Female	518.8	4.2	510.0 – 527.2	
Difference	5.4	6.4	-7.3 – 18.0	0.4

8.3.5. Results of English and Hausa literacy by proficiency category

54. The proficiency bands or levels of the pupils were generated based on the scale score for both English and Hausa literacy. At baseline, proficiency bands for English assessment were developed in November 2015 in a benchmarking workshop. The cut-off scores for Hausa proficiency bands were drawn to reflect the proficiency bands used for English assessment. This indicates that, for both English and Hausa literacy, similar skills are expected to fall within each proficiency band. The descriptions of the range of knowledge and skills expected by pupils achieving each proficiency band are illustrated in Annex 10.

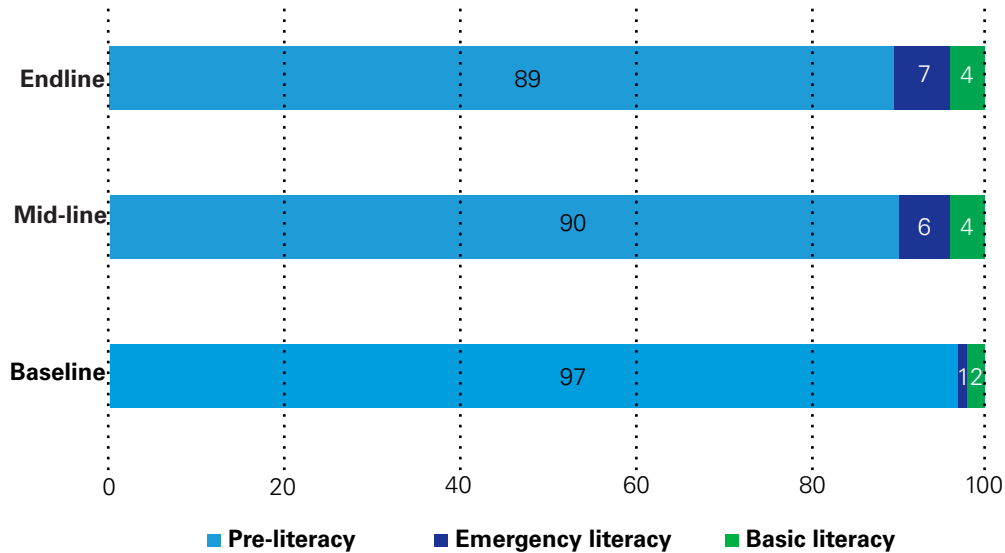
Figure 23 shows the trend in the percentage of pupils by performance in each English proficiency band at baseline, midline and end-line. Results show a 29 percentage point decrease in the pre-literacy band for the English language proficiency between the baseline and end-line. There appears to be no marked difference in the trend of emerging literacy in English language proficiency level between the three rounds of evaluation. However, **in line with GEP3-RANA programmes objective, the percentage of pupils achieving basic English literacy increased from about 10 per cent at baseline to about 40 per cent at the end of GEP3 programme.** This indicates about a 30 percentage point increase in basic English literacy rates between baseline and end-line.

Figure 23: Percentage of pupils in each English proficiency band at baseline, midline and end-line



The percentage distribution of pupils for the pre-literacy level in Hausa proficiency dropped by about 8 percentage points from the baseline to the end-line, while the basic literacy rate in Hausa language literacy increased from 2 percent from the baseline to 4 percent for both midline and end-line (Figure 24). **These results show some marginal improvement in Hausa basic literacy at the end of GEP3 interventions.**

Figure 24: Percentage of pupils in each Hausa proficiency band at baseline, midline and end-line



55. Assessment of English literacy proficiency in GEP3 intervention schools (treatment group) by state (see Figure 25) showed that the proportion of children achieving basic literacy proficiency in English was the highest for Katsina, followed by Niger, Zamfara, Bauchi, Kano and Sokoto in that order. Figure 26 shows that no pupil achieved basic literacy in Hausa proficiency in Kano and Niger states by end-line and a negligible proportion of pupils had Hausa basic proficiency in the remaining states, except in Zamfara where about 6.8 per cent of the pupils displayed Hausa basic literacy.

The English and Hausa proficiency bands (pre-literacy, emerging literacy, and basic literacy) were compared by the gender of each pupil using the Rasch scale scores. The proportion of girls attaining basic English literacy proficiency at end-line was slightly higher (30 per cent) than the boys (28.8 per cent). Likewise, slightly more girls (1.4 per cent) than boys (1.0 per cent) achieved basic literacy in the Hausa language at end-line. These findings were not significant.

Figure 25: Percentage English literacy proficiency at end-line by state

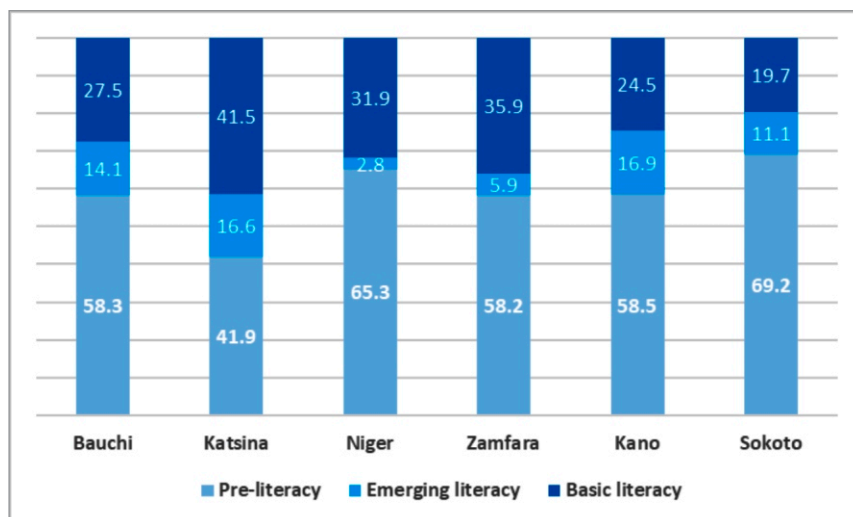
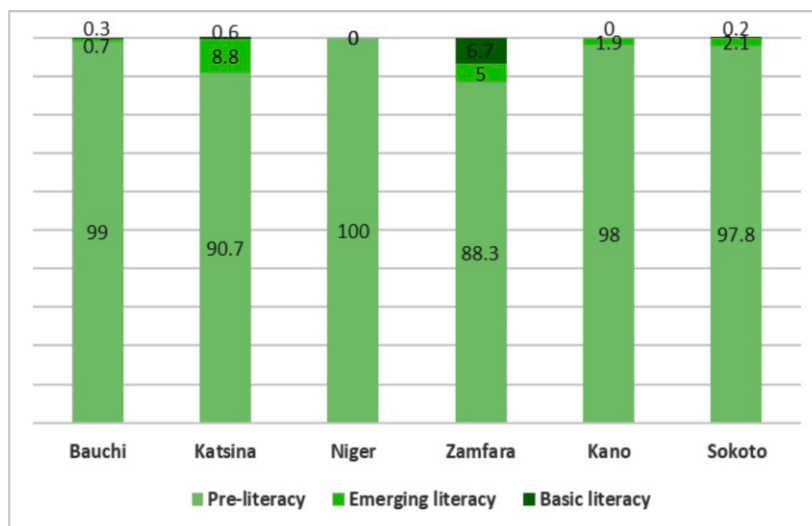


Figure 26: Percentage Hausa literacy proficiency at end-line by state



8.3.6. Numeracy assessment

56. The estimated means and proficiency bands of numeracy scale scores are presented in this section. Figure 27 shows that pupils in Katsina state (537.8) had the higher mean scores in numeracy tests which are followed by the performance of pupils in Kano (531.9) and Bauchi (510.5) states. Niger state had the lowest performance with a mean scale score of 453.2.

The results of numeracy tests by gender within each of the states are presented in Figures 28 and 29. It is observed that girls' performance slightly outweighs numeracy scale scores of boys' in Katsina, Niger and Sokoto states at end-line while the results from the remaining states reveal the opposite. However, when the school types are compared, the performances of girls in numeracy tests are somewhat higher than their male counterparts in both IQSs and formal primary schools (see Figure 29). Gender are also observed for the proportion of pupils achieving pre-numeracy and emerging numeracy.

The percentage distribution of pupils by their proficiency bands by the state is presented in Figure 30. The distribution shows that between 27 per cent and 42 per cent of pupils in all the states, except Niger, achieved basic numeracy at end-line. Katsina (43.3 per cent) has the higher number of pupils with basic numeracy, followed by Kano (36.9 per cent) and Bauchi (29.8 per cent). Niger has the lowest number of pupils achieving basic numeracy with 11.9 per cent.

Considering gender differences in achieved numeracy scales, the finding in Figure 31 indicates an approximate equal number of boys and girls achieving basic numeracy at end-line. Similar patterns by gender are also observed for the proportion of pupils achieving pre-numeracy and emerging numeracy.

However, there is an enormous gap between the proportion of pupils achieving basic numeracy in IQSs and formal primary schools. The findings in Figure 32 indicate that more pupils attending IQSs achieved basic numeracy (41.9 per cent) than their counterparts attending formal primary schools (27.9 per cent). Likewise, fewer pupils in IQSs (5.2 per cent) fell within the pre-numeracy level than those in primary schools (9.9 per cent).

Figure 27: Numeracy scale scores in treatment group by state at end-line

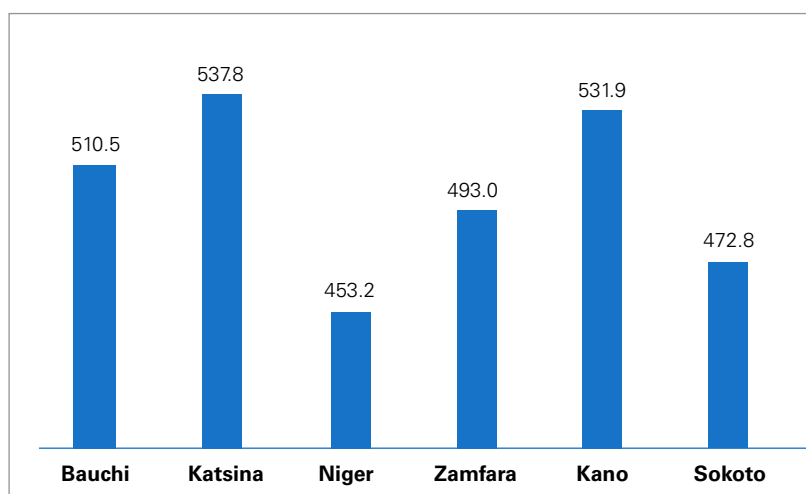


Figure 28: Numeracy scale scores in treatment group by state and gender at end-line

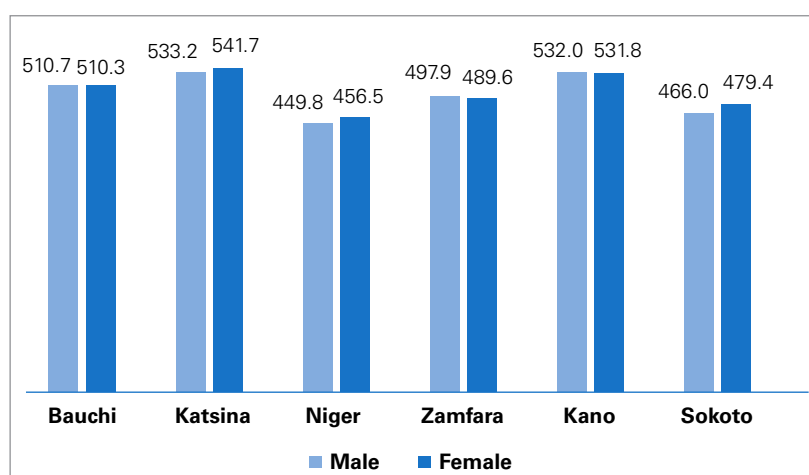


Figure 29: Numeracy scale scores at end-line by school type and gender

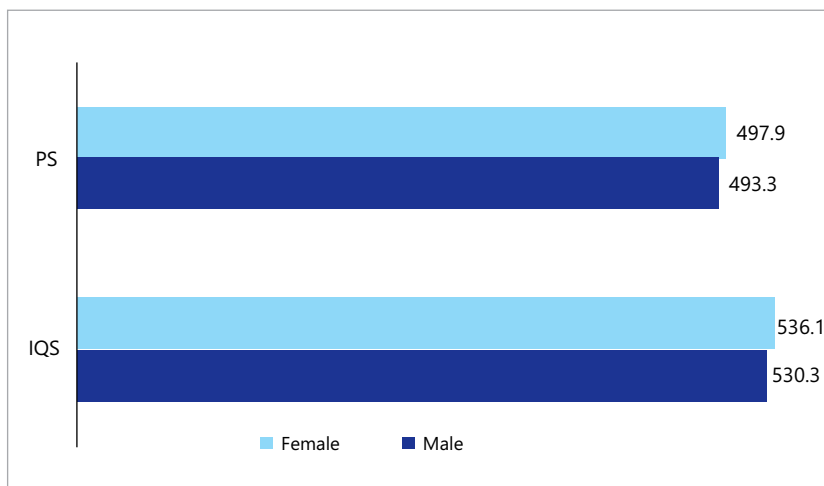


Figure 30: Percentage numeracy proficiency at end-line by state

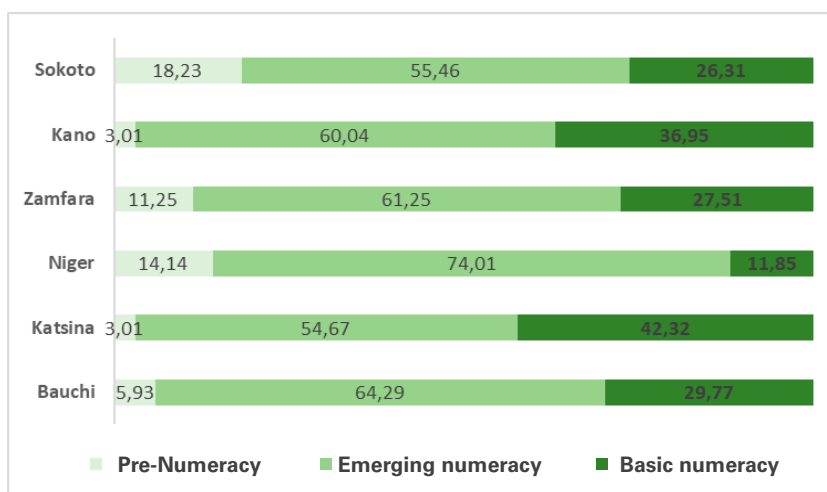


Figure 31: Percentage numeracy proficiency at end-line by gender

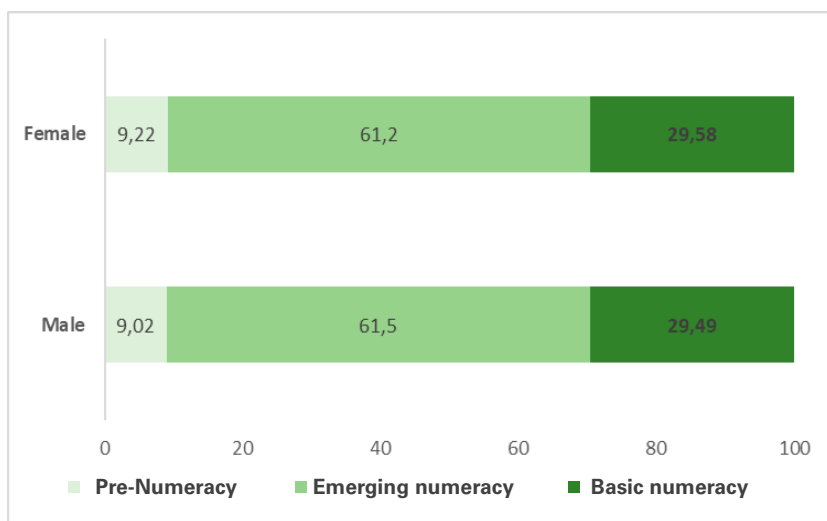
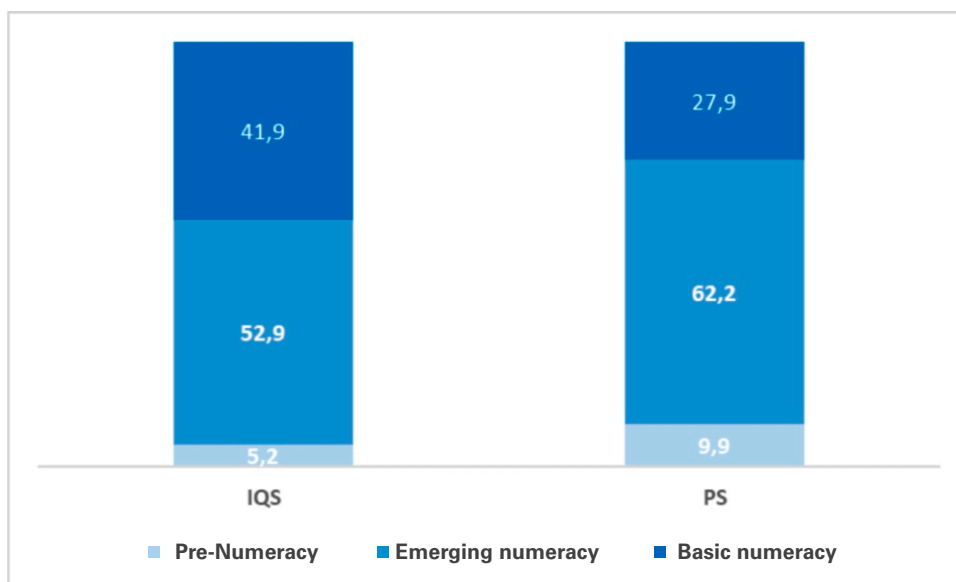


Figure 32: Percentage numeracy proficiency at end-line by school type



57. **A significance test using independent T-test statistics shows that pupils in GEP3 supported IQSs score significantly higher in numeracy tests than their counterparts in the control group ($p < 0.01$)** (see Table 24). The performances of both boys and girls were approximately equal in general and when examined separately by school type (IQS and formal primary schools). Though the overall performance in numeracy tests is higher in GEP3-supported schools than in the control schools, this difference is not statistically significant.

The estimated means and standard deviations of scale scores for numeracy in IQSs at baseline and end-line are presented in Table 25. The results indicate that while boys' performances in numeracy tests outweigh the girls' at baseline, girls overtook boys at end-line in the numeracy test performances.

Table 24: Distribution of pupils' numeracy by background variables

	Mean	SE	CL	P-value
School type				
IQS	530.0	3.5	523.1 – 537.0	
Public school	494.6	1.5	491.8 – 497.4	
Difference	35.4	3.7	28.1 – 42.8	0.000
Gender				
Male	499.9	1.9	496.0 – 503.8	
Female	500.1	1.9	496.4 – 503.7	
Difference	0.1	1.4	-5.5 – 5.2	0.961
Treatment type				
Treatment	501.4	1.7	498.0 – 504.9	
Control	497.8	2.1	493.6 – 501.9	
Difference	3.7	2.8	1.8 – 9.1	0.188
Gender (in PS only)				
Male	494.4	2.1	490.3 – 498.6	
Female	494.8	1.9	490.9 – 498.7	
Difference	0.4	2.9	6.1 – 5.3	0.901
Gender (in IQS only)				
Male	530.7	5.3	520.4 – 541.1	
Female	529.4	4.8	520.0 – 538.8	
Difference	1.3	7.1	-12.6 – 15.3	0.853

Table 25: Means of numeracy scale scores in treatment IQSs at end-line

	Baseline		End-line	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Mean	462.73	438.8	498.7	503.8
SD	87.9	90.9	100.0	100.7

Notes: Baseline data only available for IQSs

8.3.7 Association between pupils' household wealth index and their performance in numeracy and literacy tests

58. The socioeconomic dimension of learning outcomes of pupils who benefitted from GEP3 interventions is presented in Figure 33. The findings show that pupils from poorer households performed better in both numeracy and literacy (English and Hausa) than those from richer homes. Similar patterns were observed when examined by school type (see Tables 26 and 27). However, the differences were marginal.

It could be suggested that the reduction in the contribution of children, especially girls, from poor households to income generation for the family (many of them stopped hawking) was likely counterbalanced by CTP and the sensitisation it came with. CTP facilitated the improvement of access for poor children and a more conducive learning atmosphere, due to the combination of interventions (teachers' training, CTP, local advocacy and visible local authorities' support). Moreover, selective targeting of the poor for these multiple interventions contributed to closing this gap.

Figure 33: Distribution of pupils' scale scores in numeracy and literacy by their household wealth status

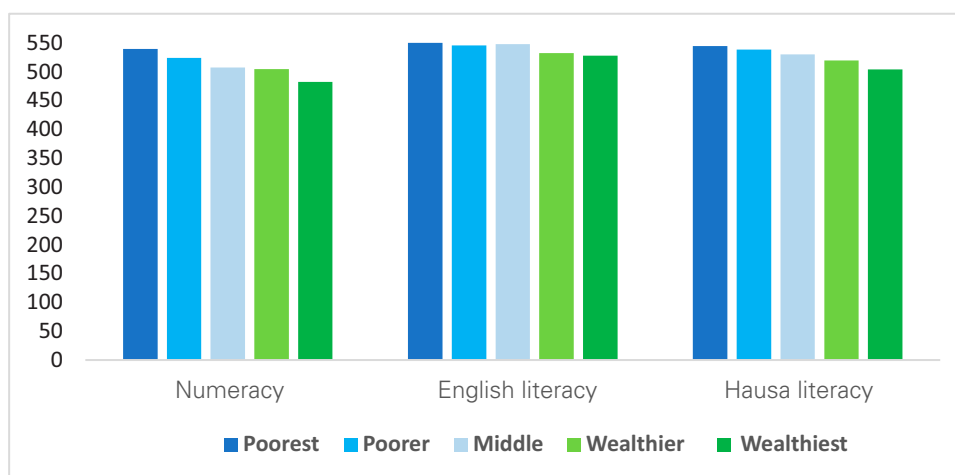


Table 26: Distribution of numeracy and literacy scales by household wealth status of pupils attending GEP3-iQSs

Wealth index	Numeracy	English literacy	Hausa literacy
Quintile 1 (Poorest)	554.8	568	553
Quintile 2	518.3	518.7	535.4
Quintile 3	517.1	536.4	558.9
Quintile 4	496.5	510.6	503.1
Quintile 5 (Wealthiest)	479.9	524.4	541.5

Table 27: Distribution of numeracy and literacy scales by household wealth status of pupils attending GEP3 primary schools

Wealth index	Numeracy	English Literacy	Hausa Literacy
Quintile 1 (Poorest)	538.1	561.4	543.9
Quintile 2	524.6	549.3	539.4
Quintile 3	506.5	549.4	527
Quintile 4	505.9	534.9	521.7
Quintile 5 (Wealthiest)	483	528.3	501.3

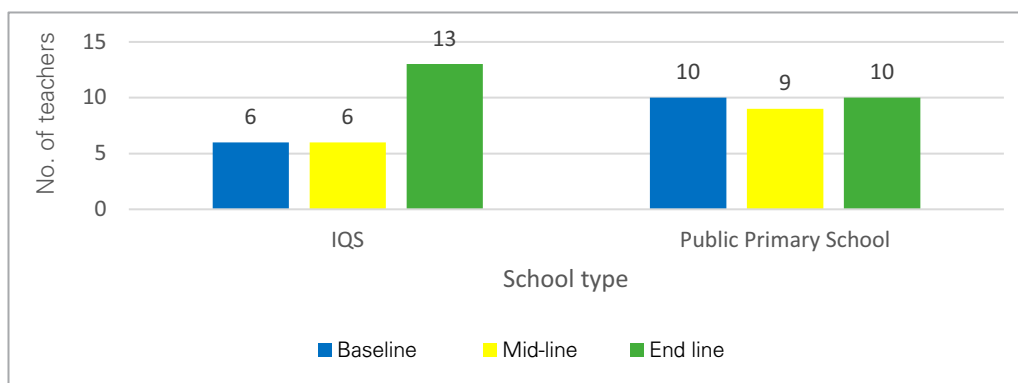
8.3.8. Availability and capacity of teachers

59. The availability and capacity of teachers were assessed via the head teacher survey, classroom observations and qualitative interviews. The findings on the output 3 indicators on basic literacy and numeracy of the pupils are displayed in the previous section.

On average, for the classroom observation, each class comprised of 47 pupils (24 boys and 23 girls). In the head teacher survey, there was a mean of about 10 teachers per school on average. However, this varied across the types of schools. Public primary schools had an average of 10 teachers whereas the IQSs had a slightly higher number of teachers per school with a mean of 13. In terms of the proportion of male to female teachers, IQSs had an average of seven female teachers compared to four in public schools. The end-line recorded the highest population of teachers per school with an average of 10 compared to the baseline and midline averages of 7 and 8 respectively.

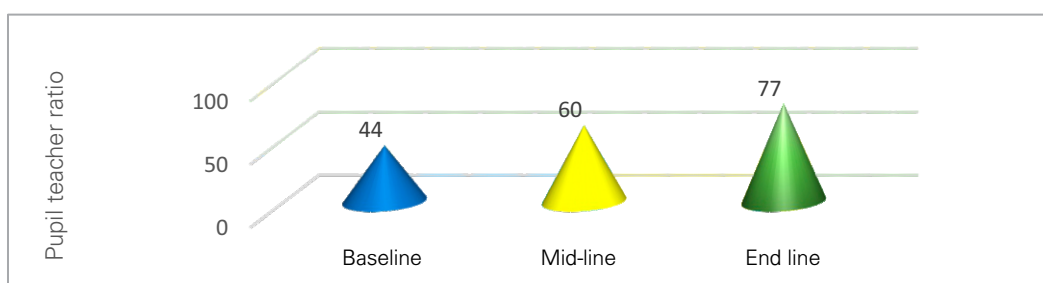
There was no significant change in the teachers' population across the public primary schools from baseline, however, there was a significant increase in the number of teachers of IQSs from a baseline average of six teachers per school to 13 at end-line (P = 0.016). Figure 34 displays the mean teacher population by school type from baseline to end-line.

Figure 34: Average number of teachers by school type at BL, ML and EL



60. **The pupil-teacher-ratio increased significantly (p=0.000) from baseline (44) to end-line (77)** (see Figure 35). This trend could be attributed to the increased enrolment of pupils whereas, overall, the teacher population has changed insignificantly.

Figure 35: Pupil-teacher-ratio comparison BL, ML, EL



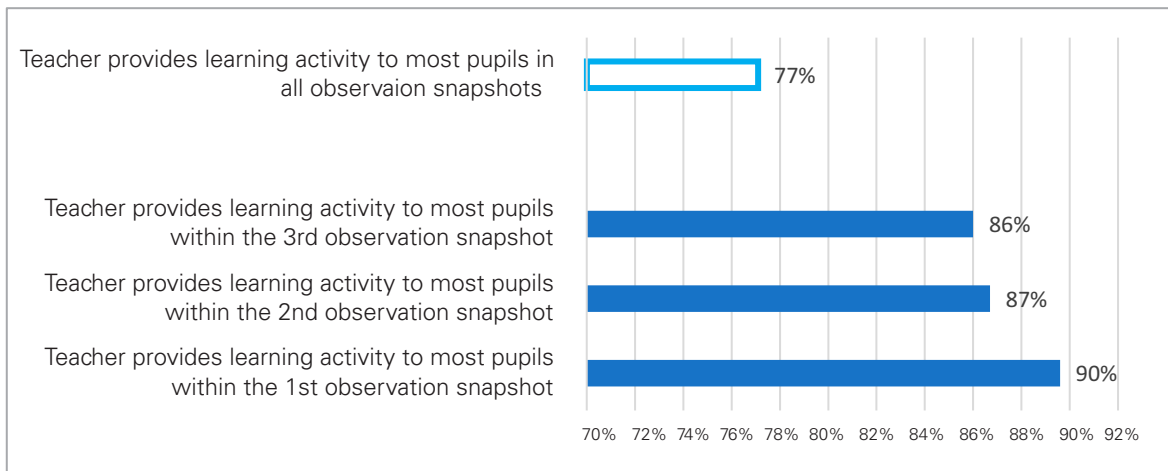
The treatment schools had an average of 11 teachers compared to the control schools which had an average of five teachers, demonstrating a reduced teacher-to-pupil population in the treatment schools.

Teachers' classroom observations

Teachers' classroom practices were observed. Figure 36 indicates the **proportion of teachers that provided learning activities to capture the attention of pupils during a class session**. The indicator was captured in three observations at intervals of five minutes from the start of a lesson.

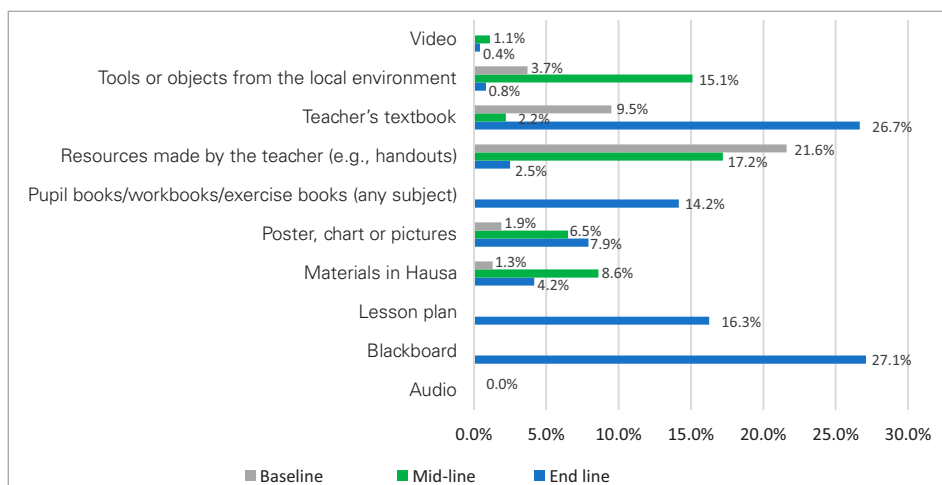
The graph depicts a reducing trend in the learning activities as the lesson continued. The majority (90 per cent) of the teachers provided learning activities within the first five minutes of the lesson while 77 per cent provided learning activities beyond 15 minutes of the lesson.

Figure 36: Teacher provision of learning activities to pupils



61. **In terms of learning resources used by teachers, at end-line, teachers' textbooks were used more** (26.7 per cent) compared to baseline (9.5 per cent) and midline (2.2 per cent). There was a considerable decline in the proportion of classes that used tools and objects from the local environment at end-line (0.8 per cent) compared to 15.1 per cent at midline. The use of posters, charts and pictures also increased from 6.5 per cent to 7.9 per cent. This could be attributed to increased rate of material support use, whether it is planning and management of material (such as the lesson plan) or didactical elements (such as posters, charts, or pictures), to the improved skills acquired through the training component of the project. Better-trained teachers are indeed more aware of the need to anticipate and plan the lessons, and keener and more comfortable with the use of graphical support and didactical materials in general⁷⁰. Details of the learning resources used in the surveyed schools are in Figure 37.

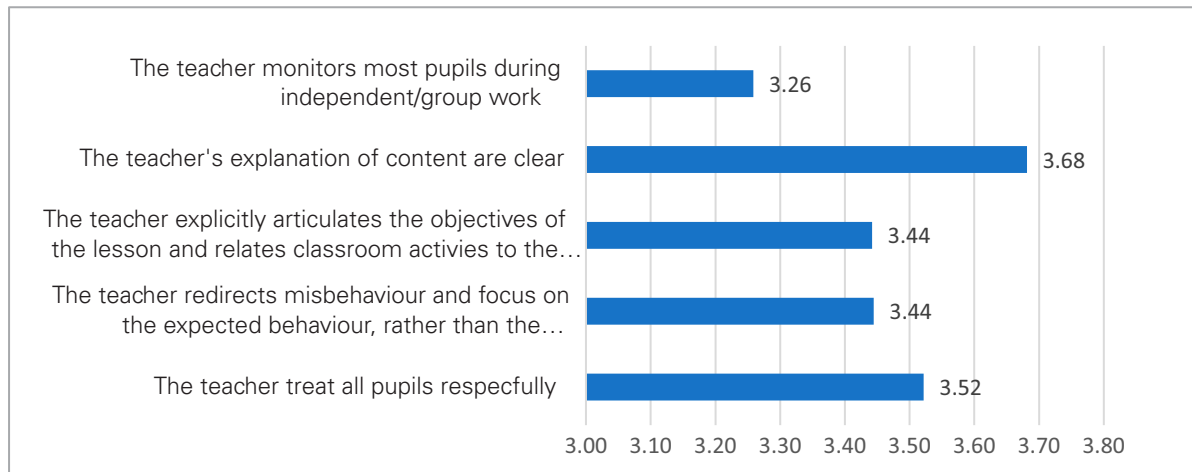
Figure 37: Lesson materials used in schools



⁷⁰ Roegiers Xavier (2010) "Pedagogy of Integration": Education and Training systems at the heart of our societies, DeBoeck, Brussels.

62. The **teachers' actions while giving lessons** were observed and rated with a score of 1 (low) to 5 (high). The average scores for all classrooms observed are presented in Figure 38. The teachers' explanation of content was rated highest across all the schools observed with an average of 3.68 (70 per cent) followed by the statement that teachers treat all pupils respectfully with an average of 3.52 (70 per cent). The indicators – that teachers explicitly articulate the objectives of the lesson, and the teacher redirects misbehaviour and focuses on the expected behaviour – scored an equal average of 3.44 (69 per cent). The lowest score was of teachers monitoring pupils during group work with an average score of 3.26 (63 per cent).

Figure 38: Scores of teachers' actions



The behaviour and actions of pupils during the lesson were also observed. The action of girls or boys asking open-ended questions was rated low with scores of 2.65 (52 per cent) and 1.87 (37 per cent) respectively. This score indicates the need for more interventions to ensure the classroom environment is friendly and open for pupils to ask questions. Analysis by gender of the teacher indicated no significant differences between the scores on pupil's actions.

63. **Efforts made by the programme to increase the number of teachers in schools** were highlighted by stakeholders in the interviews. HiLWA was seen to have been successful in lobbying for teaching positions to be given to young women in the communities. The **teacher scholarship programme** was perceived to have contributed to teacher capacity building, especially due to all the incentives attached to the scheme. The teachers' scholarship scheme that was given to encourage girls to go to school was mentioned by several government stakeholders as an important change via GEP3. This initiative was put in place to ensure that the young women would be employed as teachers upon completion of their education – and that they were well trained and dedicated and received enough technical support while in school to be able to deliver quality teaching.
64. **There was clear evidence of numerous varied and relevant capacity-building activities, mentioned frequently and appreciated by the stakeholders** in the key informant interviews, head teacher survey and FGDs of teachers. These included methodological training for teachers, management training for head teachers, administrative staff and education managers. Changes in pedagogical practices were perceived and observed broadly, from the way classes were handled, the topics presented to the pupils, to the appearance of the classroom, with aesthetics being taken into consideration to enhance motivation and learning. Teaching methodology improvements were reported with a perceived improvement in learning outcomes. The teachers were reported by several national and state government stakeholders to have improved in terms of good quality education delivery.

“Their quality of teaching is improved and then they were also taught to improvise teaching aids to suit the environment or community where they find themselves. They were taught to facilitate as opposed to teaching so that they make the children think for themselves...”
Federal Government Stakeholder

The findings from the qualitative interviews differed somewhat from those of the quantitative surveys and classroom observations regarding teaching quality. However, the improvement in learning outcomes was a point of agreement. Nevertheless, while some stakeholders in the KII and FGDs perceived an improved quality of teaching in GEP3 schools, several government stakeholders highlighted gaps in the teaching quality and problems linked to the training of teachers.

Sub-par teaching quality and poor quality of teachers sent for training were underscored in the KIIs. Even though the capacity building and improvement of teacher capacity were noted as a strength of the programme, some stakeholders did not consider the teaching quality as good as it should be. This was confirmed by the classroom observations carried out in this evaluation. Key informants attributed this sub-par quality to inadequate teaching aids or poor comprehension of the teaching material by teachers – and indicated a need to train people with the appropriate capabilities.

Several elements were perceived by UNICEF, government stakeholders and other key informants as contributions of GEP3 to the programme around governance and capacity of teachers.

“So, you are lacking in the basic teaching aids that will aid you to exhibit the knowledge you have which would affect changes in the children at the end of the day, increase the awareness in terms of the subject matter and in terms of the quality of teaching you are delivering to them. At the end of the day, the support and the resources are not available to you. You are bound to use what you have on the ground which I think is not the best practice.” **State government stakeholder, Niger**

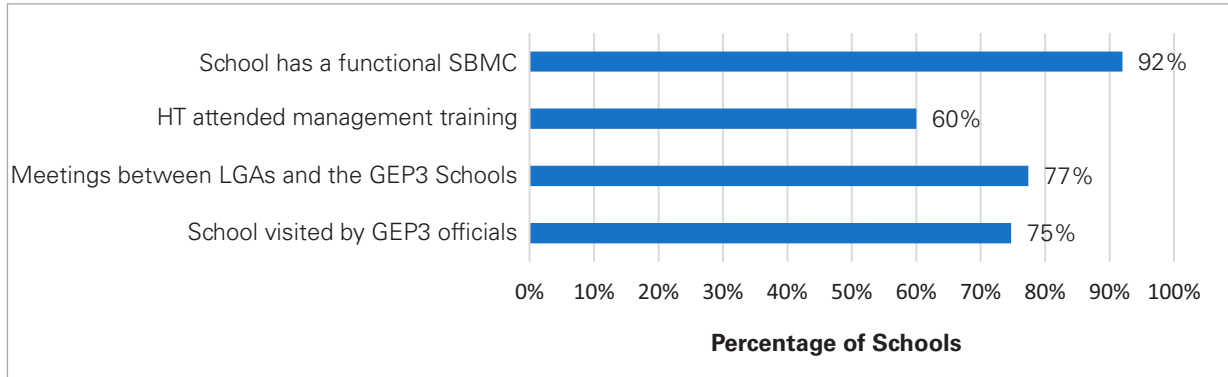
“For the teachers’ training, the LGEA level had to be honest and sincere because some of the people they are sending are not comprehending what the resource persons are taking them through, because of their low level of understanding. They need to send somebody who is capable so that they can get what the trainers are giving them. I think the successes are many but those are the few weaknesses if it was being addressed, I think we can forge ahead.”
State government stakeholder, Bauchi

8.3.9. The effects of governance in schools through monitoring and management structures

65. **Eighty-five per cent of schools with SBMCs indicated the SBMCs were supportive of the implementation of GEP3 in their schools.** The type of support SBMCs provided to the schools at the end-line included sensitisation of GEP3 to the community as mentioned by 71 per cent of schools, followed by classroom renovation 41 per cent, provision of money on regular basis for school maintenance 38 per cent and provision of teaching/learning aid 24 per cent.

The indicators evaluated to establish the change in the external monitoring included head teacher attendance of management training, frequency of visits by government officials (FME and SMoE) and UNICEF, frequency of meetings with the LGAs and the existence of functional SBMCs in schools. As shown in Figure 39, 77 per cent of the schools held meetings with the LGAs while 75 per cent received visits by GEP officials (a baseline of 80 per cent of schools received a monitoring visit). Further, 60 per cent of head teachers surveyed had attended management training and 92 per cent of the schools had functional SBMCs in place.

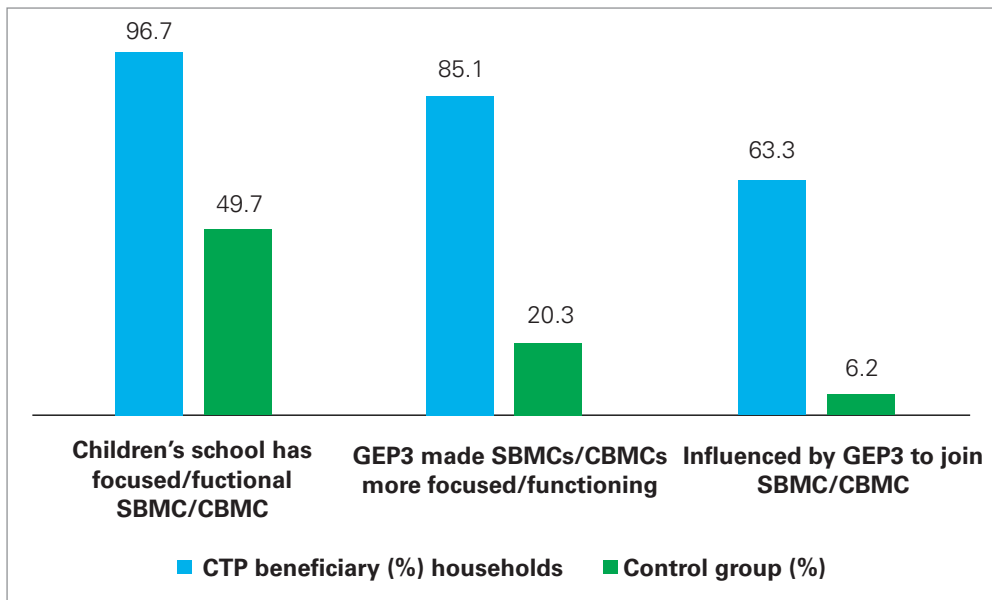
Figure 39: The extent of external monitoring in schools



The training of teachers has been useful in the overall running and management of schools as indicated by 90 per cent of the teachers surveyed. This indicates the training was resourceful towards improving the head teachers' management skills. There was also no statistical significance between the benefits of the head teacher training in IQSs and public primary schools surveyed. 85 per cent of the schools with SBMCs indicated the SBMCs were supportive of the implementation of GEP3 in their schools.

66. **The findings in the head teacher survey on the SBMCs were also supported by the household survey findings.** In gauging the effectiveness of SBMCs/CBMCs in the HHs, Figure 40 shows that nearly all households that benefitted from CTP reported that children's schooling has focused/functional SBMCs/CBMCs compared to almost half of the households in the control group. Likewise, about 85.1 percent of the CTP beneficiary households compared to 20.3 percent in the control group reported that GEP3 made SBMCs/CBMCs more focused/functional. Significantly more CTP beneficiary households (63.3 per cent) than those in the control group (6.2 per cent) reported having been influenced by GEP3 programme to join SBMC/CBMC.

Figure 40: Households perceptions of effectiveness of the SBMC/CBMC



67. **GEP3 worked with monitoring and evaluation (M&E) teams at the state levels** including the department of planning and SUBEB and the capacities of the M&E teams were reported by stakeholders to have been improved in terms of collection of data and management. The SUBEB especially was considered by the key informants as quite cooperative and equipped, and to have provided strong support to the implementation and monitoring of GEP3 programme. The cooperation between the states (i.e., SUBEB) and local government levels was considered vital to the success of activities on the ground. The state-level stakeholders in several states were considered to have the necessary resources to carry out their work.

Monitoring structures put in place at the community levels were reported as useful. **Training of the SBMCs was perceived as instrumental in influencing the availability of teachers in the schools because of the key monitoring roles they played.** The social accountability element (related to the availability of teachers in schools at the appropriate times) due to the monitoring carried out by SBMCs was highlighted several times in the interviews. The SBMCs also followed up with parents at the community level to ensure that their daughters are allowed to go to and stay in school.

UNICEF staff indicated that monitoring and evaluation were embedded in the programme design cycle. They also reported that with each implementation of the mapping and listing tool, they reflected on the research process and used what they learned to improve both the programming for girls and the quality of data collected. They also responded well to changes in context.

However, an important unintended negative effect of GEP3 programme seen in this evaluation is the increased pupil-to-teacher ratio. Though this has been highlighted in several other evaluations, (UNICEF Girls' Education Portfolio (2009–2015) and UNICEF Nigeria GEP-CTP Evaluation 2017) and the information has not been appropriately used to address the discrepancy between investments made in improving enrolment and retention of girls in schools and those made in improving the

QE 2. What are the factors (internal and external to UNICEF) that contributed to the attainment of GEP3 programme and results the most?

QE 3. What are the factors (internal and external to UNICEF) that hindered the attainment of GEP3, including CTP, programme and results the most?

Other questions: Has GEP3 generated significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects at a community and state level?

68. Like the quantitative evidence, qualitative results showed that GEP3 displayed a **high level of effectiveness in enrolment and retention of girls in school** and was also **effective in achieving the completion of girls' education in all the states.** This was noted in the face of the challenges presented by the rampant insecurity in the states and the COVID-19 pandemic. There were noted losses of some of the gains made by the programme (which will be seen more clearly in subsequent sections), but the level of success attained due to the programme's interventions appeared to have muted these to some extent and there was strong quantitative and qualitative evidence of effectiveness.

8.3.10. Drivers of change

69. Different factors (internal and external to UNICEF) led or contributed to the attainment of GEP3 achievements. **Community ownership and involvement** were perceived by stakeholders as key drivers of change. The communities were perceived as the most important stakeholders in the dynamic, and their acceptance of the interventions was critical for the programme's success. However, going beyond that, the communities' active roles in taking ownership of the problems and their solutions were considered the main pathway to actual and sustainable changes.

“The host community because the no matter how you work, without those at the community level you can't get the results.” SMOE stakeholder, Bauchi

“You see, before you cannot get an Imam of a town giving his land for his LGEA to construct a class or a school, but that has started happening now. You see this is a very important improvement, not only the Imam, but the community are also gathering to give their financial support, inviting us to open schools for them.” LGEA stakeholder, Kano

The SBMCs were mentioned most frequently as key drivers of change – their roles were noted as critical. They sensitised and mobilised the communities, enlightening parents on the need to allow their children who are at home to go to school; and carried out other advocacy activities. These enabled them to achieve the desired results – increasing the enrolment and retention of girls in schools and the reduction of early marriages for girls in the communities.

In some states, the MAs were mentioned frequently as drivers of change. The change in enrolment in Kano was attributed to a considerable extent to the use of the MAs.

“They have succeeded a lot. Before the coming of GEP3 you see a lot of our girls roaming about in the towns, hawking mangoes, fura de nunu, but because of the influence of this Mothers' Association the number has been reduced immensely. They go house to house to influence the mothers to accept sending their girls to school and they have made a lot of impact. They have contributed with the uniforms, books bags and so many things....” LGEA stakeholder, Kano

The role of **traditional and religious leaders** was also reported frequently as important for enabling the required changes in mindset and cooperation needed at the community levels.

Additionally, the **HiLWA** which were identified as community “champions” comprising women who had benefitted from basic education without compromising cultural and religious ideals, served as influencers to encourage parents to allow access to basic education for female children. Their influence as change drivers in terms of the cash transfer component did not emerge so clearly from the different qualitative data as did their crucial role as sensitisers and facilitators of enrolment and retention of girls in school.

The government, especially the Ministry of Education (federal and state) stakeholders were also mentioned as critical for the achievement of the results. **The improved capacities of the government, GEP3 stakeholders and the government's commitment from the national level enabled the commitment at the state level.** This political commitment eventually influenced budgetary allocation – were the pathways by which the government drove change.

Advocacy backed by government policy and commitment – in this regard, the cash transfer programme was highlighted as an example. Also, the government was reported as learning from GEP3-CTP programme and using those lessons to implement its programme.

“They took the lesson learned from GEP3 to shape and fashion the design of the national programme. Those are some of the things that can really drive change...” UNICEF stakeholder

“When it came, people in the community are saying that they will teach children bad things..” LGEA stakeholder, Katsina

8.3.11. Hindrances to achieving the desired change

70. Several factors were highlighted in the qualitative interviews and discussions as hindering the attainment of the desired programme results. These included:

Strong-rooted stereotypes – sometimes **due to cultural and religious factors or inflexibility** of some people were reported as barriers that still had to be overcome. Some people were considered (by both national and state government stakeholders) as set in their ways (dogmatism) and unwilling to change or “rock the boat” – these presented limitations in the acceptability and uptake of interventions.

Limited funding was mentioned in several ways – a **funding gap** that limits the scale at which the programme can be implemented; limited funding at local levels – the example was given in one of the states of lack of transportation for many of the teachers who were nominated for training but could not transfer themselves to the venue; **budgetary limitations at state level – with some states not matching funding due to lack of political will or prioritisation of education**. This means that work done such as the CTP for which the desire was for the government to design similar programmes and take them to scale has not been accomplished.

Geographical barriers presented by hard-to-reach areas were also considered as an impediment to the programme. Places with difficult-to-access terrains prevented mentors and master trainers from getting to the schools and other community locations to do their work.

Lack of interest and illiteracy of parents were considered important barriers. The most frequently mentioned issue was the perception of some parents that girls were needed more for chores or work at home, mostly hawking and farming. Some mothers that were willing to allow their girls to go to school would keep them at home during the harvest season to help on the farm, after which they would be allowed to go back to school.

Lack of interest of the parents in the school activities or the progress of the children in school was mentioned frequently in the discussions as making change difficult. This meant that when the children did not go to school, the parents would not know and assumed that the children were in school. This was especially important when the child did not have the interest to be in school as was the case with some children.

“Some of the parents will tell their children that house chores are more important than school work, so they have to stay at home and do the work before they come to school.” FGD G4G, Zamfara

“Some of the girls when they say they will enrol them they will say that they want to hawk. They will say that they are being bullied and lack of interest in school. Some of the girls hide when they see that schools close that is when they will come.” He for She FGD, Zamfara

71. Nevertheless, the FGD participants mostly referred to these incidences as what occurred more before GEP3 and noted that understanding of the value of girls' education had caused a shift in the priorities.

Logistical difficulties were also reported as hindrances to change. These included **financial issues** such as money for PTA dues (though some perceived this as more relevant for secondary schools) and **girls' menstrual periods** which were compounded by a **lack of sanitation facilities for girls in some schools** (these were also highlighted as a hindrance in the teachers and the boys FGDs).

Sexual harassment of girls on the way to school – distance from schools was mentioned as a hindrance more in the context related to the need **to ensure that girls were not harassed by boys on their way to school** – in this regard, FGD participants noted that girls were encouraged to walk in groups to and from school. The implication of this was not mentioned, but it is possible that when such a group was not feasible, parents may be reluctant to send their girls to school. This harassment of girls on their way to school by men/boys was noted as an important deterrent.

“Yes, some of the men stop s when they are on their way to school, they try to stop them and so this has affected the level of attendance.” FGD G4G, Zamfara

“Sometimes they write our names on our school bags and all these men that for a very long time have been trying to find our names are able to know our names and then you are just walking on the streets, and they call you by your name and so that has affected the attendance in school.” FGD G4G, Zamfara

Inactive SBMC at some community levels – there is a variation of capacities of the SBMC in different communities. Some have active and others inactive School-Based Management Committees. The crucial roles played by the SBMCs meant that inactive ones produced a significant gap in the achievement of results.

Inadequate government support was considered an impediment. It meant that teachers that needed help or technical support did not receive the support needed. Also, efforts made in enrolling the children were sometimes not sustained, because the children were not retained in schools due to inadequate support for teachers.

Interestingly, **insecurity** was not mentioned as often as many other hindrances. This could be because of the conditioned acceptance of the insecurity situation which had prevailed over a long period. Nevertheless, in the FGDs it was highlighted that after parents had been convinced by sensitisation and awareness creating activities to send their children to school. The gains made in enrolment were not always sustained because of insecurity concerns. Overall, long-lasting insecurity issues had an implicit influence on outcomes in Niger state, a factor that should be considered in future interventions or follow-up efforts. In the same sense, the strengthening of local public governance in states such as Sokoto and Bauchi should be considered as a platform for scaling up.

Corporal punishment in schools was also perceived as discouraging for parents. Similarly, bullying was also mentioned in the FGD of teachers as one of the things that made change difficult.

“There are people that when they come to school and when they get flogged or they get punished for doing something that is wrong and they go and tell their parents, their parents, take them out of school and just allow them to be hawking on the streets.” FGD G4G, Zamfara.

8.4. Impact of GEP3 2012–2022

Overall finding: There was a high Impact of GEP3 2012–2022 on pupils' learning outcomes in six states.

Overall finding: There was a high impact of the unconditional cash transfer on households' livelihoods, girls' enrolment, and learning outcomes with unintended benefits to boys in Niger and Sokoto states.

Quality of the evidence: Strong

The DAC criterium of impact is defined as, “the extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.” In essence, what difference did the intervention make?

The evaluation questions used for assessing the impact of GEP3 are summarized below:

QI 1. To what extent has GEP3 achieved the expected results related to impact defined in the business plan?

QI 2. Has GEP3 generated significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects at community and state level?

QI 3. What long-term transformative change or difference did the programmes have on communities, institutions and children?

The questions on impact were answered by triangulating quantitative and qualitative information from different data sources, including learning outcomes assessment survey, household survey, head teacher survey, classroom observation survey, secondary data sources (i.e., MIS, NDHS), semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.

The evaluation questions on impact, the strength of evidence and the specific data sources used for the evaluation questions in the assessment are detailed in Table 28.



© UNICEF

Picture 4: Learning assessment of a female pupil

Table 28: Strength of evidence on impact

Evaluation questions on impact	Strength of evidence	Data sources
QI.1 To what extent has GEP3 achieved the expected results related to the impact defined in the Business Plan?	Strong	Learning outcomes assessment survey Household survey Secondary data sources (EMIS, NDHS, MICS) Semi-structured interviews Focus group discussions
QI.2 Has GEP3, and CTP generated significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects at community and state levels?	Strong	Learning outcomes assessment survey Household survey Secondary data sources (EMIS, NDHS, MICS)
QI.3 What long-term transformative change or difference did the programmes have on communities, institutions and children?	Medium	Semi-structured interviews Focus group discussions Desk review Semi-structured interviews Focus group discussions

The overall conclusions of the independent evaluation team on the impact of GEP3 are summarised below:

Preliminary conclusions of impact of GEP3

IMP 1: The impact of CTP on girls' enrolment in primary schools was strongly positive and statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). Overall, the estimated difference (DID) in the reported number of children enrolled in primary 1 to 3 at end-line indicated that households that benefitted from GEP3-CTP enrolled more girls in primary 1–3 than households that did not benefit from the CTP (0.921 compared with 0.766). (Para 74-77)

IMP 2: The impact of CTP on household spending on girls' schooling was strongly positive and statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). The termly household expenditure on female child education was at least 500 Naira higher in households that received cash transfers compared to control households. Also, CTP households spent more on girls' than boys' education (about 733 Naira per term). When disaggregated by state, the difference was more in Niger (746 Naira) than Sokoto state (718 Naira) in favour of girls' education expenditure. (Para 78)

IMP 3: The results of impact analysis using the DID regression modelling approach revealed that GEP3-RANA had a positive impact on English and Hausa literacy learning outcomes at both midline and end-line. There was an increase in the number of pupils that achieved basic English literacy by 6.3 per cent and 4.7 per cent percentage points at midline and end-line respectively. The slight decline in the programme impact between midline and end-line was likely due to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and insecurity in the region. (Para 79)

IMP 4: While stronger positive impact related to the achievement of English literacy was recorded for boys (a 7.9 per cent percentage point) than girls at midline (a 4.3 per cent percentage point), the degree of positive impact for girls (a 7.9 per cent percentage point) overtook the boys' at endline (a 1.2 per cent percentage point). This was also due to the significant drop in programme impact for boys. The drop in impact for boys is an undesirable effect that requires proper examination. A possible reason could be that, in addition to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 lockdown and insecurity, the focus on girls may have led to issues regarding boys to be missed. (Para 79-80 and 83)

IMP 5: Overall and in each of GEP3-CTP states (Niger and Sokoto), the proportion of pupils achieving basic literacy was higher in GEP-CTP communities than non GEP3-CTP communities. Furthermore, female pupils from GEP3-CTP communities achieved higher basic English literacy scores compared to those from non-GEP3-CTP communities. At state level, this achievement was more evident in Niger state. (Para 81 and 82)

IMP 6: National population surveys showed improvement in the trend in literacy rate among young women aged 15–24 years; reduction in early marriages, adolescent pregnancies and childbearing in the focal states. (Para 72 and 73)

IMP 7: An unintended negative effect of GEP3 was the (persisting) increase in pupil-teacher ratio due to the massive increase in enrolment without a corresponding increase in teacher population. This has an important implication for quality of education and has been highlighted in other evaluations. (Para 87)

QI 1. To what extent has GEP3 achieved the expected results related to impact defined in the business plan?

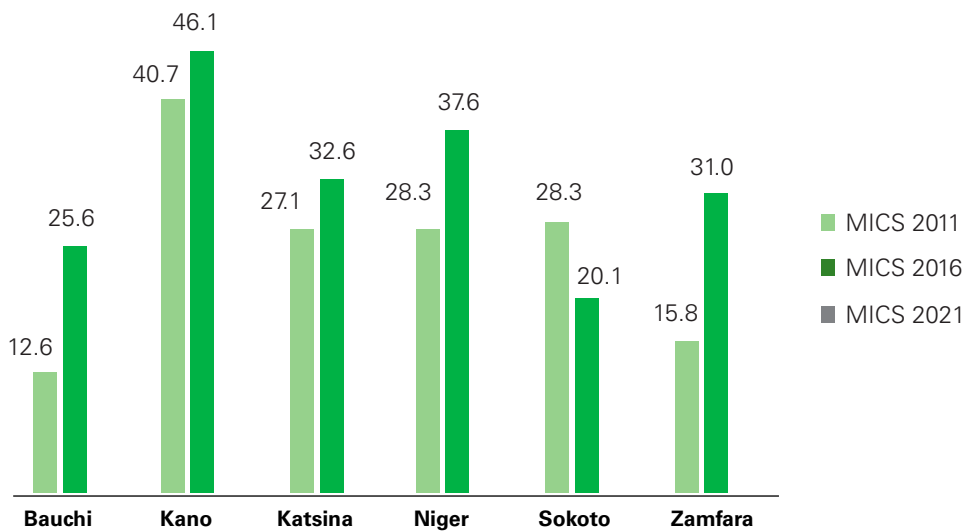
8.4.1. Long-term effects and impact of GEP3 as defined within GEP3 logframe/results framework

This section examines the expected long-term effects and impact of GEP3 as defined within the Logframe/results framework of the impact indicators. The indicators addressed in this section include the literacy rate of young women (15–24 years), the rate of early marriage (under 19) in target states and the rate of early childbearing (had a live birth before the age of 15). Secondary data and reports were reviewed and analysed including those from the Education Census (i.e., annual school census), the available national and state EMIS Report (MICS 2011, 2016, 2021) and NDHS (2013, 2018) as applicable.

72. Analysis of secondary data from the 2011 and 2021 MICS, presented in figures 34–36, showed **clear evidence of an increase in the literacy rate of young women, reduction in adolescent pregnancies and childbearing in most focus states.** MICS 2021 did not include data on literacy rate for young women 15-24 years at state level; only at the level of geopolitical zones.

Figure 41 provides an assessment of the literacy rate of women aged 15–24 years in two successive MICS surveys (MICS 2011 and 2016) by GEP3 intervention states. Available results show **an improvement in the trend in literacy rate among young women aged 15–24 years between 2011 and 2016 in all the states, except Sokoto.** The improvement in enrolment was more pronounced in Zamfara and Bauchi states where the literacy rate nearly doubled within the first five years of GEP3 interventions.

Figure 41: Literacy rate of young women (15–24 years)



73. In Figure 42, results on the rate of early marriage (under 19) in the target states show that early marriage rates decreased between the 2011 and 2021 surveys in all GEP3 target states by at least 23 percent per state (Bauchi, Kano, Katsina Sokoto and Zamfara) as evidenced in the 2011, 2016 and 2021 MICS reports. The decrease in early marriage rates between 2011 and 2021 was up to 35 per cent in Sokoto and Zamfara.

Findings from three successive surveys of MICS in 2011, 2016 and 2021 show that early childbearing before the age of 15 pointedly decreased in all the six target states. Between 2011 and 2021, Zamfara recorded close to 12 percentage points difference in early marriage rates followed by about 6 per cent difference recorded in Sokoto. The lowest percentage difference in early childbearing rates between 2011 and 2021 was observed in Bauchi state (about 0.6 per cent decrease) and Niger state (about 2.5 per cent decrease). However, it should be noted that both Bauchi and Niger had the lowest early childbearing rates (3.0 per cent and 2.7 per cent respectively) at baseline in 2011. However, the MICS data does not allow a treatment-control comparison of programme impact within GEP3 target states.

Figure 42: Rate of early marriage (under 19) in target states

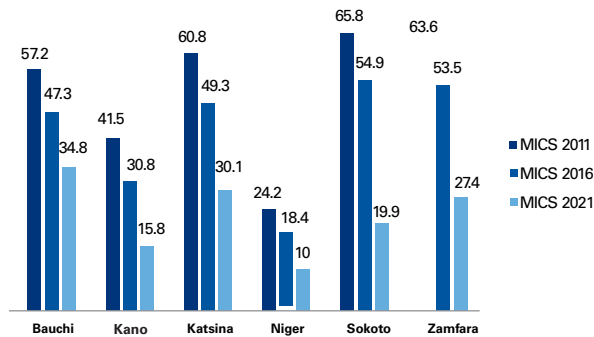
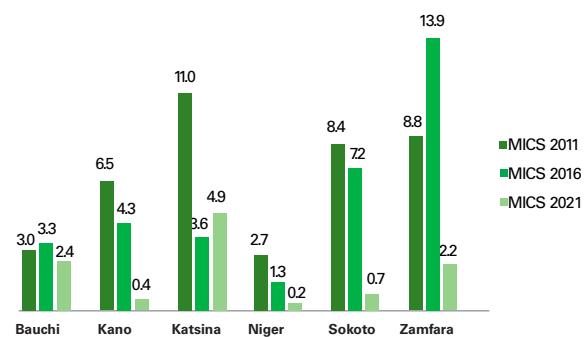


Figure 43: Early childbearing (had a live birth before age 15)



In the qualitative interviews, key roles played by the SBMCs and the MAs in supporting awareness creation were reported frequently by stakeholders. Both organisations were focused on **changing the attitudes of the female caregivers/mothers** towards the education of female children by talking to mothers in households to see the need for children to be in school and tracking the progress of the children to ensure that they were enrolled and retained in schools.

Changes in early marriages practices were also frequently reported by the community and government stakeholders. They were of the view that GEP3 sensitisation activities had enabled the mothers and fathers to gain an understanding of the disadvantages of early marriages versus the advantages of education for female children. The **mentoring programme for girls also revealed disadvantages of marrying early and advantages of education to the girls themselves.**

The influence of G4G activities in enabling a change in mindset of the girls towards early marriages was highlighted several times in the FGDs. It was reported that this **enabled the girls to put up some resistance when there was a move to marry them off early.**

The role played by the SBMCs was noted as critical in reducing early marriages for girls. The SBMC and CBMC members also highlighted in their FGDs that in addition to the sensitisation of the communities about the importance of female children's education, they played **mediatory roles in families** – convincing the men to release their daughters to go back to school when they noticed absenteeism of girls from school that could signal an imminent dropout.

“Nowadays children are very insistent that they would want to finish schooling before the go into marriage, they don't agree to marry until they finish school.” FGD SBMC and CBMC, Bauchi

“Before, sometimes you will see a girl in school and before you know it, you will stop seeing her and the reason will be that she was married away and would have to drop out of school. But with the introduction of this programme and the measures carried out by us the SBMC's, now you will see that child when enrolled, they will remain until they graduate from school. Dropouts have reduced drastically though we can't say it's total.” FGD SBMC and CBMC, Bauchi

“We appoint the female in the SBMC's to find out the reason why a female child had not been coming to school should she be missing classes and if there are needs for us the males at the SBMC's to intervene, maybe talk to the father of such child then we obliged and do so.” FGD SBMC and CBMC, Bauchi

Nevertheless, in the different states, community men, women, girls and boys in the FGDs indicated that, although these positive changes had occurred, there were still issues of **early marriages and dropouts**. FGD respondents usually noted that there was still the practice of early marriage going on usually in “other” localities.

“They do marry them out to someone at the age of 10 years old, but in other villages.” FGD He for She, Zamfara

“For instance, not people in our community but people in other villages, we do hear them marrying smaller children out, but now they are aware of it, they know the importance of school and they have enrolled their children in school. FGD He for She, Zamfara

8.4.2. Overall programme impact of GEP3 on pupils and households in line with the programme ToC and assumptions

In this section, the impact of GEP3 interventions were estimated including the CTP on pupils', especially girls' enrolment. Estimating the programme learning outcomes and household spending on education for girls and boys was an important component. Please note that CTP was implemented only in Niger and Sokoto states. The OPM English and literacy assessments were carried out at baseline and midline in Katsina and Zamfara states.

8.4.2.1. Programme impact of GEP3 – CTP interventions – Comparison of net enrolment ratio (access) in primary education between treatment group LGAs and control group using the HH survey

74. With respect to GEP3 output 1, it was assumed that improved financial access for poor households through unconditional cash transfers would have a positive impact on girls' enrolment. At both baseline and end-line evaluation through household surveys, caregivers, who were mainly female, were asked about their estimated average expenditure per term on girls' schooling at baseline (before receiving CTP) and end-line (after receiving CTP). At school level, head teachers were asked to provide the enrolment figures in the school per male and female children at baseline and end-line of CTP intervention.

Evidence provided in Table 29 indicates that the **impact of CTP on girls' enrolment in primary schools is strongly positive and statistically significant** at the end of GEP3-CTP intervention. This suggests that the cash transfers to female children through female caregivers led to a significant increase in girls' enrolment in schools between baseline and end-line of GEP3-CTP intervention. As expected, the result of the DID estimate for boys shows that the CTP did not have an impact on boys' enrolment in schools.

Table 29: The DID estimate of the impact of the CTP on school enrolment by gender between baseline and end-line

	Girls	Boys
Enrolment in school	59.4*** (20.5)	-0.025 (25.8)

NOTE *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p~0.1. SE in parentheses

75. Overall, the estimated difference in the reported number of children enrolled in P1-P3 at end-line indicated that households that benefitted from GEP3-CTP enrolled more girls in P1-3 than households that did not benefit from the CTP. At state level, CTP benefitting households in Niger state also tend to enrol more children in primary school than the non-CTP benefitting households in the state. However, the same cannot be said in Sokoto in terms of the CTP impact on female children's enrolment at end-line. The enrolment of children in P1-P3 was always lower than those from non-CTP-benefitting households both in general and at state level (Table 30).

Table 30: PSM estimate by state of impact of CTP on school enrolment by gender between treatment group and comparison group at end-line

State	Boys		Girls	
	CTP	Non-CTP	CTP	Non-CTP
Niger	0.559	1.076	1.049	0.962
Sokoto	0.669	1.021	0.819	1.025
Total	0.620	0.786	0.921	0.766

76. Using the household data collected from states where the CTP was implemented, the estimation of the net enrolment ratio (NER) and the gross enrolment ratio (GER) for girls and boys at baseline and end-line are presented in Tables 31 and 32. Unlike the regular NER and GER estimation, the estimation of these indicators in this evaluation is “adjusted” since the age range covered in both baseline and end-line surveys are from five to 11 rather than the official primary school age of between six and 11 years. Also, the focus of the evaluations was not only on enrolment in primary schools but general enrolment in schools, regardless of the level of education. In the case of GER, while the denominator included the total number of children between five and 11 years in the households, the numerator comprised children between five and 11 who were enrolled in school.

As shown in Table 31, the NER for girls of 100 per cent at end-line shows that all children between the age of five and 11 years in the household were enrolled in school at end-line in Niger and Sokoto states, unlike at baseline when some of them were not in school (NER<100). It is important to note that, while the estimated value of **NER for girls increased from baseline to end-line in CTP households, the estimated value of NER decreased between baseline to end-line in non-CTP households displaying the importance of the CTP in driving enrolment and retention of girls in schools even in the face of insecurity and other setbacks like the COVID-19 pandemic.** Overall, though the estimated NER for boys also increased from baseline to end-line, there are still some boys in CTP households (about 5 per cent) who were not enrolled in school at end-line, unlike their female counterparts.

Table 31: Comparison of net enrolment ratio of girls and boys by the state and CTP treatment and control groups

States	Adjusted net enrolment ratio of girls (%), aged 5–11 years				Adjusted net enrolment ratio of boys (%), aged 5–11 years				Adjusted net enrolment ratio of both girls and boys combined (%), aged 5–11 years			
	Baseline		End-line		Baseline		End-line		Baseline		End-line	
	Treatment Group	Control Group	Treatment Group	Control Group	Treatment Group	Control Group	Treatment Group	Control Group	Treatment Group	Control Group	Treatment Group	Control Group
Niger	97.3	97.4	100.0	93.3	94.1	95.5	94.4	96.6	96.0	96.6	98.0	95.0
Sokoto	97.9	97.5	100.0	92.6	93.0	96.5	96.6	92.1	96.0	97.4	98.6	92.3
Total	97.6	97.4	100.0	92.8	93.6	95.9	95.7	95.3	96.0	96.8	98.3	94.0

77. The adjusted gross enrolment ratio (GER), as presented in Table 32, shows that all the estimated GER values are above 100 per cent which could be an indicator of late or overage enrolment in schools. For both girls and boys from CTP households, the GER values increased from baseline to end-line though the increase is higher for girls than for boys.

Table 32: Comparison of gross enrolment ratio of girls and boys by state and CTP treatment and control groups

States	Adjusted gross Enrolment ratio of girls (%), aged 5–11 years				Adjusted Gross Enrolment Ratio of Boys (%), aged 5–11 years				Adjusted Gross Enrolment Ratio of Both Girls and Boys Combined (%), aged 5–11 years			
	Baseline		End-line		Baseline		End-line		Baseline		End-line	
	Treatment Group	Control Group	Treatment Group	Control Group	Treatment Group	Control Group	Treatment Group	Control Group	Treatment Group	Control Group	Treatment Group	Control Group
Niger	159.1	154.1	205.5	138.7	193.0	186.2	236.0	161.5	173.1	167.7	216.3	150.4
Sokoto	160.2	145.1	233.3	156.6	173.7	166.1	208.4	165.2	165.3	153.4	216.3	150.4
Total	159.7	149.9	219.3	151.2	184.5	177.4	220.2	164.0	169.6	161.2	219.6	157.6

78. Table 33 presents the result of the estimate of CTP impacts on household spending on male and female children's schooling. The **impact of CTP on household spending on girls' schooling was strongly positive and statistically significant** at the end of GEP3-CTP intervention. The termly household expenditure on female children's education was at least 500 Naira higher in households that received cash transfers compared to control households. About 100 Naira more is also observed to be spent on boys' education in CTP households than in control households, though this is not statistically significant. This indicates that boys might have also marginally benefitted from the cash transfers to households though the girls were the major beneficiaries as reflected in the household education financing of girls per term. When reviewed in terms of household consumption patterns, boys in CTP households who reported three meals a day benefitted along with girls and the whole household.

Table 33: DID estimate of the impact of the CTP on household spending on education per gender between baseline and end-line

	Girls' education	Boys' education
Household spending on education	504.6** (256)	109.8 (420.3)

NOTE *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p~0.1. SE in parentheses

The assessment of the difference between average expenditure on girls' and boys' education by CTP recipient households showed that households that received cash transfers spent more on girls' than boys' education (about 733 Naira per term) in both Niger and Sokoto states (Table 34). When disaggregated by state, the difference was more in Niger state, by about 746 Naira, than Sokoto state (about 718 Naira) in favour of girls' education expenditure.

Table 34: Comparison of the average money spent on girls' and boys' education by state and CTP treatment and control groups

States	Average of money invested by HH for girls' school cost in Naira			Average of money invested by HH for boys' school cost in Naira			Average of money invested by HH for boys and girls		
	Treatment Group	Control Group	Total	Treatment Group	Control Group	Total	Treatment Group	Control Group	Total
Niger	5453.32	5268.72	5361.52	4707.18	5751.04	5230.09	5080.25	5509.88	5295.805
Sokoto	5458.51	4128.12	4801.70	4740.36	3682.41	4196.56	5099.435	3905.265	4499.13
Total	5455.89	4705.17	5083.91	4722.44	4772.13	4747.64	4738.65	4738.65	4915.775

8.4.2.2. Programme impact of GEP3 – RANA and CTP interventions on pupils' English and Hausa literacy

79. As previously mentioned, Rasch's modelling approach was used to generate English and Hausa literacy at baseline, midline and end-line. As demonstrated in the effectiveness section, the percentage of pupils achieving basic literacy increased from about 10 per cent at baseline to about 32 per cent and 40 per cent at midline and end-line respectively. The basic literacy rate in the Hausa language marginally increased from 2 percent from the baseline to 4 percent at both midline and end-line. **The results of impact analysis using the DID regression modelling approach reveal that GEP3-RANA has a positive impact on English and Hausa literacy learning outcomes at both midline and end-line.** The use of impact in this context connotes the ability of the programme to significantly provide basic literacy skills to more pupils compared to the baseline figure. However, while we could identify the statistically significant effect at midline for both English and Hausa literacy learning outcomes, the same could not be established at end-line for both learning outcomes. More specifically, the impact analysis results in Table 35 show that **there was an increase in the number of pupils with basic English literacy by 6.3 and 4.7 percentage points at midline and end-line respectively. This indicates a slight decline in the programme impact between the two follow-up surveys.** Similar results are obtained for the programme impact on Hausa literacy where the estimated impact decreased from a percentage point of 1.8 at midline to a percentage point of 0.2 at end-line. Generally, it was observed that the programme had more impact on English than Hausa literacy.

Table 35: DID estimate of the impact of RANA on pupils achieving basic English and Hausa literacy between baseline and end-line

	English literacy		Hausa literacy	
	Midline	End-line	Midline	End-line
Pupils achieving basic literacy	0.063** (0.027)	0.047 (0.038)	0.018* (0.009)	0.002 (0.014)

NOTE *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p~0.1. SE in parentheses

When the impact results were disaggregated by state, GEP3-RANA programme had a **positive impact on English and Hausa learning outcomes at both midline and end-line in Katsina state**. The estimated impact of the programme on English literacy was statistically significant at 5 per cent at midline in the state. **In Zamfara state, the impact of GEP3-RANA on both English and Hausa learning outcomes were positive at baseline and negative at end-line, when compared to baseline status** (Table 36).

Table 36: DID estimate of the impact of RANA on pupils achieving basic English and Hausa literacy between baseline and end-line

Pupils achieving basic literacy	English literacy		Hausa literacy	
	Midline	End-line	Midline	End-line
Katsina	0.122** (0.039)	0.466 (0.057)	0.017 (0.018)	0.005 (0.013)
Zamfara	0.007 (0.035)	-0.156* (0.092)	0.019* (0.012)	0.004 (0.007)
Total	0.063** (0.027)	0.047 (0.038)	0.018* (0.009)	0.002 (0.014)

NOTE *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p~0.1. SE in parentheses

80. Further, since the focus of GEP3 is mainly on girls' education, it is necessary to examine the heterogeneous impacts of RANA on the gender of pupils achieving basic literacy at the end of GEP3 intervention. Table 37 presents the differences by gender in the share of programme impact on basic English literacy. The positive impacts of RANA were observed on the basic English literacy attainment for both boys and girls at midline and end-line.

Interestingly, while stronger positive results were recorded for boys than girls at midline and only significant for boys; the positive result for girls overtook that of boys at end-line, only significant for girls. The positive effects achieved for boys in a programme supposedly designed for girls are not unexpected since RANA interventions, to a large extent, covered all pupils present in GEP3 schools regardless of gender. It was also observed that **the programme impact on boys achieving basic English literacy dropped from a percentage point of 7.9 to a percentage point of 1.2 between midline and end-line while that of girls increased from a percentage point of 4.3 to a percentage point of 7.9 between midline and end-line.** The drop in impact for boys is an undesirable effect and requires proper examination. There may be several reasons for this, namely that the focus on girls may have skewed attention from boys and it is also possible that the insecurity in the region presented more distraction to the boys than the girls; also given that more female teachers were trained and deployed, it was not clear if there was a change in learning dynamics for the boys given that some boys tend to respond better to male teachers. The shift to girls in relation to role modelling reinforcements without a corresponding element for boys may have contributed to this skewed pattern. However, it should be noted that there is no evidence to support these assertions and relevant research in this area would help to shed more light on specific reasons.

Table 37: DID estimate of the impact of RANA on pupils achieving basic English literacy between baseline and end-line by gender

	Female		Male	
	Midline	End-line	Midline	End-line
Pupils achieving basic English literacy	0.043 (0.037)	0.072* (0.05)	0.079** (0.038)	0.012 (0.057)

NOTE *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p~0.1. SE in parentheses

81. When the programme impacts were disaggregated by state, it was found that the overall GEP3-RANA programme impact on girls and boys achieving basic English literacy was somewhat similar to what was observed in Katsina state. However, in Zamfara state, the programme impact on girls dropped from being positive at midline to negative at end-line. Similarly, no gain was recorded in basic English literacy for boys in the states as the programme impact remained negative at both midline and end-line when compared to baseline (Table 38).

Table 39 shows a descriptive analysis comparing basic English literacy proficiency scores between pupils from communities that benefitted from girls' education cash transfers (treatment group) and those who didn't benefit from the cash transfers (Control Group). The findings indicate that **overall and in each of GEP3-CTP states (Niger and Sokoto), the proportion of pupils achieving basic literacy is higher in GEP-CTP communities than in non-GEP3-CTP communities**. When examined from a gender lens, the findings further show that **girls from GEP3-CTP communities achieved higher basic English literacy scores than those from non-GEP3-CTP communities. At state level, this achievement was more evident in Niger state as the difference between the girls' English basic literacy scores between the CTP and non-CTP group in Sokoto state were approximately the same.**

Table 38: DID estimate of the impact of RANA on pupils achieving basic English literacy between baseline and end-line by state and gender

	Female		Male	
	Midline	End line	Midline	End line
Pupils achieving basic English literacy	0.043 (0.037)	0.072 (0.05)	0.079** (0.038)	0.012 (0.057)
Katsina	0.065 (0.053)	0.035 (0.076)	0.173*** (0.056)	0.055 (0.087)
Zamfara	0.023 (0.045)	0.124 (0.131)	0.005 (0.050)	0.186 (0.128)

NOTE *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p~0.1. SE in parentheses

Table 39: Comparison of the proficiency score of pupils achieving basic English literacy by state and CTP treatment and control groups

States	Proficiency score of pupils achieving basic English literacy for girls			Proficiency score of pupils achieving basic English literacy for boys			Proficiency score of pupils achieving basic English literacy for boys and girls		
	Treatment Group	Control Group	Total	Treatment Group	Control Group	Total	Treatment Group	Control Group	Total
Niger	36.73	28.13	30.14	10.71	21.39	19.90	27.27	24.62	25.12
Sokoto	21.99	22.04	22.02	21.97	19.37	20.43	21.98	20.69	21.23
Total	25.79	24.86	25.19	20.00	20.33	20.23	23.14	22.54	22.74

82. Results of the differential impact of the RANA programme on basic Hausa literacy by gender are presented in Table 40. Although not statistically significant, the findings show that RANA increased the proportions of both male and female pupils achieving basic Hausa literacy at both midline and end-line compared to baseline. However, a decline in impact is observed between midline and end-line for both boys and girls in the basic Hausa literacy learning outcomes.

When the differential impacts were further disaggregated by the two GEP3-CTP states (Table 41), similar result patterns are observed, except in Zamfara where the impact of the programme became significantly negative for female pupils at end-line.

Table 40: DID estimate of the impact of RANA on pupils achieving basic Hausa literacy between baseline and end-line

	Female		Male	
	Midline	End-line	Midline	End-line
Pupils achieving Basic Hausa literacy	0.016 (0.014)	0.001 (0.019)	0.021 (0.014)	0.011 (0.021)

NOTE *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p~0.1. SE in parentheses

Table 41: DID estimate of the impact of RANA on pupils achieving basic English and Hausa literacy between baseline and end-line

	Female		Male	
	Midline	End-line	Midline	End-line
Pupils achieving Basic Hausa Literacy	0.016 (0.014)	0.001 (0.019)	0.021 (0.014)	0.011 (0.021)
Katsina	0.018 (0.026)	0.004 (0.020)	0.016 (0.026)	0.009 (0.015)
Zamfara	0.014 (0.016)	-0.018** (0.009)	0.022 (0.016)	0.008 (0.010)

NOTE *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p~0.1. SE in parentheses

83. The reduction in the impact estimates recorded from midline to end-line in Tables 38 and 41 could be attributed to the incessant insecurities in all the focal states, especially in Katsina and Zamfara, after the midline survey was completed in 2017. This was made worse by school closures occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic which struck during the final year of GEP3 intervention in 2020. These findings are also not surprising since most pupils in primary 2 assessed at end-line enrolled into schools towards the end of the programme when insecurity was at its peak in both states. This is coupled with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on schooling. It is also worth considering that different cohorts of pupils were assessed at midline and end-line since many of the pupils at baseline and midline had completed basic education or moved on to higher classes.

8.4.2.3. Programme impact of GEP3 – RANA and CTP interventions on pupils' numeracy

84. Overall, unlike male pupils, the proficiency scores obtained by girls in basic numeracy in GEP3 schools outweigh those of their female counterparts from non-GEP3 schools. When disaggregated by states, similar result patterns are also recorded in Niger, Katsina and Kano states where girls in GEP3 schools outperformed their peers in non-GEP3 schools in basic numeracy proficiencies while the opposite is true in other remaining states. However, none of these relationships is found to be statistically significant at a level of less than 5 per cent (Table 42).

Table 42: Results of differences between estimated means of scores of pupils achieving basic numeracy

States	Female			Male		
	Treatment group	Control group	Diff.	Treatment group	Control group	Diff.
Bauchi	596.118 (4.561)	600.708 (7.103)	4.591 (8.089)	609.176 (7.141)	609.908 (7.675)	0.732
Katsina	616.235 (5.549)	608.249 (6.151)	7.985 (8.727)	611.592 (5.216)	619.969 (7.195)	8.377 (8.679)
Niger	657.027 (13.522)	645.534 (20.277)	11.492 (24.002)	619.578 (12.722)	631.160 (16.616)	11.583 (20.591)
Zamfara	645.832 (8.009)	650.619 (13.424)	4.787 (14.907)	639.965 (9.339)	642.494 (10.484)	2.528 (14.207)
Kano	631.044 (4.523)	617.932 (5.665)	13.111* (7.268)	622.676 (5.330)	619.422 (4.451)	3.253 (7.064)
Sokoto	593.649 (3.899)	595.645 (4.765)	1.995 (6.219)	599.848 (4.656)	601.488 (5.765)	1.640 (7.328)
Total	620.012 (2.509)	614.442 (3.248)	5.569 (4.131)	615.995 (2.615)	619.362 (3.135)	3.367 (4.089)

NOTE *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p~0.1. SE in parentheses

85. Table 43 shows a descriptive analysis comparing basic numeracy proficiency scores between pupils from communities that benefitted from GEP3-CTP (treatment group) and those who didn't benefit from cash transfers (control group). The findings indicate that there is a higher proportion of female pupils from GEP3-CTP communities achieving higher basic numeracy scores than those from non-GEP3-CTP communities. At state level, this achievement is also observed in Sokoto state. However, in Niger state, the proportion of female pupils achieving basic numeracy in GEP-CTP schools is lower by about 1 per cent when compared to their counterparts from non-GEP3-CTP schools in the state.

Table 43: Comparison of the proficiency score of pupils in numeracy by gender and CTP treatment and control groups

States	Proficiency score of pupils achieving basic numeracy for girls			Proficiency score of pupils achieving basic numeracy for boys			Proficiency score of pupils achieving basic numeracy for boys and girls		
	Treatment Group	Control Group	Total	Treatment Group	Control Group	Total	Treatment Group	Control Group	Total
Niger	12.90	14.15	13.98	10.71	10.10	10.17	11.86	12.11	12.08
Sokoto	38.71	27.43	28.53	19.44	23.88	23.36	28.36	25.72	26.00
Total	25.81	21.91	22.34	15.63	17.86	17.59	20.63	19.92	20.00

QI 2. Has GEP3 generated significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects at community and state level?

The programme generated numerous intended positive, including higher-level, effects many of which were highlighted in previous sections and some of which will be highlighted in the subsequent sections of the document. To avoid redundancy, this will not be repeated. Focus on unintended positive or negative effects generated by the programme is crucial.

8.4.3. Unintended positive effects

86. The programme had an unintended positive effect of increasing resilience and capacity to respond to setbacks in the community and education system. **Flexible and innovative coping strategies were used to deal with the challenges presented by the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic** – the development of radio educational programmes, parents' teaching and community mentors were a few of the strategies that helped to reduce the effect of the pandemic on pupils' learning outcomes. These are described in more detail in subsequent sections.

8.4.4. Unintended negative effects

87. **The preliminary nature of the CTP negatively impacted the families because the stipend was stopped after two years while the children were still in school.**

Then the negative side of it is being a pilot programme that lasted for two years. And Niger not been able to sustain the programmes,

You know, it is really having a negative effect on those families that were halfway to through the school and somehow dropped at the middle of the whole thing, a situation whereby you rely solely on stipend, you know, to support the child to school and suddenly just stopped you see to that extent it has consequences. **Niger SMoE**

Another unintended negative effect of GEP3 was the (persisting) increase in pupil-teacher ratio due to the massive increase in enrolment without a corresponding increase in the teacher population. The issues relating to the quality of education seen in the assessment of the capacity of teachers in the previous section also derive from this mismatch which is a strain on the system.

QI 3. What long-term transformative change or difference did the programmes have on communities, institutions and children?

8.4.5. Long-term transformative changes or differences

88. The qualitative findings support the quantitative evidence that the sensitisation and the cash transfer components of GEP3 influenced household decision-making positively and led to increased enrolment and retention of girls in schools.

In general, qualitative feedback on the effectiveness of raising awareness of girls' schooling highlighted the following benefits retained by the community:

An educated girl, when she marries, will know how to take care of her children and her home.

She can also transit to higher education and embrace professions such as those of a teacher, lawyer, doctor and nurse. In the health sector this trend is seen as extremely beneficial to women, as it will allow women to be examined by other female health professionals.

“Yes, now they are enrolled, because the mothers have now seen the importance, so now when you go to the hospital, you will see girls treating women, before when they take someone to the hospital, it is a man who will treat her.” CCW, Zamfara.

Once the participants were convinced, the **last argument raised was the financial barrier**, including the loss of income when a girl can no longer participate in farming or hawking (selling small wares) to help her mother. In this case, the cash transfer was recognised as making a real difference when the final decision was made. **In states where the CT component was not part of the intervention, the distribution of uniforms, books and other school materials were mentioned** as having helped to address financial barriers.

89. **By far, the most significant change due to the programme reported by the communities, state and local government stakeholders in the various states, was increase in enrolment of children, particularly girls, in schools.** The FGDs of the different community level groups in all the states, all displayed the consensus that enrolment of girls and their retention in schools had improved because of GEP3 interventions and activities. The programme had tackled issues related to enrolment, retention and completion using multi-faceted interventions many of which were reported frequently by the different community, government, UNICEF, and other programme stakeholders.

A key element was the **enrolment campaigns that had been carried out through the years.** FGD participants credited the **change of attitude of community members to the massive sensitisation of the community members** on the importance of education of female children. They emphasised that carrying along all the relevant community level stakeholders and the traditional, religious and community leaders, in the sensitisation efforts was key to the transformational change in attitude. The different activities of GEP3 that were carried out by key community-level groups such as G4G, He for She, the MAs, HiLWA, in addition to the crucial roles played by the SBMCs and the CBMCs all generated a collective thrust. Stakeholders in the interviews perceived that a substantial effort had been made towards enrolment even beyond GEP3 intervention areas.

90. Intense sensitisation and awareness creation at the community levels led to a **positive change of attitude towards girls' education among men, women and girls** – the programme succeeded to a considerable extent in encouraging men to support the education of female children.

"We really have seen changes because our parents are also not happy to see us at home, so we all now can read." **FGD G4G, Bauchi**

"Each year, the enrolment campaign is flagged of by the state Executive Governor and all the top Government functionary attending and stepped down to the local level. So, this campaign is increasing awareness at both states and community levels about the importance of girls' education, bringing on board all those that serves with the business of education; the traditional rulers, the religious leaders, parents, mothers, associations, everyone, about the importance of Girl-child Education, it's a widespread sensitization." **FGD HILWA, Sokoto**

"There was tremendous, tremendous, tremendous input in terms of enrolment not only in GEP3 focus LGAs in the entire state. This programme has really helped, there are people that are sent to go into the community to sensitise parents, they tell them that girl education is good they should enrol them (girls) in school." **SMoE Stakeholder, Niger**

"Before we don't have schooling materials but now, we have been given bags, book and other things; because of that, girls are coming the more, this UNICEF has helped." **FGD In Out of School Boys, Bauchi**

The change of attitude of community members towards girls' education was highlighted in the FGDs of the girls who were participating in the G4G programme and credited to what they were taught in the programme. They indicated how they were encouraged to stop hawking (selling) wares on the streets and how this has increased enrolment in schools. Similarly, the HiLWA in their FGDs indicated that the G4G programme focused on ensuring that girls developed a voice, gained confidence, and interacted with other girls who could act as mentors to showcase the value of education for girls. The aim was to change the mindset of s – to stimulate the desire in them for education. This was considered by different stakeholders as having enabled a motivation in the girls to complete their education.

Community men noted that the change of attitude was also occasioned by the economic value of education seen in girls in the communities who had been allowed to go to schools. Examples were given of how **household decision-making on enrolling girls in school was influenced by the wider community network.**

Community members, including boys in the FGDs, highlighted that **educated girls were now perceived with more respect and admiration, further encouraging others to want to emulate them.** An interesting change in mindset mentioned in the discussions in Bauchi was the perception that educated girls were more attractive to marry.

"In most cases, you find that all schools that have the G4G, they are giving this type of training on self-confidence and self-esteem. Most times we take them to Abuja to meet other girls and make them to sign an undertaking that they will complete their education from primary to secondary schools in most cases. Aah so far so good, about 100 percent are still going to school even when they don't have any kobo on them. Then in that regards I would say, ah we have succeeded." **FGD HILWA, Katsina**

"Nowadays when an educated girls come back into the community you will see the way she is admired and she is look upon as if she is a white lady, like a celebrity, because of the level of education she has." **FGD SBMC/CBMC, Bauchi**

"There is when a girl is not educated, they don't marry them, that is why there is improvement." **FGD In and Out of schoolboys, Bauchi**

8.5. Efficiency, value for money of GEP3 2012–2022

Overall finding: The net present value of GEP3 interventions was positive, displaying that the programme offered good value for money

Quality of the evidence: Strong

The criterium of efficiency is defined as, “The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.” In other words, how well resources are being used.



Picture 5: Teachers in class

The evaluation questions used for assessing efficiency of GEP3 are summarized below:

QEFY 1. To what extent has GEP3 delivered results in an economic and timely way (How well were resources used?)

QEFY 2. To what extent were the results delivered cost-effectively with the available resources?

QEFY 3. Does the impact justify the cost of the programme?

The specific data sources used for the efficiency evaluation questions and the strength of evidence in the assessment are detailed in table 44 below.

Table 44: Strength of evidence on efficiency

Evaluation questions on efficiency	Strength of evidence	Data sources
QEFY 1. To what extent has GEP3 delivered results in an economic and timely way (How well were resources used?)?	Strong	Head teacher survey classroom observation survey Value for money analysis Semi structured interviews
QEFY 2. To what extent were the results delivered cost-effectively with the available resources?	Strong	Desk review Value for money analysis
QEFY 3. Does the impact justify the cost of the programme?	Strong	Desk review Value for money analysis

The overall conclusions of the independent evaluation team on the efficiency of GEP3 are summarised below:

Preliminary conclusions of value for money of GEP3:

EFFI 1: The project demonstrated value for money through enrolling 120 per cent of the targeted number of girls. Instead of a million girls, 1,283,024 girls were enrolled at a unit cost of £43 (\$60) per girl and £55 (\$75) per girl retained in school when expenditure is considered. (Para 98)

EFFI 2: A total of £77,200,000 (87 per cent) of the budget was utilised in GEP3 by 2020. Using cost saving and cost sharing approaches successfully, the annual expenditure was always less than the annual budget. The highest expenditure was in 2018/9 with 92 per cent of the budget being spent. (Para 98)

EFFI 3: The net present value (NPV) results for the early learning – (GEP3) intervention and the cash transfer intervention are positive. This shows that GEP3 interventions offered good value for money. (Para 100 and 101)

EFFI 4: The Internal Rate of Return (IRR) for the early learning intervention is 10 per cent and for the cash transfer 16 per cent. These are the annualised rates of return for both Interventions respectively. Since both IRRs are above the real discount rate of 5 per cent, the two projects offer value for money and should be accepted. (Para 100 and 101)

EFFI 5: The rate of enrolment and the wage rate were important factors in determining the cost benefit of the project. For instance, a decrease of 10 per cent in the number of pupils enrolled saw a sharp drop in the NPV value from £7.3 to £6 trillion while an increase of 20 per cent in enrolment results in an increase in the NPV from £7 trillion to £11 trillion. Similarly, the wage rate also impacted the NPV. (Para 101)

EFFI 6: Globally, a value assessment of GEP3 (2012–2020) and the Cash Transfer Programme demonstrated value for money based on a cost benefit analysis. Also, the use of the project framework demonstrated that the money was worth spending. This shows there is opportunity for scale-up. (Para 91, 98-101)

EFFI 7: The high pupil-teacher ratio created classroom space, material, and human resources gaps, and thereby challenging the efficiency of the system. (Para 97)

91. To understand the efficiency of the programme, there was an examination in which teaching and learning take place with the head teacher and classroom observation surveys. Different materials and human resources were assessed to determine how they were used and maintained. The VfM analysis was also carried out to determine the cost-benefit ratio of implementing GEP3 programme in six northern Nigeria states over a period of eight years; to determine the cost-benefit ratio of implementing the unconditional cash transfers; and to provide an indication of the costs at which the eventual results were delivered. The assessment was carried out in two parts. Firstly, a cost-benefit analysis of GEP3 from (2015– 2020) was carried out. This timeframe was chosen because the project underwent a redesign in 2014 and the unconditional cash transfer project in Niger and Sokoto states was implemented between 2014 and 2017. Secondly, using the project framework, the unit cost for each additional girl enrolled into school and how much it cost to improve the quality of education in an IQS were determined. The assessment compared “without GEP3 scenario” against “GEP3 scenario” to determine the cost-benefit ratio of implementing the project.
92. Overall, the programme displayed efficiency. However, there were some gaps especially related to infrastructural maintenance and external monitoring. The burn rate of the project per year slowly increased over the years to 129 per cent. However, the overall expenditure rate was 54 per cent. This enabled the enrolment of 1,283,024 girls in school as opposed to a target of 1,000,000. There was evidence that GEP3 offered good value for money.

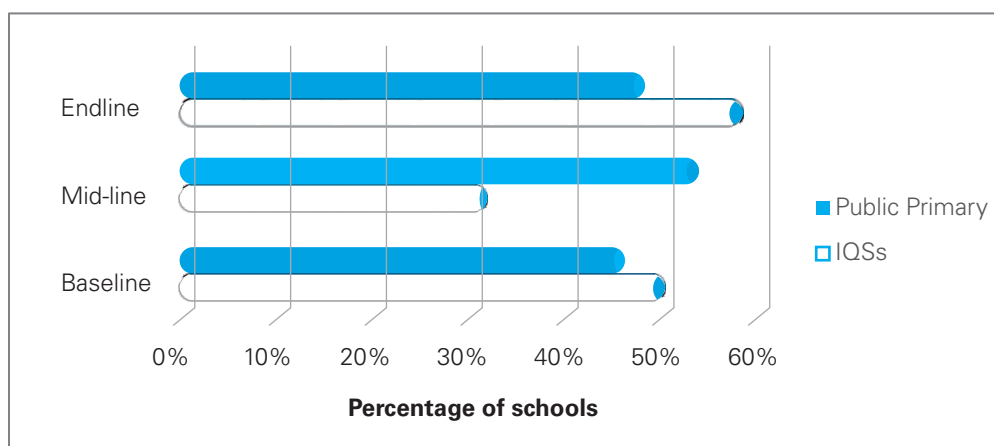
QEFY 1. To what extent has GEP3 delivered results in an economic and timely way (How well were resources used?)

8.5.1. School infrastructure, monitoring and management

93. To assess how well resources were used in the programme (Q1), the use, monitoring and management of both infrastructural, material and human resources was analysed. This analysis of the **schools' infrastructural status** indicated that 70 per cent of the schools needed repairs at end-line. A larger proportion (73 per cent) of public primary schools needed repairs compared to 55 per cent of IQSs. **There was a consistent reduction in the proportion of schools that needed repairs from baseline (93 per cent) to midline (87 per cent) and end-line (70 per cent).** This result was significant (p=0.000). This suggested that the school grants received by the treatment schools had enabled some degree of maintenance culture of the school infrastructure.

The proportion of schools with **source of drinking water** (including water pots/drums for pupils) was 49 per cent at end-line. This is a significant improvement from the midline score of 41, but not much different from the baseline of 47 per cent. Overall, a greater proportion of IQSs has at least a source of water for their pupils. The availability of water sources according to school type is displayed in Figure 44 below.

Figure 44: Availability of water sources by school type across BL, ML and EL



The availability of toilets for pupils across all types of schools was poor. Pupil to toilet ratio in IQSs was 198:1 compared to 246:1 for public primary schools. This indicated inadequate toilets for pupils in the schools. The ratios in the control and treatment groups were 262:1 and 246:1 respectively.

In terms of **school improvement support provided specifically by GEP3**, the project provided various ways of support to the schools through repairs and supplies. As shown in Table 45, both IQSs and public schools benefitted from school repairs, school uniforms, monthly financial support, classroom construction, chairs and tables. However, improvement of sanitation facilities (boreholes and toilet construction) was only done at the public schools.

Table 45: Project infrastructure support to schools

Type of support	IQS	Public school
School repairs	8.2% (5)	38.4% (138)
School uniforms	4.9% (3)	9.2% (33)
Improved sanitation (dug well or borehole)	0	15% (54)
Improved sanitation (Build more toilets)	0	14.8% (53)
Value of monthly financial support for school maintenance (Naira ₦)	N2,000.00	N2,820,000.00
Number of new classrooms constructed	9	356
Number of additional chairs provided	635	7,102
Number of additional tables provided	442	5,762

Stakeholders in the KII and community members in the FGD also highlighted infrastructure available and material improvements. The valued elements included:

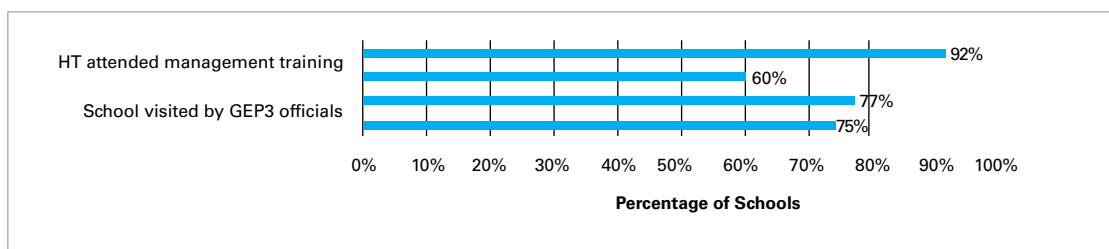
- The existence of more classes than before, including the feature of less children per class (fewer than 80 children per class).
- The existence of tap drinking water at schools.
- Common perceptions in the sense of more girls (than boys) in school due to the programme.
- The material help provided by the programme and the policy on school gratuity was identified as clear adjuvants of girls' retention at school.
- Importance of providing free uniforms as this was perceived to have allowed enrolment of families without economical means.

“The free uniforms provided by GEP3 to the pupils is helping a lot. For example, there was a pupil who stopped coming to school for a while because his uniform is bad. I told the headmaster the boy's problem, and he was given a new uniform. From then on, he didn't miss school again.” **Trained teacher, Kano**

“I know about 10 homes of orphans that their children were not coming to school at all, but now they are coming because the children got uniform, books, pens and other learning materials at no cost.” **Female parent, Kano**

94. The indicators evaluated to establish the change in the **external monitoring** include head teacher attendance of management training, frequency of visits by GEP3 officials, frequency of meetings with the LGAs and the existence of functional SBMCs in schools. As shown in figure 44, **77 per cent of the schools held meetings with the LGAs while 75 per cent received visits from GEPs officials. Further, 60 per cent of head teachers surveyed attended management training and 92 per cent of the schools have functional SBMCs.**

Figure 45: The extent of external monitoring in schools



95. **The training of teachers had been useful in the overall running and management of schools as indicated by 90 per cent of the teachers surveyed.** There was no statistical significance between the perceived benefits of the head teacher training in IQSs and public primary schools surveyed. There was clarity among respondents in the interviews regarding how to know that funds were being correctly allocated and used. **There was some social accountability for funds that involved control measures – formal and/or informal.** Respondents mentioned indicators such as the presence of improvement plans presented for approval, monitoring tools and direct observation of physical improvements to the school premises being made. These improvements were enumerated, such as renovated classrooms, rehabilitated school buildings, construction/increased number of latrines, etc. **A dimension of perceived appropriate funding allocation was the teacher's training and workshops.** They were identified by many respondents as important components of the improvement process undertaken by GEP3. Enhancing the quality of teaching was reported as having gone hand in hand with updated and reinforced competencies and skills among teachers.

96. Other reported positive outcomes include proper monitoring and evaluation of the programme. **Improved monitoring and data management skills were reported as enhancing accountability and transparency.** The EMIS was indicated as widely used and mentioned by respondents as a source of verification in terms of the monitoring modality of GEP3 implementation in the field. **The standardisation of the procedures and the decentralisation of GEP3 data were reported as strengthening the efficiency of the programme** due to improved quality of data collection and data treatment practices.

A key weakness reported by some stakeholders was the relative lack of synergy or coordination among key partners at the state level, with projects being undertaken without central communication. The duplication of efforts arising because of the lack of synergy was also highlighted. Overlapping efforts were noted as a concern considering the funds were not enough for all the needs identified.

"I know sometimes there is no synergy in the programmes they are carrying on so which brings about gaps in funding because some people will be duplicating the same activity when they would have carried out other activities to bring out more benefits for this sector."

Federal Ministry of Education stakeholder

"I think there should be more synergy and more collaboration among the partners. If we, do it that way we can put our resources together, then we will be able to achieve more instead for all of us focusing on one thing differently thereby duplicating a lot of activities."

State Ministry of Education, Bauchi

97. This massive increase in enrolment did not come without problems. **Among the most mentioned drawbacks were the overall conditions in classes, especially in terms of spaces available for pupils and the pupil-teacher ratio.** This unintended negative effect had several consequences.

- a) Pedagogical consequences: **with less space, there are limited possibilities for the teacher and children to move and exchange, hindering the variety of activities and flows of interactive learning possible.** An overcrowded classroom normally would mean difficulty to concentrate for the slower learners, hardship to follow the teacher and the lesson, and of course, very little interaction for each pupil, as well as a more static and motionless attitude from children.

"What we are still battling with in our schools is how to accommodate children in our classes in the manner it should be. This has not been achieved until now. In a class you may find pupils amounting to about one hundred and fifty or two hundred or even more. A lot of enrolment but there are no spaces for the children to sit!" **Trained teacher, Bauchi**

"In a class the only place for a teacher to stay is just at the board he can't move forward away because the class is so crowded no space to move or even turn so there has been this problem of lack of sufficient classes in the schools up till now." **Parents, Bauchi**

- b) Students-teachers ratio: with increased enrolment not followed by massive recruitment of teachers, the volume of teachers available (and trained) is lower in relation to the pupils and even though some mitigating actions were taken to remediate the lack of staff, quality and relevant learning are surely needed. **Some schools requested the help of volunteers to alleviate the staff shortage or introduced the logic of shifts to maximise the use of classrooms and premises.**

"In some places there are shifts. They separate the children, just like this system of shifting, some will do morning, and some will do afternoon and they take primary 1 2 3, mornings, they will occupy all the classes of the school, then they separate them." **Katsina, female parents**

"In a class you may have two different classes with the teacher taking turns. Sometimes we have shortage of classes, and we have to merge them." **Trained teacher, Sokoto**

- c) **Classroom material shortage:** The high number of pupils also has consequences on the teaching material available. More children mean less access to furniture, chairs, books, etc. As a teacher from Kano says: “

“We have shortage of desks, enough classrooms, teaching materials and teachers.”
Trained teacher, Kano

In some areas, these problems were addressed locally. For instance, in Kano, the local governments (through the governor) invested in infrastructure to deal with the renovation and infrastructural development to create more access to education. Others requested the intervention of the community to alleviate the lack of infrastructure, which seemed in line with the involvement of the community in the performance and results of schools.

Communities were also mobilised to provide facilities that would serve as classrooms, or in terms of paying for the extra staff needed:

It is worth noticing the central role of SBMC and MAs in mobilising the community around the school needs and enrolling community teachers to join those teachers assigned by the state – an example is Niger state. In addition to this, the difficulty of an effective learning environment was highlighted by teachers complaining that too many children attended school and teaching them

“Because of this association (SBMC) that has introduced that people in the community pay some volunteer teachers every month because the teachers in the school are very few, and you will see one businessman, and he will contribute, so different people contribute to the society to make the school develop. The wealthy among the community build the class or pay teacher’s salary so that is how the school develops.” **Male parent, Katsina**

8.5.2. Cost-benefit of GEP3

To determine the cost-effectiveness (Q2) and value for money (Q3) of the programme, the VfM performance was compared against the original VfM proposition in the business case and a cost-benefit analysis of GEP3 and GEP3-CTP was carried out.

QEFY 2. To what extent were the results delivered cost-effectively with the available resources?

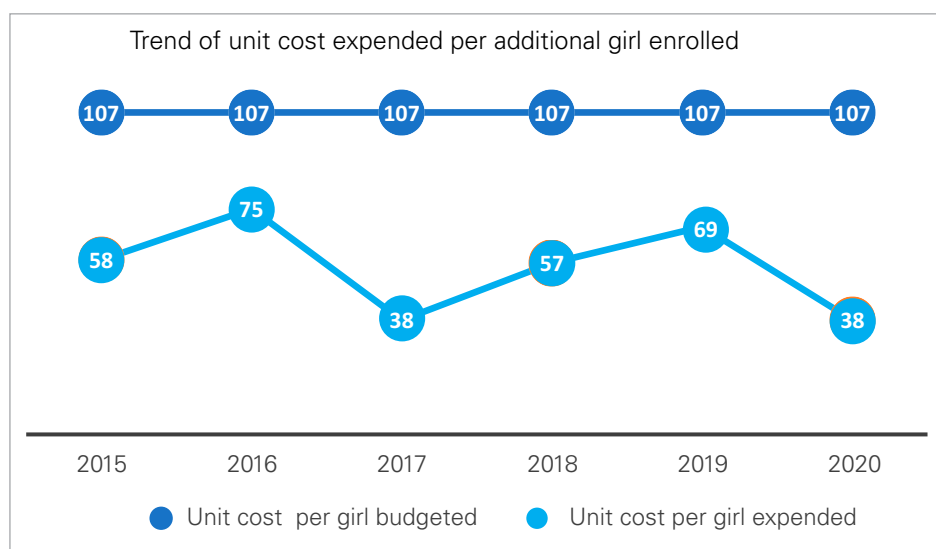
98. **The results of the programme were delivered cost-effectively with the available resources.** An analysis based on the original VfM proposition in the business case demonstrated that GEP3 **spent less than the benchmarked unit cost for most activities and there was still overachievement of the target with regards to the number of girls enrolled** – a total of 1,283,024 girls instead of 1 million additional girls. The unit cost expended per additional girl enrolled was much lower than what was budgeted. **It was estimated that £1073 would be spent per additional girl enrolled in the business case.** However, this amount was not spent in any year. **The highest spent was £75 per additional girl enrolled in 2016 and the least was £38. Because the annual target of 100,000 girls was exceeded each year at a lower than budgeted cost, the project did provide value for the money.** Table 46, Figures 46 and 47 display the findings.

The unit cost of reaching a girl was much reduced in 2017 and 2020 compared to those in other years. This is because in those years, although the additional number of girls reached was much higher than the previous years, this was achieved at a lower cost to the project. In 2017, additional girls were reached by applying savings emerging from Naira depreciation and savings from SBMC and CBMC training. While in 2020, the operating costs were kept low despite implementations resulting in the lowest overhead cost ratio between 2016 and 2020. Operating costs were reduced through leveraging partner resources to achieve results while reducing spending from the project side. An example was the collaboration between UNICEF, the Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN) and NEI Plus, which resulted in the use of resource materials and personnel developed by ESSPIN and NEI Plus minimising project costs. This **underscores the importance of collaboration and leveraging existing systems as a**

Table 46: Unit cost per girl enrolled from 2015-2020

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Unit cost per girl enrolled (£)	58	75	38	57	69	38
Unit cost per girl enrolled (US\$)	80	103	52	78	95	52
Unit cost per girl enrolled (N)	33,179	42,903	21,738	32,607	39,471	21,738

Figure 46: Trend of unit cost expended per girl enrolled in school



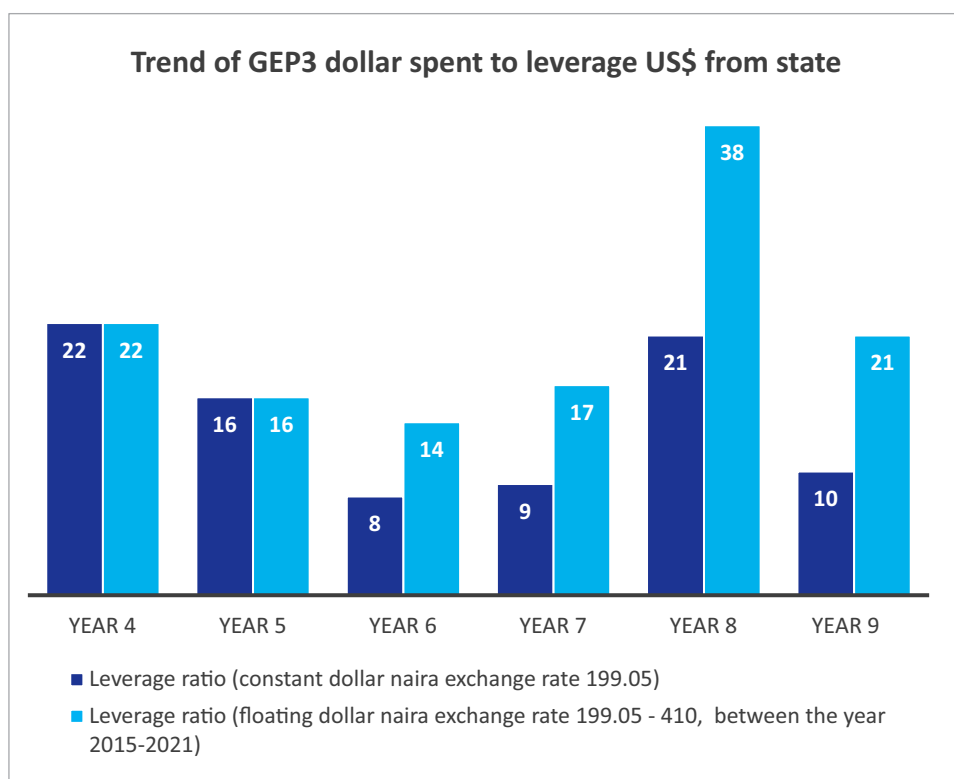
When the yearly expenditure is compared to the yearly budget, much less was spent except in 2016/7 and 2019/20 as seen in table 47 below.

Table 47: Trend of burn rate

Year	Year 5 2016/7	Year 6 2017/8	Year 7 2018/9	Year 8 2019/20	Year 9 2020/21
Budget (US\$)	13.8m	17m	27.2m	20.3m	N/A
Expenditure (US\$)	9.9m	7.6m	13.3m	18.6m	21.8m
Expenditure (£)	7.3m	6.2m	10.2m	14.3m	16m
Expenditure Rate	72%	45%	49%	92%	-

99. Though the benchmark leverage ratio of \$1 to 0.8 was not achieved, the project gradually spent fewer dollars to leverage a dollar from the states. In 2015, 21 dollars was spent to leverage 1 dollar but in 2019/20, \$10 was spent to leverage \$1 from the states. However, there was a jump back to \$22 in 2018/9, but by 2020/21, the project spent \$10 to leverage a dollar from the states. It is important to note that these values are when a constant dollar exchange ratio of 199.05 is considered. When the Naira depreciated against the dollar from 2017 onwards, more dollars were spent leveraging a dollar from the states. See figure 47 below.

Figure 47: Trend of GEP3 dollar spent to leverage \$1 from states



The project was able to limit its overhead expenses to roughly 10 per cent of the programme expenditure between 2015–2019, which was less than the approved 22 per cent, allowing more funds to be committed to actual implementation (see table 48).

Table 48: Cost category and actual expenditure

Cost category	Actual expenditure Year 5	Actual expenditure Year 6	Actual expenditure Year 7	Actual expenditure Year 8
UNICEF Management and Operations Support	US\$305,168.77	US\$299,740.89	US\$334,328.15	US\$375,943.77
Indirect Support	US\$647,014.36	US\$498,257.15	US\$896,901.08	US\$1,220,737
Overhead Cost Total	US\$952,183.13	US\$797,998.04	US\$1,204,229.23	US\$1,596,681.15
Overhead Cost Ratio	9.63%	10.48%	9.06%	US8.56%
Total programme cost	US\$9,890,077	US\$7,616,216	US\$13,297,059	US\$18,659,843

QEFY 3. Does the impact justify the cost of the programme?

100. **The project successfully enrolled over 1,283,024 girls over the period**, about 140,000 girls annually into primary school, ranging from 142,233 in 2015/2016 to 317,134 girls in 2019/2020, exceeding the annual target of 100,000 girls. Each year of the project, a new cohort of girls is enrolled in primary 1. These girls spend the next six years in school.

The findings show that the project represents value for money. The net present value (NPV) is £7.3 trillion with a cost-benefit ratio of 14.2. An internal rate of return (IRR) of 10 per cent is obtained, which is higher than the real discount rate of 5 per cent. The cost-benefit ratio is above 1, which means that the benefits exceed the costs of implementation. Therefore, the project offers value for money. The IRR is the discount rate at which a project's NPV becomes zero. Since the IRR exceeds the discount rate, the project generates returns more than other investments in the economy and is considered worthwhile.

101. **To determine the robustness of the results, the assumptions about input data were varied to see the range of potential outcomes.** This analysis helped to identify the point at which the net benefits for the project no longer exist. The range of potential outcomes for differing inputs was gauged using a sensitivity analysis. A sensitivity analysis helps to determine the potential where the net benefits of the project are no longer positive. Details of the sensitivity analysis and a table summarising the results of varying the inputs are in Table 49 below.

Table 49: One-way sensitivity analysis – potential outcomes due to varying scenarios

S/N	Scenario	Cost-benefit ratio	Net present value (£) (trillions)	IRR
1	Decreased enrolment rate at 10%	12.7	6	10
2	Increased enrolment rate at 20%	17.1	11.0	12
3	Increased wage rate for the educated	19.8	11.5	14
4	Increased wage rate for both the educated and uneducated	15.9	11.7	11
4	Increased wage rate for the educated in line with the yearly returns of education	19.5	11.3	13
5	Increased education cost at 50%	12.5	7.3	9
6	Decreased education cost at 20%	13	7.8	11
7	Survival rate to Grade 5 at 100%	14.2	7.7	10

The sensitivity analysis shows that the degree of enrolment and the wages earned are important factors in determining the cost-benefit of the project. A decrease of 10 per cent in the number of pupils enrolled sees a sharp drop in the NPV value from £7.3 to £6 trillion while an increase of 20 per cent in enrolment results in an increase in the NPV from £7 trillion to £11 trillion. The wage rate also impacts the NPV, with an increase of 50 per cent in the wage rate for either the educated or both the educated and uneducated or increasing the wage rate in line with the yearly market returns of primary school education, 7 per cent results in an NPV of £ 11 trillion. The rate of survival to Grade 5 and the cost of education both seem to have a limited impact on the cost-benefit ratio of the project as the NPV value does not vary much from the baseline. **The cost-benefit analysis of the CTP also yielded a positive NPV of £64billion and an internal rate of return of 16 per cent higher than the cost of capital investment.** A one-way sensitivity analysis shows that the amount of stipend per beneficiary impacts the cost-benefit of the project. The higher the stipend per beneficiary, the lower the NPV and IRR on the project.

8.6. Sustainability of GEP3

Overall findings: GEP3 has established sustainable transformative gains with strong community ownership that will secure the culture and practices of girls' education

Quality of the evidence: Strong

The DAC criterium of sustainability is defined as, "the extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue."

The evaluation questions used for assessing the sustainability of GEP3 are summarized below:

QS 1. To what extent are the net benefits of interventions likely to continue after the UNICEF support has stopped?

QS 2. How likely are the benefits (including resilience to risk) to last and under what conditions?

QS 3. Is government capacity sufficient to implement and monitor a government-supported CTP in Niger and Sokoto states?

QS 4. Should the CTP, or a variant of it, be scaled up to state level? If the programme is to be scaled up, which aspects of the operation must be modified and strengthened for it to operate effectively at the state level? Which aspects of the programme should remain the same?

The questions on sustainability were answered by triangulating findings from the semi-structured



Picture 6: FGD –School-Based management committee

The overall conclusions of the independent evaluation team on the sustainability of the net benefits of GEP3 are summarised below:

Conclusions of sustainability of GEP3

SUS 1: There are multiple potentials for the sustainability of the net benefits of GEP3 interventions, but the key bottleneck relates to government financial commitment. (Para 102)

SUS 2: The extensive and meaningful community participation in GEP3 in all the states displays an important potential for sustainability. Replication/imitation efforts at local levels including financial/operational support from local mentors and communities are very promising in terms of keeping the flow of benefits emerging. (Para 105 and 108)

SUS 3: The scaling up efforts undertaken by some states (although limited by funding availability and important differences among states) are evidence of local ownership and high interest in continuing/reinforcing the process. For instance, the Sokoto state is documented to have successfully transitioned the CTP into a state-run programme. (Para 105 and 109–110)

SUS 4: Through the education-related local capacities training schemes those capacities were strengthened enough to ensure scaling up. (Para 107)

SUS 5: There is reported awareness on the need to scale up GEP3-CTP project to cover more states more evenly. The key deterrent in the sustainability component at all levels is poor government funding. (Para 103 and 104)

QS 1. To what extent are the net benefits of interventions likely to continue after the UNICEF support has stopped?

102. It was important to examine the extent to which the net benefits of interventions are likely to continue after the UNICEF support has stopped by reviewing what elements (intrinsic or extrinsic) denoted potential for sustainability. **There are multiple potentials for the sustainability of the net benefits of GEP3 interventions, but the key bottleneck relates to government financial commitment.**

There is sufficient government capacity to implement and monitor the programme at national and state levels. The FME, SUBEB, SAME, SMOE were major drivers of the programme – and there was evidence of national and state ownership of the programme and clear political commitment. The states have developed sustainability plans to enable the programme activities to continue beyond GEP3. Most of the states (Bauchi, Katsina, Kano, Sokoto and Zamfara) detailed plans to institutionalise enrolment drive campaigns in SUBEB and/or at community levels; continued and expanded training of teachers, teacher facilitators and head teachers; and the digitisation of EMIS to support Annual School Census among other things (see Annex 12). All indicated government budgetary commitments to these activities and in some cases (Kano, Katsina and Sokoto), funding was leveraged from the World Bank-funded Better Education Service Delivery for All (BESDA) Programme for some activities in the sustainability plans. **The key gap relates to a financial commitment by the government.** There was no evidence of an actual release of government funds for the activities in any of the states.

There was also ample evidence of local ownership and the use of local capacity generated via intensive advocacy efforts of the programme. The LGEAs are important drivers of the programme at the local level and there was evidence of commitment and capacity of the government stakeholders at the local level. Even beyond that, SBMCs and other key community-level groups received extensive training and were provided with resources to function. Regular financial commitments made by the Mothers Associations and some community leaders in addition to extensive community participatory activities within the programme are examples of local ownership and commitment. It is widely documented that the participation of communities in the operation of schools helped to increase access, enrolment, and retention of children in

school in different contexts^{72,73}. The society/community plays an important role as facilitator and partner in Education⁷⁴.

103. **The extensive and meaningful community participation in GEP3-CTP in all the states displays an important potential for sustainability.** Intrinsic elements relating to the strong motivation displayed by key stakeholders, such as SBMC, HiLWA, MAs, and the transformational change in the mindset of communities, including girls, denote the potential of the net benefits of the programme lasting beyond donor support.

Moreover, Sokoto State continued the GEP 3 cash transfer with state funds from 2017. Although this has been constrained to a degree by budgetary release towards the programme, GEP3 has served as a foundation for the strengthening of cash transfer systems in the state including the launch of the SDG Joint Fund Programme to accelerate SDGs through social protection, with Sokoto as a focus state⁷⁵. However, this is a programme that has considerable operational costs and **without firm and sustained financial commitment by the government, the likelihood of loss of some of the net benefits of interventions is high.** Even with UNICEF support, poor funding by the government impedes governance in the sector.

“It is unfortunate that the state doesn’t match the funding while the resources for the education are there. When you look at the utilization beyond recurrent and capital expenditures it a very little amount that goes to soft aspects of teachers training, of governance, to really look at the effectiveness of programme, so budget flows continue to be a major constraint.” Stakeholder, UNICEF

Stakeholders in the interviews also identified the need for extra funds to assure sustainability plans that would ensure the long-term impact of GEP3. As the project comes to an end, stakeholders expect that this new stage and effort will be mainly performed by the Government at all levels.

QS 2. How likely are the benefits (including resilience to risk) to last and under what conditions?

104. The COVID-19 pandemic and the persisting insecurity situation in many of the focal states, have tested the resilience of the programme. Certain opportunities, due to the COVID-19 situation, were highlighted in the interviews– such as the rethinking of educational modalities and strategies. However, both the **COVID-19 crisis and insecurity have influenced and disrupted the flow of GEP3 outputs. There were evident losses in retention and learning outcomes, though the programme also displayed resilience and retained many of its benefits.**

The consequences of the pandemic were global and did not just affect the girls. Students had to stay home during the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020 for seven months before being able to return to classes. Further down the line, the ongoing fear of COVID-19 vaccination compounded issues. As one of the consequences, school attendance dropped, and at the same time, the number of out-of-school children increased largely. The COVID-19 situation brought a varied series of changes and dysfunctions to the project, from very high numbers of absenteeism, both from children and teachers to stopping the school curricular programme. Disturbances to the ongoing process were high, with long-bearing effects. Additional effects of the pandemic reported were girls being married off during the lockdown and increased pregnancies among girls because they were forced to stay at home.

⁷² GPE(Global Partnership for Education). 2017. Empowering the community to improve education in Honduras. Slideshow. Retrieved from: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/multimedia/slideshow/empowering-community-improve-education-honduras>.

⁷³ Meresman, S. 2014. Parents, Family and Community Participation in inclusive education. New York: UNICEF (United Nations Children’s Fund). Retrieved from: http://www.inclusive-education.org/sites/default/files/uploads/booklets/IE_Webinar_Booklet_13.pdf.

⁷⁴ Sujatha, K. 2011a. ‘Module 4: Managing External Relations’. In: Improving school management from successful schools (pp. 192-210). ANTRIEP (Asian Network of Training and Research Institutions in Educational Planning), NUEPA (National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration). Retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002205/220543E.pdf>

⁷⁵ The Joint SDG Fund Programme is being implemented by UNICEF as lead in collaboration with WFP, ILO and UNDP (for more information : <https://www.jointsdgifund.org/where-we-work/nigeria>)

"This pandemic has negatively influenced the retention, some of the pupils visited their relatives, some have gone to Benue, Lagos and other places. It is only when they come back, they will resume back to school. There are some girls who got married in between the period of the pandemic. A lot of complaints come to the office - there are no pupils, some teachers went to some other areas due to the pandemic and there are lot of things that was affected." LGA, Kano.

"Yes, many of the girls got pregnant and many of them stayed out of school. We had some information that some of the girls got pregnant and for that reason they could not go back to school. These are some of issues that affected the schooling of girls." HiLWA, Kano.

In their FGDs, girls and boys highlighted their perceptions of the lockdown. Schools were closed and, according to the children, that slowed down their learning. Many of them did not do much at home, whereas some did study. As expected, not everything they learned in school was retained by the time school reopened. Most importantly, the protracted school closures led to some of their friends dropping out of school.

"It affects us, if not because of Coronavirus now we would have been in JSS 1." Girl, Bauchi

"We all forgot what we were taught. When we came back, our teachers had to revise with us our previous lessons before teaching us new things." Girls, Kano

"We were not happy because the period we were meant to be studying, we were meant to stay at home doing nothing" versus "We were not happy but some of us used the period to attend lessons." Boys, Kano

"Some of us are not happy with the corona holiday, some came back while some don't return, some prefer hawking than to return back to school, they tell us that they will not come back to school, that they are tired." G4G, Sokoto

105. Nevertheless, stakeholders used some innovative strategies to address learning during the lockdown. **During the crisis, teaching programmes** were developed for radio and television that were aimed at ensuring the pupils were busy with schoolwork, even though they were at home, which had greater success than planned. **The uptake was higher than anticipated.** Stakeholders reported receiving land from communities to build schools and gave the example of receiving a farm (Kano). The G4G programme led to the development of skills resulting in some unanticipated positive effects. Girls developed skills to make petroleum jelly, liquid soap, do knitting, mats and baskets weaving and bead making (Katsina). **There was considerable community support and participation during the COVID-19 restrictions, highlighted by the financial support (including transportation) provided to mentors in the communities.**
106. In terms of insecurity, impressions vary. For instance, there is no feeling of insecurity in Kano according to one respondent. For others, insecurity has always been a part of the landscape in some regions, so mechanically transferring the (eventual) effects of it to the project doesn't seem fair. Insecurity was not felt as solely influencing GEP3, it was perceived as a much larger problem, affecting everything. There was a feeling that endemic insecurity could be as paralyzing as the COVID-19 pandemic.

QS 3. Is government capacity sufficient to implement and monitor a government-supported CTP in Niger and Sokoto states?

107. There is substantial government capacity for the implementation of a scaled-up version of the CTP in Niger and Sokoto states. **Technical capacity and political willingness are available for such a project, but the main constraint for both states would be their ability to provide sustained funding for the CTP.** The previous evaluation (2017) noted that Sokoto State Government had developed the CTP scale-up plan and an implementation committee had already been set up to implement the programme from April 2017. The evaluation also highlighted that their programme implementation unit (PIU) in Sokoto state had the necessary capacity to implement and monitor a government-supported CTP if given adequate financial support.

QS 4. Should the CTP, or a variant of it, be scaled up to state level? If the programme is to be scaled up, which aspects of the operation must be modified and strengthened for it to operate effectively at the state level? Which aspects of the programme should remain the same?

108. At the time of the impact evaluation of GEP3-CTP in 2017, Niger State Government was planning on sustaining the CTP in the six targets LGAs, while the Sokoto State Government was planning for a scale up to the 23 LGAs in Sokoto State. This was an indication of a political will to sustain the programme and implement a scale-up in Niger and Sokoto respectively. Yet, despite the willingness and political goodwill, the findings in each of the two states indicate that the government's capacity to sustain or scale up the CTP is tightly constrained by funding.

On the other hand, the social protection policy measures initiated by the Federal Government in 2016 and formally introduced to Nigerians in 2017 are classified into eight categories and GEP3-CTP fits perfectly under policy measure 2: "Provide scholarship, learning materials, uniforms and cash transfers for children in poor households and children living with disabilities".

However, it is important to note that "Nigeria's spending on social protection is considered low compared to other sub-Saharan African countries. Comparative analysis on per capita GDP to social protection for six sub-Saharan African countries, including Nigeria, indicates that though the richest country among the six, Nigeria spends a lower share of GDP on social protection"⁷⁶. Social protection is not a key priority for the Federal Government, as reflected by the limited funding available for it. Furthermore, as there is no ministry to champion social protection causes, there is no drive to develop the social protection policy.

109. **However, new developments in Sokoto state potentially favour sustainability and expansion of GEP3-CTP. The evaluation of the SDG4 project in Nigeria (2021) noted that Sokoto state has successfully transited a cash transfer scheme, the "Girls' Education Project" reducing gender gaps in public primary schooling, into a state-run programme.** Thus, favouring its selection to pilot a social protection project aimed at developing a model for federal states of Nigeria. The expected impact is described as follows: "The expansion of existing state-owned cash transfer programmes promoting girls' education, will help to increase the proportion of children both girls and boys at the end of primary education achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) Mathematics (SDG 4.1). Additionally, the communal engagement, of women and adolescent girls in social behavioural change communication activities will strengthen the efforts made in the reduction of infant and child mortality due to malnutrition (SDG 2.2). Improved participation in a decision-making process by women and adolescent girls through their inclusion in the establishment of communal project management committees will create conditions that advance rather than undermine gender equality and women's empowerment (SDG 5)". Thus, confirming sustainability in terms of CT provision as well as gender sensitivity. Moreover, as described in the next section related to Equity and Gender Equality it seems that sustainability could be better found in positive changes related to gender discrimination linked to the socio-cultural context of patriarchal communities in Nigeria.

110. **In answering the questions in this section, key informants indicated what a scale-up of the CTP should look like:**

Scaling up must also consider the transfer of ownership of GEP3 results, the inclusion of more cost-effective work modalities and standardisation (digitalisation) of some processes and protocols. These identified improvements, all of which have emerged at different levels through the implementation of the project, would aim at a long-lasting impact based on the lessons learned and best practices identified. They would mainly focus on facilitating closer and more effective monitoring and follow-up mechanism to render a more realistic sustainable effort.

⁷⁶Social Protection in Nigeria, 2018. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

Of particular concern is the need for procedures' digitalisation, it is important to mention that it relates to the perception of an increasing (physical) insecurity factor. Indeed, it was mentioned as being at the origin of this need to digitalise accounting procedures (payments, transfers and so on). Digitalisation would be a way of minimising exposure to insecure environments, transferring and transporting valuables included.

“The aspect I would say which I also see as a very good practices that of accountability is the movement of funds because we need to go electronic now because of the insecurity.”
SMoE, Niger.

It is worth noticing that according to the respondents, the state level should be in charge of the scale-up process as they are better placed to manage and monitor the calling-up process. Furthermore, it would be very relevant to consider that those perceptions of a more homogeneous and even coverage in the scaling-up effort run very high among respondents. This scaling up should be thoroughly planned as not all local governments are benefitting from the programme.

The clear and recurring re-vindication was that many states and communities that were not included in the project should be included in the scaling up “so that everybody should get it”. Additionally, to this last point, there was a concern and the expressed need to increase the training coverage to train those beneficiaries that have not yet been trained (within the already covered states).

8.7. Resilience of GEP3

Overall findings: GEP3 was resilient to internal and external setbacks including insecurity and the COVID-19 pandemic

Quality of the evidence: Strong

The evaluation questions used for assessing resilience of GEP3 are summarized below:

QRES 1. To what extent was the project resilient to internal and external setbacks (economic, conflicts, the pandemic, etc.)?

QRES 2. To what extent has the GEP programme responded effectively to risks and threats?

The questions on resilience were answered by triangulating findings from the semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and the desk review.

Because of the similarities in the questions, these have been addressed together. Please note that the preceding section on sustainability also addresses some elements of the programme's resilience from a perspective of the likelihood of continuation of benefits.

The overall conclusions of the independent evaluation team on resilience of GEP3 are summarised below:

Preliminary Conclusions of Resilience of GEP3

SUS 1: Even though the COVID-19 crisis influenced and disrupted the flow of GEP3 outputs, it also brought reflection and reengineering of certain educational practices, modalities, and strategies. They included the more direct involvement of stakeholders, local media, and the rethinking of learning. (Para 111 and 112)

SUS 2: Innovative mitigation strategies used during the COVID-19 lockdown period, such as teaching programmes on radio and television and village-level mentorship activities enabled learning for girls and boys, with a higher level of participation than expected. (Para 113)

SUS 3: Massive abductions of school children and people in the programme areas was an ever-present threat for the project, but qualitative evidence displayed a general perception of the structural insecurity as part of the landscape. Nevertheless, obvious challenges were presented by insecurity in the states, especially in Niger state. (Para 114)

SUS 4: Overall, female mentors/mentees empowered by the project, such as HiLWA, G4G or female teachers, seemed to be better prepared and more sensitised to issues of gender-based violence which helped create spaces for addressing them. (Para 115)



Picture 7: Focus group discussions with men

Overall, in terms of the programme's resilience to risk:

111. **Community-based ownership of GEP3 as evidenced in other sections, proved to be the right platform for confronting one of the main threats of the programme – the COVID-19 epidemic.** An unexpected situation was not only affecting school attendance in the regions where the project was being implemented, it was a national and worldwide crisis affecting all social activities. The flexible and innovative strategies developed to cope with the drawbacks of the unimaginable context (radio educational programmes, parents teaching, school shifts, etc.) seemed to play a double role, to help maintain social contact and provide learning for pupils in numerous places.

112. **In terms of monitoring and following up of GEP3 by central authorities and LGA, the desk reviews carried out through this evaluation process showed that the unprecedented character of the pandemic caught all levels of management off-guard, strongly influencing and disturbing the data collection efforts especially from mid to the end of 2020.** Thus, some monitoring tools and protocols in place stopped gathering in-field information due to the lack of reliable contacts in the regions' local administrations, who were under lockdown themselves, or due to the interrupted school activity (teachers not attending classes, children being kept at home). These gaps in information, though non-negligible, were compensated by the qualitative and quantitative information collected for this evaluation which started in April 2021.
113. As already noted in the sustainability section, innovative mitigation strategies used during the COVID-19 lockdown period such as teaching programmes on radio and television and village level mentorship activities enabled learning for girls and boys on a higher level than expected. There was considerable community support for these strategies shown via moral and financial (including transportation) support provided to mentors in the communities.
114. **The insecurity problems in the northern regions of Nigeria also worsened during the last part of the project (which influenced the implementation of this evaluation field phase).** The increasing massive abductions of school children and people in the concerned areas were an ever-present threat for the project. **Paradoxically, evidence collected qualitatively refers to a globally assumed context, where structural insecurity seems to be a part of the landscape.** As mentioned repeatedly, insecurity issues have always been present, not necessarily being perceived as clearly deteriorating in the last four or five years. Evidence shows that reality differs from the perceptions collected through the qualitative tools. Niger state was challenged by insecurity especially during the evaluation data collection period.
115. **In terms of gender-based violence (GBV) such as rape, harassment and molestation, the problem seems to have worsened with the lockdown periods during the COVID-19 pandemic, with girls being kept at home for longer periods** exposing them more to this kind of violence. There is evidence nevertheless, of growing awareness of this social problem and instances exists at school level where these problems are discussed. Geographical distance between the schools and homes is a variable directly related to the perception of danger and risk of GBV on the road to or from school. Spontaneous strategies such as walking in groups to school have partially palliated this threat.

Overall, female instances empowered by the project such as G4G or female teachers, seem to be better prepared and more sensitised to these issues, which helped create spaces to address them.

8.8. Gender Equality and Equity

Overall findings: Strong benefits to the female gender was achieved by GEP3 with evidence of massive girls' enrolment in schools; and social and economic empowerment of women. Programme benefits were fairly evenly distributed across all wealth quintiles with evidence of pro-poor benefits in learning outcomes

Quality of the evidence: Strong

The evaluation question used to assess gender equality of GEP3 is recapitulated below:

QE 1. To what extent has GEP3 addressed inequalities in education, and incorporated gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls into the design, implementation and results achieved?

The evaluation question on gender equality and equity was answered by triangulating quantitative and qualitative findings from the household survey, desk review, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions.

The overall conclusions of the independent evaluation team on gender equality and equity of GEP3 are summarised below:

Preliminary conclusions on gender equality and equity achievements of the programme

GEN 1: There was strong evidence of massive enrolment of girls and a significant positive impact of the programme on girls' learning outcomes (see previous sections on effectiveness and impact)

GEN 2: Pupils' learning outcomes were mostly similar across the five quintiles of wealth distribution with the poorest quintile interestingly performing better than the richest quintile. This implies a pro-poor element of the programme. (Para 58)

GEN 3: The programme favoured the enrolment of girls across households of different wealth status. Analysis of the NER in relation to the wealth status of households showed only a little difference between the richest and the poorest households for the NER of girls in the CTP households (93.4 vs 92.5) compared to the same variable for the boys (93.6 vs 90.4), implying that the gender-sensitive CT intervention bridged the divide for girls. (Para 120)

GEN 4: The use of women by the programme – especially as mentors and high-level advocates was a strategy that produced both intrinsic and extrinsic benefits – the activities of the HiLWA generated high-level political interest in girls' education, but even more importantly, the mentoring of the G4G led to a change of mindset among the girls – a good foundation to set towards any long-term change. (Para 118)

GEN 5: The project worked holistically with women – Mothers' Associations, HiLWA; and girls (G4G) and engaged with multiple stakeholders including community-level decision-makers to systematically address drivers of gender inequality. Fundamentally, the programme aimed to drive behaviour change norms by implementing advocacy and awareness programming with men (SBMCs, He for She, religious and community leaders, etc.) alongside support for women's resources, voice, and decision-making. However, there was not much evidence to suggest that the project considered the intersection with several social vulnerabilities (including disability and displacement). (Para 116-119)

GEN 6: An even broader approach was adopted – improving the school environment to allow good management of periods at school; offering a life skills programme in the "Girl 4 Girl" component; and taking different barriers and concerns into account that could represent an obstacle to the pursuit of schooling for a girl who has reached puberty. (Para 124 and 126)

GEN 7: There was evidence of social and economic empowerment of women and improved livelihood for households because of the CTP. This appeared to have influenced the position of women in decision-making within the family and community – highlighted by the evidence of increased investment in girls' education made with the cash transferred to mothers. (Para 121–123)

GEN 8: However, the socially transmitted fear of (and shame associated with) a pregnancy out of wedlock, which is also a major reason for girls' early marriage after their first menstruation, didn't seem to have been adequately considered in the programme design. (Para 124)

8.8.1. Addressing gender in the design and implementation of GEP3

The **design and implementation of GEP3 took gender issues considerably into account**, but there were limitations.

- 116. GEP3 aimed to promote gender equity by transforming gender norms, relations and roles at the household and community levels to tackle girls' education, stimulate gender empowerment and reduce early marriage. **The project worked holistically with women through groups like Mas, HILWA; and girls (G4G) and engaged with multiple stakeholders, including community-level decision-makers, to systematically address drivers of gender inequality.** Fundamentally, the programme aimed to drive behaviour change norms by implementing advocacy and awareness programming with men (SBMCs, He for She, religious and community leaders, etc.) alongside supporting women's resources, voice, and decision-making. **However, there was not much evidence that the project considered the intersection with several social vulnerabilities (including disability and displacement).** Nevertheless, there was an element of focus on marginalised and vulnerable groups in the CTP, although it was limited by the targeting process.
- 117. **There was active consultation and meaningful participation of relevant groups in shaping the project objectives and implementation.** Community leaders, HILWA, religious leaders, youth groups (boys and girls) and women's associations were all engaged in the programme implementation. However, it was not so clear how many of the groups were involved in the design phase. The women change agents (HILWA and the MAs, etc.) and the male champions (SBMCs and He for She, etc.) were important advocacy and awareness generation drivers within the communities. The capacity of the change agents appeared to have been increased by training and the project initiatives.
- 118. **The use of women by the programme – especially as mentors and high-level advocates was a strategy that produced both intrinsic and extrinsic benefits – the activities of the HiLWA-generated high-level political interest in girls' education, but even more importantly the mentoring of the G4G led to a change in mindset among girls – a good foundation to set towards any long-term change.**

The pictures painted in the psyche of different things they can be in addition to being a wife and mother, stimulated a voice in the young, enabling them to challenge decisions made by their parents for early marriage – something that may never have occurred to them without the influence of the programme.

- 119. **Positive changes relating to gender empowerment also provided a potential for sustainability.** CTP was structured to give women caregivers a voice in their daughters' education and there is evidence that the programme logic worked in this regard with an unintended positive effect of improved spousal relationships because of the cash transfers (this could easily have gone the opposite direction within the patriarchal context).

8.8.2. Gender, equity and CTP

- 120. The programme favoured the enrolment of girls across households of different wealth statuses (see table 41). Net enrolment ratios for girls and boys in the treatment groups (GEP3-CTP) were higher in HHs in the highest wealth quintiles compared with the other wealth quintiles. **For the boys, there was a clear difference in enrolment ratio between the richest and the poorest households (93.6 compared to 90.4) However, for the girls, the difference in the NER between the richest and the poorest households was less (93.4 compared to 92.5) because of the increased enrolment among poor households, implying that the CTP bridged the divide for girls.**

Table 50: Net enrolment ratio by household wealth status in treatment group

Household Wealth Index	NER Female	NER Male
Low	92.5	90.4
Middle	92.7	92.5
High	93.4	93.6

Also, comparing the average household expenditure on girls' and boys' education by household wealth status before and after receiving cash transfers, findings showed that there was more of an increase in expenditure on girls' education than that of boys' education within the households that received GEP3-CTP. The findings further revealed that the households within the highest wealth quintile spent more on the education of girls and boys after receiving CTP when compared to the other wealth quintiles. This was displayed more for boys compared to girls. While girls benefitted from CTP almost equally across wealth quintiles, boys showed more of a benefit in HHs in the highest wealth quintile. See Table 51.

Table 51: Distribution of average money spent on girls' and boys' education by household wealth status before and after receiving the cash transfer

Wealth Index	Girls			Boys		
	Before receiving CTP	After receiving CTP	Difference	Before receiving CTP	After receiving CTP	Difference
Low	4,087	5,181	1,095	2,067	2,380	313
Middle	3,468	4,519	1,051	2,533	2,912	380
High	3,426	4,616	1,191	2,745	3,245	500

121. **There was also qualitative evidence of social and economic empowerment of women and improved livelihood for households because of the CTP.** Participants in the FGDs perceived that the money given as an unconditional cash transfer was substantial and reported that it was used as seed money to invest in small businesses. Mothers invested to generate regular profits to continue their daughter's education after primary school or even beyond secondary school. Poverty reduction was mentioned, but with no substantive details.
122. **Another positive effect already mentioned was the improvement of the relationship between spouses.** The wife's gain in financial independence seemed to have removed some of the tensions generated by the woman's economic dependence within the household.

"In some ways it has cemented the relationship between husband and wife. The cash is given to the mothers and not the fathers, so the husband will be forced to talk to the wife ... Let's go straight to the point, you know, because of the economic empowerment, the husband now respects her woman, that's why the relationship is better, she doesn't have to be asking for money all the time." **HiLWA, Sokoto.**

123. A reduction in early marriages was mentioned frequently by the FGD respondents. There was evidence of recognition of a change in the social status of an educated woman. It was reported as the desired status both by female and male/young and adult FGD participants – not only for professional or socio-economic reasons but also in terms of household management improvement, including better socialisation with and support of children. **Though there was evidence of transformation change in mindset, difficulties still exist – due to strongly-rooted social prejudices.**
124. GEP3 adopted a holistic gender-sensitive approach – by improving the school environment so that it allows good management of periods at school; offering a life skills programme in the "G4G" component and considering different barriers and concerns that could represent an obstacle to the pursuit of schooling for a girl who has reached puberty.

Despite the latter, socially transmitted fear of (and shame associated with) a pregnancy out of wedlock, which is also a major reason for girls' early marriage after their first menstruation, didn't seem to have been adequately considered in the programme design. The value assigned to virginity and the risk of pre-nuptial sex greatly gears the imposition of early marriage for the sake of girls' finalising schooling, its associated fulfilment and eventual emotional and personal happiness. This gap in underestimating the logic underlying the early marriage dynamics in its psychosocial dimensions weakened the potential impact GEP3 could have had in such practice.

125. The most compelling element of change in gender equality would have been undoubtedly a unanimous and straightforward change in the defined script for a daughter by the different groups from the community that participated in the FGDs. Indeed, the change in the script to include the option for a woman to contribute to the family income through paid work outside the home does not seem to have been fully embraced by the older generation.

While both boys and girls mentioned girls becoming doctors, teachers, or lawyers as one of the main outcomes of girls' education, the main outcome mentioned by fathers and men, in general, was that an educated woman can properly look after the house and children and even help them with their homework. In these traditional and conservative communities, even after having benefitted from the project, only a minority of men would accept that their wives have a job outside the home. Mothers and women also mentioned that educated women are preferred because they know how to behave and control themselves to avoid arguing with their husbands. They also mentioned that men still want to control their wives, which means that there is still this norm that a girl must be submissive and dependent on her husband.

In so far as these different groups from the community also explained that nowadays most men prefer to marry a girl who has studied, the number of married girls with a child, at school has increased, meaning that husbands are permitting their wives to continue their studies.

*"Yes, it used to be impossible to have junior secondary school female students who were not engaged, but this is no longer the case. Instead, they have different aspirations to become doctors, nurses, pilots, teachers, etc. They have successfully shifted their views on early marriage and are now aiming for a better future because the world has changed." **Teacher, Kano.***

*"The difference is clear; men prefer to marry educated women because they know that they are understanding and can take good care of their home while the uneducated women can hardly take care of their home ... Men prefer educated wives because they can help their children with their homework and help them when they have difficulties in their studies." **Female parent, Kano.***

*"I think it's a matter of preference some educated women do not want to work probably because their husband can provide for them, and in some cases it's the husband who do not want his wife to go out and work because he believes that is his responsibility to provide for the family and the mother should look after her children to train them." **HiLWA, Sokoto***

*"When you have money, you allow her to continue, after marriage." **Male parent, Sokoto***

*"Early marriage may mean before the age of 18, but there are still girls that are over 18 and still in junior secondary who still get married, so as you can see, it does not stop them from going to school." **HiLWA, Bauchi.***

*"Here you will see the girls are many, some are even pregnant, or with an infant. Some of them come for enrolment and probably left education before." **Female parent, Bauchi***

Also, as reiterated in previous qualitative analysis, the delay of girls' marriage was mentioned as influencing the importance given to girls' education. However, the fact that a girl may not want to marry because she wants to pursue a career was mentioned as a positive and possibly accepted exception where previously it would have been considered a failure of the parents to fulfil their responsibility to marry off their daughter.

Also, a girl's period affects the amount of education she receives. For instance, physical pain or discomfort, lack of menstrual products and WASH infrastructures can contribute to preventing girls from attending school. Girls are often forced to stay at home during their periods. This leads them to repeatedly miss school days and fall behind in their studies. When they can no longer keep up, girls are discouraged by their poor performance and sometimes end up dropping out of school altogether.

126. **By adopting a gender-sensitive approach, in particular by improving the school environment so that it allows good management of menstrual periods at school, but also by offering a life skills programme in the "G4G" component;** the programme proposed a holistic approach, considering different barriers and concerns that could represent an obstacle to the pursuit of schooling for a girl who has reached puberty.

Indeed, the life skills programme contributes to the transformation of the gender discriminatory role where girls are to be prepared to be submissive and silent wives who do not take part in conversations within the extended family. Traditionally, it is the parents, or even the father, who make decisions about the daughter, who is thus conditioned. However, participation in life skills sessions enables the adolescent daughter to improve her ability to communicate, negotiate, solve problems, make decisions, have critical thinking, and manage stress and emotions. While the programme runs parallel awareness-raising sessions on girls' schooling and gender equality, parents and community members will have to be prepared to accept that adolescent girls use their skills and allow them, for example, to give their opinion on choices that concern them.

However, talking about sexuality remains a taboo in these communities and in the absence of sex education that would allow adolescent girls to make informed choices about their sexuality and prevent unwanted pregnancies, marriage at the onset of puberty remains the best option for parents as it guarantees that their daughter's sex education will be provided by the husband and that pregnancies will be legitimised by the marriage.

Sex education and reproductive health should be part of life skills modules for adolescent girls, which did not seem to be the case and was never reported in the interviews or focus group discussions. Similarly, it seems that there isn't any training in parenting skills or even an inter-generational dialogue strategy, which would allow parents to benefit from this sexual education. This would allow mothers to use dialogue rather than marriage to prevent unwanted pregnancies outside marriage.

9. LESSONS LEARNED

The evaluation highlighted several lessons from the programme.

- Methodologically speaking, the **comprehensive societal approach** (considering a wide range of social, psychosocial, cultural, and economic factors) was shown to be effective in inducing the change in perceptions and behaviour intended. Indeed, the combination of an array of intervention types, using different change-inducing modalities such as training, awareness-raising, role modelling (HiLWA), peers influence (G4G) and financial incentives (CTP) were internally complementary and allowed targeting different types of stakeholders (community, school population, teachers, local authorities, families) adequately.

Having said that, this comprehensive project design was shown to have a management challenge due to a change in project management culture, for authorities as well as UNICEF staff. Coordination, information, and reporting seemed to be the main challenges at the beginning, which were eventually overcome by quality-oriented practices. Readapting and better operationalisation of the ToC in 2014 proved to be a good decision to render the project more concrete and feasible.

- Key strategies of the programme such as **RANA, G4G, HiLWA mentoring, IQS are recommended as good practices**. RANA's evidence-based approach to early-grade literacy and numeracy has been shown in this evaluation to achieve fundamental reading and numeracy skills for both girls and boys. GEP3-supported IQSs showed the effectiveness of the RANA intervention even more than the public primary schools in terms of English and Hausa literacy, as well as numeracy. Although the pupils were significantly older than their counterparts, this also meant that children that were missed in the public primary system have been effectively captured and are benefitting from quality education. The imitation strategies used by HiLWA and G4G were important drivers of transformational mind shifts among girls. This holds the potential to eventually drive the change in social norms that are required to enable the desired shift in the defined script for girls in the community. Moving forward, a multi-sectorial approach (involving the women's affairs and social protection line ministries, for instance) would be useful to maintain and propel the momentum achieved by GEP3.
- The combination of **geographical and categorical targeting** was demonstrated to be effective for the identification of beneficiaries from the low-income group bracket but failed to prevent exclusion, as the poorest caregivers were not selected. The programme has an extensive network of community-level stakeholders (such as SBMC and CBMC) which could have been leveraged better to ensure better targeting of the most marginalised groups within the communities. Furthermore, while targeting the right population for the CTP is important, **planning for onward education** is also critical for success. For CTP to be more effective, enough secondary schools must be available in the communities as well so that the children can easily transition.
- The programme's focus on **massive enrolment and retention** of pupils proved to be an effective strategy and contributed to reducing out-of-school children as well as early marriages and early childbearing among girls younger than 15 years. Also laudable was the evidence of transformational shifts in mind-set regarding girls' education in the communities – a result of immense and consistent community sensitisation and high-level advocacy activities of the programme. However, enrolment and retention of pupils should have been accompanied by a **corresponding increase in the teacher population** to ensure the desired quality of teaching and learning.
- Though there was evidence of a reduction in **early-marriage practices**, the change appeared to be limited due to strong-rooted stereotypes and inflexible attitudes linked to culture and religion. However, the G4G strategy of changing the mindset of girls is stimulating a push-back, although to a limited degree.
- The combination of early learning and cash transfer interventions had a multiplier effect on girls' enrolment, retention and completion**. Indeed, this evaluation has shown the value of cash Plus initiatives. This is an important finding and should inform the package of interventions for the next programme cycle. The cash transfer strongly impacted household spending on girls' education even though it was unconditional. Although qualitative interviews suggested that caregivers may not have invested the money as they should have due to the unconditionality, this finding was not supported by quantitative evidence.

It appears that most of the beneficiaries used the money for its intended purpose. This finding is supported by literature on the non-conditionality of cash transfers^{77,78}. It is recognised that the misuse of cash is usually minimal and in no way justifies the costly expenses generated by a control system that should be put in place to monitor the provision of conditional cash.

This makes a case for the scale-up of the CTP both in Niger and Sokoto states and the extension of the programme to other pilot and extension states. It also seems that six states out of 37 are not enough and stakeholders recommend scaling up further.

- A key focus of UNICEF is to ensure that learning occurs. In that sense, the strategy must be broader than just cash transfer and should include enrolment rights, working School-Based Management Committees, etc. Several inefficiencies in the system occurred as unintended negative effects due to massive enrolment and retention of children in schools such as overcrowding in classrooms necessitating shift systems of classes in some areas. **Better planning to address the increase in access generated by the programme is needed.** The Education portfolio multi-country evaluation (2018)³⁴ reflected on the Nigerian situation and noted that UNICEF programming had not taken context and available resources into account, and that interview and observational data showed that the continued emphasis on access was disproportionate to the investments in improving the quality of education in schools.
- While a stronger positive impact related to the achievement of English literacy was recorded for boys than for girls at midline, the degree of positive impact for girls overtook the boys at end-line. The drop in impact for boys is of concern and requires further examination. A possible reason could be that, in addition to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 lockdown and insecurity, the focus on girls may have led to issues regarding boys being missed.
- **The relative lack of synergy or coordination among key development partners** in education in the country has resulted in the inefficient use of available resources. The UNESCO briefing note which details how to ensure appropriate coordination mechanisms in education at national level states, "Achieving the aspirations of the education goal and targets in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires coordinated efforts among all partners involved at all levels. In all cases, strong multi-stakeholder partnerships and unity of action are essential for successful integration of SDG4-Education 2030 commitments and focus areas into national education development efforts." The core is the need for unity of action to stem the duplication of efforts within the sector reported by several stakeholders. This would need to be a government-led, inclusive process using a system-wide approach; but development partners such as UNICEF can stimulate discussions with the government on the practical ways that coordination and synergy can be achieved.
- **The tenacity of programme implementers has enabled them to overcome many hindrances and implement creative solutions** in the programme. They were able to come up with methodologies that were used to have the level of success achieved by the project. The seven-month COVID-19 pandemic lockdown and the persisting insecurity in the region eroded programme gains. The level of impact that was seen because of the programme interventions despite the disruptions pointed to the fact that **before the COVID-19 crisis, the programme was on a trajectory to achieve higher levels of effectiveness and impact.**
- **The importance of meaningful community engagement** is seen very clearly in this evaluation. The degree of local ownership of the programme – displayed by the political and financial commitment of key community leaders and stakeholders showed the usefulness of the programme's advocacy activities as well as the effective identification and involvement of relevant stakeholders. Community members in different groups and networks were involved in the implementation and monitoring of the programme. This leveraging of community resources was key to the level of success in enrolment and retention seen in the programme.

⁷⁷ Samson et al., 2004

⁷⁸ Hamoudi and Thomas 2005

- The evaluation shows clearly that poverty has a major influence on whether a child goes to school or not and provides evidence of **potential for more effectiveness when the CTP money is given to the mother** rather than the father. This is interesting given the patriarchal context. It suggests that the socio-economic empowerment of women even in such a context enables them to have a voice in the household, decision making. It is also possible that the mediatory roles played by the SBMC in the communities contributed to the success at the household level. Women's influence over decision-making within their family, particularly regarding the use of household income, can play an important and enduring role in shaping the welfare of their children. Cash transfer programmes often target women to increase their control over household resources⁷⁹. Empirical evidence on the effectiveness of this approach is varied and indicates the importance of local context⁴¹.
- The programme aimed to strengthen the capability of schools to provide improved learning outcomes through the professional development of teachers, head teachers, school infrastructure development planning and provision of lesson plans and other teaching resources. It succeeded in doing this to some extent but gaps in several areas including teaching quality still need to be addressed.

Dissemination plan for lessons learned: In addition to the evaluation report being published online by UNICEF, dissemination forums will be held at national and (focal) state levels and the results of the evaluation will be presented also using the policy brief (four pages). The evaluation findings have been shared with the FME and UNICEF plans to use social media and hold discussions with youths etc. to further disseminate the findings. OAG is available to develop additional policy briefs in different thematic areas and an infographic if required.

10. FINAL CONCLUSIONS

GEP3 programme showed evidence of relevance, effectiveness, and positive impact with evidence of sustainability of the transformative gains made within the period.

GEP3-CTP tackled **relevance** by addressing enrolment and retention of girls across six states in northern Nigeria with a comprehensive and systemic approach (considering financial, social, and identity components) which proved to be successful. A comprehensive situational analysis of basic education in northern Nigeria was undertaken to support the programmatic design and proper prioritisation of relevant needs and causal determinants factors/barriers to pupils' education in northern Nigeria. The programme displayed an adequate application of the Results-based Planning and Management (RBM) approach. The monitoring and evaluation framework contained adequate vertical logic of results chains and horizontal logic of measurement of results (indicators, baseline, targets, etc.) to successfully track and adjust the project.

The CTP was appropriate in terms of design and delivery approach addressing the three dimensions of demand bottlenecks, given the contextual realities in Niger and Sokoto States regarding girl education.

The anticipated "imitation strategies" identified such as Girls for Girls or the role of HILWA or MAs were influential, even beyond girls.

There was evidence of strong and useful synergies between the community-level stakeholders involved (SBMCs, MAs, HILWA, CBMCs) involved in the programme. Some limitations still exist mainly around entrenched societal and cultural norms some of which are beyond the scope of the programme and the sector.

⁷⁹ El-Enbaby et al. Cash transfers and women's control over decision-making and labour supply in Egypt. Regional Working Paper IFPRI 2019.

Most of the assumptions in the ToC were proven by evidence but the assumption related to effective learning through infrastructure and teachers provided by local and central authorities was not fully proven. Although materials were available, and infrastructure was globally provided by authorities (though not always sufficient and with some need for repairs), the lack of newly recruited teachers to fulfil the pressing staffing needs given the increasing number of children enrolled was evidenced early in the project and hindered impact in quality learning outcomes.

In terms of **coherence**, GEP3-CTP was intentionally structured to align with global strategies on girls' education – integrating elements from the evidence used globally in designing interventions for girls' education. GEP3 as implemented in the six focal states was coherent with education and the broader policy environment at the Federal and State levels. The Programme was aligned with the national strategic policy on education as well as the national social protection and gender policies, and the adapted policies at state levels. The project considered key contextual elements and causal factors in formulating the hypotheses underlying the design of GEP3 interventions. Consideration for the contextual issues relating to financial access, socio-cultural practices and continuity of use was also seen clearly in the CTP design. As far as alignment of the GEP- CTP with the local and contextual realities is concerned, some sociocultural elements still must be addressed; especially those aspects which are so deeply entrenched in societal and cultural norms that they are likely beyond the scope of one programme or one sector.

Regarding **effectiveness**, GEP3 achieved its Expected Results (Outcomes and Outputs) agreed within the Business Plan in the strategic area of access to an exceptional extent and in the two other strategic areas of quality and governance of the Education Sector to a fairly good extent. The programme was highly effective in achieving enrolment and retention of girls in schools. It enabled a definite shift in mindset regarding the importance of education for girls and created a norm in many communities of a raised profile for educated girls. The combination of the early learning and the cash transfer interventions significantly displayed the most effectiveness, with the highest proportion of households with 1-2 or more girls who had completed nine years of schooling compared to the early learning intervention only and control groups. The CTP specifically, was effective in improving household consumption and welfare for the beneficiary households in Niger and Sokoto states and significantly influenced increased expenditure on girls' education as well as the decisions to send and retain girls in school in the two states. The training was key to improving the quality of teaching and learning, as well as raising awareness of the relevance of the core problem (girls' access to education) but evidence from classroom observations and qualitative interviews indicated gaps in the quality of teaching. This was attributed in part to inadequate teaching aids or poor comprehension of the teaching material by teachers – and indicated a need to train people with the appropriate capabilities.

An unintended negative effect of GEP3 was the (persisting) increase in pupil-teacher ratio due to the massive increase in enrolment without a corresponding increase in the teacher population. This has an important implication for the quality of education and has been highlighted in other evaluations.

The **impact** of the CTP on girls' enrolment in primary schools is strongly positive and statistically significant, and the impact of the unconditional cash transfers on household spending on girls' schooling was strongly positive and statistically significant. The results of impact analysis using DID regression modelling approach revealed that GEP3-RANA had a positive impact on English and Hausa literacy learning outcomes at both midline and end-line. However, there was a slight decline in the programme impact between midline and end-line – likely due to disruptions caused by COVID-19 pandemic and insecurity in the region. While a stronger positive impact related to the achievement of English literacy was recorded for boys than girls at midline, the degree of positive impact for girls overtook the boys at end-line. This was also due to a significant drop in programme impact for boys. The drop in impact for boys is an undesirable effect and requires proper examination. A possible reason could be that in addition to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 lockdown and insecurity, the focus on girls may have led to issues regarding boys being missed. National population surveys showed improvement in the trend in literacy rate among young women aged 15–24 years, a reduction in early marriages, adolescent pregnancies, and childbearing in the focal states.

Concerning the **efficiency** of the programme, GEP3 spent less than its budget yearly. The highest expenditure was in 2018/9 with an expenditure rate of 92 per cent. However, the project using cost-saving and cost-sharing approaches successfully enrolled a total of 1,283,024 girls in school as opposed to a total target of 1 million girls. The net present value results for both the early learning and the cash transfer intervention are positive. This shows that the interventions offered good value for money. The internal rate of return (IRR) for the early learning intervention is 10 per cent and for the cash transfer – 16 per cent. These are the annualised rate of return for both interventions respectively. Since both IRRs are above the real discount rate of 5 per cent, the two projects offer value for money and should be accepted. The rate of enrolment and the wage rate are important factors in determining the cost-benefit of the project. Globally, a value assessment of GEP3 (2012–2020) and the CTP demonstrate value for the money based on the cost-benefit analysis. Also, the use of the project framework demonstrated that value was gotten from money spent. This shows that there is an opportunity to scale up the programme.

Nevertheless, a key issue to be addressed is the high pupil-teacher ratio which created classroom space, material, and human resources gaps leading to inefficiencies in the system.

There are multiple **potentials for the sustainability** of the net benefits of GEP3 interventions but the key bottleneck relates to governments' financial commitment. Even though the COVID-19 crisis influenced and disrupted the flow of GEP3 outputs, it also brought reflection and reengineering of certain educational practices, modalities and strategies. They included the more direct involvement of stakeholders, local media and rethinking of learning. The extensive and meaningful community participation in GEP3 in all the states displays an important potential for sustainability. Replication/imitation efforts at local levels are very promising in terms of keeping the flow of benefits emerging. The scaling-up efforts undertaken by some states (though limited by funding availability and important differences among states) are evidence of local ownership and high interest in continuing/reinforcing the process. For instance, the Sokoto state is documented to have successfully transitioned the CTP into a state-run programme. Through the educational-related local capacities training schemes, those capacities were strengthened enough to ensure scaling up. There is clear awareness of the need to scale up GEP3-CTP project to cover more states and more evenly. The key deterrent in the sustainability component at all levels is poor government funding.

Regarding **gender equality and equity**, the use of women by the programme – especially as mentors and high-level advocates was a strategy that produced both intrinsic and extrinsic benefits – the activities of the HiLWA generated high-level political interest in girls' education, but even more importantly, the mentoring of the G4G led to a change in mindset among girls – a good foundation to set towards any long-term change. The project worked holistically with women-MAs, HiLWA; and girls (G4G) and engaged with multiple stakeholders including community-level decision-makers to systematically address drivers of gender inequality. Fundamentally, the programme aimed to drive behaviour change norms by implementing advocacy and awareness programming with men (SBMCs, He for She, religious and community leaders, etc.) alongside support for women's resources, voice, and decision making. However, there was not much evidence that the project considered the intersection with several social vulnerabilities (including disability, displacement and socio-economic status). Nevertheless, there was some element of focus on marginalized and vulnerable groups in the CTP though limited by the targeting process. GEP3 adopted an even broader approach – Improving the school environment to allow good management of periods at school; offering a life skills programme in the "G4G" component and considering different barriers and concerns that could represent an obstacle to the pursuit of schooling for a girl who has reached puberty.

There was evidence of social and economic empowerment of women and improved livelihood for households because of the CTP. Despite the latter, socially transmitted fear of (and shame associated to) a pregnancy out of wedlock, which is also a major reason for girls' early marriage after their first menstruation, didn't seem to have been adequately considered in the programme design.

The most compelling element of change in gender equality would have undoubtedly been the change in the defined script for a daughter by the different groups from the community that participated in the FGDs. However, the changing definition of a daughter's script varied from one generation to the other. It was clear in this evaluation that for the older generation, the main role of a girl is still to be a mother and wife maintained by her husband, and formal education helps them to fulfil this role better. For the younger generation, both boys and girls, their perceptions were that education allows girls to consider professional careers such as doctors, etc. as well as have financial independence, which is a key to transforming the household gender dynamics such as a submissive/dependent wife-husband relationship into a more balanced and equal one.

The evaluation highlights a need for intergenerational dialogue which has been demonstrated to be an effective strategy for programmes aimed at abandoning harmful social norms and creating an enabling environment for adolescent girls and young girls to pursue studies further and delay the age of marriage through mutual understanding between different generations in a community.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the rich evidence in this evaluation, the team shares a series of considerations to be taken into account for future UNICEF interventions.

Strategic Recommendations			
Criteria	Text of the recommendation	Recipients	Level of priority
RELEVANCE	<p>To reinforce the relevance of this kind of intervention, we recommend generating a better understanding of the stakeholders' constellation of future project designs. Considering the elaboration of the situational cartography (including own agendas and interests) should be proposed as a precondition at the project management level. Moreover, this would be in line with addressing the school ecosystem as a social reflection of the community in which it is embedded, including the socio-cultural specificities it entails. The- acknowledgment of this strong school-community interaction would be empowering for the steering team of such projects. Increased relevance will likely be tackled by considering that any wide-scope educational project must be socially permeable to its context, especially when aiming at deep-rooted behavioural changes. This is especially valid in large geographical-scaled projects such as GEP3. Numerous respondents mentioned the diversity of realities that the project had to address as a hindering factor. Access to anthropological and sociological tools/expertise would reinforce this enriched approach to quality baseline information.</p> <p>Operationalisation of this recommendation would focus on:</p> <p>a) Validating end-line impact levels of the current GEP3 evaluation at the state level (and for each state) through workshops organised by SMoE and UNICEF in which one of the points should be a thorough and critical analysis of stakeholders. This collective analysis enriched by local entities would help identify gaps as perceived by SMoE and LGAs and would help to complete a more relevant and updated landscape.</p> <p>b) Implementing local studies to understand more about the drivers of not just girls but boys' education in the face of insecurity would be another way to obtain this necessary updated information.</p>	<p>LGAs, Federal Ministry of Education, SMoE, UNICEF</p>	<p>Medium</p>

Criteria	Text of the recommendation	Recipients	Level of priority
<p>COHERENCE</p>	<p>Improvement of the alignment of future initiatives with the development and political national priorities. Special attention should be given to linking how they contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the Agenda 2030, closely linked to GEP3 intervention: Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all; Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.</p> <p>Moreover, this alignment with both core SDGs addressed by GEP3 and UNICEF priorities should also be supported by a more thorough and contextualised analysis of eventual supplementary SDGs such as (but not only):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere. • Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. <p>Even though the Theory of Change (ToC) of GEP3 design does relate to the SDG, project management should ensure a more consistent approach to these worldwide references in development all along with the implementation and evaluation phases. This approach should be put in place for all future interventions.</p>	<p>FME, UNICEF</p>	<p>Medium</p>
<p>EFFECTIVENESS</p>	<p>1. The government should create a more enabling environment for gender equality and transforming discriminatory social norms that affect girls. National, state and local governments should commonly support approaches to changing power relations between men and women, girls and boys – at the community, local, institutional and national levels. At local and state level, this could be achieved by a concerted effort to raise awareness among civil servants, for example through an HR-oriented training programme or MOOCs on these transversal issues.</p> <p>Clear policy strategic adaptations in terms of girls' social inclusion would most likely enable change in this direction.</p> <p>At a higher policy-making level, this could be operationalised by focusing on reinforcing regional institutional integration. In his sense, priority should be given actively</p>	<p>FME, UNICEF</p>	<p>High</p>

Criteria	Text of the recommendation	Recipients	Level of priority
	<p>reaching out and reinforcing sectorial programming with adequate methodological and technical tools. Indeed, many regional and supranational organisations and working groups such as UN Women and UNESCO (especially through curricula development by the IPE⁸⁰ or policy-making support by IBE⁸¹ have created specific programmes and working groups to develop, accompany and enable authorities to reinforce this strategic social domain.</p> <p>In this sense, the incorporation of the inclusive curricula notion, not only covering gender, but also ethnical and social minorities and children with disabilities, should be considered a priority in the educational sectorial development plans.</p>		
<p>EFFECTIVENESS</p>	<p>2. Decrease the pupil: teacher ratio to cope with the massive increase in enrolment. The need to increase teachers' recruitment and training in the system to sustain the flow of benefits from the project is evident.</p> <p>Through a comprehensive effort to train and inject new contingents of trained teachers the existing gap between pupils and teachers would be tackled.</p> <p>Such as a Teachers Training Master Plan⁸² should include an in-service component and a pre-service training component.</p> <p>a) The in-service component includes newly hired future teachers with a minimum profile and a programme to level them up in a short time span (1-2 months) through self-training, online training when possible, and/or delocalised training sessions (resources' centres at local levels).</p> <p>b) The pre-service component aims at a further impact on the system by increasing the number/profiles of teachers entering formal training. The number of female teachers should be an important variable in this profiling of candidates. The teachers' training schools at the state</p>	<p>FME, UNICEF</p>	<p>High</p>

⁸⁰ International Institute for Educational Planning <http://www.iiep.unesco.org>

⁸¹ International Bureau of Education: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org>

⁸² For example, see "Plano Mestre de Formacao de Professores" (UNICEF et Intituto Nacional de Formaco de Quadros) Angola, 2009-2015.

Criteria	Text of the recommendation	Recipients	Level of priority
	<p>level or local levels should be able to respond to long-term demographical projections including a stable representation of girls (sustainable impact of GEP3 Programme).</p> <p>3. The holistic gender-sensitive approach should be maintained. By improving the school environment so that it allows good management of periods at school; offering a life skills programme in the "Girl 4 Girl" component and considering different barriers and concerns that could represent an obstacle to the pursuit of schooling.</p> <p>The validation state-wide workshops on GEP3 results could be a good opportunity to sensitise authorities to the strengths of this global approach. By proving the added value of such an approach.</p> <p>Advocating for the Girl 4 Girl, He for She and similar strategies through the dissemination of the very positive results it achieved within GEP3 would also go in this sense.</p>	<p>FME, SMoE, LGAs, SBMC, UNICEF</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>EFFECIENCY</p>	<p>1. Having proved through the present evaluation that GEP3 was efficient in terms of Value for Money, the recommendation is to include cash transfer initiatives whenever possible, especially with the Plus (complementing cash transfers with additional inputs, services, and linkages to other services) element. Given that this finding highlights the importance of financial support for beneficiaries, financially supporting poor households should be part of the follow-up strategy for girls' enrolment and inclusion whenever proper monitoring is possible. Therefore, we propose that integration, or scaling-up of this financial household component as part of a more comprehensive inclusive education intervention strategy, should be considered in future programmes.</p>	<p>UNICEF, FME, SMoE</p>	<p>High</p>

Criteria	Text of the recommendation	Recipients	Level of priority
EFFICIENCY	<p>2. Improving the synergies among development partners regarding the implementation of interventions in the education sector. This absence of coordination undermined the efficiency level expected from them and was reflected in duplication or overlapping efforts, showing inefficient use of limited resources.</p> <p>This synergy could start by boosting communication through the creation of project coordination cells at the SMoE. Else, UNICEF should advocate improving networking among partners and international and national education stakeholders by introducing digital common platforms and/or shared databases to better centralise information on in-field interventions. The objective is to render visible ongoing relevant projects in the education field to national educational managers and decision-makers.</p>	FME, SMoE, LGAs, SBMC, UNICEF	High
SUSTAINABILITY	<p>1. Benefit from the existing conditions to scale up GEP3, covering more states and more evenly. The latter, as mentioned before in efficiency, should be combined with demonstrated cash transfer value for the money based on a cost-benefit analysis and the findings from the existing scaling-up efforts undertaken by some states (though limited by funding availability and important differences among states) contributes to a positive environment for this new phase to take place.</p> <p>2. A post-evaluation steering committee assessment from a representative panel of stakeholders involved (PFE and others) should determine which conditions must be met and monitor the compliance with them to launch the scaling-up effort.</p>	FME, LGAs, UNICEF, SMoE	High

Operational Recommendations			
Criteria	Text of the recommendation	Recipients	Level of priority
EFFECTIVENESS	<p>1. The methodological project approach based on the prior development of a pragmatic proposal of the Theory of Change must be implemented across the board for socially sound projects. The proven added value that GEP3 worked with a shared: coherent, concise, comprehensive complete and consistent common view of the change expected must be implemented. Besides, it would allow local level implementers to be trained in a state-of-the-art straightforward project management methodological approach being used worldwide.</p>	FME, UNICEF	High
	<p>2. For projects that focus so overwhelmingly on social representations and tackle ambitious behavioural changes, a multidisciplinary programme approach must be structurally envisaged at the design phase for all projects. The combination of a comprehensive set of scientific knowledge, conceptual frames but moreover; methodological tools will allow a global understanding of the forces and stakes. Particular attention should be given to cultural, historical, and psychological variables that are sometimes oversimplified or overlooked when formulating the intervention logic. So, multidiscipline should be a quality criterion when assessing or selecting an adequate project design.</p>	UNICEF	Medium
EFFICIENCY	<p>1. To prevent exclusion error targeting, SBMC members should be better involved in the targeting process and prepare a list of the poorest households with school-age girls from their communities to be cross-checked with the list prepared by the state and local government authorities. This strengthened collaboration will allow more accurate identification of beneficiaries.</p> <p>To achieve this, SBMMs role in future projects should be clearly stated and clarified. Thus, having an operational role in defining sampling, especially if much-disaggregated information is needed. Sensitising SMoE and LGAs to the key role they have, should also be implemented to assure their active participation.</p>	SBMC, FME, SMoE	Medium

Criteria	Text of the recommendation	Recipients	Level of priority
EFFICIENCY	<p>2. The programme should consider integrating a Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) sensitising module in the G4G package or another awareness-raising local interface. This information effort would help support the indirect objective of preventing unwanted teenage pregnancies which could impact girl education and sustain child marriage, hindering the long-lasting impact of GEP3.</p> <p>By elaborating such a training module or toolkit locally (as opposed to using an external material), the cultural context would be taken into consideration as well as the lesson learned from the current GEP3 impact evaluation.</p>	FME, LGAs, SBMCs UNICEF for the module/toolkit	High
SUSTAINABILITY	<p>1. A competency-based curriculum is recommended for initial teacher education programmes and training. The curriculum would involve a conceptual framework for a new model of competency-based teacher education (including transversal competencies on gender equality and gender-based social inclusion) to enhance teachers' professional competencies and raise the quality of learning processes. This would also favour long-term sustainability to the culturally based process of integrating girls into the Nigerian education system.</p> <p>A Teachers Training Master Plan as presented in a previous recommendation would have to include the pedagogical platform based on a nationally or regionally validated competency referential, an experimental phase (sampling of Teachers Training Schools), assessment and a later generalisation phase for all national teachers training institutions. The semi-experimental methodology will allow us to steer and adjust eventual incoherencies or inefficient elements in the training engineering device sustaining the Master Plan.</p>	FME, UNICEF	Medium
SUSTAINABILITY	<p>2. Any new intervention should consider reinforcing the results related to monitoring, management, transparency practices and competencies acquired by LGAs and other authorities to build up from them and enhance the quality of any other oncoming educational project. The progress in this domain across the six states involved is remarkable and building up from this achievement is a matter of institutional accountability.</p> <p>MoE could certify those acquired competencies through a validation scheme and specify them in post descriptions to render them visible and sensitised of their relevance.</p>	SBMC, FME, SMOE	Medium