Project Evaluation Report

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Endline Evaluation of the Supporting Adolescent Girls' Education (SAGE) Programme in Zimbabwe

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Prepared by	Sarah Melville, Catherine Namwezi, Chika Ehirim, Aditya Khurana, Victoria Brown
Checked by	Aditya Khurana
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Acronym List

ALP	Accelerated Learning Programme
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
ATL	Accelerated Teaching and Learning
AWET	Apostolic Women's Empowerment Trust
BEAM	Basic Education Assistance Module
CAPI	Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews
CBC	Competency-based Curriculum
CBM	Christian Blind Mission
CBLH	Community-based Learning Hub
CDTSD	Curriculum Development and Technical Services Department
CE	Community Educators
CoGE	Champions of Girls Education
CPC	Child Protection Committees
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DLLC	District Lifelong Learning Coordinators
DSD	Department of Social Development
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECONET	Enhanced Communications Network
ECOZI	Education Coalition of Zimbabwe
EE	External Evaluator
EGMA	Early Grade Mathematics Assessment
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EPA	End Progress Assessment
ESA	Education Sector Analysis
ESP	Education Sector Plan
EQ	Evaluation Question
FCDO	Foreign Commonwealth and Development's Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FM	Fund Manager
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GEC	Girls Education Challenge
GoZ	Government of Zimbabwe
GWD	Girls with Disabilities
HoH	Head of Household
HDC	Hub Development Committee
ID	Identity Document
IPA	Initial Progress Assessment
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
IO	Intermediate Outcomes
ISOP	Integrated Skills Outreach Programme
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices

KII	Key Informant Interview
LEPSI	Learner Welfare and Psychological Services
LNGB	Leave No Girl Behind
LPA	Learning Progress Assessment
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MoPSE	Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
MHPS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MPA	Mid Progress Assessment
MTRP	Medium-Term Response Plan
MPSLSW	Ministry of Public Service, Labour, and Social Welfare
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MWAGSMED	Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender, Small Medium Enterprise Development
MoY	Ministry of Youth
NFE	Non-formal Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OM	Outcome Mapping
OOS	Out-of-School
OU	The Open University
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PFA	Psychological First Aid
PIZ	Plan International Zimbabwe
PSI	Perceived Safety Index
PSS	Psychosocial Support
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
RMI	Research Methods International
SAGE	Supporting Adolescent Girls Education
SeGMA	Secondary Grade Mathematics Assessment
SeGRA	Secondary Grade Reading Assessment
SRHR	Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights
SVIS	Sustainable Volunteer Incentive Scheme
ToC	Theory of Change
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VFM	Value for Money
VFU	Victim Friendly Unit
ZABEC	Zimbabwe Basic Education Course
ZALP	Zimbabwe Accelerated Learning Programme
ZNDS	Zimbabwe National Development Strategy
ZWMB	Zimbabwe Women's Microfinance Bank

Executive Summary

1. About the Programme

The Supporting Adolescent Girls' Education (SAGE) Programme is an £11.9 million project funded by the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office's (FCDO) Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) through its Leave No Girls Behind funding window. Between August 2018 and July 2023, Plan International UK, and its partners (Plan International Zimbabwe (PIZ), The Open University (OU), Christian Blind Mission (CBM) UK, the Apostolic Women's Empowerment Trust (AWET), ECONET, and Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education) implemented the SAGE programme in Zimbabwe. The programme has supported more than 13,400 out-of-school, highly marginalised adolescent girls in 11 districts in Zimbabwe to improve their learning outcomes and assist their transition into formal education, vocational training, or employment. SAGE identified seven sub-groups of girls to specifically target support for and tailored its interventions in line with their needs. These included married girls, young mothers, girls who have never been to school, girls from the Apostolic community, girls with disabilities, girls from ethnic minorities, and girls engaged in labour. As a gender transformative education programme, SAGE also sought to work at multiple levels to promote and improve education for girls by tackling the root causes of gendered social and economic barriers and creating an enabling environment for transforming unequal gender norms. The programme aimed to achieve its intended impact through four key interventions. These included:

- **Accelerated Teaching and Learning (ATL):** Providing out-of-school girls with high-quality, accelerated learning in 88 Community-Based Learning Hubs and eliminating barriers to education through free, accessible, inclusive, and flexible learning opportunities. Community Educators (CEs) were also provided with continuous professional development (CPD) to enhance their capacity to deliver inclusive, gender-responsive pedagogy.

- **Integrated Skills Outreach Programme (ISOP):** Improving access to skills training through an integrated skills outreach programme whereby girls are mentored and trained by local master craft people in a community-based vocational training programme to increase livelihood opportunities for the girls and their families.

- **Champions of Girls' Education (CoGE) sessions:** Supporting adolescent girls and boys to improve their self-esteem and life skills through community-based sessions to encourage exploration of issues such as sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), gender rights and economic empowerment. Men's clubs and intergenerational dialogues were also established to engage men, boys, and local leaders to adopt more positive gender attitudes as well as to support and protect girls and young women.

- **Safeguarding:** Delivery of direct activities complemented with mainstreaming of good practice across all SAGE project activities to create a safe and inclusive environment where all programme participants, staff, volunteers, partners, and associates could thrive and feel secure and supports people to understand, exercise their rights and report any concerns.

The implementation of SAGE took place in a challenging context, which included economic, and environmental crises, in addition to the outbreak of COVID-19. These challenges caused a number of problems for the programme since at the core, it was designed as a community-based programme, aiming to leverage community participation, community structures, and community capacity. Continuation of services during the pandemic and beyond required significant adaptations to the programme strategy and approach, ranging from community mobilisation to adjusting teaching and learning materials for both the ATL component and CoGE, as well as capacity building to aid volunteers in delivering remote sessions. To respond to the learning needs of the girls, SAGE expanded the learning pathways and adopted a flexible model whereby in addition to hub-based sessions, learning could be accessed through door-to-door engagement, telephonically, and through community-based small groups. CEs' CPD sessions were conducted over WhatsApp and included training on disability support, progress assessments, screening assessments, Psychological First Aid, supporting virtual reflective conversations and learning differentiation. In response to COVID-19 and the increased incidence of gender-based violence (GBV) and intimate partner violence (IPV) seen globally, SAGE also strengthened girls' access to safety and protection by capacitating Child Protection Committees (CPCs) and linking them to the Department of Social Development (DSD) at the district level. The programme also expanded its CoGE support services to include psychosocial support (PSS).

2. Endline Evaluation of SAGE Programme

The endline evaluation, conducted by Genesis Analytics and its data collection partner Research Methods International, began in October 2022 and involved data collection from over 1,400 individuals through surveys, focus groups, and key informant interviews. Using a pre-post evaluation design, this endline evaluation report examines the impact of SAGE programming in terms of learning, transition, and sustainability outcomes. To understand the impact of the project, including its adaptation measures, a set of evaluation questions were developed to guide the analysis, and the evaluation has been conducted using a mix of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods to answer the evaluation questions. The evaluation also uses a hybrid approach that combined the use of endline data collected by the external evaluator (EE) with the use of the research and monitoring data collected by the SAGE programme – including the Learning Progress Assessment data, Transition data, Attendance data, girl surveys, community perception surveys and programme outcome mapping to answer questions.

3. Endline Evaluation Sample

The beneficiary-level data came from the quantitative sample, qualitative key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. These samples were selected using different methods, and beneficiaries in one sample were not included in the other sample. This was done primarily to reduce respondent fatigue, given the detailed and in-depth tools developed for both quantitative and qualitative data collection. The endline quantitative and qualitative sample is presented in the following tables. It should be noted that the Girl survey was complemented with a Parent/Caregiver survey, conducted with parents/caregivers of each surveyed girl.

Quantitative Survey Sample (and the overall SAGE beneficiary composition)

Sub-groups	SAGE Beneficiaries		Endline Survey Sample	
	Beneficiaries No.	Proportion	Survey Sample	Proportion
Married Girls	2,650	35%	322	53.13%
Young Mothers	3,117	41%	379	62.54%
Apostolic Girls	4,580	60%	388	64.02%
Girls with disabilities	537	7%	71	11.71%
Girls from ethnic minorities	373	5%	107	17.65%
Girls never been to school	432	6%	31	5.11%
Girls engaged in labour	7,270	96%	497	82.01%
Total[1]	**7,588**	**100%**	**606**	**100%**

Qualitative Sample

Data Collection Method	Stakeholder	Number of KIIs/ FGDs	Qualitative Sample Achieved
Key Informant Interviews (KII)	Girls and Young Women participants of SAGE[2] (only Cohorts 1,2 and 3)	50	50
	Community Educators	15	15
	NFE Buddies	9	9
	Government Officials (District and National)	10	10
	Project Partners	5	13
Focus Group Discussions (FGD)	Parents/Caregivers	6	53
	Partners/Spouses of SAGE Girls	4	17
	Boys	3	9
	Community Members	7	60
	HCD Committee Members	3	11
Total		**112**	**247**

4. Key Results

A. Learning

1. SAGE has effectively improved girls' foundational learning levels. Overall, the average SAGE learner has shown statistically significant improvements in literacy score (39.70 points) as well as numeracy score (32.63 points). More than 75% of SAGE learners have improved their literacy and numeracy scores, with an average SAGE learner showing 3 to 4-grade levels of improvement in their foundational literacy and numeracy skills to achieve Grade 5 proficiency. This exceeded the programme target of 65% of girls showing an improved learning outcome score. SAGE improved learning scores most for the learners with the lowest scores at IPA stage. This is consistent with the project's theory of change (ToC), which focused on learners establishing key foundational literacy and numeracy skills, typically acquired by the time a student completes Grade 5. At the initial progress assessment (IPA), non-learners, on average, improved their learning by three grades and by the end progress assessment (EPA) jumped up to two colour bands. There was also a significant drop in the percentage of learners getting zero scores on all sub-tasks. In line with the wider evidence base, the learning score improvement for literacy was stronger between the

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[1] Girls may be a part of multiple sub-groups.
[2] The qualitative sample of girls included girls from all SAGE sub-groups, including GWDs. The sample included 10 GWDs (20% sample).

initial and mid-progress assessment, compared to the second half (mid-to-end progress assessment). For numeracy, the learning score improvements were uniform across the two periods.

2. The project effectively delivered inclusive, learner-centred, gender-responsive instruction, which contributed to learning improvements and girls' satisfaction with their learning experience. Children, caregivers, and teachers had overwhelmingly positive views of the SAGE learning curriculum, the structure and delivery of instructional sessions, SAGE's pedagogical approaches, and the overall impact of active teaching methods. Qualitative evidence shows that the project effectively delivered teaching and learning in a student-centred way, especially through in-person sessions in learning hubs (throughout the programme) and in small groups (notably during COVID-19 school closures). At the endline, nearly 75% of SAGE learners attributed their learning success to the support provided by CEs, particularly by explaining the content and answering questions to aid understanding and comprehension; whilst 20% specifically attributed it to SAGE's pedagogical approaches.

3. Continuous Professional Development effectively supported CEs in adopting learner-centred, gender-sensitive and inclusive learning modalities. The SAGE programme introduced inclusive, gender-sensitive, and learner-centred approaches, training CEs to focus on engaging marginalised girls, including those with disabilities and those who had never attended school. More than 90% of CEs were found employing these approaches, including providing delivery adaptations for girls with disabilities to encourage inclusion. CEs regularly invited questions from learners and encouraged them to challenge the gender status quo, which regards boys as better performers than girls when it comes to educational achievement. CEs reinforced messages from Learner Workbooks, which show girls in successful economic and livelihood activities and venturing into male-dominated jobs to encourage girls to break the gender employment ceiling. CEs also built strong relationships with their learners, and there is ample evidence of learners confiding in CEs, reaching out to them for life advice, and engaging in general mentorship. Many CEs credited the training and support provided by SAGE to help them more effectively reach out to and support girls with disabilities.

4. Learners expressed a preference for group learning compared to individual learning modes. KIIs conducted with girls highlighted the specific importance girls placed on group learning environments (in-hub and small groups), with many attributing their positive learning experiences to the support provided through interaction with their CEs and peers during sessions. They also reported that the SAGE programme positively established structures to help them attend sessions regularly during COVID-19, including flexible timing and locations for learning sessions. This assisted them with overcoming barriers to attendance such as childcare, location and timing of sessions, household, and family responsibilities. Many girls also indicated that participating in hub-based and small group sessions during COVID-19 was important to their social and mental health, helping them reduce isolation stress by leaving home and engaging in a social learning activity within a safe, accessible, and well-monitored environment. This preference for group-based learning was also expressed by girls with disabilities (GWD). Phone-based sessions (introduced during COVID-19 lockdowns), although appreciated by girls for its ability to help them continue learning during COVID-19, had limited uptake. This was primarily due to the challenges faced by these vulnerable girls in accessing phones. Many girls also highlighted their inability to take time out of their day to complete phone-based lessons, particularly during COVID-19 lockdowns, when they faced heightened household chores burdens.

5. Programme strategies were only partially successful in improving attendance. The evaluation finds a direct correlation between higher attendance and learning scores. Girls' attendance remained a challenge for SAGE throughout the programme. While establishing satellite hubs, introducing multi-modal learning pathways, and child-care services and introducing multiple delivery modalities helped improve attendance, it remained below target. Only 48.73% of girls attended at least 65% of ATL sessions. Major barriers to attendance were girls' household responsibilities and labour burden. The economic turmoil in Zimbabwe over the last five years, further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, meant that girls could not afford to skip work to focus on their learning. Due to a large percentage of girls engaging in agricultural activities, attendance was particularly affected during the agricultural season (November to April).

B. Transition

6. Although SAGE has achieved its target of supporting the transition of 60% of girls into one of the four pathways, questions about the effectiveness of transitions remain. The programme has supported the transitioning of marginalised learners through the four key transition pathways of non/formal education, skills training (including SAGE-funded ISOP training), fairly-paid employment, and self-employment. 5,201 (77.17%) out of 6,739 Cohort 1 and 2 learners have transitioned into at least one pathway. Overall, the most common transition pathway was ISOP skill training (3551, 52.69%), followed by paid jobs (1,387, 20.58%), transition into schools (331, 4.91%) and self-employment (204, 3.02%). However, due to data challenges, the evaluation has not been able to assess the effectiveness of the transition into skill training and fairly-paid jobs – which together reflect 94.94% of SAGE transitions. The programme classifies enrolling into SAGE's ISOP skill training (a 2-month skill training programme) as a successful transition, but there is limited data available on the post-ISOP results for these girls. The evaluation finds that financial barrier remains a big issue for girls, which has prevented girls from starting their own businesses. Due to this, it is not clear how the girls have been using the skills achieved by them under ISOP, and how this has translated into their long-term transition. Similarly, for girls transitioning to fairly-paid jobs, the evaluation finds that 78.65% (1,091 out of 1,387) of these girls reported working as household help post SAGE.

Given that the programme did not collect data on the kind of labour activities SAGE girls were engaged in before enrolling in SAGE, the evaluation is unable to assess whether these girls ended up going back to the jobs they had before SAGE, and what value was added to their long-term transition.

7. **ISOP was the biggest motivator for girls to join and participate in SAGE.** A majority of girls reported joining the SAGE programme to be able to access the skills training under ISOP. This is evidenced in transition analysis, which proved ISOP represented the largest transition pathway, with 52.69% of girls transitioning into SAGE's ISOP skill training programme. Given that these girls come from vulnerable backgrounds and a large percentage from impoverished families, the ISOP component represented an opportunity to escape their vulnerabilities and financial constraints and increase their personal and household income.

8. **Vulnerable girls are more likely to use their new learning competencies and improved skills to advance short-term income opportunities rather than transition back to school.** Although the programme supported girls' transition to all four identified pathways, only 4.91% of girls transitioned into formal/non-formal education. This was primarily due to financial constraints – especially among the most vulnerable girls supported by SAGE. Most SAGE participants came from impoverished backgrounds, and when coupled with COVID-19-related challenges, a large majority chose to transition into vocational training (ISOP) or to work in the informal economy (as household help, in local shops and industry workers, security guards, and farm workers). Given the particularly vulnerable nature of SAGE girls and their families, they largely chose transition pathways that were expected to immediately contribute to their household earnings and support personal and household financial security. The programme, however, saw a relatively higher proportion of girls, who had never been to school, transition into formal education. 8% of girls who had 'never been to school' transitioned into education, compared to the programme's 4.91% overall education transition.

9. **Improved self-efficacy and empowerment contribute to girls' transition.** The evaluation finds a strong, positive correlation between the likelihood of successful transition with girls' self-efficacy and empowerment index scores. Higher scores on each index were linked to higher transition rates across all girls in the cohort; the evaluation finds that the girls who transitioned to one of the four pathways had on average 10.57% higher self-efficacy scores compared to girls that did not transition. Similarly, the empowerment score for girls transitioning was 8.35% higher than those who did not transition. Both these differences were found to be statistically significant. This points to a direct link between the work SAGE did under the CoGE component to build girls' agency, their ability to advocate for their transition, and their overall likelihood of transitioning. Girls from subgroups with relatively high self-efficacy and empowerment – such as married girls and young mothers – were more likely to successfully transition post-SAGE.

10. **Economic conditions and lack of access to finance remains the biggest barrier to girls' successful transition.** SAGE was successful in developing the building blocks for the girls' successful long-term transition, through better preparedness for future learning, resilience, increased income, improved confidence, and self-efficacy. However, access to finance has emerged as the biggest challenge for the girls' transition into pathways such as education, vocational training (outside of/after SAGE's ISOP), and into self-employment. A number of girls interviewed at the endline highlighted their intention to enrol into further education, further vocational training, and to start their businesses, but also their inability to do so due to financial constraints and a lack of access to finance or collaterals to borrow funds from formal banking channels. Many girls wanting to start their businesses do not have the funds to start their businesses or buy ingredients (baking) or materials (hairdressing kits, sewing machines, etc.). These groups traditionally rely on non-formal funding sources, but with the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the population in rural Zimbabwe had little to no disposable income to provide funding. This has likely driven many SAGE graduates back to the work they did before the programme, including working as household help. SAGE facilitated the opening of bank accounts for approximately 900 girls, and between 10 to 15 girls secured funding from formal institutions for their businesses. However, this number is very small compared to the overall number of girls following the ISOP transition pathway.

C. Life Skills

11. **SAGE has supported participating girls in building life skills and improved resilience.** CoGE has contributed to improving life skills, self-efficacy, understanding of gender equality, social and normative barriers, and supporting girls to explore issues such as self-esteem, sexual reproductive and health rights, gender-based violence, early marriage and gender-responsive economic empowerment. 65.79% of SAGE girls surveyed at the endline, scored high on the self-efficacy index and positive reports were noted related to their ability to overcome challenges and achieve goals, their perception of personal capabilities and individual performance on tasks. In the endline interviews and the outcome mapping exercise, many girls highlighted SAGE's impact in improving their confidence, sense of self-worth, and belief in their abilities. The girls also expressed critical awareness of safeguarding, personal hygiene, disability, and gender inclusion as well as exhibited strengthened confidence, skills, and social capital for making informed choices about their own transition, and their families' long-term betterment.

12. **SAGE girls demonstrate improved confidence and decision-making power.** Engagements with the girls across the different sub-groups indicated that the girls' confidence has greatly improved after acquiring skills in ATL and through CoGE sessions. Young mothers reported that they are capacitated to support their children and siblings

with foundational literacy and numeracy skills and homework. Findings from Mutare, Mutasa, and Mutoko districts, which have the highest population of Apostolic communities, show that girls from this subgroup are now showing greater participation in decision-making at the community level as well as within their households. Young mothers are more active and assertive in household, school and community conversations about issues that affect them and their children and they are also active in governance issues within their communities. Outcome mapping conducted by the programme also identified examples of women's increased participation in community leadership and advocating for gender equality.

13. SAGE has improved knowledge and attitudes amongst young men and women around SRHR. Girls' endline survey responses and qualitative interviews with girls, boys, young men, and caregivers show that many young women and men participating in SAGE and CoGE have improved knowledge, understanding and appreciation of SRHR and menstrual hygiene. Married girls and young mothers shared that they can now better negotiate safe sex and discuss sexual and reproductive health issues with their partners and spouses. After participating in CoGE, girls show an improved awareness of the risks and implications related to unprotected sex and child marriage and reported an improved understanding of contraception, sexual and reproductive health, and how and where to access SRHR services. This has led to the girls being more vocal about their and their partners' sexual health. 69.31% of surveyed girls reported having used at least one scientific contraception method. In the qualitative interviews, many girls stated that they are now knowledgeable and confident enough to ask their spouse about using condoms, with 58.24% of surveyed girls at endline reporting that they have successfully negotiated condom use with their partners. Some girls also reported influencing their partners to get circumcised to protect themselves from cervical cancer and other sexually transmitted diseases. There is also a greater understanding of sexual consent among young women and men interviewed at the endline. A majority of boys, and young men interviewed at the endline highlighted that they now actively seek the consent of their partners before engaging in sexual activity, and 76.61% of girls reported that they can say no to sex if they don't want to engage in it.

D. Gender and Social Norms

14. Community members demonstrate improved attitudes and practices toward girls' education, gender equality and gender roles, and gender-based violence. Data from parent/caregiver surveys and FGDs with various community actors show that there has been a positive shift in the perception among caregivers, community and religious leaders, spouses, and men in the community on the value of educating girls and young women. The value was also recognised in evolving and improving negative or limiting traditional social and cultural norms around gender roles and gender equality. The endline survey finds that the programme has had a particularly strong influence in generating support for girls' education, with 92.79% of girls surveyed at endline reporting high support for education from the members of their household and the community. Similar improvements were seen in the community gender attitude index, which showed that 72.07% of surveyed caregivers demonstrated high gender attitude scores. Discussions with young men, spouses, and community members highlighted that gender equality has become an increasingly important issue in many communities. Men demonstrated an increased appreciation of the value of supporting women in their roles, in the workplace and in domestic tasks. The discussions found that men are now also participating more in household chores and childcare, breaking traditional gender norms. In the FGDs, community members and young men also spoke about the increasing number of double-income households in their communities, where both husband-and-wife work and earn money to provide a better standard of living for their children and their families. There is also a high level of agreement that engaging the community through SAGE has been crucial in promoting gender equality. Community members have noticed positive changes as more people are educated about the importance of equal opportunities for all genders. This includes encouraging parents to be involved in their children's education and ensuring equal education access for boys and girls.

15. Men's clubs and intergenerational dialogues have been highly successful in engaging communities, especially men, in dialogue around gender roles and equality, women's rights and girls' education. Intergenerational dialogues and men's clubs were introduced within the CoGE component to ensure boys' and girls' commitment to gender equality is supported by their families and their communities. The evaluation finds that these engagements have improved the communities' attitudes towards traditional gender norms. Bringing young men and young women together with other members of their families and communities brought a greater understanding of the issues faced by young girls within the communities. Dialoguing with decision-makers in their communities was particularly powerful. It allowed girls and boys to exercise their agency and identify positive actions to combat harmful practices that the community has been supporting. Establishing 88 men's clubs provided a forum for SAGE to work with adult men, targeting fathers and husbands of participating adolescent girls and guiding them through a curriculum which explores positive masculine role models and challenges entrenched negative gender attitudes and practices. This has strongly impacted men, who are now more cognisant of gender roles and barriers faced by women and appreciate equality of responsibilities.

17. Community attitudes toward girls – including GWDs – have improved. Several girls interviewed as part of endline data collection reported that they are being treated with respect and dignity after graduating from SAGE; even amongst individuals who initially opposed their participation in the programme. In discussions with GWDs, they reported that their contributions to their household and communities are being recognised now and that community members – including neighbours, are seeking their advice on enrolling their daughters in SAGE, as well as possible career paths for their daughters. Almost all interviewed girls reported that their involvement in skill

training has helped them improve their income-earning potential, with some of them starting formal or informal businesses involving hairdressing, dressmaking, or baking. This has led to an improvement in their perceived status in their communities, with them being more involved in community functions and community discussions through their trades. Some girls also reported that they were called upon by the community and religious leaders to talk to groups of women and in church gatherings, about gender equality, and the importance of girls' education, as well as to inform people about the SAGE programme.

E. Safeguarding and child protection

18. SAGE has been able to incorporate a strong safeguarding approach into its activities, leading to improvements in girls' safety and security at the hubs, in their households, and the community.

A strong safeguarding approach underpinned all SAGE programme components and strategies. The project also provided training to project staff, CEs, CoGE facilitators, community leaders, community members, and men and boys in the community on the importance, processes, and procedures to strengthen safeguarding and child protection. At the community level, the programme facilitated awareness-raising and knowledge activities through CoGE, intergenerational dialogues, and men's clubs to improve the girls' and community members' understanding of GBV and IPV. The girls also gained knowledge to assist in their understanding of the redressal mechanisms available to them in case they experience abuse or violence. Many girls interviewed at endline reported that SAGE (particularly CoGE) has helped them become more aware of the protection and safeguarding issues and has given them the knowledge of protection mechanisms available. In addition to its efforts to improve community understanding and awareness of safeguarding and child protection, SAGE also contributed to revitalising and strengthening community-based protection mechanisms and built the community and government capacity to enhance referral, psychosocial support, and reporting mechanisms. As a result of all these safeguarding and child protection interventions, 83.31% of the girls surveyed at endline reported a high safety perception, compared to 54.81% at baseline.

F. Sustainability

19. While the programme has achieved success in implementing a range of sustainability measures, several risks to sustainability remain. Overall, the SAGE programme has achieved progress in embedding sustainability at the systems and community levels. The programme efforts have led to demonstrated uptake and usage of the SAGE learning materials by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE), strengthened coordination of child protection systems, improved community attitudes towards girls' education and gender norms, and established and strengthened hub-development committees with a commitment to continue SAGE's community-based learning model. However, there is a lack of clarity around how the continuation of the SAGE model and the various community-based structures it helped develop will be funded and sustained going forward. Even though it was not a programme goal to secure funding for the programme's scale-up, the lack of a clear intent from the government or any other donor/development partner to take over the proven effective SAGE approaches means that there is a high likelihood that the results generated by the programme will be hard to sustain. Recognising this, SAGE has put in place some sustainability measures such as a community-managed 'Sustainable Volunteer Incentive Scheme' to set up income-generating activities – such as poultry farms – to help generate income to sustain the operations of the learning hubs and to provide incentives and honoraria to community volunteers. The programme has also piloted a girl-led delivery of the CoGE modules. However, given that these measures were put in place in the last six months of the programme, there is not enough data to measure the effectiveness of these sustainability measures. In the absence of financial or human resources, as well as in the absence of continued monitoring and accountability measures, there is a possibility that some of the hubs will not be able to sustain themselves.

G. Additional Findings

20. Married girls and young mothers were the biggest beneficiaries of SAGE interventions. Across long-term and intermediate outcomes from SAGE, married women and young mothers, who together form almost 45% of the SAGE learner population, showed stronger positive results compared to other sub-groups. This is evidenced in these sub-groups being above the overall average across learning outcome gains and successful transitions post-SAGE. Married girls and young women showed higher literacy scores (82.26 and 82.29 respectively) as well as numeracy scores (82.61 and 81.68) at EPA compared to the overall average (80.70 on literacy and 78.93 on numeracy). These two groups also showed a 108%[3] and 96.74% transition respectively compared to the overall SAGE transition average of 77.17%. Similarly strong performance for these groups is seen in intermediate outcomes related to improved life skills, confidence, self-efficacy; and better attendance in NFE programming. Before SAGE, many girls, even though keen to continue formal learning, had dropped out of school due to financial challenges, unexpected pregnancy, or early marriage. This aligns with findings shared by girls in the KIIs, whereby married women and young mothers reported that SAGE gave them a second chance at gaining an education and employment skills.

21. Some programme targets were too ambitious for SAGE to achieve in the time and context it was implemented. Some of the targets set by the programme – particularly around girls' life skills and community

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[3] The likely reason for a more than 100% transition rate for Married Girls sub-group is that a number of these girls transitioned into more than one pathway – e.g., Vocational training and job, or vocational training and self-employment.

attitude changes – proved too ambitious to be achieved in the project's life cycle. The programme set a target of 90% of girls achieving high self-efficacy, yet SAGE fell short of achieving this, with 63.53% demonstrating a high score on the empowerment index. These targets were positively ambitious, but in practice, were high standards for a programme like SAGE to achieve in the time available. This is especially so, when requiring major cultural and social practices to evolve significantly in a short time within highly vulnerable, traditional community settings with highly entrenched patriarchal practices and historically regressive attitudes. One of the reasons the programme set high targets was due to relatively high baseline evaluation scores on similar indices. However, it should be noted that the Apostolic community, which needed the most investments to improve traditional gender attitudes and practices, formed more than 60% of the SAGE programme's learner base. At the baseline evaluation, Apostolic girls only constituted around 25% of the sample; this number increased significantly throughout programme implementation. This might have led to baseline values for all targeted communities and subgroups appearing higher than they were, possibly leading to underperformance in life skills targets at the endline. Endline analysis of girls' empowerment scores further strengthens this point: analysis shows a statistically significant difference in empowerment scores between Apostolic and non-Apostolic girls across the programme. Endline evidence also demonstrates that despite assignment into other subgroups such as young mothers, married girls, GWDs, girls who have never been to school, etc., being part of the Apostolic community is the main driver of low empowerment overall.

5. Findings against the evaluation questions

Evaluation question	Summary of findings and conclusions
EQ1: To what extent were the objectives and design of the programme, including the underlying theory of change, valid, and did they respond to the needs, priorities and policies of intended beneficiaries, communities, and the country?	The endline evaluation finds that the SAGE programme was aligned with the needs of its beneficiaries and their communities. The girls expressed via interviews and surveys that the programme equipped them with diverse skills that catered to their learning and personal and family basic needs. Regarding the relevance of the programme design, girls who participated in the KIIs highlighted gains and positive transformation in the ATL and ISOP components of the programme. Also, over 80% of girls with disabilities who participated in the household survey expressed that the learning resources utilised were adapted to their specific needs. General feedback from the girls suggests that the ISOP programme could be more relevant by providing business and financial lessons and support to further enable girls to successfully progress through transition pathways.
EQ2: To what extent did they remain responsive to the needs, priorities, and policies of these groups when circumstances changed?	The evaluation finds that SAGE successfully maintained its relevance by adapting interventions and delivery strategies based on evidence generation and use. It was highly responsive during the COVID-19 pandemic, adopting a multi-stage approach to address changes in priorities and events in Zimbabwe. Some components of SAGE's response plan aligned with MoPSE's Catch-Up Strategy, which included content delivery through multimodal learning, learner enhancement strategies, teacher enhancement strategies, and observing standard operating procedures for COVID-19.
	SAGE also responded to the needs of learners, CEs, and the broader community by incorporating changes based on feedback. Key adaptations included shifting to a multi-modal learning model, transitioning professional development training for community volunteers to WhatsApp sessions, reducing absenteeism for SAGE learners, and adapting learning materials for disabled learners. The programme also made changes to the ISOP component design and incorporated mental health and psychosocial support for girls during the COVID-19 pandemic.
EQ3: To what extent was the programme consistent with and complementary to other interventions and policies?	The evaluation finds that SAGE was designed to align with and complement the Government of Zimbabwe's (GoZ) policies and priorities. It focused on engaging government stakeholders to enhance the programme's value and sustainability and has successfully integrated government participation at various levels. SAGE is closely aligned with Zimbabwe National Development Strategy 1 (2021-2025), Education Sector Strategic Plan, and the Non-formal Education policy. Key areas of alignment include human capital development, improving access and quality of non-formal education, and ensuring accessibility and inclusiveness for marginalised groups. The programme has also successfully contributed to operationalising the GoZ Non-Formal Education Policy by emphasising flexible learning, recognition and certification, coordination and partnerships, quality assurance, and resource mobilisation. Overall, SAGE is highly aligned with the government's policies and priorities, particularly in non-formal education.
EQ4: Was the programme managed efficiently? To what extent did the programme adopt and apply 'adaptive management' practices?	The evaluation finds that SAGE was managed efficiently and incorporated adaptive management principles in its design and delivery. It successfully achieved its objectives within budget, despite challenges from currency fluctuations and COVID-19-related restrictions and measures. The programme has shown a strong ability to monitor the context and incorporate lessons and beneficiary feedback to improve its delivery approach and implementation strategies. Key factors for this were close collaboration among staff and stakeholders. The project was delivered by a consortium of seven organisations from Zimbabwe and the UK, fostering strong partnerships with community leaders, religious leaders, and government representatives. Despite issues inherent in large consortiums, the partnership was described as excellent, and we find that the programme was able to

Evaluation question	Summary of findings and conclusions
	leverage the individual expertise of all consortium partners. SAGE invested significantly in monitoring and evaluation, focusing on learning and adaptive programming. This approach allowed the project to remain relevant and effective in a changing context.
EQ5: To what extent were the objectives and intended results of the programme achieved, including differential results across sub-groups?	The SAGE programme has achieved mixed success in meeting its targets and objectives. It has effectively improved learning outcomes, particularly in literacy and numeracy, and successfully transitioned girls into various pathways. Notable improvements were seen among girls with disabilities, girls who have never been to school, married girls, and young mothers. However, the programme has been less successful in achieving intermediate outcomes such as regular attendance, self-efficacy, and skills acquisition.
	SAGE successfully supported the transition of girls with disabilities, married girls, young mothers, and Apostolic girls. The programme faced challenges with girls from ethnic minorities and girls who had never been to school. The programme achieved intermediate outcomes in inclusive, gender-sensitive pedagogy, improving knowledge of gender and SRHR, social norms, and partnerships, but fell short against targets for self-efficacy, empowerment, and attendance. Sustainability has been embedded at various levels, but threats such as lack of leadership and funding constraints remain.
EQ6: What major factors influenced the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives and intended results?	SAGE is a comprehensive programme that aims to achieve its objectives through various interconnected interventions. Key factors contributing to its success include the collaborative approach towards programme delivery, a co-creation approach, and flexible programme adaptation and budget management. The programme involved beneficiaries in the design process and adapted to girls' changing needs.
	Factors that have contributed towards the achievement of learning outcomes include consulting beneficiaries as part of the programme design process and throughout implementation, ensuring that CEs were trained appropriately to deliver the programme content as well as to support girls and their differing needs, and ensuring that the pedagogical approach and class composition were girl-centric and composed of girls with mixed learning abilities.
	Factors that have contributed towards the achievement of transition outcomes include collaboration with government structures to enable a transition to schools and remaining responsive to girls' transition aspirations, as seen in the inclusion of the ISOP skills training programme as a transition pathway.
	Factors contributing to achieving sustainability outcomes include the co-creation approach taken at the programme's design stage with relevant ministries and intentional efforts to engage key community groups through partners.
EQ7: To what extent did the programme generate or contribute to generating significant higher-level effects, whether positive or negative, intended, or unintended?	SAGE is a gender transformative programme that successfully addresses barriers to girls' learning through girl-focused and community-focused interventions. It has improved literacy and numeracy skills, leading to increased social functionality, access to employment, and higher income levels. The programme has also supported girls with disabilities and fostered self-efficacy and confidence. Skill acquisition through ISOP has enabled girls to access employment opportunities, and transition support has facilitated access to financial services. Over 55% of girls who transitioned through SAGE reported increased income. SAGE has also changed community perspectives on girls' education, creating a supportive environment for female learners. The programme has contributed to capacity building and supported government priorities in areas where resources were limited.
EQ8: To what extent was the project successful in building sustainability within the enabling environment for change at the girl, family, community, and system levels?	The SAGE programme has seen mixed sustainability results. On the systems level, the programme has successfully generated strong ownership of learning materials among the government and other stakeholders, established buy-in and ownership at national and district levels, and fostered collaboration with various ministries. However, the lack of resources to support scale remains a challenge.
	At the community level, the programme has shifted perspectives in favour of girls' education and gender equality, supported the establishment of community structures for child protection, and built the capacity of stakeholders for continued out-of-school learning support. Yet, the absence of financial commitment from the government or other development partners threatens the sustainability of these structures.
	Regarding girl-level sustainability, the programme has successfully imparted valuable knowledge and skills, contributed to improved self-efficacy and empowerment, and established support systems for child protection. These achievements are expected to continue benefiting girls even after the programme's conclusion.
EQ9: What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability?	At the systems level, the SAGE programme's close collaboration with key government ministries, alignment with government priorities, and focus on out-of-school learners ensured strong ownership, buy-in, and adoption of ATL materials.
	Local partners facilitated stakeholder buy-in at the community level, while community-based learning hubs allowed communities to witness the programme's progress. Capacity-building

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	efforts created a critical mass of individuals to provide leadership and support learning. Intergenerational dialogues and clubs facilitated mindset changes.
	At the girl level, targeted holistic support and CoGE sessions enhanced girls' self-efficacy and understanding of their rights and programme materials aimed to dispel negative perceptions around learners with disabilities and gender roles.
	Cross-cutting factors include engaging various stakeholders, designing the programme with sustainability in mind, and remaining responsive and adaptive to emerging findings and needs. The programme supported capacity-building for facilitators and educators to interpret and implement learning materials correctly.
EQ10: To what extent will the net benefits of the programme continue?	There are indications that the programme's activities and interventions to foster sustainability at the community level and the girls' level will continue, given the programme's recognition and appreciation among key government personnel and ministries, strong stakeholder buy-in, and adoption of its materials by MoPSE and development partners like UNICEF and World Vision.
	At the girl level, the programme has successfully built learning, life skills and confidence among SAGE learners. There is ample evidence of improved participation of girls in public life, governance, shunning early marriage, and reporting incidences of GBV and IPV., Many girls also expressed their intention to continue to share their improved knowledge and life skills with other younger girls in their communities. The programme has also provided girls with skills and knowledge to transition into better-paying, dignified income-generating activities. However, the economic climate in Zimbabwe and the lack of financing available to these girls prove a significant hurdle for them to use the skills they've learnt to earn a decent living. This is also seen in many girls transitioning from ISOP working as household helps – a job that they likely already had before participating in SAGE.
	At the community level, the programme has been able to foster strong buy-in from religious and community leaders, shift the mindsets of communities, establish GBV Rapid Response committees, as well as train the Hub Development Committees (HDCs), non-formal education (NFE) buddies, school heads, and district leaders. However, given that there is no clear path to financial support for managing, maintaining, and running the community-led models to deliver ATL, CoGE and ISOP, the continuation of these interventions remains at risk.
EQ11: Did the programme demonstrate good value-for-money approach?	The SAGE programme effectively addressed the needs of disabled and marginalised girls in Zimbabwe through its multi-dimensional approach, community engagement, and cost-effective methods. Although the programme demonstrated excellent value for money across most areas, sustainability concerns persist. Financial stability and the continuity of the CoGE component require attention for long-term success. Securing financial commitments, developing robust income-generating activities, and institutionalising the CoGE model will be essential to enhance sustainability.

6. Validity of the SAGE theory of change

A review of SAGE's Theory of Change (ToC) concludes that large parts of the programme ToC remain valid. The programme faced several contextual challenges, including an unstable economy, unfavourable currency exchange movements, and COVID-19, which have impacted parts of the ToC. The evaluation also notes that some missing pieces – such as access to finance components and technical assistance to the MoPSE – would have made the programme design and the ToC more robust.

The SAGE 'Learning' pathway is strong and supported by evidence, showing that girls regularly attending accessible, community-based sessions led by well-trained educators achieve desired learning outcomes. The evaluation finds that while the impact pathway for 'Transition' in the programme ToC is valid and supported by evidence, it could have been strengthened by including a component of economic empowerment of the vulnerable girls. Financial barriers faced by girls were identified as a key barrier to transition at the programme design stage and remain the biggest barrier to girls' transition to education, skill development or self-employment. While the original programme design included a component to support the establishment and strengthening of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) in SAGE communities, it was removed at the onset of COVID-19 due to concerns about the inability of the households to effectively contribute to VSLAs due to the negative economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This ended up removing the component of access to finance for girls to successfully realise their transition. Even though the programme tried to support girls' financial inclusion by helping them connect with banks to open bank accounts as well as providing some basic financial literacy through ISOP, it was not found to be sufficient to improve girls' access to finance. Another area where the programme's transition impact pathway could have been strengthened is the definition of 'Transition'. Among its four transition pathways, the programme identifies girls enrolling on the ISOP component (also co-designed by the SAGE programme) as a sign of a successful transition. The evaluation finds that this definition does not capture the quality of the transition, and the effectiveness of ISOP to support long-term transition of girls.

The 'Sustainability' pathway is found to be valid but faces concerns mainly due to external factors. The programme has positively impacted community attitudes towards girls' education and has engaged with the government for policy adoption. However, the financial commitment from the government remains uncertain, putting the continuity of the programme at risk. The evaluation suggests that supporting out-of-school girls' access to finance and providing additional technical assistance to MoPSE to strengthen evidence-based decision-making and their capacity to mobilise financing from government sources and development partners to operationalise NFE policy could strengthen the programme's sustainability.

7. Recommendations

A. Overall

1. Expand community-based delivery of learning and skill development programming. SAGE's community-based approaches to learning, life-skills development, and technical skilling for employability have proven to be effective in supporting girls to achieve learning and transition. The programme improved girls' foundational literacy and numeracy proficiency by 3-4 grade levels on average, and many girls reported learning employable skills through ISOP, which they believe are market relevant and have helped them improve their incomes. These programme components have also been cost-effective at around £93 per year per girl for ATL and £170 per girl for skills training. They demonstrate highly successful inputs that provide value for money through community-based, community-owned development. Given the highly cost-effective nature of the interventions, their alignment with the government's policies and priorities, and their effectiveness in delivering results, it is strongly recommended that these community-based approaches are scaled up in Zimbabwe to ensure out-of-school (OOS) girls across the country can benefit from similar investments. SAGE has also proven that locating programming close to home, within households and communities that stand to benefit from NFE interventions, is highly effective in leveraging confidence, relationships, and local support and buy-in for successful outcomes. Evidence shows that what matters for results to be achieved is inexorably linked to trust and embedded in the belief that <u>who</u> delivers programming and <u>where</u> it is delivered matters just as much as <u>what</u> inputs are provided and <u>how</u> they are delivered and achieved.

2. Ensure ongoing community engagement and continually incorporate beneficiary feedback to adapt programme design, operations and inputs that encourage deeper buy-in and ownership throughout the life cycles of a project and beyond. SAGE prioritised community engagement – including the buy-in of community and religious leaders, girls and boys, caregivers, household heads, spouses, education leaders and teachers – to design, deliver and monitor the programme. Quarterly review and reflection engagements were held as part of the monitoring process, where stakeholder feedback was collected and integrated into the next round of activities. The programme adopted and incorporated clear and specific adaptive measures based on beneficiary experiences and feedback to improve future inputs. These adaptations directly contributed to the programme's success and its ability to remain relevant and responsive to the needs of beneficiaries even under the most difficult conditions during COVID-19, helping create a distinct brand for SAGE and furthering its reputation amongst girls and communities. The ongoing engagement with community representatives also secured a commitment from community leaders to support the interventions and established stronger community structures for sustainability. Any future programme involving community-driven development should build similar systems, processes, and structures for the community to effectively engage with and provide feedback and learnings to the programme leadership and managers. This will secure the programmes' continuation and embed them in the local communities where they can continue operating and benefit future generations.

B. Learning

3. Link community-based learning hubs to local primary schools for ownership and sustainability. One mechanism for enabling wider roll-out of a community-based learning model is to engage local primary schools, together with the community and religious leaders and local government, to 'adopt' one or more nearby hubs to oversee their functioning and delivery of NFE and learning programming, including the possibility for local skilling initiatives. SAGE has successfully demonstrated this model, by linking hubs with local primary schools, development of operational and maintenance standards for hubs; ongoing identification, training, and capacity building of local CEs; conducting community-led learning assessments; and monitoring the quality of systems, services, facilities, and individuals involved in the delivery. This is a robust, locally owned, managed, cost-effective approach to maintaining and expanding a community-based learning model across the country while securing value for money regarding the human, physical and financial resources associated with establishing and running NFE programmes in Zimbabwe.

4. Integrate learner-centred, active, inclusive and gender-sensitive teaching approaches into NFE programmes, with regular refresher training for educators supporting and implementing these approaches. The learner-centred, active, inclusive and gender-sensitive teaching methods employed by SAGE curricula were greatly appreciated and widely adopted by CEs, girls, community members and NFE buddies, ultimately helping girls from different communities and subgroups, notably GWDs and girls who had never been to school, to significantly improve their learning, SRHR and employable skills. These approaches also improved teacher engagement in formal schools and ISOP centres near SAGE's communities and learning hubs. The GoZ competency-based curriculum (CBC) encourages inclusive and participatory teaching in formal schools and training institutions. SAGE's proven and

effective methodologies and pedagogy can further embed these principles and practices, aiding and motivating teachers and their learners to engage in teaching and learning practices in positive, active, inclusive and gender-sensitive ways – overall improving learning environments and educational outcomes for all. Therefore, SAGE's training curricula, instructional methods and pedagogical approaches should be included in national pre-and in-service teacher professional development for formal and non-formal education curricula, and teachers should be trained countrywide to use these approaches more routinely.

5. Integrate relevant and appropriate technologies for teachers' continuous professional development and delivery of NFE programmes. The programme has effectively integrated specific, targeted, low-cost technology solutions to support the ongoing professional development of community educators and teachers. Many CEs and teachers found SAGE's phone-based CPD useful and accessible, especially during COVID-19 lockdowns and in highly rural areas, where they continue developing and honing their professional skills from home. GoZ should further integrate these inputs and other low-cost technology solutions into their teacher professional development plans and expand these options to deliver teaching and learning programming where possible.

C. Transition

6. Conduct research on post-ISOP transition pathways for girls and the effectiveness of sustainability measures. The evaluation finds that there is limited evidence on the post-ISOP transition of girls. This is an important piece of evidence to assess the high-level transition outcomes of the programme. Therefore, it is recommended that GEC and SAGE programme conduct a tracer study to complement the endline evaluation findings and identify the transition pathways and transition success of girls after graduating from ISOP. The programme should also conduct research to understand and unpack the effectiveness of the various sustainability measures put in place or piloted by it – including the sustainable volunteer incentive scheme, girl-led CoGE sessions, and the HDC-led community-based learning hub (CBLH) management. Understanding the effectiveness of these measures is extremely important to better understand the sustainability prospects of the programme approaches.

7. Ensure skills training provides intensive and relevant practical and work-based learning experiences alongside effective financing for securing entry into employment or self-employment following certification. One area where the SAGE programme achieved limited success was developing strong vocational competencies among ISOP participants that translated into decent work opportunities following graduation. This was likely due to the short length of the skills training programme, limited exposure to work-based learning opportunities, and the limited budget for financing the ISOP component. To enable OOS girls to develop strong, market-relevant skills, future programmes should ensure a sufficient budget for skills training, practical work-based experience, and funding to establish or grow small businesses. Any such skill training component should also be disability inclusive and consider the longer time that may be needed by GWDs for skill training. SAGE proved that girls who achieved a high level of mastery in technical and financial skills had better transition results regarding income and work opportunities. Plan International should widely disseminate this lesson and incorporate it into policy and programme designs in the future.

8. Integrate financial inclusion component into programming focused on OOS girls. While SAGE's multi-pronged approach included building life skills and agency for adolescent girls, the programme could not implement its initially planned component for developing and strengthening VSLAs. Evidence showed that despite a widespread desire among girls to transition back into formal education, access further vocational training opportunities, or enter the world of work, they could not do so due to severe financial constraints and persistent household and family responsibilities. The relative absence of start-up capital and the overall lack of independent collateral among vulnerable girls to access their financing for transitioning to decent employment remained a massive challenge. Thus, future programmes must incorporate components of financial inclusion, small business incubation and access to finance for vulnerable girls to sufficiently support impacts related to employment and improved lives and livelihoods following similar initiatives.

D. Life Skills

9. Expand life skills for girls to advance their self-efficacy and empowerment and to better support overall learning and transition outcomes. There is evidence from SAGE and wider research that improved life skills are crucial for supporting the empowerment and confidence of adolescent girls, which in turn boosts their participation in social and economic activities. Improved self-efficacy and empowerment also facilitate adolescent girls' participation and retention in formal and non-formal education. The GoZ NFE policy is recommended to incorporate SAGE's life-skills model for OOS girls who do not have access to similar instructional content under the country's CBC curriculum. Moreover, expanding content to include aspects of entrepreneurship and financial management skills will provide an even greater basis for improved productivity and recognition of women's key role in the economic and social development of their homes, communities, and society.

E. Gender and Social Norms

10. Intensify efforts to address negative gender-related social norms and attitudes. SAGE's approach of engaging local, traditional, and religious leaders, and community members has effectively addressed negative social, cultural, and gender norms that hinder women's access to education and economic activities. A large part of Zimbabwe's

population consists of women belonging to various religious sects, including the Apostolic community, who have intrinsically patriarchal and traditional views about women's roles in society and the home. SAGE's transformative approaches to generating dialogue on these issues have proven successful in challenging these traditional views. Future programmes must focus on embedding positive practices that promote women's education, civic engagement, and economic participation, enabling them to experience the benefits of personal and family wealth, health, and dignity.

11. Continue addressing the specific needs of marginalised populations to enhance programming efficiency and promote better equity and equality between men and women. Evidence from the programme and more widely available research findings suggest that married girls, young mothers, GWDs, and individuals belonging to certain religious and ethnic minorities are more prone to dropping out of school, achieving limited learning gains, and realising poor school and life transitions. In Southern Africa, many children and adolescents also fail to complete school or realise their work potential due to orphanhood or belonging to a child-headed household. Future programmes must be intentional in adopting localised, contextualised, acceptable approaches to generating change, including incorporating differentiated and appropriate modalities and inputs to generating change, including incorporating approaches that are targeted to improve access, participation, education quality and employment outcomes for highly marginalised and vulnerable populations.

F. Sustainability

12. Build demand, ownership, and accountability for community-based initiatives to ensure success and sustainability. While the community-based approaches implemented by SAGE proved efficient and cost-effective, the programme only implemented processes such as the Sustainable Volunteer Incentive Scheme and Girl-Led CoGE sessions towards the end of the programme. This means that the programme, and the endline evaluation, could not fully explore the effectiveness of these processes and document the sustainability of the community structures developed under SAGE to administer and maintain them. It is thus important for future programmes to initiate thinking, establishment, and ownership of these (or similar) measures from inception, allowing the duration of the programme for ensuring their effective operation, monitoring, and management. Impacts can also thus be realised during the project timeframe rather than only upon the initiative's closure or after completion.

13. Community-based structures and approaches should be complemented with strong government engagement and technical assistance from local authorities and civil society to strengthen delivery, management, and monitoring capacities. Delivering learning and skills training to vulnerable and excluded OOS girls through community-based approaches, local delivery mechanisms, and locally managed institutions like CBLHs are efficient and cost-effective models that support girls' learning, transition, and life outcomes. These approaches require deep engagement with local authorities, civil society, and government stakeholders at local, district and regional levels to enable ownership, financing, transparent oversight, and effective monitoring upon programme completion. The effectiveness of civil society and government engagement and the sustainability of programme results can be further strengthened by providing technical assistance to civil society and government representatives on issues such as evidence-based policymaking, planning and programme management, monitoring, and financial and human resource mobilisation. This can ensure the successful continuation of interventions and foster deeper, integrated community-driven development, leading to greater health, wealth, and education outcomes for all involved.

1. About the programme

1.1 Introduction

Funded as part of the Foreign Commonwealth and Development's Office (FCDO) Girls' Education Challenge's Leave No Girl Behind (LNGB) funding window, the Supporting Adolescent Girls' Education (SAGE) programme in Zimbabwe aimed to – over five years (Aug 2018 - July 2023) – improve learning outcomes and assist transition into formal education, vocational training, or employment for 13,200 highly marginalised, out-of-school adolescent girls in 11 districts[4]. SAGE focused on providing high-quality, accelerated, non-formal education across 88 accessible, girl-friendly[5] Community-Based Learning Hubs (CBLHs). As a gender transformative education programme, SAGE sought to work at multiple levels to promote and improve education for girls by tackling the root causes of gendered social and economic barriers and creating an enabling environment for transforming unequal gender norms. This was ensured through enabling girls' access to learning, life skills and vocational training activities; safeguarding support; engagement with civil society and government stakeholders; and mobilisation of parents, boys, and the wider community to adopt more positive gender attitudes to support and protect girls and their education. The programme, led by Plan International UK, was implemented through a consortium of faith-based, academic, and private sector partners, which include Plan International Zimbabwe (PIZ), The Open University (OU), Christian Blind Mission (CBM) UK, the Apostolic Women's Empowerment Trust (AWET) and Enhanced Communications Network (ECONET). The programme is being implemented under the oversight of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) and seeks to complement the implementation of their Non-Formal Education (NFE) Policy[6] which promotes alternative pathways to increasing access to quality education for marginalised learners.

1.2 Programme beneficiaries and sub-groups

SAGE aimed to reach the most educationally marginalised girls unable to attend or sustain their attendance in formal schools to successfully acquire foundational literacy and numeracy skills at the proficiency level of Grade 5. SAGE included seven cohorts of girls who joined the programme on a rolling enrolment basis. With a staggered launch approach, the first cohort (Cohort 1) was enrolled in seven districts and the second cohort (Cohort 2) in four more districts, starting June 2019 and January 2020, respectively. Since November 2020, an additional five cohorts have joined across all 11 districts as the challenge of enrolling marginalised girls necessitated the shift towards a rolling enrolment approach instead of defined enrolment periods.

Table 1: Overview of SAGE Learners

Cohort number	Number of districts	Entry date	Number of girls enrolled
Cohort 1	7	May 2019 – Dec 2019	4,456
Cohort 2	4	Jan 2020 – Oct 2020	2,283
Cohort 3	11	Nov 2020 – Jan 2021	849
Cohort 4	11	Feb 2021 – July 2021	1,995
Cohort 5	11	Aug 2021 – Oct 2021	1,324
Cohort 6	11	Nov 2021 – Jan 2022	1,356
Cohort 7	11	Feb 2022 – Aug 2022	1,197
Total	11	May 2019 – Aug 2022	13,460

SAGE identified seven sub-groups to specifically target support for and tailored its interventions in line with their needs and to focus monitoring, evaluation and learning activities. These sub-groups were identified based on key axes of vulnerability and characteristics that intersect to compound the educational marginalisation of girls in Zimbabwe. These are gender, age, marital status, school experience, disability, religion, ethnicity, and poverty/socio-economic status. The seven sub-groups included and supported by SAGE, along with their accompanying total enrolled numbers, are provided in Table 2 below.

Table 2: SAGE Learner Sub-Group Disaggregation

Characteristic	Sub-group	Definition	Number of girls
Marital status/Age	Young mothers	Girls who are pregnant or have at least one child	5,224 (38.81%)

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[4] SAGE Districts include: Hatcliffe, Harare South, Epworth, Khami, Mutoko, Reigate, Bulilima, Chimanimani, Imbizo, Mutasa, Mutare Rural
[5] Refers to girls and adolescent young women in the age range of 11-19 years.
[6] MoPSE (2015). The National Non-Formal Education Policy for Zimbabwe: Promoting Alternative Pathways to Increase Access to Quality Education in Zimbabwe.

Characteristic	Sub-group	Definition	Number of girls
School Experience	Girls who have never been to school	Girls who have no formal school experience	611 (4.54%)
Religion	Girls from the Apostolic community	Girls who belong to an Apostolic family/community or identify as Apostolic	8,280 (61.5%)
Ability	Girls with disabilities	Girls who have at least one disability	690 (5.12%)
Ethnicity	Girls from ethnic minorities	Girls who are from the Kalanga and San ethnic groups	594 (4.41%)
Marital status/Age	Married girls	Girls who are currently married	4,634 (34.42%)
Level of Poverty/Socio-Economic Status	Girls engaged in labour	Girls who are engaged in income-generating or subsistence activities to support their families	13,104 (97.35%)

1.3   Programme components

SAGE focused on providing high-quality, accelerated, non-formal education across 88 accessible and girl-friendly Community-Based Learning Hubs (CBLHs, commonly referred to as Hubs). SAGE aimed to deliver sustainable and transformative change through skills training, engagement with civil society and government stakeholders, and the mobilisation of parents, boys, and the wider community to adopt more positive gender attitudes to support and protect girls and their education.

As part of a community-driven approach, a range of services (listed in Table 3) were provided by CBLHs, aligned to a local school, and supported by a Hub Development Committee (HDC), which leads the selection of hub sites, identification of volunteers and broader community mobilisation. The programme's key interventions are summarised below:

Table 3: Key SAGE Programme Components

Programme components	Details
Accelerated Teaching and Learning (ATL)	Providing out-of-school girls with high-quality, accelerated learning in 88 Community Based Learning Hubs and eliminating barriers to education through free, accessible, inclusive, and flexible learning opportunities. With the onset of COVID-19 and lockdown measures, the programme adapted a multi-modal delivery model that enabled volunteers to support girls via phone, at the household (door-to-door) and in small community groups.
	Leading continuous professional development (CPD) of community educators (CEs) to enhance their capacity to deliver inclusive, gender-responsive pedagogy through a range of methods, including creating mentoring linkages with the support of district-level education officials, virtual and in-person training and establishing communities of reflective practice (CORP).
Champions of Girls' Education (CoGE) sessions	Supporting adolescent girls and boys to improve their self-esteem and life skills through Plan International's Champions of Change Model, where community-based sessions encouraged the exploration of issues such as sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), gender rights and economic empowerment.
	Establishing men's clubs and intergenerational dialogues, whereby community members, including men, boys, and local leaders, are mobilised to adopt more positive gender attitudes and support and protect girls and young women through intergenerational dialogue and to act as champions of positive masculinity.
Integrated Skills Outreach Programme (ISOP)	Improving access to skills training through an integrated skills outreach programme whereby girls are mentored and trained by local master craft people in a community-based vocational training programme to increase livelihood opportunities for the girls and their families.
Safeguarding	Delivery of direct activities complemented with mainstreaming of good practice across all SAGE project activities to create a safe and inclusive environment where all programme participants, staff, volunteers, partners, and associates could thrive and feel secure. It also aims to support people to understand and exercise their rights and report any concerns.
	Activities include safe recruitment practices, capacity development, awareness raising, strengthening of child protection structures, service mapping and referrals to specialised services, case management and monitoring well-being and safety in hubs.

SAGE's learning programme was centred around all girl learners attending six hours of sessions per week, consisting of four hours of accelerated teaching and learning (ATL) sessions covering numeracy and literacy and two hours of CoGE sessions. For boys, the focus was on promoting gender equality and girls' rights through two hours of CoGE sessions per week. In CoGE, using a gender-synchronised programme, boys and girls worked through most of the modules in their curricula separately but covered similar topics. They would then come together for four sessions to discuss gender issues and other topics.

1.4   Response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Continuation of services during the pandemic and beyond had required significant and ongoing efforts ranging from community mobilisation to adapting teaching and learning materials for both the ATL component and CoGE, as well as capacity building to aid volunteers in delivering sessions which rapidly shifted to being delivered remotely. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, SAGE undertook a needs assessment to understand the needs of girls, the community and volunteers, and their access to technology. The needs assessment also reviewed secondary data and identified appropriate adaptations that could help the programme improve its operating model to remain responsive. This needs assessment guided the development and implementation of adapted activities through an Immediate Response Plan (May-August 2020) and a Medium-Term Response Plan (MTRP). As part of the adaptations, SAGE prioritised three areas: (i) keeping girls safe; (ii) continuing to support girls in their learning journey; and (iii) monitoring their safety and learning. In line with these priorities, the following key adaptations were incorporated into the programme:

1. **Continuation of learning and life skills support by expanding learning pathways:** To ensure continuity of learning support to SAGE beneficiaries, the programme adopted a flexible model by expanding access to learning beyond being held at only static hubs to a fully operationalised multi-modality model, which enabled girls to be reached through four learning support pathways. These pathways included learning through in-person attendance at CBLHs, door-to-door engagement, telephonic engagements, and community-based small groups. Teaching and learning materials were also adapted from existing ones to support session delivery through these new pathways.

2. **Strengthening access to safety and protection services:** The SAGE Girls' survey conducted in May 2020 noted that 78% of girls said no support services were available in their communities. In response, the programme committed to building the capacity of community-based Child Protection Committees (CPCs), linking them to the Department of Social Development (DSD) at the district level. SAGE also implemented direct awareness-raising activities for girls, focusing on signposting services as captured in routinely updated service mapping, which encompasses SRHR, gender-based violence (GBV) and mental health and psychosocial support (MPHSS).

3. **Expanding CoGE support services to include psychosocial support (PSS):** The programme invested in strengthening volunteers' capacity to integrate mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) into CoGE sessions to aid girls and boys in developing positive coping mechanisms. This integration was implemented with support from REPSSI, a consulting organisation engaged to build staff and volunteers' capacity on Psychological First Aid (PFA) training and to aid the integration of PSS activities into existing modules. This enabled volunteers to recognise PSS needs better and refer to local specialised services for further support. Girls and boys also received wellbeing checks from volunteers and monthly SMSs with messaging related to safeguarding and well-being.

4. **Strengthening of community-based structures:** Recognising the importance of its pre-existing and extensive community-based volunteer network and its strong relationships with wider community stakeholders and groups, SAGE focused on mobilising parents and caregivers to support different learning modalities. It recruited 65 new volunteers to support the rollout of the multiple learning pathways, providing PPE and additional airtime to volunteers and strengthening community referral pathways for safeguarding protection and PSS services.

5. **Expansion of continuous professional development through embracing low-cost technology:** Unable to continue with the face-to-face delivery of its CPD component due to COVID-19 restrictions, the programme adopted WhatsApp as a platform to maintain contact with volunteers and deliver continued professional development training. The modified approach allowed the integration of offline tasks, which volunteers would practise before the remote WhatsApp training. Through this approach, volunteers were able to receive training on disability support, progress assessments, screening assessments, PFA, supporting virtual reflective conversations and learning differentiation.

1.5   Programme theory of change

The SAGE theory of change (ToC) was initially developed in 2019, and the SAGE team undertook the final revision in August 2021. SAGE's ToC assumes that reducing barriers at the household, learning-space, community, and system-levels will improve girls' access to high-quality education and skills acquisition, improve their confidence to learn, identify and proceed into positive transition pathways, as well as create sustainable supportive and enabling environments at the community, district, and national-level. SAGE's overarching programme outcomes are:

1. **Learning:** the improvement in literacy and numeracy performance of out-of-school girls and their increased self-efficacy and life skills.

2. **Transition:** an increase in the likelihood of highly marginalised adolescent girls transitioning through non-formal education or back into formal education, into vocational or life skills training or into fully paid employment which could be self-employment.

3. **Sustainability:** the expectation that the changes brought about through SAGE are sustainable following the end of the programme due to fundamental shifts in social norms, practices, behaviours or attitudes in the programme communities and through the continued efforts and increased capacity of local stakeholders and by relevant government stakeholders including the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) and the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprise Development (MWACSMED).

These are underpinned by five intermediate outcomes, with the programme working on the basis that:

1. Highly marginalised adolescent girls regularly attend high-quality, accelerated learning sessions.
2. Highly marginalised adolescent girls have increased self-efficacy and life skills.
3. Highly marginalised adolescent girls have improved levels of market-relevant livelihood skills.
4. Communities demonstrate more positive gender attitudes and actively support and protect girls.
5. Strong and active partnerships with MoPSE officials and other civil society actors actively advocate for more inclusive, gender-responsive education policies.

These final and intermediate outcomes are supported by six outputs with the accompanying key interventions which seek to remove these barriers:

- Out-of-school (OOS) adolescent girls are able to access high-quality accelerated learning programmes.
- Community Educators (CEs) and formal sector Non-Formal Education (NFE) mentors are trained and supported to employ inclusive, gender-responsive teaching strategies.
- Adolescent girls and boys are supported to learn about and discuss life skills and their SRHR.
- Adolescent girls and their families are supported to participate in skills development opportunities.
- Adolescent and adult champions of gender equality engage others in their communities in dialogue on girls' rights.
- Programme evidence and learning - including girls' voices and experiences - are shared with key stakeholders at the district and national levels.

The programme theory of change and its validity are illustrated in Annex 1.

2. Endline evaluation approach and methodology

The endline evaluation for SAGE was commissioned by Plan International UK in October 2022, with a budget of £161,000 including the cost of data collection. This evaluation report is intended to be useful for a range of stakeholders – including the SAGE programme, SAGE implementing partners, the Government of Zimbabwe's relevant ministries, the GEC fund manager, FCDO and the wider education sector.

2.1. Evaluation design

SAGE endline evaluation, conducted between October 2022 and May 2023, sought to conduct accountability, and learning-focused analysis of the programme's components, learn from the successes and failures of the programme implementation – especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic – to understand the programme's uptake and effectiveness, as well as any intended and unintended outcomes on girls and young women, including those with disabilities.

This endline evaluation adopted a mixed-methods approach and a hybrid design, in which data from the endline data collection and programme data and research conducted by the SAGE consortium were used to conduct the analysis. At the beginning of the SAGE programme, the original evaluation design was based on a difference-in-difference approach, utilising a treatment and control cohort. However, during programme implementation, the changes to programme design due to the severe economic crisis in Zimbabwe and the COVID-19 pandemic prompted a revision in the evaluation design. The endline evaluation adopted a pre-post evaluation model, looking at the impact the programme had on the learning and transition of its participants through its various components, as well as identifying barriers to and drivers of the impact. The breadth of the quantitative approach allows for a statistically representative sample of programme locations and participants. At the same time, the qualitative component provides context and depth to the findings of the quantitative impact evaluation. This dual approach enabled the triangulation of findings, thus increasing the validity of the findings.

The evaluation adopted two complementary frames of analysis – one to use quantitative and qualitative data to analyse the programme outcomes against the programme log frame and the second to use the quantitative and qualitative data to answer evaluation questions. These frameworks are presented in Annex 2.

The evaluation followed the revised evaluation principles issued by the GEC fund manager (FM) in September 2021. To assess the effectiveness of the learning component, the team conducted a longitudinal analysis of the learning data for all learners that had learning data for at least two learning progress assessment (LPA) points. The quantitative data on the transition pathways of SAGE participants were drawn from the quarterly monitoring data collected by the SAGE consortium. Additionally, the girls and household surveys contained questions to identify barriers to and effectiveness of transition for girls. An overview of our approach to analysing the three broad outcome areas is presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Overview of Approach to Analysing Key Otcome Areas

SAGE outcome areas	Focus of evaluation	Approach
Learning	To assess whether there is any improvement in literacy and numeracy progress of out-of-school girls and their increased self-efficacy, confidence, and life skills.	- Longitudinal analysis of SAGE LPA data for Cohorts 1-7. (Data collected by the SAGE programme) - Analysis of girls' and heads of household (HoH) surveys to ascertain improvements in life-skills, self-efficacy, and confidence. (Data collected by external evaluator []) - Key informant interviews (KIIs) with girls, parents, spouses, boys, community, CEs, and government to deepen the understanding of key barriers and drivers both from the supply and demand side. (Data collected by EE) - KIIs with CEs and girls to ascertain pedagogical quality, learning uptake, curriculum delivery, logistical challenges, and specific support they received that enabled them to deliver lessons. (Data collected by EE)
Transition	To understand the likelihood of marginalised adolescent girls transitioning into formal education, vocational training, or fairly-paid employment.	- Utilising programme monitoring data to analyse transition pathways of Cohort 1 and 2 girls. (Data collected by the SAGE programme) - KIIs with girls, parents, men/husbands, and CEs to be used to understand barriers and drivers of transition. (Data collected by EE) - KIIs and focus group discussions (FGDs) with stakeholders (girls, parents, spouses, boys, community) to explore changes in agency and self-efficacy (gender attitudes, SRHR knowledge, confidence) and drivers/barriers to this. (Data collected by EE)

SAGE outcome areas	Focus of evaluation	Approach
		• Qualitative data to ascertain changes in social norms around girls' education and engagement in income-generating activities. (Data collected by EE)
		• Case studies to showcase successful transitions. (Data collected by the SAGE programme)
Sustainability	To assess the shift in mindsets, social norms, practices, behaviours, or attitudes related to girls' education in the programme communities. Also, to assess the likelihood of scale-up and institutionalisation of programme approaches, mechanisms, and outputs.	• Sustainability was analysed based on project reports and the SAGE consortium's responses. (Data collected by the SAGE programme) • Outcome mapping by the SAGE consortium to ascertain programme outcomes' sustainability and develop a sustainability narrative. (Data collected by the SAGE programme) • KIIs with CEs and SAGE consortium to identify examples of sustainability. (Data collected by EE) • HoH surveys, community FGDs and government FGDs were used to develop further sustainability narrative (Data collected by EE)

As part of the hybrid approach to the evaluation, the evaluation team validated the quantitative programme data received from the SAGE programme – including that for LPA, transition, attendance, SAGE-led quarterly girls' and community surveys and budgetary data. Wherever issues, duplications or inconsistencies were found, it was communicated to Plan International monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) specialist and the programme manager to clarify and verify the data. To validate the LPA data, the evaluation team also conducted observation visits in December 2022 to 10 CBLHs where LPA data was being collected. The team found that LPA data was being collected following the guidance and guidelines issued to CEs and that the data was being recorded properly, clearly, and accurately. A summary of the findings of these quality assurance visits has been provided in Annex 12 of this report.

Additionally, the evaluation team presented its emerging findings and the analytical approach to the SAGE consortium in early March 2023 to validate its analytical approach with the programme and identify the contextual factors that may have contributed to the programme results – both positive and negative.

2.2. Evaluation questions

Once the foundations of the programme theory were in place and the use case of the evaluation findings was established, the evaluation team worked with the SAGE consortium to finalise the evaluation questions. The evaluation team also developed the rationale for each evaluation question (EQ) through internal discussions. Sub-questions were also prepared to break down the main evaluation question into its parts. These questions assisted with assessing the linkages between programme inputs, activities, short-term and medium-term outcomes, and impact as specified in the ToC. The evaluation questions were broadly guided by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria to ensure that the approach was consistent with best practices.

Table 5: Key Evaluation Questions – Endline Evaluation of the SAGE Programme

DAC Criteria	Key Evaluation Question
Relevance	EQ1: To what extent were the objectives and design of the programme, including the underlying theory of change, valid, and did they respond to the needs, priorities and policies of intended beneficiaries, communities, and the country?
Relevance	EQ2: To what extent did they remain responsive to these groups' needs, priorities, and policies when circumstances changed?
Coherence	EQ3: To what extent was the programme consistent with and complementary to other interventions and policies? To what extent did the programme adapt to changes in the policy environment?
Efficiency	EQ4: Was the programme managed efficiently? To what extent did the programme adopt and apply 'adaptive management' practices?
Effectiveness	EQ5: To what extent were the objectives and intended results of the programme achieved, including differential results across sub-groups?
Effectiveness	EQ6: What major factors influenced the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives and intended results?
Impact	EQ7: To what extent did the programme generate, or contribute to, generating significant higher-level effects?
Sustainability	EQ8: To what extent will the programme's net benefits (whether financial, economic, social and/or environmental) continue?

DAC Criteria	Key Evaluation Question
Sustainability	EQ9: To what extent was the project successful in building sustainability within the enabling environment for change at the girl, family, community, and system levels?
Sustainability	EQ10: What were the major factors that influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability?
Value for Money	EQ11: Did the programme demonstrate a good value-for-money approach?

2.3. Data collection tools

The endline evaluation of SAGE included data from a wide range of sources. The primary data collection included both qualitative and quantitative data. The SAGE programme data – both qualitative and qualitative – were complemented by primary data collection. The tools were administered to a range of programme stakeholders, including learners, parents/caregivers, heads of household, boys in the community, partners/spouses of SAGE girls, community members, CEs, NFE buddies, and district and national government officials. In addition to aligning with the evaluation questions, the data collection tools link directly to select programme outcomes and intermediate outcomes.

Table 6 below lays out the tools used in the endline evaluations of SAGE. In most cases, the tools were updated from the baseline evaluation to capture the programme's impact and nuanced changes occurring at the individual, community, and ecosystem levels. Most of the questions used in the baseline evaluation tool were retained, and new questions were added to capture learners' and HHs' experience and programme impact. Any questions that formed part of an intermediate outcome index were also retained to provide a uniform comparison between baseline evaluation and endline evaluation values.

Table 6: Data Collection Tools and Participants

Target Group	Tool
Learners	Girls' Survey
	Adolescent Girls' KIIs
Parents/Caregivers/Heads of Household	Heads of Household Survey
	Parents/Caregiver FGDs
SAGE Volunteers	Community Educator KIIs
	NFE Buddy KIIs
	Hub Development Committee FGDs
Other Participants	Boys/Young Men FGDs
	Partners/Spouses of SAGE Girls FGDs
	Community Members FGDs
Government Officials	Federal Government Representative KIIs
	District Government Representative KIIs

Evaluation tools were updated and designed in English and translated to Shona and Ndebele – the two primary spoken languages in the districts of data collection[7]. To promote participants' comfort and ensure understanding between data collectors and participants, data collectors delivered all instructions and questions in local languages. A portion of data collector training was dedicated to identifying appropriate local language terms for qualitative and quantitative activities.

Quantitative data collectors practised administering surveys, and qualitative data collectors facilitated KIIs and FGDs in local languages. Quantitative data collectors recorded all data on tablets in English, qualitative data collectors wrote field notes in English, and transcriptions were prepared in English. The training addressed language issues for both the quantitative and qualitative teams. For qualitative transcripts, Research Methods International (RMI) implemented a quality assurance strategy and assigned a staff member responsible for overseeing the transcription process's integrity. Additionally, Plan International Zimbabwe staff conducted quality assurance of a random sample of qualitative transcripts.

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[7] Although there are three primary languages spoken in the districts that data was being collected in – Shona, Ndebele, and Kalanga; it was understood from the CEs and from the enumeration team that all girls in these seven districts were proficient in Shona or Ndebele, and because of this, it was decided to only translate the tools into two languages. Additionally, the enumeration team included Kalanga speakers who would be able to deal with any language challenges that arose in the field. There were, however, no issues faced by the evaluation team and we did not come across any learners who were not proficient in either Shona or Ndebele.

2.4. Study sample

The beneficiary-level data came from the quantitative sample, qualitative key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. These samples were selected using different methods, and beneficiaries in one sample were not included in the other sample. This was done primarily to reduce respondent fatigue, given the detailed and in-depth tools developed for both quantitative and qualitative data collection.

Quantitative sample

In arriving at the overall sample size for the quantitative survey, a 98% confidence level and a 5% margin of error were aimed for. This gave a minimum sample size of 507. Approximately another 20% were added to the sample to cover for non-responses and incomplete responses, thereby arriving at a final sample size of 600 girls and their heads of household/caregivers.

While developing the sample, it was estimated that 50% of the sample to come from Cohort 2, 40% from Cohort 1, and 10% from Cohort 3. As data collection was planned for completion by December 2022/January 2023, which aligned with the expected graduation date of Cohort 2, it was expected to be easier for the CEs to mobilise girls from Cohort 2. However, in mobilising the randomly sampled girls, a large percentage of sampled girls were found unavailable. CEs mobilised replacement girls from the three target cohorts while trying to match the demographic profiles of unavailable girls as closely as possible. In total, of 606 girls and their heads of household/parents/ caregivers were covered. The distribution of the sample across the three cohorts is presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Distribution of Sample across Cohorts

Cohorts	Total Beneficiaries	Proportion	Girls' Survey Sample	Proportion
Cohort 1	4,456	58.72%	285	47.03%
Cohort 2	2,283	30.09%	253	41.74%
Cohort 3	849	11.19%	68	11.22%
	7,588	100%	606	100%

The sample was drawn from 45 CLBHs across 7 SAGE districts and sought to have a representative sample from all sub-groups. Four districts – Hatcliffe, Imbizo, Khami and Reigate- comprised only 8% of SAGE learners and were excluded from the sampling framework. This was done to optimise survey logistics and provide value for money to the survey exercise. The survey sample is presented across multiple parameters in Tables 8 and 9 below:

Table 8: Girls' Survey Sample Distribution across Districts

Districts	SAGE Beneficiaries (Cohorts 1-3)		Endline Survey Sample	
	Beneficiaries No.	Proportion	Survey Sample	Proportion
Bulilima	698	9.20%	53	8.74%
Chimanimani	1038	13.68%	94	15.51%
Epworth	493	6.50%	53	8.74%
Harare South	459	6.05%	58	9.57%
Hatcliffe	217	2.86%	0	0%
Imbizo	178	2.35%	0	0%
Khami	131	1.73%	0	0%
Mutare Rural	1,611	21.23%	136	22.44%
Mutasa	1,733	22.84%	136	22.44%
Mutoko	940	12.39%	76	12.54%
Reigate	90	1.19%	0	0%
Total	7,588	100%	606	100%

Table 9: Survey Sample Distribution across Sub-Groups

Sub-groups	SAGE Beneficiaries		Survey Sample	
	Beneficiaries No.	Proportion	Survey Sample	Proportion
Married Girls	2,650	35%	322	53.13%
Young Mothers	3,117	41%	379	62.54%

Sub-groups	SAGE Beneficiaries		Survey Sample	
	Beneficiaries No.	Proportion	Survey Sample	Proportion
Apostolic Girls	4,580	60%	388	64.02%
Girls with disabilities	537	7%	71	11.71%
Girls from ethnic minorities	373	5%	107	17.65%
Girls never been to school	432	6%	31	5.11%
Girls engaged in labour	7,270	96%	497	82.01%
Total	7,588	100.00%	606	100%

Further breakdown of the endline survey sample by age, disability type, disability severity, etc., is provided in Annex 2 - Endline Evaluation approach and methodology.

Qualitative sample

The number of KIIs and FGDs to be conducted for the endline evaluation was identified purposefully with the budget limitations in mind. Sixteen of the forty-five quantitative sample hubs were selected randomly to collect the qualitative data. SAGE district and hub staff were asked to support the recruitment of evaluation participants after being notified in advance about the fieldwork dates and what types of beneficiaries would be interviewed. Attention was paid to the day communities were visited, considering known holidays, market days, harvest days etc., where the community population would be less available than usual. The qualitative sample is provided in Table 10 below.

Table 10: Qualitative Data Collection Sample

Data Collection Method	Stakeholder	Number of KIIs/ FGDs	Qualitative Sample Achieved
Key Informant Interviews	Girls and Young Women participants of SAGE[8] (only Cohorts 1, 2 and 3)	50	50
	Community Educators	15	15
	NFE Buddies	9	9
	Government Officials (District and National)	10	10
	Project Partners	5	13
Focus Group Discussions	Parents/Caregivers	6	53
	Partners/Spouses of SAGE Girls	4	17
	Boys	3	9
	Community Members	7	60
	HCD Committee Members	3	11
Total		112	247

2.5. Data collection

Data collection for the final evaluation was conducted in January 2023. The on-ground data collection was led by RMI – a research and data collection firm headquartered in Zimbabwe, which was also responsible for the recruitment and training of enumerators, managing logistics and coordinating with PIZ staff to mobilise sampled beneficiaries. Evaluation team members led the development and delivery of enumerator training with inputs from RMI and PIZ.

Recruitment of enumerators

Twenty enumerators and four field supervisors for data collection were recruited. Among these, 16 were recruited for quantitative and 4 for qualitative data collection. Each quantitative team comprised a field supervisor (one person) and four enumerators. The data collection team was 100% female, given the target respondents and the nature of the project. Enumerators were selected based on the following:

- Their experience conducting similar surveys (START4Girls, SAGE or IGATE)
- A minimum first degree in social sciences

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[8] The qualitative sample of girls included girls from all SAGE sub-groups, including GWDs. The sample included 10 GWDs (20% sample).

- Minimum of 4 years collecting quantitative or qualitative data
- Residing in targeted districts

RMI's field managers oversaw each team during data collection. Genesis had overall oversight of the process, and both Genesis and RMI worked with PIZ to mobilise survey, KII and FGD respondents and further notifications.

Training of enumerators

The training of enumerators took place in Harare from 10-13 January 2023. The purpose of the training workshop was to introduce the programme and evaluation objectives to the enumeration team, provide an overview of research ethics, familiarise them with the data collection tools, train the team on the administration of the tools to ensure uniformity in data collection, review and validate the final data collection tools, outline data collection protocols, and prepare the enumeration team for the endline evaluation and plan for the data collection exercise.

Given that the team was expected to collect data from young girls, the training also focused on giving detailed guidance on safeguarding and child protection issues. Informed consent and other ethical principles and standards, such as confidentiality, were also covered in training. Focusing on one tool at a time, participants were taken through each question, it's value to the analysis, and its corresponding response options, where applicable. Enumeration teams also participated in role plays in pairs and groups. The exercise allowed participants to get acquainted with all the questions in the tools, assess the framing, flow, and sequence of the questions, assess the ease of comprehension of the questions and the accuracy of translations, and identify redundant and repeated questions. The accuracy of the skip patterns was also determined. Following the exercise, repetitions, redundancies, and other discrepancies in the tools were identified, and corrections were made after deliberations in the plenary.

All challenges encountered and discrepancies identified following the pre-test exercise were noted and addressed on the last day of the training workshop. Qualitative enumerators were also trained on a standardised template for recording qualitative interviews by theme and capturing data on any identifiers to facilitate data analysis. Field Supervisors also received additional instructions and practice with the computer-assisted personal interviews (CAPI) system to perform supervisory activities and how to comply with COVID-19 regulations within the teams.

Pre-testing

The pre-test for the SAGE endline was done in the Hatcliffe district. The main reasons for selecting Hatcliffe were its proximity to Harare and being one of the districts excluded from the sampling framework due to its relatively low representation of SAGE learners. The team visited three hubs – two for quantitative tools pre-test and one for qualitative tools pre-test. The qualitative team conducted two FGDs – one each with community members and adolescent boys; and four KIIs with beneficiary girls at Hatcliffe 3 Hub. Quantitative enumerators were divided into two groups to conduct Girls and Heads of Household Surveys at Friendship and Bhagi Prince Robert Hubs. Each enumerator was expected to survey two girls and two heads of household/caregivers. At Bhagi Prince Robert, the enumeration team conducted seventeen Girls and fifteen Caregivers Surveys, whilst the team at Friendship conducted fourteen Girls surveys and nine Caregivers Surveys. The pre-test exercise involved all enumerators, supervisors, field managers and project managers interacting with the PIZ District Coordinator from Hatcliffe, particularly on community mobilisation. The field team also worked closely with CEs and CoGE facilitators from the district.

The pre-test survey helped the team check that questions work as intended and are understood by those likely to respond to them. The pre-testing also helped the team gauge the performance of the enumerators and fine-tune the qualitative enumerators' interview style. Minor revisions to the tools were made following this pre-test. A training report was also submitted to Plan International following the completion of training and pre-testing.

Data Quality Control during field work

The team employed several data quality control measures during data collection. These included:

- Sit-ins – the field supervisors sat in during interviews to check if questions were being asked correctly.
- Before synchronisation, the supervisors checked each enumerator's data for completeness, accuracy, and logical inconsistencies.
- The evaluation team held debriefing sessions with enumerators twice a week to communicate any data quality issues and get feedback on emerging issues affecting data quality. These were then communicated to Plan immediately for their action and support (if needed).
- Given that the CEs were directly responsible for identifying replacements for sampled girls that were not available, the team was provided real-time support to verify the learner IDs, cohorts and other demographic details of the girls using the learner database provided by SAGE.

Accommodations for girls with disabilities

As part of the field planning, the team developed detailed guidance for the enumerators for engaging with girls with disabilities. The data collection team also included enumerators with prior experience working with and collecting information from girls with various physical and learning impairments. Regardless of their prior experience with collecting data from and engaging with girls with disabilities, the enumerators were trained on the adaptations and accommodations required to collect data from girls with disabilities. Coordination with the CEs was done to ensure that GWDs were accompanied by a caregiver who could escort the girl. The disability adaptation guidance developed as part of the inception phase, and used to train the enumerators has been provided in Annex 3.

2.6. Data analysis

Quantitative data was coded and analysed using 'R' software. To test for statistical significance of learning results, a two-sample t-test was used in instances where learning scores were being compared at two timepoints (initial and end progress assessment or mid and end progress assessment. In instances where they were being compared across all three time points (initial, mid and end progress assessments, a one-way ANOVA test was used.

There were three main criteria to guide data cleaning and analysis: data must be complete, accurate and internally consistent. A multi-stage data cleaning plan was used, ensuring all data values were within the allowable range and reserve codes were used appropriately. The standard best practices for cleaning and finalising data were used as outlined in analysis guidance on the LPA model developed by the OU team and provided via Plan, as well as LNGB guidance, including developing and providing a 'master' codebook, as well as merging or appending data files where possible for easier use and manipulation.

Data coming from surveys were linked using the SAGE learner IDs. A cleaned and merged data set was produced to analyse different responses. In the case of learning assessments, data were synthesised at the sub-task and test levels.

Qualitative data were transcribed, translated, and reviewed for accuracy and quality upon the completion of data collection. Quality assurance on a sample of transcription was also done by PIZ staff. Any KII audio-recordings, field notes, transcriptions and translations were shared and stored on Genesis' secured, password-protected server. Data were cleaned and anonymised to the extent possible, with participant information remaining confidential. Finalised field notes and translated transcriptions were imported into Dedoose, a data analysis software package, to systematically code and analyse the qualitative data. The qualitative data analysis incorporated an iterative approach, including content analysis and constant comparison of narrative data to identify and validate emerging themes. The qualitative data and emergent themes were then examined within the broader context of the quantitative results and indicators, with relevant findings woven into the report as appropriate to help provide additional insights and understanding into the SAGE endline evaluation results, analyses, and external evaluator recommendations.

The evaluation used baseline evaluation data to only analyse and compare the programme's progress against the intermediate outcomes. These include self-efficacy, gender and SRHR knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP), empowerment, safety perception, community's gender attitudes, and learning support available to girls at home and in the hubs. Data for analysing the higher-level outcome data – learning, transition and sustainability is derived from programme data and endline surveys.

2.7. Evaluation ethics

- The PIZ team sought approvals and permissions from the concerned ministries for conducting the data collection exercise. No separate IRB approval was deemed necessary for this evaluation research.

- Evaluation team aimed to promote social inclusion, particularly in the sampling and data collection phases of the assignment, to avoid the exclusion of any sub-groups from the sample due to minimal numbers or low frequency within hubs. While developing the sampling framework, the team ensured representation across sub-groups and geographies to enable a balanced and nuanced analysis of quantitative and qualitative data.

- Concerning the 'Do No Harm Guideline', the evaluation team incorporated a consent mechanism in each assessment tool. The safety and safeguards for minor girls participating in the data collection were put in place primarily by obtaining their consent, and in case the girls were minors, obtaining additional consent from their parents/caretakers or guardians to allow them to participate. Parents/guardians who were illiterate had the form read and explained to them. In cases where minor girls were married, the team obtained consent from the head of the household. The consent form was also translated into local languages and was available for the survey, KII and FGD participants to reference at any time during the data collection. For the surveys and KIIs, the enumeration team collected verbal consent. In the case of

FGDs, the consent form was combined with the FGD attendance sheet, and written consent was obtained from FGD participants.

- To ensure child safety, all enumerators underwent child protection training and signed a statement of commitment to Plan International's Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Programme Participants. This policy underpinned all methodological approaches implemented during data collection and aligns with Plan International's minimum standards for child protection. The enumerators were also trained on safeguarding and child protection reporting mechanism, which included reporting any incidence immediately to the SAGE district coordinator as well as the SAGE national Safeguarding lead. The contact numbers and email IDs of the district coordinators, and SAGE safeguarding leads both in Zimbabwe and in the UK were provided to the enumerators along with a printed handout depicting the SAGE safeguarding and child protection principles and incident reporting pathway. During data collection, the enumerators came across one child protection incident, which was immediately reported to the SAGE team following the reporting pathway.

- Given the sensitivities involved in collecting data around girls' hopes and dreams, their self-efficacy, confidence and SRHR, it was ensured that female enumerators collected all quantitative and qualitative data as discussed in the above section. All enumerators for this data collection exercise were women.

- The team removed any direct identifiers in the collected data and only used the unique project ID for each respondent. This also facilitated the linking of endline data with other programme monitoring data sets. Once deposited, the data underwent procedures to protect the confidentiality of individuals whose personal information may be part of archived data. These included: (1) rigorous review to assess disclosure risk, (2) modifying data, if necessary to protect confidentiality, (3) limiting access to datasets in which the risk of disclosure remains high, and (4) conducting a consultation to manage disclosure risk.

- During analysis, the evaluation team took care to disaggregate data on a range of parameters, specifically on the various sub-groups targeted by SAGE. These included girls with disabilities, married girls, girls with young children, girls from Apostolic communities, girls from ethnic minorities, and girls engaged in labour.

- Even though there were no COVID-19 restrictions placed by the GoZ by the time endline data collection was underway, the enumerators were provided training on COVID-19-appropriate procedures and were provided with face masks and gloves for collecting any data. All survey/KII/FGD respondents were also provided with face masks while being interviewed/surveyed.

2.8. Limitations and mitigation

The endline evaluation had a few limitations, which are listed below. That said, the evaluation team believes that none of them impacted the data quality or the accuracy of the findings and recommendations. Having a mixed methods approach and a hybrid design helped overcome these challenges since this meant that the endline evaluation used data that was collected through a range of different quantitative and qualitative methods. There was robust triangulation through quantitative and qualitative data, endline and programmatic data, etc. The external evaluation team was able to implement the endline evaluation as intended, ensuring the evaluation was methodologically sound. Noted below are the limitations and challenges for qualitative and quantitative data collection, as well as the mitigation strategies ensuring that the challenge/limitation does not impact the quality of the data or findings and recommendations.

Limitations of the evaluation design

- **The endline evaluation relies on a pre-post evaluation design.** Although this design is commonly used to assess the effectiveness of interventions, there are some limitations, especially when compared to a more robust experimental or quasi-experimental design. One of the most significant limitations of the pre-post design is that without a control group, it's difficult to determine if observed changes are due to the intervention or other external factors. This limits the ability to draw causal inferences about the effectiveness of the intervention. There are also limitations related to this design's ability to uncover the impact of external events between the pre- and post-intervention periods and their influence on the outcomes, making it difficult to attribute the change solely to the intervention.

  To overcome these inherent limitations of the pre-post design and to improve the validity and reliability of the results, the endline evaluation has extensively used measures including random sampling, using qualitative data to draw out the impact of external factors (such as COVID-19) on the intervention participants, and triangulating quantitative data with qualitative data wherever possible. The evaluation has also expanded the quantitative sample to achieve a 99% confidence level to ensure any findings are credible and valid. Additionally, the analysis of learning results covers the learning assessments for all SAGE learners for whom learning data was available, thereby ensuring the reliability of learning findings. While the evaluation has put in place all the above-mentioned measures to enhance the validity and

robustness of the evaluation results, it should be noted that in the absence of a control group to compare against, all correlational inferences made by the evaluation remain indicative rather than absolute.

- Another limitation of the evaluation is that data for assessing community social and gender norms were collected from parents, caregivers, and community members **through KIIs and FGDs**. Therefore, there is the possibility that KII and FGD participants may report socially desirable behaviours during the interviews, particularly around norms, out of a need to be socially acceptable or to come across as politically correct rather than due to the intervention itself.

Challenges in data collection and analysis and their mitigation

- **There were some difficulties recruiting randomly selected girls during data collection since many of the girls were either working or had moved from the community.** About 70% of the originally sampled girls were unavailable for the surveys for various reasons. Some girls had moved to other cities in Zimbabwe or across the border to South Africa or Botswana in search of jobs; some girls had gotten married and moved out of the villages, and some other girls had transitioned to schools or jobs within the community were unable to skip their jobs/school to participate in the surveys. The evaluation team also tried measures such as going to the schools to interview SAGE girls who had transitioned into formal education, but this was unsuccessful due to – in some cases – long distances between CBLHs and schools that girls enrolled in. The evaluation team worked with the CEs and community mobilisers to pre-empt the number of girls originally sampled available for surveys and help them to identify girls to replace them. This has meant that many of the girls recruited as replacements were recruited by the CEs because they were readily available in the community. This may point to an unintended bias inserted into the survey data, particularly around questions of self-efficacy or empowerment due to a possibility of high self-efficacy girls having transitioned into education or jobs or having moved outside the community to pursue any of these transition pathways. The evaluation team has tried to overcome this through strong triangulation across the report with qualitative data collected at the endline, and with the programmatic data collected by SAGE over the last year. This included the quarterly surveys conducted by the project with a range of stakeholders, the outcome mapping exercise conducted by the programme, and research conducted by OU and Plan UK. The programme also ran an analysis to check if there was any significant difference in all intermediate outcome scores for 30% of respondents from the original sample and the 70% replaced sample to make sure any significant differences were noted and explained. The EE did not find any statistically significant differences in the responses of the original sample and the replacement respondents.

- **Financial data of cost per activity per girl is not available for the value-for-money analysis.** Given that the programme only started following activity-based expenditure reporting in 2021, the evaluation did not have access to activity-level financial data and hence, has not been able to analyse activity-level costs. This has not hampered the value for money (VFM) analysis, and the evaluation team relied upon out-put level costs data to conduct VFM analysis.

3. Key Results

Table 11: Summary of Key Programme Results

	Indicators	Target	Headline Result	Achievement status
Outcome 1 – Learning	0.1.1 - Aggregate average literacy score	65% of girls improve their literacy score	76.7% of SAGE learners improved their literacy score	Achieved
	0.1.2 - Aggregate average numeracy score	65% of girls improve their numeracy score	78.91% of SAGE learners improved their numeracy score	Achieved
Outcome 2 – Transition	0.2.1 - % of highly marginalised adolescent girls who have transitioned into and through key stages of education (formal/non-formal); training (vocational/life-skills) or fairly-paid employment (including self-employment)	60% of girls in Cohorts 1 and 2 transition into one of the transition pathways	5,201 out of 6,739 learners from C1 and C2 transitioned into at least 1 of the four transition pathways (77.17%)	Achieved
Outcome 3 – Sustainability	0.3.1 - # of community leaders reporting that CBLHs will continue to function after the project ends	100% of community leaders reporting that CBLHs will continue to function after the project ends	88 (100%) Community leaders reported their intention to continue CBLHs after the project ends	Achieved
	0.3.2 - Commitment from district-level stakeholders to continue monitoring and support SAGE initiatives	Community-driven initiatives supported by district stakeholders in 11 districts	District officials from all 11 districts have been involved in joint monitoring of the SAGE programme and have indicated positive support for SAGE interventions through endline KIIs	Achieved
	0.3.3 - SAGE-supported materials on ATL and inclusive and gender-responsive education approved by relevant government ministries.	Approved SAGE materials	SAGE ATL learning materials approved and adopted by MoPSE.	Achieved
IO.1 – Attendance	IO.1.1 - % of highly marginalised adolescent girls regularly attending sessions	65% of girls achieve minimum 65% attendance	48.7% of girls achieved a minimum of 65% attendance	**Not Achieved**
	IO.1.2 - % of CEs using inclusive, gender-sensitive pedagogy approaches	90% of CEs use inclusive, gender-sensitive pedagogy approaches	97% CEs found using inclusive, gender-sensitive pedagogy approaches	Achieved
IO.2 – Empowerment	IO.2.1 - % of highly marginalised adolescent girls demonstrating improved self-efficacy	90% of SAGE girls demonstrate high self-efficacy scores.	65% of the SAGE learners surveyed at the endline demonstrate high self-efficacy scores.	**Not Achieved**
	IO.2.2 - % of highly marginalised adolescent girls demonstrating improved knowledge, attitudes, and practices on gender and SRHR	Mean score 20% above baseline	37% increase in the mean gender KAP score and a 15.3% increase in the mean SRHR KAP score.	**Achieved for Gender KAP and partially achieved for SRHR KAP**
IO.3 – Skills	IO.3.1 - Girls feeling empowered to make informed and relevant choices on their transition pathways that best account for their circumstances.	80% of girls having a high score on an Empowerment Index	63.53% of girls surveyed at the endline have a high score on the	**Not Achieved**

	Indicators	Target	Headline Result	Achievement status
			empowerment index	
	IO 3.2 - % of marginalised girls demonstrating vocational competencies at the end of the training	80% of ISOP graduates demonstrate vocational competencies at the end of the training	100% of girls demonstrated vocational competencies at the end of the training	Achieved
IO.4 – Social Norms	IO.4.1 - % of community members (parents/caregivers) demonstrating improved gender attitudes	50% increase (over baseline) in the number of community members with a high score	47% increase in the number of community members with a high score	Partially Achieved
	IO.4.2 - Perception of safety and security amongst girls in the community	80% of girls score 3.75 out of 5 on Perceived Safety Index	81.52% of girls surveyed at endline scored a minimum of 3.75 out of 5 on Perceived Safety Index	Achieved
	IO.4.3 - % of marginalised girls feeling they are given appropriate support to stay in school/learning	58% of girls report high community support for Education	91.42% of girls reported high community support for Education	Achieved
IO.5 – Partnerships	0.5.1 - Recognition and adoption of SAGE NFE initiatives by MoPSE	MoPSE adopts at least one SAGE initiative.	MoPSE has approved ATL learning material and has uploaded it to the ministry website for further dissemination as needed.	Achieved

3.1. Learning

Learning outcomes have been one of the primary outcomes evaluated since inception and are primarily answered using quantitative data from the SAGE learning progress assessments and the endline survey data to measure changes in learning scores. This was combined with qualitative data collected from learners to further identify and explore the changes contributing to the learning improvements. Outcome mapping conducted by the SAGE programme was also used to comment on outcomes related to learning beyond numeracy and literacy and community support for learning (when relevant to learning outcomes).

3.1.1. SAGE Learning Progress Assessment (LPA)

3.1.1.1. Introduction

Drawing on technical leadership provided by the OU, the SAGE programme developed an alternative approach to assessing girls' learning from the early grade reading assessment (EGRA)/early grade Mathematics assessment (EGMA) and secondary grade reading assessment (SeGRA)/secondary grade Mathematics assessment (SeGMA) model conventionally used within the sector and across other GEC programmes. The rationale for this was based on a consideration of the SAGE girls' backgrounds and circumstances, their possible prior learning experiences (both formal and informal), the purpose of the SAGE programme and the experience of SAGE hub volunteers in carrying out assessments. An additional driver for introducing the LPA model was the need for an embedded high-quality assessment model, which could contribute to the accumulation of a national data set for NFE, improving pedagogic programme design and assessment frameworks and supporting CPD interventions that enable high-quality NFE provision. Since November 2020, the SAGE programme has utilised LPAs designed by the OU, whereby girls' learning progress was assessed at three points throughout their learning journey to form a picture of a girl's learning in three subjects (literacy, numeracy, and English). LPAs informed CEs, district staff and the wider team how well girls have learned and their level of attainment. They also supported CEs to strengthen and tailor their support to girls. The recording of the LPAs helped assess learning across a cohort and identify areas of strength and development across the hub; thereby, it also served to identify strengths and areas of professional development needed at the CE level. Within the LPA model, there are four assessment points for each girl:

- **Screening tool:** a screening tool was used to determine a girl's eligibility to join the SAGE programme. Girls were eligible to join SAGE if they had never been to or dropped out of school and had learning levels equivalent to or below Grade 5 of formal schooling in either literacy, numeracy, or both subjects.

- **Initial Progress Assessment (IPA):** The IPA occurred within two to five weeks of a girl joining the SAGE programme and was carried out by the CEs. The IPA is framed as a starting point of the girl's actual learning level and the CE's knowledge of the girl.

- **Mid-Progress Assessment (MPA):** The MPA was administered to girls midway through their SAGE learning journey by CEs, after completing Module 1c (equivalent to 1 year of the 2-year learning programme).

- **End Progress Assessment (EPA):** The EPA occurs when a girl completes the SAGE programme at the end of Module 2c (Year 2). The EPA is designed to capture the girl's progress from the initial data point to the endpoint as the girl graduates from SAGE.

A detailed overview of the LPA process is provided in Annex 2.

3.1.1.2. SAGE LPA Scoring Overview

The SAGE programme provided support across three subjects –literacy (speaking and listening, picture reading, and writing), numeracy (number sense and number operations), and English (which included letter/sound knowledge, word reading, reading and comprehension). These assessment domains relate to the national primary education curriculum for literacy and numeracy in Zimbabwe, intending to enable girls to reach grade level equivalency to support them back into formal education where possible. SAGE offered multi-lingual teaching; girls could complete/learn in English and/or their home/vernacular language. However, the LPAs were designed to be completed in the home language. The sub-tasks under literacy and numeracy assessments were:

- **Literacy:** Speaking and listening; picture reading; writing; English letter/sound knowledge; English word reading; English short passage reading; English comprehension.

- **Numeracy: Number sense:** Counting; number recognition; missing numbers; comparing and ordering numbers; place value. **Number operations:** Addition; subtraction; multiplication; division.

Thus, for both literacy and numeracy, there were scores for each sub-tasks and an overall score. The sub-tasks and total scores were assigned a colour band - white (equivalent to 'no score'), blue, pink, and yellow

(low to high scores), and this was used to indicate the overall score, e.g., for literacy, each girl had seven sub-task scores and seven sub-task colour bands, along with a total score and corresponding colour band.

The CEs recorded the girl's progress as she completed the sub-tasks within the assessments (numeracy and literacy). Each of the subject areas (numeracy and literacy) gave a girl the opportunity to score in the white level ('no score'), blue level (ECD- Grade 2), pink level (Grade 2-4) and yellow level (Grade 5+). The use of overlapping colour coding allowed for a 'best fit' within and across the sub-tasks and also meant that girls could be referred to as working within a particular colour banding rather than being reduced to a single absolute score.

Table 12 below indicates the four colour bands, their equivalent school grades, and the total score ranges to which they correspond for IPA, MPA and EPA in both literacy and numeracy.

Table 12: SAGE LPA Scoring Bands for Literacy and Numeracy

Colour band	Grade equivalent	Literacy		Numeracy	
		IPA scoring band	MPA and EPA scoring band	IPA scoring band	MPA and EPA scoring band
White	No score	0-15	0-15	0-15	0-15
Blue	ECD-Grade 2	16-33	16-34	16-21	16-21
Pink	Grades 2-4	34-60	35-61	22-37	22-36
Yellow	Grade 5+	61-81	62-87	38-52	37-52

3.1.1.3. Data availability

Given that the SAGE LPA was only adopted in Year 2 of the project, there is some variation in data availability across cohorts, which has impacted how and what analysis is conducted for learners across cohorts to assess improvements in learning.

- Cohort 1 did not have an IPA since the programme only fully developed and rolled out the LPA process in Year 2. For this reason, Cohort 1 learning progress is based on the learning improvements shown between the MPA and the EPA data points.

- Cohorts 2 to 7 have data available for all three progress assessment data points – IPA, MPA and EPA. The evaluation has used the initial and the end progress assessment data to analyse improvements in learning for Cohorts 2-7.

Table 13: Overview of LPA Data Availability

Cohort	Total learners in cohort	Total learners for whom LPA data is available	IPA data	MPA data	EPA data	Data availability			
						IPA+ EPA	IPA+ MPA	MPA+ EPA	IPA+ MPA+ EPA
Cohort 1	4,456	3,612	0	3,093	3,010	0	0	2,491	0
Cohort 2	2,285	2,003	1,477	1,188	1,073	666	1,002	984	509
Cohort 3	849	849	777	360	234	174	311	129	46
Cohort 4	1,996	1,262	1,081	730	429	311	702	170	102
Cohort 5	1,324	1,168	912	369	227	120	234	94	54
Cohort 6	1,386	1,333	1,289	693	362	343	601	362	243
Cohort 7	1,164	1,169	1,164	396	381	377	332	309	273
	13,460	11,395	6,700	6,829	5,716	1,991	3,182	4,539	1,227

3.1.1.4. LPA analysis methodology

As part of assessing the improvement in learning and the underlying factors contributing to or hindering learning, the endline evaluation took a three-step approach to provide a depth of analysis. The analysis was structured as follows:

- **Part 1 (Section 3.1.2): Overall Learning Achievement Analysis:** Focusing on the overall learning progress of girls from Cohorts 1-7 (using MPA and EPA data for Cohort 1; IPA and EPA data for Cohorts 2-7). This forms the basis for ascertaining progress against Outcome indicators O.1.1 and O.1.2.

- **Part 2 (Section 3.1.3): Longitudinal analysis:** Focusing on learners with all 3 data points (IPA, MPA and EPA) to understand progress and drivers of progress between initial and mid-point, and between mid-point and end point.
- **Part 3 (Section 3.1.4): Analysis Across Other Key Metrics:** Focusing on the learning data of SAGE learners that were covered in the endline survey (Cohorts 1,2 and 3) to determine whether LPA findings relate to key demographics of the learner sample. This assists with identifying the effect of different SAGE inputs and learner and household characteristics on the statistical significance of results.

3.1.2. Learning outcome findings

3.1.2.1. Changes in literacy score

SAGE learners have shown a significant improvement in literacy scores over their engagement with the accelerated teaching and learning (ATL) programme. Table 14 shows the average literacy scores for SAGE girls at IPA and EPA. It also shows the difference between the two data points and the p-value of these differences, which measures how likely the changes are due to chance.

Table 14: Changes in Standardised Literacy Scores by Cohorts

Cohort	Average literacy score at IPA	Average literacy score at MPA	Average literacy score at EPA	Difference between IPA-MPA	Difference between MPA-EPA	Difference between IPA-EPA	p-value
Overall (N = 11,395)	41.42	68.80	81.12	27.38***	12.32***	39.70***	p < 2e-16
Cohorts 1 and 2 Combined (n=5,615)	43.16[9]	68.91	81.43	25.75***	12.52***	38.27***	p < 2e-16
Cohort 1 (N = 3,612)	N.A.	69.22	80.70	N.A.	11.48***	N.A.	p < 2e-16
Cohort 2 (N = 2,003)	43.16	68.10	83.48	24.94***	15.38***	40.32***	p < 2e-16
Cohort 3 (N = 849)	40.87	70.98	81.66	30.11***	10.68***	40.79***	p < 2e-16
Cohort 4 (N = 1,262)	43.12	68.12	78.58	25.00***	10.46***	35.46***	p < 2e-16
Cohort 5 (N = 1,168)	37.94	68.18	81.92	30.24***	13.74***	43.98***	p < 2e-16
Cohort 6 (N = 1,333)	40.13	68.50	80.82	28.37***	12.32***	40.69***	p < 2e-16
Cohort 7 (N = 1,169)	42.14	68.04	80.19	25.90***	12.15***	38.05***	p < 2e-16

Statistical significance is indicated using asterisks: * p-value < 0.1, ** p-value < 0.05, *** p-value < 0.01, where the p-value measures how likely the results are due to chance.

Overall, the average literacy score improvement between IPA and EPA was positive and statistically significant for all Cohorts. Table 14 suggests that the programme has positively impacted girls' literacy, with a majority of SAGE girls achieving Grade 5 literacy proficiency by the EPA stage. **The mean literacy score at EPA ranged between 78.58 and 83.48 across cohorts, with the overall average at 81.12. This means that an average SAGE learner was able to achieve literacy scores equivalent to Grade 5 proficiency.**

The following pages present a detailed analysis of literacy outcomes across cohorts. Cohort 1 has been analysed separately from Cohorts 2-7 due to the non-availability of IPA data and reliance on MPA data for learning progress analysis. The difference in learning improvements in Cohort 1 girls and other cohorts is also because Cohort 1 girls would already have improved their learning in the first year of their learning, thereby impacting the measurable difference between IPA and EPA.

Figures 1 and 2 show the distribution of learners' scores across the four bands. For Cohort 1, the distribution is mapped at MPA and EPA (since there was no IPA for C1), and for Cohort 2-7, the distribution is mapped at IPA and EPA stage. **There is a significant improvement in the average scores of the learners, with 69.97% of Cohort 1 girls achieving Grade 5 scores (yellow band) at the EPA stage compared to 44.46% at the MPA stage. In Cohorts 2-7, 71.21% of girls achieved Grade 5 scores (yellow band) at the EPA**

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[9] Only uses data from Cohort 2 since Cohort 1 does not have IPA scores.

stage compared to 7.76% at the IPA stage. Overall, for all cohorts (1-7), the percentage of girls achieving Grade 5 literacy scores at the EPA stage is 70.55%.

Figure 1: Distribution of Total Literacy Score – MPA to EPA (Cohort 1)
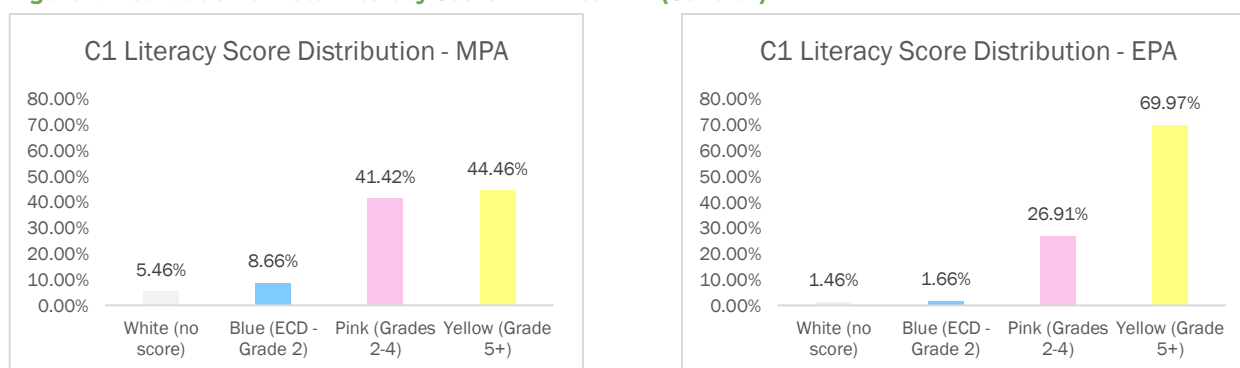
Figure 2: Distribution of Total Literacy Score – IPA to EPA (Cohort 2-7)
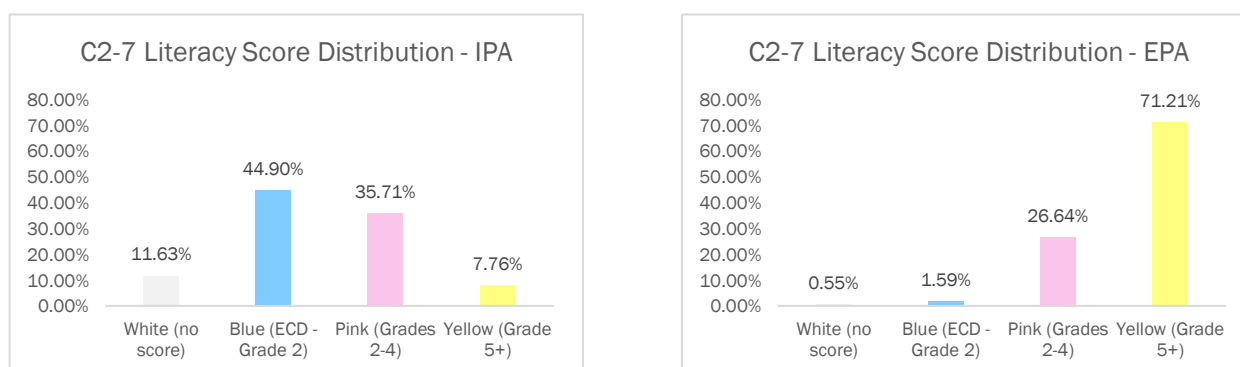
After two years of exposure to SAGE, 64.27% of Cohort 1 girls and 92.34% of Cohort 2-7 girls show improved literacy scores. **Cumulatively, around 76.71% of SAGE learners (3,438 out of 4,482) across Cohorts 1-7 improved their literacy scores at EPA. This is much higher than the programme target of '65% girls showing an improved literacy score'.** Table 15 below illustrates the percentage of girls showing improved literacy scores across cohorts.[10] While the evaluation looked at various factors contributing to learning gains in sections 3.1.3 and 3.1.4, the difference between girls showing learning gains in Cohort 1 and later cohorts can be explained by the fact that the Cohort 1 baseline value available for the analysis is the MPA data, which means that the learners would already have been a year into the SAGE programme and would have already achieved some learning increase in that time.

Table 15: Literacy Score Improvements Across Cohorts

Cohort	Total girls with baseline[11] and EPA scores	Number of girls showing improvement in literacy scores	Percentage of girls showing improvements in literacy scores
Cohort 1	2,491	1,601	64.27%
Cohort 2	666	615	92.34%
Cohorts 1&2 combined	3,157	2,216	70.19%
Cohort 3	174	164	94.25%
Cohort 4	311	272	87.46%
Cohort 5	120	118	98.33%
Cohort 6	343	322	93.88%
Cohort 7	377	346	91.78%
	4,482	3,438	76.71%

Of these 3,438 girls reporting literacy score improvement, 2,583 (75.13%) moved to a higher colour band.

Colour band movement	Cohort 1	Cohorts 2-7	Total
White to blue	10	7	17
White to pink	40	64	104

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[10] This only includes girls for whom both baseline (MPA for C1, IPA for C2-7) and endline scores (EPA) were available.
[11] Baseline here refers to MPA score for Cohort 1; IPA score for Cohorts 2-7

Colour band movement	Cohort 1	Cohorts 2-7	Total
White to yellow	49	187	236
Blue to pink	62	188	250
Blue to yellow	110	624	734
Pink to yellow	714	528	1,242
	985	1,598	2,583

Mean Analysis[12]

The mean literacy scores for SAGE learners show a significant increase – with literacy scores for Cohort 1 increasing from 64.45 at MPA to 75.13 at EPA, and an even more significant increase visible in Cohorts 2-7, where the mean literacy score almost doubles from 41.42 at IPA to 81.59 at EPA. One-way ANOVA tests conducted to ascertain the robustness of the difference in mean scores show that the literacy score was statistically significantly different between MPA and EPA for Cohort 1 and IPA and EPA for Cohort 2 to 7.[13] Further post hoc analyses with a Bonferroni adjustment revealed that the difference between the time points is also statistically significantly different. For Cohort 1, the generalised eta squared value of 0.06 indicates that the assessment timepoint (MPA or EPA) accounts for 6% of the variability in the total literacy score. For Cohort 2-7, the generalised eta squared value of 0.53 indicates that the assessment timepoint (IPA or EPA) accounts for 53% of the variability in the total literacy score. Figure 3 visualises the results of the ANOVA test mapped onto boxplots at MPA and EPA for Cohort 1 and for IPA and EPA for Cohort 2-7.

Figure 3: One-Way ANOVA Tests for Cohort 1 and Cohorts 2-7
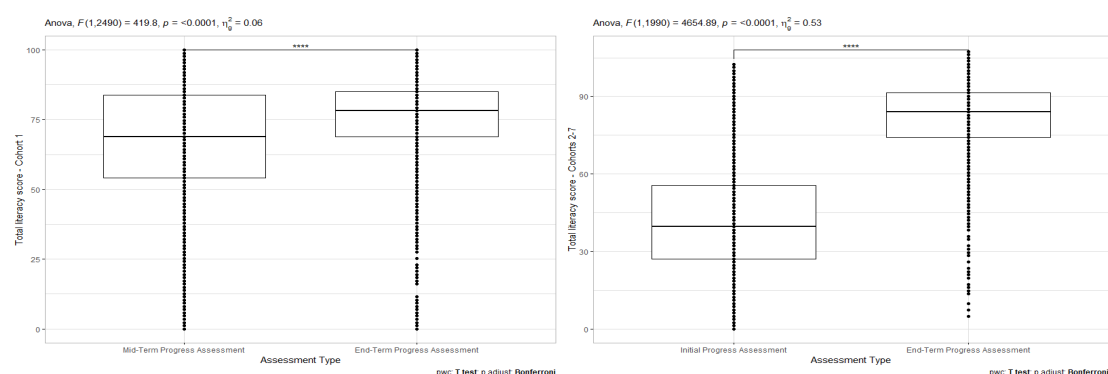
3.1.2.2. Changes in numeracy score

Like the literacy scores, SAGE learners demonstrated significant improvements in their numeracy scores. Table 16 shows the average numeracy scores for SAGE girls at IPA and EPA. The table also shows the difference between the two data points and the p-value (which measures how likely the result is due to chance) of these differences.

Table 16: Changes in Standardised Numeracy Scores by Cohort

Cohort	Average numeracy score at IPA	Average numeracy score at MPA	Average numeracy score at EPA	Difference between MPA-IPA	Difference between EPA-MPA	Difference between EPA-IPA	p-value
Overall (N=11,395)	**47.10**	**63.29**	**79.73**	16.19***	16.44***	32.63***	**p < 2e-16**
Cohorts 1 and 2 Combined (N=5,615)	**48.54[14]**	**62.00**	**79.21**	13.46***	17.21***	30.67***	**p < 2e-16**
Cohort 1 (N=3,612)	N.A.	61.56	78.93	N.A.	17.37***	N.A.	p < 2e-16
Cohort 2 (N=2,003)	48.54	63.15	80.01	14.61***	16.86***	31.47***	p < 2e-16
Cohort 3 (N=849)	47.15	66.36	77.22	19.21***	10.86***	30.07***	p < 2e-16

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[12] This section performs means analysis on the subsample of girls who have literacy scores at both baseline and endline.
[13] For girls who have both MPA and EPA observations for Cohort 1, and girls who have both IPA and EPA observations for Cohorts 2-7.
[14] Only uses data from Cohort 2 since Cohort 1 does not have IPA scores.

Cohort	Average numeracy score at IPA	Average numeracy score at MPA	Average numeracy score at EPA	Difference between MPA-IPA	Difference between EPA-MPA	Difference between EPA-IPA	p-value
Cohort 4 (N=1,262)	45.86	64.47	80.58	18.61***	16.11***	34.72***	p < 2e-16
Cohort 5 (N=1,168)	43.41	71.23	83.04	27.82***	11.81***	39.63***	p < 2e-16
Cohort 6 (N=1,333)	48.38	67.16	81.67	18.78***	14.51***	33.29***	p < 2e-16
Cohort 7 (N=1,169)	47.87	58.09	82.10	10.22***	24.01***	34.23***	p < 2e-16

Statistical significance is indicated using asterisks: * p-value < 0.1, ** p-value < 0.05, *** p-value < 0.01, where the p-value measures how likely the results are due to chance.

As is visible, there was a statistically significant improvement in numeracy scores across all cohorts. Between IPA and EPA, the change in numeracy scores is both positive and statistically significant for the overall programme and each cohort. Just like literacy, the average SAGE learner was able to achieve Grade 5 proficiency in numeracy at the EPA stage. Figures 4 and 5 below show the distribution of learners' numeracy scores across the four bands. For Cohort 1, the distribution is mapped at MPA and EPA (since there was no IPA for C1), and for Cohort 2-7, the distribution is mapped at IPA and EPA stage. **There is a significant improvement in the average scores of the learners, with 70.56% of Cohort 1 girls achieving Grade 5 scores (yellow band) at the EPA stage compared to 38.60% at the MPA stage. In Cohort 2-7, 73.43% of girls achieved Grade 5 scores (yellow band) at the EPA stage compared to 10.37% at the IPA stage. Overall, for all cohorts (1-7), the percentage of girls achieving Grade 5 numeracy scores at the EPA stage is 71.92%.**

Figure 4: Distribution of Total Numeracy Score – MPA to EPA (Cohort 1)

C1 Numeracy Score Distribution - MPA

White (no score) 10.86%, Blue (ECD-Grade 2) 8.70%, Pink (Grade 2-4) 41.84%, Yellow (Grade 5+) 38.60%

C1 Numeracy Score Distribution - EPA

White (no score) 1.50%, Blue (ECD-Grade 2) 2.06%, Pink (Grade 2-4) 25.88%, Yellow (Grade 5+) 70.56%
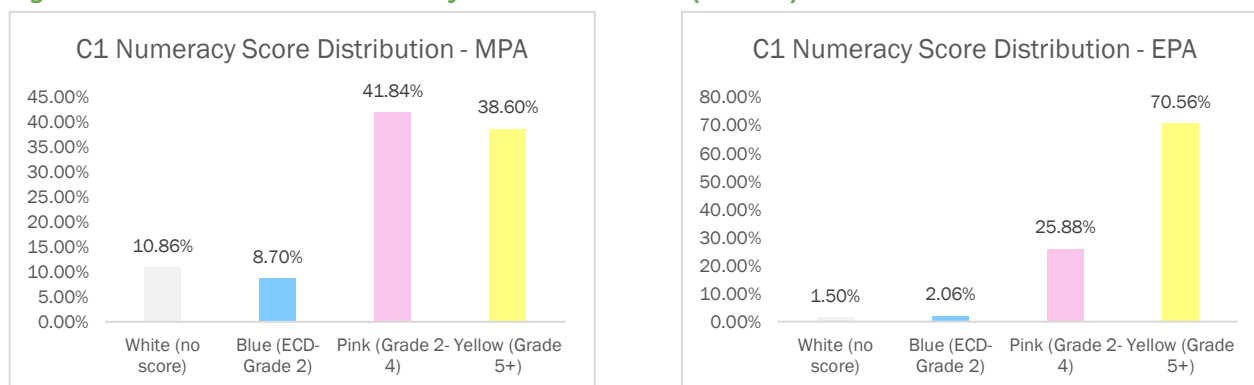
Figure 5: Distribution of Total Numeracy Score – IPA to EPA (Cohort 2-7)

C2-7 Numeracy Score Distribution - IPA

White (no score) 16.85%, Blue (ECD-Grade 2) 19.22%, Pink (Grade 2-4) 53.56%, Yellow (Grade 5+) 10.37%

C2-7 Numeracy Score Distribution - EPA

White (no score) 1.44%, Blue (ECD-Grade 2) 1.03%, Pink (Grade 2-4) 24.09%, Yellow (Grade 5+) 73.43%
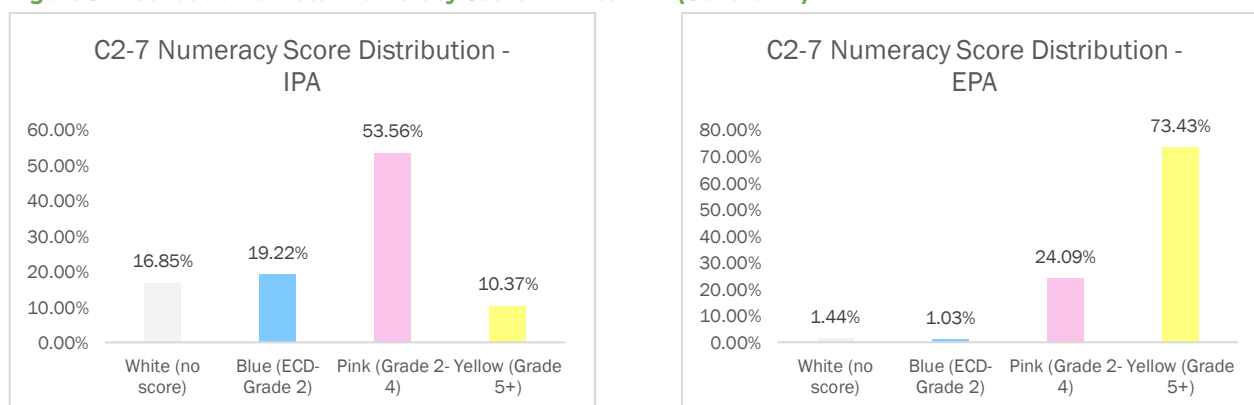
Importantly, these findings show progressive gains and a clear distributional shift to the right in their competencies as girls progress from innumerate to numerate learners. The profile of the learners is changing – they start innumerate (zero scores) and then progress along the numeracy continuum to emergent (blue), developing (pink) and then capable (yellow). From a technical perspective, they demonstrate a shift from basic foundational knowledge of mathematical 'facts' to a conceptual understanding of principles in action for higher-order subtasks. In other words, they are applying their knowledge of the number system (number identification, place value, counting/number bands, basic addition, and subtraction of whole numbers/units) to

the application of these core mathematical principles to more complex, conceptual numeracy tasks (multiplication, division, number problems/word problems, etc.).

Many learners in the C2-7 cohort were already at the developing stage at the start of SAGE, indicating many had been exposed to instruction in numeracy foundational skills either through their previous school experience (96% of SAGE learners had at least some schooling before SAGE) or acquired from employment, socially engaging, through learning in the home, with siblings/friends who had attended school. The EE notes that numeracy subtasks in the LPAs were presented as they would in formal schools, using signs/symbols, equations and formatting only taught in classrooms. When tested at IPA, learners had to be already familiar with this 'language of maths'. Girls with limited or no experience in a formal school environment may have had less exposure to this 'language'. Instead, they would probably have struggled to interpret these sub-tasks and items during the IPA, with more learners expected in the white and blue bands initially, with a profile shift to pink and yellow bands at EPA. The distributional shift in profiles can be seen across numeracy and literacy results across all cohorts.

72.38% of Cohort 1 girls and 87.09% of Cohort 2-7 girls showed improved numeracy scores. **Cumulatively, 78.91% of SAGE learners (3,537 out of 4,482) showed an improvement in their numeracy scores.** Table 17 below shows the percentage of girls showing improved literacy scores across cohorts.[15] While the evaluation looks at various factors contributing to learning gains in sections 3.1.3 and 3.1.4, the difference between girls showing learning gains in Cohort 1 and later cohorts can be explained by the fact that the Cohort 1 baseline value available for our analysis is the MPA data, which means that the learners would already have been a year into the SAGE programme and would have already achieved some learning increase in that time.

Table 17: Numeracy Score Improvements across Cohorts

Cohort	Total girls with baseline[16] and EPA scores	Number of girls showing improvement in numeracy scores	Percentage of girls showing improvements in numeracy scores
Cohort 1	2,491	1,803	72.38%
Cohort 2	666	560	84.08%
Cohorts 1 & 2 combined	3157	2,363	74.85%
Cohort 3	174	154	88.50%
Cohort 4	311	254	81.67%
Cohort 5	120	119	99.17%
Cohort 6	343	297	86.58%
Cohort 7	377	350	92.83%
	4,482	3,537	78.91%

Of these 3,537 girls reporting numeracy score improvement, 2,614 (73.90%) moved to a higher colour band.

Colour band movement	Cohort 1	Cohorts 2-7	Total
White to blue	15	6	21
White to pink	85	93	178
White to yellow	143	249	392
Blue to pink	74	92	166
Blue to yellow	145	283	428
Pink to yellow	695	734	1,429
	1,157	1,457	2,614

Mean Analysis

The mean numeracy scores for SAGE learners show a significant increase – with scores for Cohort 1 increasing from 61.56 at MPA to 78.93 at EPA and from 47.10 at IPA to 80.63 at EPA for Cohorts 2-7. One-way ANOVA tests conducted to ascertain the robustness of the difference in mean scores show that the literacy score was statistically significantly different for Cohort 1 and Cohort 2-7. Further post hoc analyses with a Bonferroni adjustment revealed that the difference between MPA and EPA for Cohort 1 and between IPA and EPA for Cohort 2-7 is also statistically significantly different. For Cohort 1, the generalised eta squared value of 0.12 indicates that the assessment timepoint (MPA or EPA) accounts for 12% of the variability in the total numeracy score. For Cohort 2-7, the generalised eta squared value of 0.42 indicates that

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[15] This only includes girls for whom both baseline (MPA for C1, IPA for C2-7) and endline scores (EPA) were available.
[16] Baseline here refers to MPA score for Cohort 1; IPA score for Cohorts 2-7

the assessment timepoint (IPA or EPA) accounts for 42% of the variability in the total numeracy score. Figure 6 visualises the results of the ANOVA test mapped onto boxplots at MPA and EPA for Cohort 1 and for IPA and EPA for Cohort 2-7.

Figure 6: One-Way ANOVA Tests for Cohort 1 and Cohort 2-7

Anova, $F(1,2490) = 809.17$, $p = <0.0001$, $\eta_g^2 = 0.12$

Anova, $F(1,1990) = 2840.34$, $p = <0.0001$, $\eta_g^2 = 0.42$

pwc: T test; p.adjust: Bonferroni
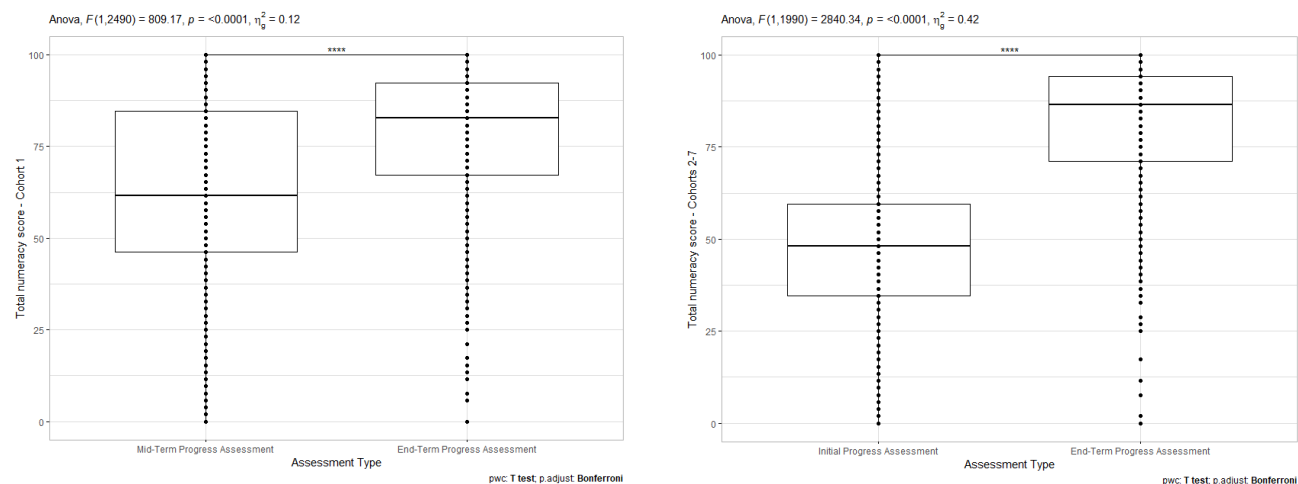
3.1.2.3. Relative change in learning outcomes by baseline[17] scores

Figures 7 and 8 below show the average improvements in literacy and numeracy scores for learners within different baseline bands. Across literacy and numeracy, the score gains for learners in the lower colour bands (white and blue) at baseline (MPA for C1, IPA for C2-7) have shown the most significant improvements. Average literacy scores for Cohort 1 and Cohorts 2-7 improved by 55.27 and 67.29 points for those in the white band at baseline and 41.13 and 50.52 points for those in the blue band at baseline. Similarly, the numeracy scores improved by 59 and 63.98 points for those in the white band at baseline and 40.95 and 44.94 points for those in the blue band at baseline. **This means that SAGE improved the learning scores most for those who had been the weakest learners at baseline. This is consistent with the project's theory of change, which focused on foundational skills. Non-learners (at baseline) – on average, improved their learning by three grades and jumped up to two colour bands between baseline and EPA.** Emergent learners (blue band at baseline) also jumped a colour band on average.

Figure 7: Average Gains in Cohort 1 Literacy and Numeracy Scores Based on the Colour Band at MPA.
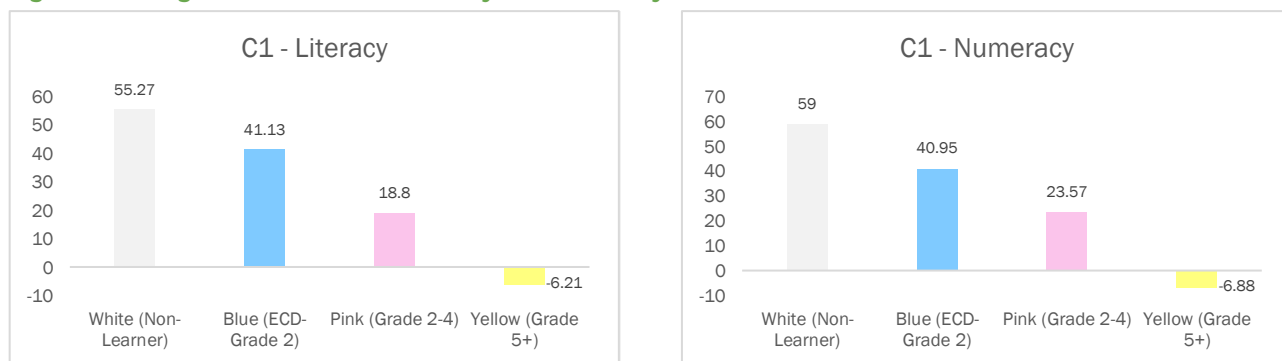
Figure 8: Average Gains in Cohort 2-7 Literacy and Numeracy Scores Based on the Colour Band at IPA.

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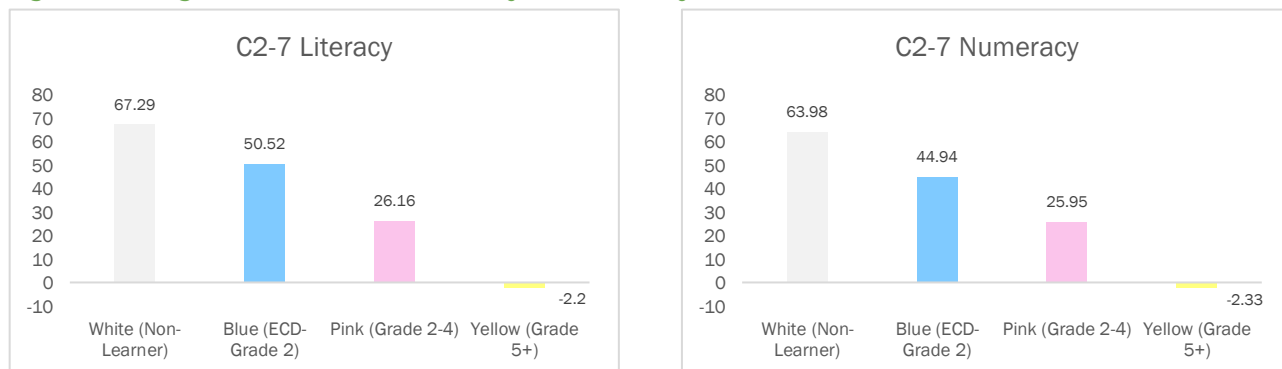
[17] In this section, baseline refers to MPA score for Cohort 1; IPA score for Cohorts 2-7

3.1.2.4. Learning results by sub-tasks

As discussed in the sections above, SAGE learners have demonstrated statistically significant improvements in literacy and numeracy scores across cohorts. This section analyses learning gains across sub-tasks in the LPA tests to identify areas with the most improvement in learning scores. **Table 18 highlights that there has been a statistically significant improvement in learning scores across every literacy and numeracy sub-task.** However, in terms of gains, the most significant gains in terms of percentage score improvements are visible in sub-tasks such as English word reading and English short passage in literacy; and missing numbers and number operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division) in numeracy.

Table 18: Learning Results by Subtask

Subtasks	Cohort 1			Cohort 2-7		
	MPA	EPA	Difference (EPA-MPA)	IPA	EPA	Difference (EPA-IPA)
Literacy						
English Letter/Sound Knowledge	5.03	6.23	1.20***	3.97	6.38	2.41***
English Word Reading	19.17	22.72	3.55***	9.82	22.80	12.98***
English Short Passage Reading	15.35	16.43	1.08***	7.40	16.60	9.20***
English Comprehension	3.22	3.82	0.60***	2.27	3.92	1.65***
Speaking & listening	4.79	5.76	0.97***	3.95	5.87	1.92***
Picture Reading	2.12	2.39	0.27***	1.61	2.36	0.75***
Writing	6.39	8.01	1.62***	4.52	8.17	3.65***
Numeracy						
Number Sense: Counting (3)	2.46	2.88	0.42***	2.50	2.90	0.40***
Number Sense: Missing Number (9)	5.33	6.78	1.45***	4.16	6.96	2.80***
Number Sense: Number Recognition (9)	5.72	7.08	1.36***	4.56	7.19	2.63***
Number Sense: Comparing Ordering (4)	2.85	3.32	0.47***	2.12	3.36	1.24***
Number Sense: Place Value (3)	1.84	2.51	0.67***	1.48	2.54	1.06***
Number Operations: Addition (6)	3.95	5.03	1.08***	3.27	5.11	1.84***
Number Operations: Subtraction (6)	3.78	4.86	1.08***	2.92	4.97	2.05***
Number Operations: Multiplication (6)	3.25	4.40	1.15***	1.86	4.57	2.71***
Number Operations: Division (6)	2.84	4.18	1.34***	1.63	4.33	2.70***

Statistical significance is indicated using asterisks: * p-value < 0.1, ** p-value < 0.05, *** p-value < 0.01, where the p-value measures how likely the results are due to chance.

Further breakdown of the numeracy scores into the two 'intermediate' sub-tasks – number sense and number operations – shows that the learners have shown a greater improvement in the number operations sub-tasks compared to the number sense sub-tasks. This is in line with the expectations since a large number of SAGE girls had some exposure to formal schooling before SAGE and were already scoring better in number sense compared to number operations at the time of their enrolment in SAGE, so there was a smaller room to improve in number sense sub-tasks. Given this, the bigger improvement in number operations aligns with the programme expectations, given the composition of the SAGE learner universe.

Table 19: Numeracy Score Break-Down by Intermediate Sub-Tasks

Sub Tasks	Cohort 1			Cohorts 2-7		
	MPA	EPA	Difference (EPA-MPA)	IPA	EPA	Difference (EPA-IPA)
Numeracy						
Number Sense (out of 28)	18.2	22.57	4.37	14.82	22.95	8.13
Number Operations (out of 24)	13.82	18.47	4.65	9.68	18.98	9.30

In addition to the improvements in mean scores across sub-tasks, **EE notes a significant drop in the percentage of learners getting white band/zero scores on each sub-task.** This is presented in Figures 9 and 10 below. In literacy, girls have shown significant improvements in their knowledge of English, with all four English-related sub-tasks showing between 80% and 90% drop in the number of girls with zero scores. A similar trend is seen for literacy subtasks related to picture reading and writing in the home language. Sub-tasks such as English word reading, short passage reading, picture reading and writing which had the highest number of zero scores at baseline (MPA for C1, IPA for C2-7), have shown the biggest improvements.

Similarly, for numeracy, significant drops were seen in learners scoring zero scores in both number senses and number operations (multiplication and division in particular). Higher-level number operations such as multiplication and division had close to half of the SAGE learners scoring zero scores at baseline (MPA for C1, IPA for C2-7). This number had dropped to less than 6% for both operations by EPA. Number sense sub-tasks related to comparing and ordering numbers and placing value on a number, which had the highest number of learners with zero scores at IPA/MPA, have shown a significant improvement with an 86.64% drop in learners scoring zero scores in these sub-tasks.

Figure 9: SAGE Learners with Zero Scores across Literacy Sub-Tasks
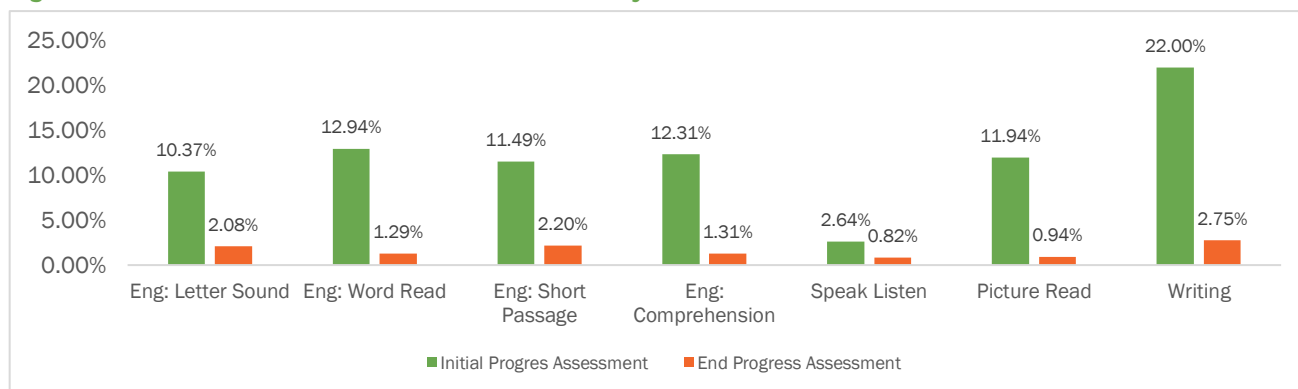
Figure 10: SAGE Learners with Zero Scores across Numeracy Sub-Tasks
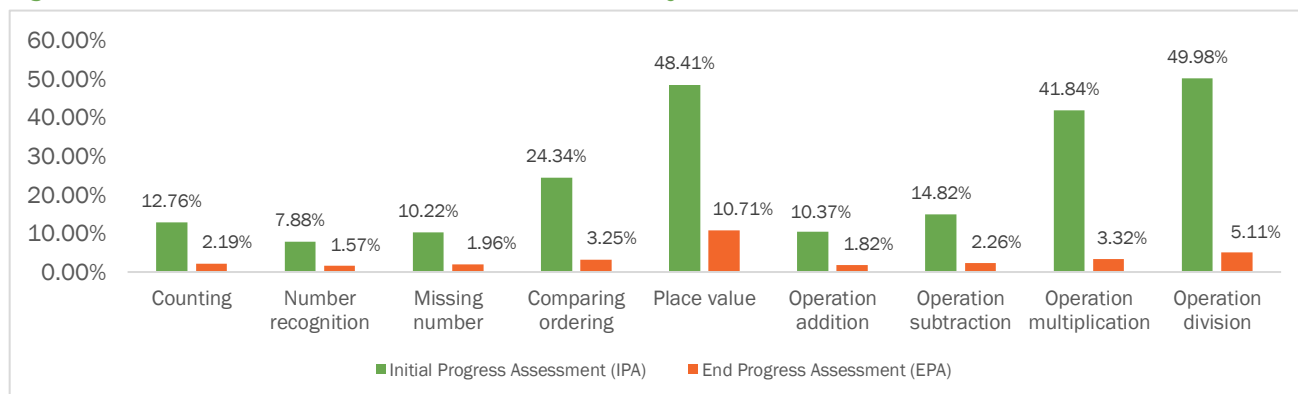
This improvement across all the sub-tasks indicates that the SAGE programme has successfully supported girls' future learning, having established the basics of literacy and numeracy among the girls. Girls and their parents/caregivers also echoed this during the endline data collection. When asked whether they believed that SAGE had enabled them to be successful in their further learning through a formal school or another non-formal education programme, more than 90% of girls surveyed at endline highlighted that they feel prepared and primed for success in their future learning. Interviews and FGDs with parents and community members also highlight SAGE's role in helping their girls be better prepared for attending school, NFE programmes, and vocational training. The endline survey data shows that many girls who had dropped out of school due to financial issues and could not attend school before joining SAGE are now better prepared and better equipped to get back into formal education. Many learners highlighted that after participating in SAGE and improving their literacy and numeracy, they are confident about doing well in a formal school.

> *"It will help me in the sense that when I decide to come back to school in future, I will be able to use some of the knowledge I acquire through the SAGE programme. I can now fluently speak English and understand basic Math."*
> – SAGE Learner, Hotsprings.

3.1.2.5. Learning results by sub-groups

This section compares the literacy and numeracy results for SAGE learners by sub-groups. Looking at the disaggregated literacy data, **all 7 SAGE sub-groups show statistically significant improvements in literacy and numeracy scores** from baseline (MPA for C1, IPA for C2-7) to EPA.

Table 20: Learning Scores by SAGE Sub-Group

Sub-groups	N	Mean literacy score			p-value	Mean numeracy score			p-value
Cohort 1		MPA	EPA	Diff		MPA	EPA	Diff	
Overall	3,612	69.22	80.70	11.48***	<2.2e-16	61.56	78.93	17.37***	<2.2e-16
Girls with disabilities	345	62.42	74.66	12.24***	8.5e-8	56.01	75.54	19.53***	<2.2e-16
Married girls	1,295	73.50	82.26	8.76***	<2.2e-16	60.62	82.61	21.99***	<2.2e-16
Young mothers	1,657	73.40	82.29	8.89***	<2.2e-16	61.75	81.68	19.93***	<2.2e-16
Apostolic girls	1,951	69.23	79.67	10.44***	<2.2e-16	61.71	79.26	17.55***	<2.2e-16
Girls from ethnic minorities	299	71.65	80.65	9.00***	1.3e-6	66.68	74.00	7.32***	8.9e-5
Girls never been to school	150	42.81	70.77	27.96***	1.4e-12	46.11	70.05	23.94***	3.03e-11
Girls engaged in labour	3,452	69.14	80.64	11.50***	<2.2e-16	61.31	79.03	17.72***	<2.2e-16
Cohort 2-7		IPA	EPA	Diff		IPA	EPA	Diff	
Overall	7,784	41.42	81.59	40.17***	<2.2e-16	47.10	80.63	33.53***	<2.2e-16
Girls with disabilities	280	37.27	75.54	38.27***	<2.2e-16	43.05	76.15	33.10***	<2.2e-16
Married girls	2,639	39.72	83.97	44.25***	<2.2e-16	46.77	83.59	36.82***	<2.2e-16
Young mothers	2,816	41.04	84.13	43.09***	<2.2e-16	47.67	82.93	35.26***	<2.2e-16
Apostolic girls	5,016	40.51	81.62	41.11***	<2.2e-16	46.90	80.37	33.47***	<2.2e-16
Girls from ethnic minorities	293	39.42	78.73	39.31***	<2.2e-16	46.02	76.28	30.26***	<2.2e-16
Girls never been to school	357	39.99	83.46	43.47***	<2.2e-16	45.84	77.04	31.20***	<2.2e-16
Girls engaged in labour	7,610	41.40	81.68	40.28***	<2.2e-16	47.10	80.72	33.62***	<2.2e-16

Statistical significance is indicated using asterisks: * p-value < 0.1, ** p-value < 0.05, *** p-value < 0.01, where the p-value measures how likely the results are due to chance.

For Cohort 1, understandably, girls who had never been to school scored the lowest across both literacy and numeracy at MPA and have shown the most improvement in learning scores, closely followed by girls with disabilities who show amongst the biggest improvements in both scores. This aligns with the programme expectations since these two groups are particularly disadvantaged and have fewer formal learning opportunities. This also points to SAGE acting on the findings of the midline alternative results report, which found a need for targeted and specific support for girls who had never been to school and girls with disabilities. The programme was able to put in place targeted interventions and supported the professional development of CEs to further support girls who had never been to school and those with disabilities.

For Cohort 2-7, married women and young mothers from Cohort 2-7 showed the greatest improvement in learning scores across literacy and numeracy. This is in line with the sentiments shared by girls in their KIIs, where married women or young mothers mentioned SAGE as a second lease of learning for them. Even though they were keen to continue learning, many had to drop out of school due to financial challenges, getting pregnant, or getting married early. In addition, the support provided by SAGE, particularly regarding childcare support, flexible session timing, and individualised learning support as needed to enable girls with children to attend SAGE sessions regularly, has also played a significant role in girls achieving learning gains.

3.1.2.6. Learning results by districts

This section compares the literacy and numeracy results for girls by the district. The disaggregated data shows that all districts with sample sizes above 20 see statistically significant improvements in literacy and numeracy scores from baseline (MPA for Cohort 1 and IPA for Cohort 2-7) to EPA.

Table 21: Learning Scores by District

District	N	Mean literacy score			p-value[18]	Mean numeracy score			p-value[19]
Cohort 1		MPA	EPA	Difference		MPA	EPA	Difference	
Bulilima	593	70.50	82.71	12.21***	p<2.2e-16	66.77	76.75	9.98***	p=3.51e-13
Chimanimani	581	74.70	81.06	6.36***	p=5.42e-8	68.81	79.46	10.65***	p=1.15e-13
Epworth	290	60.32	77.08	16.76***	p=2.34e-8	60.42	76.43	16.01***	p=6.81e-10
Harare South	8	60.49	85.43	24.94	NA	59.13	75.77	16.64	NA
Hatcliffe	4	67.49	51.44	-16.05	NA	51.92	51.92	0	NA
Imbizo	122	69.43	78.93	9.50*	p=0.06	68.11	80.18	12.07**	p=0.01

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[18] Paired t-tests were not performed in instances where the sample size is less than 20.
[19] Paired t-tests were not performed in instances where the sample size is less than 20.

District	N	Mean literacy score			p-value[18]	Mean numeracy score			p-value[19]
Khami	9	77.78	91.36	13.58	NA	58.97	82.69	23.72	NA
Mutare Rural	613	65.73	82.82	17.09***	p<2.2e-16	48.10	79.76	31.66***	p<2.2e-16
Mutasa	923	74.50	82.25	7.75***	p=5.84e-15	58.31	83.36	25.05***	p<2.2e-16
Mutoko	469	59.21	70.70	11.49***	p=8.52e-9	64.20	70.07	5.87**	p=0.002
Reigate	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Cohorts 2-7		IPA	EPA	Difference		IPA	EPA	Difference	
Bulilima	548	38.96	79.02	40.06***	p<2.2e-16	47.87	77.22	29.35***	p<2.2e-16
Chimanimani	1,643	40.77	81.88	41.11***	p<2.2e-16	46.14	83.51	37.37***	p<2.2e-16
Epworth	646	42.95	81.54	38.59***	p<2.2e-16	46.76	83.82	37.06***	p<2.2e-16
Harare South	770	43.76	83.20	39.44***	p<2.2e-16	44.29	77.10	32.81***	p<2.2e-16
Hatcliffe	415	39.67	65.23	25.56***	p<2.2e-16	46.57	63.75	17.18***	p=2.19e-8
Imbizo	120	48.74	86.57	37.83***	p<2.2e-16	54.20	85.54	31.34***	p=9.78e-11
Khami	189	40.89	85.46	44.57***	p<2.2e-16	47.79	81.41	33.62***	p=1.80e-10
Mutare Rural	1,185	39.94	83.88	43.94***	p<2.2e-16	46.40	83.60	47.20***	p<2.2e-16
Mutasa	1,586	39.70	85.08	46.10***	p<2.2e-16	46.75	81.75	35.00***	p<2.2e-16
Mutoko	545	46.94	73.38	26.44***	p<2.2e-16	55.13	72.64	17.51***	p=1.27e-12
Reigate	137	46.15	78.60	32.45***	p=0.0001	47.18	80.34	33.16***	p=3.12e-07

Statistical significance is indicated using asterisks: * p-value < 0.1, ** p-value < 0.05, *** p-value < 0.01, where the p-value measures how likely the results are due to chance.

Of the districts with sample sizes greater than 20, the district that sees the greatest improvement in both mean literacy and numeracy scores from IPA/MPA to EPA for Cohort 1 is Mutare Rural. The smallest gain in mean literacy score for Cohort 1 is observed for Chimanimani and for the mean numeracy score, Mutoko. For Cohorts 2-7, the district that sees the greatest gains in literacy is Mutasa, and for numeracy, Mutare Rural.

3.1.3. Learning score progression

As seen in Table 14 and 7 and summarised in Table 22 below, **we note that the numeracy learning gains between IPA-MPA (16.19) and MPA-EPA (16.44) were relatively similar, showing a gradual, linear improvement in numeracy. However, for literacy, we see that the learning improvements in the programme's first half – IPA to MPA (27.38) – were much higher than learning gains in the second half – between MPA and EPA (12.32).**

Table 22: Learning score improvement between assessments

Cohort	Literacy score improvement			Numeracy score Improvement		
	Between IPA-MPA	Between MPA-EPA	Between IPA-EPA	Between IPA-MPA	Between MPA-EPA	Between IPA-EPA
Overall	27.38***	12.32***	39.70***	16.19***	16.44***	32.63***
Cohort 1	N.A.	10.68***	N.A.	N.A.	17.37***	N.A.
Cohort 2	24.94***	15.38***	40.32***	14.61***	16.86***	31.47***
Cohort 3	30.11***	10.68***	40.79***	19.21***	10.86***	30.07***
Cohort 4	25.00***	10.46***	35.46***	18.61***	16.11***	34.72***
Cohort 5	30.24***	13.74***	43.98***	27.82***	11.81***	39.63***
Cohort 6	28.37***	12.32***	40.69***	18.78***	14.51***	33.29***
Cohort 7	25.90***	12.15***	38.05***	10.22***	24.01***	34.23***

Statistical significance is indicated using asterisks: * p-value < 0.1, ** p-value < 0.05, *** p-value < 0.01, where the p-value measures how likely the results are due to chance.

This differing pace of learning improvement between literacy and numeracy is consistent with generally available knowledge about progress in accelerated learning programmes. Regarding literacy instruction and reading theory, research shows[20,21] that learners typically make greater and faster gains in the first half of an instructional programme like SAGE, which focuses on teaching foundational skills. In the programme's first half, they spent a lot of time mastering the smaller, simpler 'building blocks' of literacy (letters, words, sentences, verbal comprehension, etc.) rather than mastering more complex tasks of reading fluency and

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[20] Zygouris-Coe, V. (2001). A comparison of the impact of two reading intervention programs on the reading performance of middle-level underachieving readers. In J. R. Dugan (Ed.), Middle Level Reading Innovations (pp. 37-62). National Middle School Association.
[21] Briggs, K. C., & Briggs, C. R. (2003). Implementation and Effect of an Accelerated Mathematics Programme for Students with Learning Disabilities. Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 18(4), 234-244.

comprehension. Although these more complex skills are taught, big gains are not usually registered in these sub-tasks in the first half of a programme model. Instead, learners make swift, often statistically significant, gains in lower-level subtasks. Competencies related to oral reading fluency and reading comprehension are more challenging to improve on and certainly take longer to master. In the SAGE data, smaller gains were often seen between IPA and MPA and between MPA and EPA. The subsection below and linear mixed-effects models in Annex 5 expand on this general understanding of learning progress by subgroup across IPA, MPA and EPA. This is followed by quantitative analysis to deepen the understanding of factors contributing to differential learning improvement.

3.1.3.1. Learning progression trends across sub-groups

Table 23: Mean Learning Scores across IPA, MPA and EPA by Sub-group

	IPA			MPA			EPA		
	Mean literacy score	Mean numeracy score	Difference	Mean literacy score	Mean numeracy score	Difference	Mean literacy score	Mean numeracy score	Difference
All girls (N=11,396)	41.42	47.10		68.80	63.29		81.12	79.73	
Girls with disabilities (N=625)	37.27	43.05	Literacy: -4.30** Numeracy: -4.20**	63.10	57.10	Literacy: -6.10*** Numeracy: -6.61***	74.91	75.72	Literacy: -6.74*** Numeracy: -4.36***
Girls without disabilities (N=10,770)	41.57	47.25		69.20	63.71		81.65	80.08	
Married girls (N=3,934)	39.72	46.77	Literacy: -2.53*** Numeracy: -0.49	72.28	63.60	Literacy: 5.05*** Numeracy: 0.45	83.06	83.07	Literacy: 3.19*** Numeracy: 5.49***
Unmarried girls (N=7,461)	42.25	47.26		67.23	63.15		79.87	77.58	
Young mothers (N=4,473)	41.04	47.67	Literacy: -0.57 Numeracy: 0.86**	72.11	63.89	Literacy: 5.33*** Numeracy: 0.97	83.10	82.23	Literacy: 3.77*** Numeracy: 4.76***
Not a young mother (N=6,922)	41.61	46.81		66.78	62.92		79.33	77.47	
Apostolic (N=4,429)	40.51	46.90	Literacy: -2.54*** Numeracy: -0.57	68.73	63.17	Literacy: -0.16 Numeracy: -0.28	81.82	79.84	Literacy: 1.13* Numeracy: 0.27
Not Apostolic (N=6,966)	43.05	47.47		68.89	63.45		80.69	79.57	
Girls from ethnic minorities (N=592)	39.42	46.02	Literacy: -2.06 Numeracy: -1.12	70.66	66.87	Literacy: 1.99 Numeracy: 3.84**	79.70	75.12	Literacy: -1.58* Numeracy: -5.14***
Girls not from ethnic minorities (N=10,803)	41.48	47.14		68.67	63.03		81.28	80.26	
Girls who have never been to school (N=507)	39.99	45.84	Literacy: -1.50 Numeracy: -1.32	53.32	54.17	Literacy: -16.15*** Numeracy: -9.51***	76.66	73.30	Literacy: -4.61** Numeracy: -6.65**
Girls who have been to school (N=10,888)	41.49	47.16		69.47	63.68		81.27	79.95	
Girls engaged in labour (N=11,061)	41.40	47.10	Literacy: -0.72 Numeracy: -0.16	68.85	63.25	Literacy: 1.42 Numeracy: -1.17	81.14	79.84	Literacy: 0.43 Numeracy: 3.12*
Girls not engaged in labour (N=334)	42.12	47.26		67.43	64.42		80.60	76.72	

Statistical significance is indicated using asterisks: * p-value < 0.1, ** p-value < 0.05, *** p-value < 0.01, where the p-value measures how likely the results are due to chance.

It should be noted that the SAGE girls, in most cases, belong to more than one sub-group, and it has not been possible for the EE to isolate the results for girls only belonging to one particular sub-group. The sub-group-wise findings presented below should be interpreted with this important consideration in mind.

Girls with disabilities: Means analysis provides insight into progress comparisons between girls with and without disabilities. Table 23 shows that at IPA, MPA and EPA, GWDs do worse in both literacy and numeracy compared to girls without disabilities, and the difference between the two groups is statistically significant across all assessment points. At the IPA stage, the difference in scores both at literacy and numeracy is the largest for GWDs compared to any other sub-group, with an average difference of 4.30 on literacy and 4.20 on numeracy. GWDs score the lowest on both literacy and numeracy compared to any other sub-group at IPA stage. Only 13% of the GWDs had never been to school before enrolling in SAGE, which points to the magnitude of challenges GWDs face in accessing learning opportunities – even when they are enrolled in schools – due to a range of factors such as distance, quality of infrastructure, unsuitability of learning material, and a lack of capacity of the teachers to engage with GWDs in formal schools.

The SAGE programme was designed to be inclusive, with specific strategies employed to integrate and effectively engage GWDs. Some of these strategies included GWD-friendly infrastructure, adapted learning material, a specific focus on building capacities of the CEs and other stakeholders to engage GWDs, as well as specific pedagogical choices to ensure GWDs' participation and continuity of learning even in the face of COVID-19 challenges. After going through the SAGE ATL for two years, while there is a significant increase in the learning scores of GWDs on both literacy and numeracy, their learning improvements fall short of their counterparts, and the difference in learning achievement increases slightly, particularly in literacy (from 4.30 at IPA to 6.74 at EPA). The qualitative discussions with GWDs as part of the endline evaluation did not bring out any particular points of concern or challenges faced by GWDs in accessing learning under SAGE, so it is difficult for the EE to pinpoint the reasons for GWDs not doing as well as their peers.

To identify the potential reasons for the learning achievements, the EE looks at learning improvements by GWDs based on the type of disabilities (Annex 4, Table 4.7). The analysis finds that while a learning score improvement has been seen across all disability types, the low literacy scores at EPA are primarily driven by learners with speech impairment, intellectual disability, and physical disability. Lower numeracy scores are driven by learners with speech impairment, intellectual disability, learning disability and physical disability. Across both literacy and numeracy, learners with visual impairment have seen the highest learning scores at EPA, and – along with learners with hearing impairments – the biggest improvement between IPA and EPA. This points to the programme's success in making the content of the ATL available to a large range of learners, including in braille, as well as the programme's focus on engaging CEs with the knowledge of sign language. On the other hand, while the programme spent a lot of time and effort in building the capacities of CEs to engage learners with a range of disabilities, the data shows that they had limited success in engaging with learners with a range of intellectual and learning disabilities, pointing to a need for special/more in-depth capacity building of CEs in successfully engaging learners with these disabilities. Additionally, across both literacy and numeracy, learners with speech impairment scored the lowest, likely due to some of the sub-tasks (particularly in literacy assessment) needing spelling or reading out words/sentences/passages. From the LPA guidance documents shared by SAGE, it is not clear to the EE how the assessments were adapted particularly for learners with speech impairment, but it is likely that more training of CEs and better adaptations need to be developed for conducting LPAs with learners with speech impairments.

Married girls and young mothers: Mean analysis presented in Table 23 highlights the significant improvements both these sub-groups have made across literacy and numeracy between IPA and EPA. At the IPA stage, both married women and young mothers perform more or less at par with their peers, except in literacy, where married women score slightly lower than their unmarried peers. However, this starts to change at the MPA stage, where both married women and young mothers start to significantly outperform their peers. The literacy scores for these sub-groups increase more acutely between IPA and MPA, compared to MPA and EPA. This is in line with the broader sectoral understanding of accelerated learning programmes (discussed earlier) and shows that the programme has been able to provide learners from these sub-groups an opportunity to fulfil their unrealised potential, given that many of these girls had to drop out of school due to marriage or early pregnancy. This higher-than-average learning score improvement for these sub-groups points to the success of the programme to accommodate the needs and constraints of the girls, specifically through having flexible timing for learning hubs to navigate around household chores, additional support provided by the CEs to girls who missed in-person sessions, multiple modes of learning available to these girls – including door-to-door and phone-based sessions, and the availability of childcare support at the hubs to ensure young mothers did not have to miss sessions in absence of childcare support at home. A number of girls highlighted these programme approaches as helpful in supporting their learning.

Further analysis also shows that self-efficacy also played a role in improved learning. The analysis of the role of life skills and self-efficacy presented in section 3.1.4.4 shows that improved self-efficacy does have a positive effect on girls' learning performance, and both married women and young girls were found to have the highest levels of self-efficacy among the sub-groups. Comments made by girls as part of KIIs also highlight this point. When asked about the reasons for their successful completion and improvements in learning, a number of girls from these sub-groups highlighted self-belief and self-confidence as key reasons.

"I improved because I had self-motivation to finish the modules." - SAGE Learner (married), Katsukunya

"it's because I wanted to have something in my life, people used to laugh at me that I know nothing, and my husband was supporting me." – SAGE Learner (married), Mafararikwa

"I think what really made me finish the SAGE programme components was the fact that I took it as an opportunity to learn since I had not finished school, so I grasped the opportunity with both hands and made sure that I finish the programme." – SAGE Learner (GWD/married), Nenhowe

Girls from the Apostolic community: Table 23 shows that while girls from the Apostolic communities scored slightly less than their peers from other communities at IPA, with a difference of 2.54 points on literacy and 0.57 points on numeracy, they have been able to show significant learning improvement, and have performed better at the EPA stage compared to their counterparts. One of the key reasons identified by the EE for these learning gains is the improvements in household support for learning that SAGE has been able to generate amongst the Apostolic communities. The analysis of household support for learning presented in section 3.4 (IO4.3) shows that the household support for learning amongst the Apostolic community has increased significantly, with 93.14% of the girls belonging to the Apostolic community reporting high support for education. This has shown a significant increase from only 5.80% of girls from the community reporting a high support for education at baseline evaluation. While the girls belonging to the Apostolic community have also benefitted from learning support, inclusive pedagogy, and contextualised, girls-specific support from the CEs, the significant improvements in the level of support provided by the Apostolic households seem to have contributed positively to the learning improvements of Apostolic girls.

Girls from ethnic minorities: For this sub-group, while there are some differences in learning scores at IPA, these are not found to be statistically significant. Table 23 indicates that by EPA however, there are statistically significant differences between girls from and not from ethnic minorities for both literacy and numeracy scores. In both cases, girls who are not from ethnic minorities do better. For literacy, the gap between the girls from ethnic communities and their peers reduces slightly, but for numeracy, the learning gap was found to have increased. The EE could not uncover any particular reasons for this learning gap at EPA from the qualitative data. However, the analysis of attendance data shows that girls from ethnic minorities are less likely to attend sessions regularly, with this sub-group showing the lowest average attendance as well as the lowest percentage of learners in the green attendance band. Given that the EE has found learning scores highly correlated to individual attendance, this low attendance figure might offer a likely explanation for the learning gap compared to their peers.

Girls who have never been to school: Surprisingly, the SAGE LPA data does not show a statistically significant difference in IPA scores for girls who have never been to school compared to those that have. However, both at MPA and EPA, the difference in learning gains for girls who have never been to school is both stark and statistically significant. At MPA and EPA, girls who have been to school perform better in both literacy and numeracy. It is worth noting, however, that the difference in literacy and numeracy mean scores decreases between the two groups from MPA to EPA. The learning improvements for girls who had never been to school are slower between IPA and MPA, and more pronounced between MPA and EPA. This is the inverse of the broader learning trends seen in SAGE, where the learning improvements are stronger in the first half of the programme compared to the second half. These results intuitively make sense considering the previous exposure to formal education and some basic knowledge of foundational literacy and numeracy that girls who had been to school, had. While it is unrealistic to expect the learning performance of girls who have never been to school to surpass that of girls who have been to school, the SAGE programme has successfully supported learning achievements for girls who have never been exposed to formal education. Likewise, findings also indicate that NFE programmes like SAGE may have the ability to reactivate foundational learning in girls previously exposed to formal school, allowing them to build on past acquired knowledge to progress faster and achieve more comprehensive gains overall.

Girls engaged in labour: The EE does not find statistically significant differences in mean numeracy or literacy scores at IPA, MPA, and EPA for girls who are and girls who are not engaged in labour. The only exception is a statistically significant difference at EPA for mean numeracy score, where girls engaged in labour achieve higher mean numeracy scores. A tentative interpretation of this finding could be that girls engaged in daily labour are exposed more frequently to tasks requiring foundational numeracy skills (such as counting, addition, subtraction, etc.), dependent on the nature of their work.

3.1.4. Factors contributing to learning improvement

This section uses data collected through the endline survey, qualitative interviews, and FGDs with various stakeholders to assess the role of factors contributing to improved learning outcomes.

3.1.4.1. Attendance

One of the key hypotheses of the programme was that improved attendance of girls in learning sessions leads to increased learning scores. There were many underlying barriers to attendance that SAGE learners faced and that SAGE actively tried to address through its interventions – both by providing active support to overcome individual and household barriers and engaging with communities to address social norms around

girls' education. These are discussed in more detail in Section 3.4. This section only seeks to understand the effect of attendance on learning achievement. To uncover this, the EE isolated girls' learning gains across literacy and numeracy based on average attendance. SAGE categorised girls' attendance in three bands – red (attending 0-33% of the sessions in a given period), orange (attending 33-65% of the sessions in a given period) and green (attending 65% or more of the sessions in a given period). Table 24 below shows the learning score improvement based on the attendance bands.

Table 24: Average Learning Score Improvements Based on Attendance Bands

	Average literacy score			Average literacy score improvement		
	IPA score	MPA score	EPA score	IPA-MPA	MPA-EPA	IPA-EPA
Cohort 1						
Overall		64.76	75.28		10.52	
Green		65.28	76.01		10.74	
Orange		65.56	75.60		10.03	
Red		63.31	73.95		10.64	
Cohort 2-7						
Overall	41.31	68.57	81.73	27.26	13.16	40.42
Green	40.62	68.57	82.72	27.95	14.15	42.10
Orange	40.20	68.98	80.43	28.78	11.46	40.23
Red	43.38	68.26	80.60	24.88	12.35	37.22
	Average numeracy score			Average numeracy score improvement		
	IPA score	MPA score	EPA score	IPA-MPA	MPA-EPA	IPA-EPA
Cohort 1						
Overall		61.21	79.04		17.83	
Green		59.58	80.40		20.83	
Orange		60.69	80.06		19.37	
Red		63.75	76.21		12.46	
Cohorts 2-7						
Overall	47.00	64.77	80.77	17.77	16.00	33.77
Green	46.69	59.83	82.02	13.13	22.19	35.33
Orange	45.83	66.23	79.27	20.40	13.04	33.44
Red	48.40	65.83	79.19	17.42	13.37	30.79

The analysis provides evidence that attendance plays an important role in learning improvement: higher attendance correlates with higher performance. The table shows that, on average, SAGE learners who attended 65% or more SAGE sessions, showed more learning improvement at EPA. Learners in higher attendance bands were found to have higher scores in both literacy and numeracy at the EPA stage across the cohorts. Learning improvements were also greater for learners in higher attendance bands than those in the lower bands. This is in line with the programme's assumption that improving learners' attendance leads to better learning outcomes. This result is also in keeping with other GEC studies, which document improved learning outcomes within groups of learners who are more regularly exposed to and engaged with literacy and numeracy instruction.

3.1.4.2. Mode of delivery

Considering restrictions regarding in-person learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the SAGE programme launched multiple modes of learning delivery for SAGE learners – in-person hubs, in-person small groups, phone-based, or door-to-door sessions. The evaluation attempted to explore the differential impact of these various learning delivery modalities on learning outcomes. However, this posed multiple challenges: 1) most SAGE learners were exposed to multiple modes of learning delivery, so isolating the impact of different modalities on learning was impossible to untangle, and 2) the evaluation team did not have access to complete or comprehensive data on the learning modes available to all sampled learners included in the LPA analysis. Additionally, isolating the rate of learning improvement against only the mode of delivery also undermines the importance of other factors that influence performance, such as session attendance, home support, family circumstances, subgroup category, etc.

Overall, the EE found that girls preferred learning in settings where they engaged with other learners, including hub-based and small-group sessions, compared to individual learning modes like phone-based or door-to-door sessions. While conducting a quantitative analysis to estimate the isolated effect of delivery modality on learning achievement is statistically difficult due to the large percentage of learners who were exposed to, and engaged in, multiple delivery modalities, the qualitative data collected from girls, CEs,

and other stakeholders provides some context regarding the impact of small group versus autonomous learning environments on programme participation and satisfaction. **The KIIs conducted with girls highlighted the importance girls placed on group learning environments, with many attributing their positive learning experiences to the support provided through interaction with their CEs and peers during sessions. They also overwhelmingly reported that the SAGE programme positively established structures to help them attend sessions regularly during COVID-19, including flexible timing and locations for learning sessions that helped them overcome barriers to attendance such as childcare, location and timing of sessions as well as household and family responsibilities.** Many girls also indicated that participating in hub-based and small group sessions during COVID-19 was important to their social and mental health, helping them reduce isolation stress by leaving home and engaging in a social learning activity within a safe, accessible, and well-monitored environment. This finding is in line with SAGE's mid-term results, which found that girls preferred learning in hubs as opposed to independently at home.

While girls generally found hub-based and small group sessions helpful in accessing learning in a personalised, inclusive environment, the opposite was true for phone-based and door-to-door sessions, which had poor uptake due, in part, to limited interest in and access to these learning modalities for sampled girls. Practically, many girls faced specific challenges learning through phone-based sessions as they do not independently own a mobile phone to use at will, with many girls reporting that accessing phones was difficult for them. These challenges in accessing phone-based learning were found to be common across sub-groups, including GWDs, and were thus found to be related to the economic challenges faced by girls – particularly in rural areas – rather than related to specific sub-groups. Many of those who reported attending phone-based sessions, found them difficult to follow due to connectivity challenges, limitations in understanding instructional content, and restrictions in the ability to ask questions and keep pace with the learning content.

Girl-to-girl learning conversations facilitated by SAGE District Coordinators as part of the OU research also highlight the challenges with phone-based lessons:

> *"Don't mention the issue of phones. I do not like phone-based learning."* – SAGE learner, Bulilima.

> *"It's difficult to get lessons through the phone. Some of us fall further behind. We find ourselves responding very late to what the Community Educator will have shared a long time ago."* – SAGE learner, Bulilima.

Qualitative discussions with girls and CEs during the endline evaluation also highlighted specific issues faced by girls in accessing phone-based and door-to-door sessions.

> *OK, at a later stage, they introduced online lessons as a way of protecting us from meeting and spreading the virus. However, as much as it was a good initiative, I still feel they should have considered buying phones for those who did not have access to the gadgets. Not everyone had access to smartphones and data. Electricity to charge the gadgets was another major challenge.* – SAGE Learner (GWD), Changazi, Chimanimani

> *"Others were learning over the phone, but I had no phone, so when we were not allowed to gather, it was a challenge to me"* – SAGE Learner (Apostolic), Hotsprings, Chimanimani

> *"At times you would call, and they would tell you she is not around, and you would have to keep calling and checking if the child is back"* - Community Educator, Bulilima

> *"Yes, it did very well, but there was a challenge; some did not have phones, so the learner was left behind. She did not receive full help or support due to lacking phones. Even door-to-door sessions in COVID error were difficult because everyone was afraid."* - Community Educator, Mutoko

> *"They had no phones, and this was the biggest challenge. We can do online lessons, but she can tell you I don't have a phone you can buy for me so that I can learn. I could not follow up on the issue of phones, and they did not have enough material."* - Community Educator, Mutare Rural

In addition to the issue of keeping up with lessons, many girls highlighted challenges related to their ability to find time within the home to participate in phone and door-to-door lessons, particularly during COVID-19 lockdowns when every household member was around and competing for their attention. The added burden of household chores and childcare, and its effect on girls' attendance, is further discussed in Section 3.4.

3.1.4.3. Community educator support to learners

The ATL programme had at its core, inclusive, gender-sensitive and girl-centric pedagogical approaches, with CEs trained in employing these approaches at CBLHs. SAGE CPD support to CEs included practical training on how to apply participatory learning methods such as group work, role-play, discussions, peer-to-peer learning, etc. During KIIs with CEs, they referred to numerous inclusive and participatory techniques that they would use regularly in the CBLHs and found useful in engaging learners with different educational backgrounds and learning levels.

> *"I encourage group work, role play, dramas, discussions, learner-to-learner interactions, pair work."* – Community *Educator*, Mutoko.

> *"We used different methods like pairing them since there were other learners with different disabilities, management by walking around assisting those who didn't understand."* - Community Educator, Chikukwa

In the endline survey, more than 95% of learners reported positively about their experiences with the SAGE curriculum, the pedagogical methods incorporated in lesson delivery, and the individualised support and differentiated instruction provided by CEs based on their needs. This is a positive indication that the SAGE CPD helped improve the confidence and capability of CEs to apply active and inclusive learning methods in instruction, which were in alignment with the instructional model and training support that the programme provided. It also focused on highly practical and demonstration-based approaches that provided multiple opportunities for CEs to observe demonstrations of these instructional methods in action and practice them repeatedly with their peers.

To assess the impact of CEs' support on girls' learning, the endline collected data on girls' experiences with their assigned CE. An index was developed to gauge girls' perceptions of the degree of CE support they received. Table 25 below details the six items utilised to create this index and report on its corresponding programme indicator. The reliability coefficient for the index is 0.47.

Table 25: Community Educator Support Index

No.	Endline girls' survey questions	Scale
	Q69: How much do you agree with these statements?	
1	My CEs made me feel welcome to the hubs/sessions.	
2	My CEs treated boys and girls differently in the classroom.	
3	My CEs are often absent from class.	Agree a lot; Agree a little; Neutral; Disagree a little; Disagree a lot
4	My CEs encouraged me to learn.	
5	I feel I can talk to my CE if I have a problem in my life.	
6	I was able to participate actively in the sessions.	

Analysis was conducted to understand the relationship between mean numeracy and literacy scores and CE support as recorded by the index. These results are presented in Table 26. At midline, the difference between low and high CE support scores is only statistically significant for numeracy, whereby girls reporting a high CE support score achieved a mean numeracy score roughly 9 points higher than girls reporting a low CE support score. At the endline, differences between girls with high versus low CE support scores are statistically significant only for literacy, whereby girls reporting high CE support scores achieved a mean literacy score roughly 6 points higher than girls reporting a low CE support score. The correlation results indicate that CE support had a documented, though relatively low, or statistically insignificant, influence on learning achievement, particularly for numeracy findings.

Table 26: Impact of Community Educator Support on Learning Scores

	IPA			MPA				EPA			
	N	Mean literacy score	Mean numeracy score	N	Mean literacy score	Mean numeracy score	Difference (Welch two sample t-test)	N	Mean literacy score	Mean numeracy score	Difference (Welch two sample t-test)
All girls	177	32.51	24.01	346	57.20	32.79		349	65.74	40.52	
Low CE support score	25	36	26.16	41	52.56	28.68	Literacy: 5.26 Numeracy: 4.66*	38	63.58	39.92	Literacy: 2.43 Numeracy: 0.67
High CE support score	152	31.93	23.65	305	57.82	33.34		311	66.01	40.59	

Statistical significance is indicated using asterisks: * p-value < 0.1, ** p-value < 0.05, *** p-value < 0.01, where the p-value measures how likely the results are due to chance. A high score on the CE perception index was defined using a 75% cut-off point.

Pearson's correlation coefficients were also calculated for the CE support index against literacy and numeracy scores to explore the full variance of both numerical learning scores. Findings indicate that only at MPA was there a statistically significant relationship between the CE support index and numeracy scores. The relationship is weakly positive, indicating that a higher CE support score is weakly associated with a higher numeracy score overall.

Table 27: Pearson's Correlation Coefficients for CE Support Index

Learning outcomes	Community educator support index		
	IPA	MPA	EPA
Literacy score	-0.05	0.10	0.08
Numeracy score	-0.06	0.14**	0.08

Statistical significance is indicated using asterisks: * p-value < 0.1, ** p-value < 0.05, *** p-value < 0.01, where the p-value measures how likely the results are due to chance.

Endline evidence that CE support played a role in improving learning outcomes was corroborated with SAGE monitoring data. Quarterly girls' surveys conducted by the programme team also found that a large percentage of girls – almost 75% – attributed their learning improvement to the support provided by CEs, indicating they helped with explaining the content and answering questions to aid understanding and comprehension. A total of 20% of girls also attributed their learning gains to the pedagogical approaches incorporated into the design of learning sessions and implemented by CEs, further pointing to the significant role CE support played in advancing learning improvements within the programme.

Figure 11: Factors Contributing to Learning Improvement
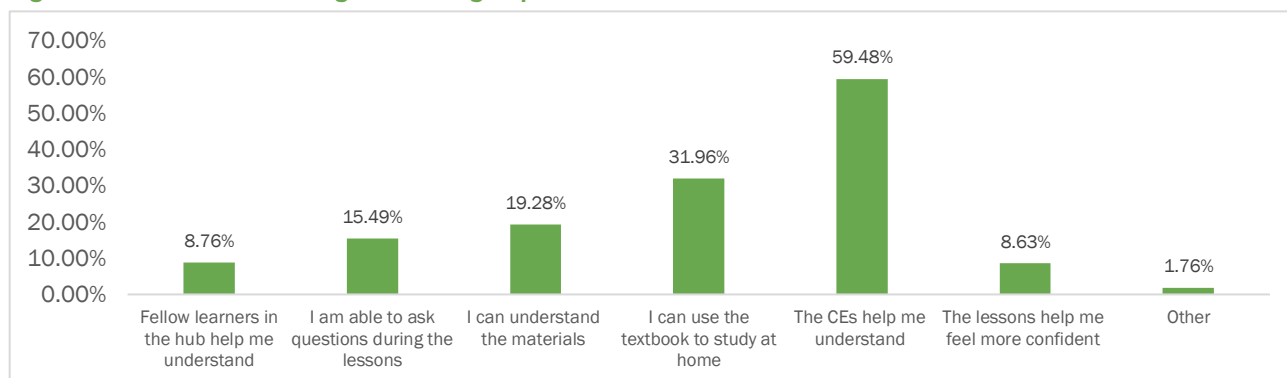
When asked about their favourite components of the learning experience, most girls at the endline frequently cited the opportunity to practise new content during the literacy and numeracy sessions and the teaching methods used by CEs to demonstrate foundational learning skills.

Figure 12: Favourite Aspects of Learning, as Reported by Girls
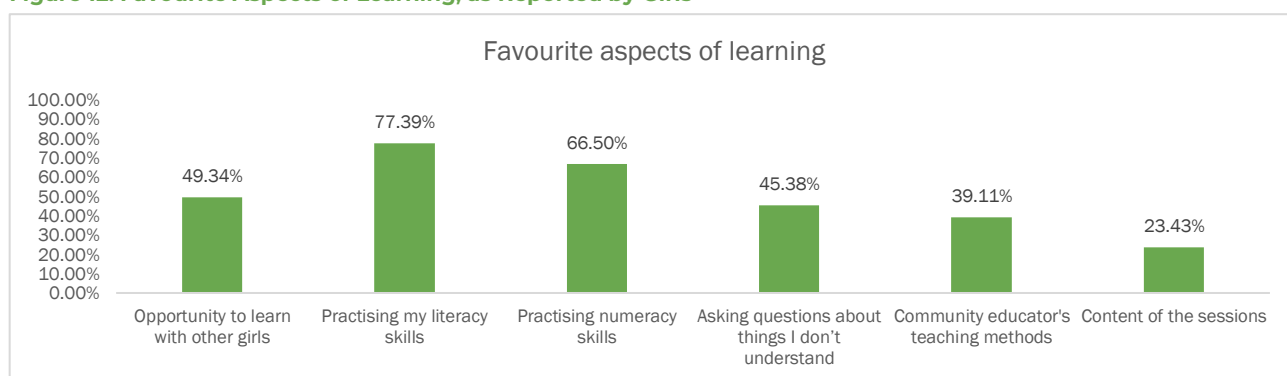
These are further supported by qualitative data, where girls credited participatory teaching methods and the pedagogical approaches used by CEs to help them learn, which also positively helped build their academic and personal confidence.

> "Yes, they (teaching methods) were different. At school, we could just rush everything. At SAGE they were treating us differently. At SAGE they were very patient with us, and no one was beating or laughing at us when we failed to answer or pronounce something like what happens in formal schools." - SAGE Learner (GWD), Hotsprings

> "Yes, she (CE) would explain till you understand; she would use good examples which are practical, like for numeracy lessons, if it's addition, she would ask us to go get counters so that we can count physically. This was good because you would easily understand. She was very accommodating; she would make sure that everyone in the class understood what she would be teaching before moving forward." - SAGE Learner (GWD), Nenhowe

> "It was easy because they were using simple examples that we could understand easily; for example, if they asked us to do a poultry project, they could explain every stage until the final stage of selling the chickens, which was different from formal schools they could just rush things, but at SAGE they were taking us step-by-step." - SAGE Learner (GWD), Hotsprings

> "Our teacher was a good person. He was patient with us. He helped me when I faced challenges in understanding what he was teaching us over the phone, so he would come in person and explain everything to me later. The CoGE facilitator was also good; he would help us whenever we had challenges. He was very approachable." - SAGE Learner (never been to school), Mafararikwa

While the girls interviewed by the evaluation team reported positive satisfaction with SAGE's pedagogical approaches, some CEs mentioned that they had challenges retaining and continuously engaging some girls who had previously attended school before SAGE, especially those who had already studied up to Grade 5 or beyond. They stated that many girls found the learning sessions repetitive, as they were virtually restarting their learning journey equivalent to the content in early grade 1 or 2 classes.

"Most of the learners were not of the same level. How the module was designed to cater for adolescent girls, some have never been at school. It was not proper, some of the learners were advanced, but we taught them with 7-year-old. There was a big knowledge gap and an age gap. Learners were from different churches; some modules mentioned different religions, and some were too much for never being at school. Even when you started module 1A, some materials were tough for girls who had never attended school. So, you as a CE would look for something that suits these people, which this programme did not provide." – Community Educator, Mutoko.

OU, however, clarified that the programme design had incorporated a method to differentiate the activities for learners based on their IPA score. Activities were designed to be low threshold/high ceiling so that all girls could access the activity, but that attainment would differ, for example, differentiation by outcome. This was also supported by ongoing training for CEs (from Module 1a) on the ways to differentiate activities, and guidance in the module Session Guides. Since the issue of girls – especially those that had already been in school before and dropped out at Grade 5 – was mentioned there remains a question as to why this was not effective for some. The above CE quote indicates someone who is still struggling with the range of differentiation.

On the other hand, some CEs also highlighted that the truncated nature of SAGE's instructional content delivery model was difficult for some girls – especially those that had never been to school and girls with disabilities, to adapt to. They were, however, able to support girls through additional personalised sessions in line with the SAGE's strategy to specifically focus on GWDs and girls who had never been to school.

"We could have started somewhere even for those who could not write the modules were starting to ask them to write, it was not necessary. It was a bit fast-forward, and from 1a to 1b, what was expected of the girl to have covered and know in 10 weeks was too much; maybe it was because it was bunched. The other was covering work from ECD to Grade 3, so with the available weeks, it was being rushed under SAGE – Community Educator, Katsukunya, Mutoko

These concerns were also mentioned by girls as something that worried them when they enrolled in SAGE; some even pointed to community members, neighbours, and family members mocking them for re-learning letter sounds (alphabetic principles and phonemic awareness) and foundational literacy and numeracy concepts that they were already proficient in. **It should be noted, however, that the SAGE programme adapted its enrolment approach for ATL in later years, as the programme started to – based on the screening test – place girls in the modules that were suitable for their learning levels.**

3.1.4.4. Other intermediate outcomes

Understanding whether the intermediate outcome (IO) indicators have a relationship with literacy and numeracy achievement, aids in understanding of whether additional components of the SAGE programme, such as the CoGE modules, have positively affected girls' learning outcomes.

Pearson's correlation coefficients are presented in Table 28 below to understand if there is a significant association between the IO indicators and literacy and numeracy scores at IPA, MPA and EPA. Across all IO indicators, the self-efficacy, gender attitudes, SRHR and empowerment indicators all indicate positive statistically significant associations with literacy and numeracy performance at EPA. The strongest positive relationships are seen for self-efficacy and empowerment, where statistically significant positive correlations are observed. The strength of the correlation is small, however. This indicates that the work that the SAGE programme was doing through additional components such as CoGE has likely positively affected girls' learning outcomes. In contrast, caregiver gender attitudes, perceived safety and caregiver support for education do not show statistically significant correlations, indicating that these factors did not influence girls' learning outcomes much.

Table 28: Pearson's Correlation Coefficients for IO Indicators and Literacy and Numeracy Scores

	Learning outcome	IO 2.1 Self-efficacy	IO2.2 Gender attitudes	IO2.2 SRHR	IO3.1 Empowerment	IO4.1 Community gender attitude	IO4.2 Perceived safety	IO4.3 Support for education
IPA	Literacy score	-0.005	0.05	0.04	0.006	-0.03	-0.13*	-0.06
	Numeracy score	0.06	0.05	0.01	0.04	0.03	-0.08	-0.07
MPA	Literacy score	0.22***	0.07	0.06	0.20***	0.09	0.10*	0.10*
	Numeracy score	0.07	0.05	0.005	0.10*	0.10	0.02	0.02
EPA	Literacy score	0.14**	0.12*	0.17**	0.22***	0.07	0.02	0.007
	Numeracy score	0.13**	0.09*	0.11*	0.13**	0.07	0.02	0.01

Statistical significance is indicated using asterisks: * p-value < 0.1, ** p-value < 0.05, *** p-value < 0.01, where the p-value measures how likely the results are due to chance.

To further understand the relationship between literacy and numeracy achievement and IOs, average literacy and numeracy scores are presented by each IO indicator in Table 29. Differences and their statistical significance are reported between low and high scores for each IO indicator. At EPA, there are statistically significant differences in high and low self-efficacy for literacy and numeracy, with girls with a high self-efficacy score having a mean literacy score that is 4.46 points higher than girls with a low self-efficacy score, and a mean numeracy score that is 3.19 points higher. This, in combination with the statistically significant correlations observed, indicates that self-efficacy score has an important influence on literacy and numeracy achievement overall. For both the gender attitude and empowerment indicators, only differences in literacy scores between high and low scores are statistically significant. Girls who have a high gender attitude score achieved a mean literacy score that is 3.87 points higher than those with a low gender attitude score. Similarly, girls with a high empowerment score achieved a mean literacy score of 4.65 points higher than those with low gender attitude scores.

Table 29: Impact of Other Intermediate Outcomes on Learning Scores

	IPA				MPA				EPA			
	N	Mean literacy score	Mean numeracy score	Difference	N	Mean literacy score	Mean numeracy score	Difference	N	Mean literacy score	Mean numeracy score	Difference
All girls	296	41.47	47.19	NA	439	69.51	62.28	NA	480	80.10	77.84	NA
Low self-efficacy	93	41.55	44.44	Literacy: 0.07	127	63.02	60.86	Literacy: 9.61***	134	77.07	75.60	Literacy: 4.46*
High self-efficacy	151	41.62	48.90	Numeracy: 4.46	261	72.63	62.89	Numeracy: 2.03	294	81.53	78.79	Numeracy: 3.19
Low gender attitudes	144	40.41	45.81	Literacy: 2.56	205	68.19	62.08	Literacy: 2.80	221	78.22	76.48	Literacy: 3.87*
High gender attitudes	102	42.97	49.15	Numeracy: 3.34	184	70.99	62.49	Numeracy: 0.41	209	82.09	79.27	Numeracy: 2.79
Low SRHR	143	41.83	47.55	Sample too small	263	73.19	65.71	Sample too small	310	81.64	78.99	Sample too small
High SRHR	7	43.21	44.51		15	69.63	52.56		18	84.57	85.04	
Low empowerment	134	41.75	47.14	Literacy: 0.58	180	66.58	61.59	Literacy: 5.21*	186	77.39	76.49	Literacy: 4.65**
High empowerment	111	41.17	47.28	Numeracy: 0.14	205	71.79	62.33	Numeracy: 0.74	240	82.04	79.04	Numeracy: 2.55
Low caregiver gender attitude	71	42.79	47.07	Literacy: 1.85 Numeracy: 0.17	110	66.33	59.00	Literacy: 4.40 Numeracy: 4.61	110	79.70	77.20	Literacy: 0.51 Numeracy: 0.86
High caregiver gender attitude	175	40.94	47.24		278	70.73	63.61		319	80.21	78.06	
Low perceived safety	48	45..63	47.60	Literacy: 4.95	63	60.08	58.73	Literacy: 11.55**	60	77.08	76.44	Literacy: 3.91
High perceived safety	192	40.68	47.07	Numeracy: 0.53	320	71.63	62.83	Numeracy: 4.10	359	80.99	78.25	Numeracy: 1.81
Low education support	18	41.33	54.91	Sample too small to perform a t-test	28	67.46	61.13	Sample too small to perform t-test	23	77.19	72.58	Sample too small to perform a t-test
High education support	223	45.54	46.53		358	69.70	62.11		400	80.48	78.33	

Statistical significance is indicated using asterisks: * p-value < 0.1, ** p-value < 0.05, *** p-value < 0.01, where the p-value measures how likely the results are due to chance.

3.2. Transition

3.2.1. Introduction

One of the three outcomes of the SAGE programme is to ensure that marginalised adolescent girls have transitioned into their next life stage. The programme identified four transition pathways, which, when pursued by a SAGE learner, are considered successful. These four transition pathways include:

- **Transitioning into and through key stages of formal and non-formal education:** transitioning into any formal education grade from 10 years and above; non-formal education[22] represents transitioning from basic literacy currently provided by the programme to Zimbabwe Basic Education Course (ZABEC).
- **Transitioning into vocational/life skills training:** transitioning to formal (certified) vocational training colleges or vocational skills training offered by other NGOs (including SAGE ISOP) and government ministries for girls aged 15 years and above.
- **Transitioning into fairly-paid employment:** transitioning into formal and informal employment for girls aged 16 years and above. These could include casual jobs on farms, as house-helps, childminders, shop-keepers etc., where they receive some payment. Transitioning of learners below 16 years into employment is not considered a successful transition. Industries which are not classified as fairly paid or gainful are sex work, illegal mining activities, etc.
- **Transitioning into self-employment:** any enterprise/income-generating initiative led by girls aged 15 years and above, earning income for their upkeep. This includes individual and group businesses.

3.2.2. Transition pathways

The programme has supported SAGE's highly marginalised learners to transition through the four defined transition pathways of non/formal education, skills training, fairly-paid employment, and self-employment as defined above. Figure 13 shows the transition by each pathway. Analysis of the programme data shows that **5,201 (77.17%) out of 6,739 Cohort 1 and 2 learners have transitioned into at least one pathway. While the programme has achieved its target of 60% of girls (from Cohorts 1 and 2) transitioning in line with its definitions, some questions about the quality of these transitions remain unanswered due to a lack of relevant data.** The largest number of SAGE girls (60%) have transitioned into the SAGE ISOP programme, with fairly-paid employment being the second biggest transition pathway with 21% of girls transitioning into fairly-paid jobs. Limited data on post-ISOP outcomes for girls transitioning into ISOP means that there is limited clarity on the effectiveness of ISOP to contribute to successful long-term transitions. Additionally, the analysis of girls transitioning to fairly-paid jobs finds that 78.16% of these girls reported working as household help after graduating from SAGE. In the absence of data on the kind of work these girls were doing before enrolling in SAGE, it is difficult for the EE to comment on these girls' quality of transition. It is likely that some of these girls were working as household help before SAGE and went back to the same job post-SAGE. Due to these data challenges, the evaluation has limited its analysis of the transition to the indicators which were agreed upon with the GEC FM to assess transition results. The EE's comments about the relevance of the definitions of these transition pathways and the indicators used are included in Annex 1, Section A-1-3.

Figure 13: Number and Percentage of Girls from Cohorts 1 and 2 Transitioning across Pathways
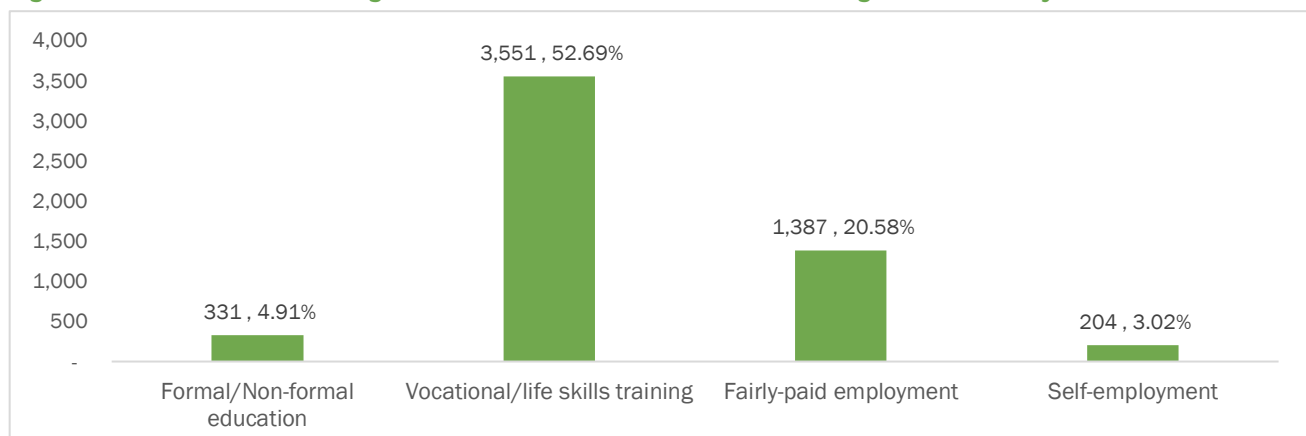
Note: The total of the four transition pathways is more than 5,201 since a few learners transitioned into multiple pathways –e.g., into vocational training and self-employment.

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[22] NFE programmes: **(i) Basic literacy** covers, reading, writing and arithmetic meant for those who have never been to school.
(ii) Functional literacy- application of basic literacy required for everyday life.
(iii) Zimbabwe Adult Basic Education Courses (ZABEC) – primary school programme for adults leading to Grade 7 examination sat together with formal candidates.
(iv) Part Time Continuing Education (PTCE) – These are afternoon or evening classes for those pursuing secondary education.
(v) Open and Distance Learning (ODL) – Target those pursuing secondary education. It is intended to serve learners who are separated by time and distance.

Overall, the most common SAGE transition pathway was vocational/skill training, followed by fairly-paid jobs, transition into schools and self-employment. This points to the particularly vulnerable nature of the girls and their families, whereby choosing pathways that are expected to immediately contribute to earning money and securing their own and the household's financial security remain the main focus of the girls. The endline survey and KIIs conducted with SAGE learners also found positive evidence of the programme creating positive, sustainable change in many areas, including improved preparedness for future learning, resilience, increased income, improved confidence, and self-efficacy. The programme's transition pathways into formal/non-formal education (4.91%) and self-employment (3.02%) saw limited success, primarily due to financial challenges faced by the demographic targeted by SAGE. The drivers and barriers to girls' transition into education, skill training and self-employment are discussed in Sections 3.2.2.1 and 3.2.2.2 on the following pages.

Table 30: Transition Across Sub-Groups

Sub-groups	School	Vocational /Skills training[23]	Jobs	Self-employment	Total girls transitioning	Total girls in Cohorts 1 and 2	% Transition
Overall	331	3,551	1,387	204	5,201	6,739	77.17%
Married girls	135	1,743	647	53	2,509	2,323	108%
Young mothers	173	1,906	674	85	2,736	2,828	96.74%
Apostolic girls	128	2,118	856	95	3,060	4,008	76.34%
Girls from ethnic minorities	8	141	42	27	192	369	52.03%
Girls with disabilities	8	239	136	9	380	519	73.21%
Girls never been to school	24	114	49	4	185	322	57.45%
Girls engaged in labour	311	3,453	1,337	197	5,039	6,424	78.44%

SAGE was found to be particularly successful in supporting the transition of married girls and young mothers, with 108%[24] and 96.74% of learners from these sub-groups respectively reporting transitioning to at least one of the four pathways. Girls engaged in labour (78.44%), girls from Apostolic communities (76.34%) and girls with disabilities (73.21%) also reported a high transition rate. Table 30 also highlights the difficulties faced by the programme in supporting the transition of girls from ethnic minorities and those who had never been to school, with only half the girls belonging to these sub-groups reporting transition to any pathway.

The evaluation team conducted additional analysis to look for possible reasons for this difference in transition. A strong correlation was found between the likelihood of transition with self-efficacy and empowerment index scores. This indicates a link between SAGE's work under CoGE to build girls' agency and their ability/likelihood of voicing their opinions about their transition. Table 31 below shows a statistically significant difference in the empowerment and self-efficacy scores of girls who have transitioned and those who have not transitioned. It should be noted that this does not establish causality.

Table 31: Relationship Between Girls' Transition and their Self-Efficacy and Empowerment Scores

	Mean self-efficacy sScore		Mean empowerment score	
Transitioned	2.51		16.86	
Not transitioned	2.27		15.56	
Difference	0.24***		1.30***	
	# High self-efficacy score	# Low self-efficacy score	# High empowerment score	# Low empowerment score
Transitioned	290	121	224	187
Not transitioned	105	82	78	110
ANOVA test result				
p-value	0.00021		0.00459	
Interpretation	Both self-efficacy and empowerment scores are strongly correlated with the transition status of girls surveyed at the endline			

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[23] It should be noted that only girls 15 years or above were eligible for transitioning into ISOP, so even though there was significant demand for joining ISOP, all interested girls were unable to transition to ISOP.
[24] The likely reason for a more than 100% transition rate for Married Girls sub-group is that a number of these girls transitioned into more than one pathway – e.g., Vocational training and job, or vocational training and self-employment.

3.2.2.1. Drivers and barriers to transition to education

The SAGE programme found limited success in getting girls to transition to schools. As highlighted in Figure 13 above, only 4.91% of girls from Cohorts 1 and 2 were found to have transitioned into formal or non-formal schools. One of the key factors that have supported girls' transition to schools is SAGE's collaboration with existing government structures at the community level and other organisations working in the formal and non-formal education space in Zimbabwe. For example, by working with local Development for Social Development (DSD) structures and community-level basic education assistance module (BEAM) committees, SAGE girls were enrolled for BEAM support. SAGE programme data[25] shows that almost half of the girls who transitioned into schools were supported by MoPSE's Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM). Engagements with other projects (internally within Plan) and other partners have also facilitated SAGE girls to benefit. SAGE has also noted positive attitudes towards girls' education amongst parents/guardians as they are committing to pay school fees for girls not part of BEAM or any social protection scheme. *"The mother was not interested in taking her child to school just because she was disabled. The child's performance made her realise that she delayed her daughter,"* feedback from an HDC member shows the commitment of a parent to support her daughter further.

Box 1: Formal School Transition Experience

Ntando (not her real name) lives with her parents and three siblings in Pumula Old, an impoverished high-density suburb in the Zimbabwean city of Bulawayo. Her mother works as a vendor, and her father as a driver. Ntando had never attended school before joining the SAGE programme, so she could not read or write. Her parents could not pay her school fees, so she did not attend. It was very painful for her to watch other children go to school. **"It pained me to remain at home while other children my age were attending school."** She indicated that her friend introduced her to a SAGE community educator who helped her to enrol in SAGE: **"My friend, Anna, linked me with the community educator Mrs Mguni who enrolled me in SAGE programme. I attended SAGE numeracy and literacy sessions where we were taught how to read and write."**

After attending SAGE literacy and numeracy sessions for one year, the community educator helped Ntando to transition to formal education: **"The community educator, Mrs Mguni, helped me to transition to formal education by liaising with the headmaster so that I could be admitted to the local school, Godlwayo Primary School."** Ntando is excited that now she can read and write and has transitioned to formal education: **"I am very happy that now I am able to read and write. I have now moved to Godlwayo Primary School doing Ggrade 2."**

The school assisted Ntando by ensuring that she benefited from Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) that would pay her school fees. The following sentiments were shared by Mrs Manganyi (Goldwayo Primary School's SAGE focal person): **"The school linked Ntandoi with BEAM so that she gets the assistance of school fees payment."** The teacher indicated that Ntando is doing very well in her studies. The teacher shared the following sentiments. **"Ntandoyenkosi is always punctual in class, and she takes schoolwork seriously. Currently, she is the best student in the class."** Ntando's family assists her in doing the homework and the continuous learning assessment (CALA). Ntando shared the following sentiments: **"My family help me to do homework and Continuous Learning Assessment (CALA). They make sure that I have adequate schoolbooks."**

Source: SAGE Most Significant Change Stories, Plan International

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Even though there has been girls who have transitioned to formal/non-formal education, the sub-group distribution of girls transitioning to schooling is unbalanced. Very few girls with disabilities or girls from ethnic minority groups are transitioning back into education. **However, the programme was more successful in supporting the transition of girls who had never been to school, into education. The girls who had never been to school were almost twice as likely to transition into education compared to any other sub-group.** The sub-group wide transition into education is presented in Figure 14 below. Of the 185 never been to schoolgirls who transitioned after SAGE, 24 reported transitioning to formal education, representing a 12.97% successful transition into education for this group. This relatively high transition to education points to the progress made by SAGE in educating parents/caregivers about the importance of education for girls. The programme has provided many girls with a way into schools who would not have had any access to education if not for SAGE.

Figure 14: Sub-Group-Wide Number and Percentage of Transitioned Girls Transitioning into Education

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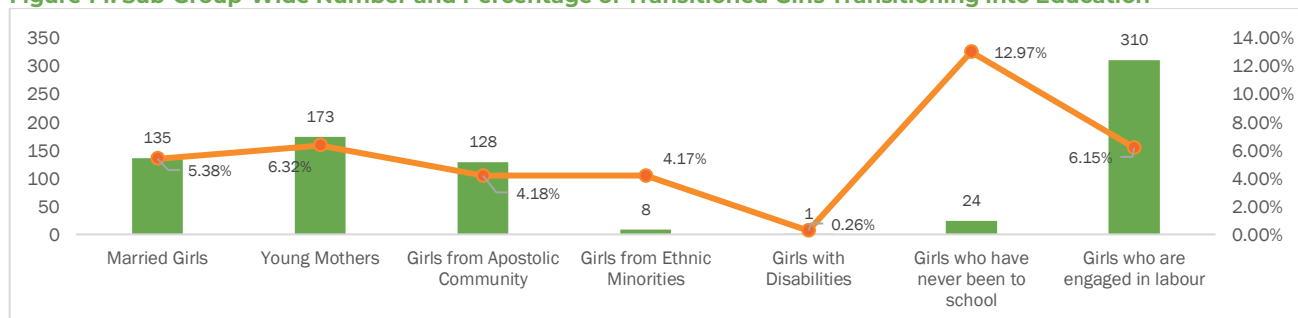
[25] SAGE Annual Report Year 4.

The girls continue to face various familial, social, and financial barriers to accessing education. The endline survey of girls found that financial barriers remain the biggest constraint for girls to transition into school. This was unanimous across various sources, from ministry officials to caregivers and CEs. Most girls also pointed to this barrier, with almost 90% citing it as the reason they haven't transitioned back to education.

Figure 15: Barriers to Education
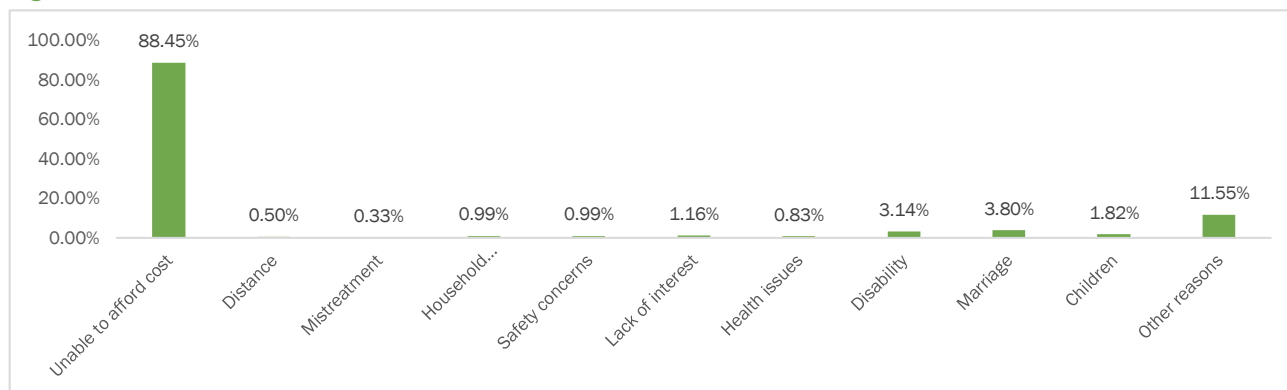
As shown in Figure 15, in addition to the financial barriers, many vulnerable girls also needed to contribute to household chores or the family income through labour, business, or jobs, meaning that education remains a distant dream for most girls. Programmes like SAGE provide free education while not taking a lot of their time to work for these girls. However, joining the school and foregoing a large part of their family/financial responsibilities is not possible for these girls, many of whom come from poor households. Caregivers also reported that COVID-19 resulted in economic hardships for many families, which reduced household income and ability to pay school fees.

> *"COVID gave us a lot of challenges; even to source for money to prepare for a child who is going to Grade 5 was a challenge. There were no means to source money. Our livelihoods were affected."* – Female Caregivers, Epworth

> *"COVID was a major setback; people were not allowed to meet, we couldn't sell or do anything to make money, and that is where people could have gotten the money for fees."* – Caregiver, Hillview, Harare South

> *"Some parents were surviving by selling (trading) clothes, so when the COVID restrictions were imposed, they could not raise money to send their children to school. Hence some dropped out of school."* – Community Member, Masvaure

This was corroborated by government officials and CEs, who also pointed out that COVID-19-related challenges had pushed many children, especially girls, out of school due to many parents losing their livelihood or facing low sales. Marriage, children, disabilities, constant migration, and parents' demise were some of the other barriers cited by girls that prevented them from getting back into education. Surprisingly, parents not favouring education did not come across as a significant barrier in the quantitative survey or any discussions with the girls or their caregivers. More than 90% of girls reported high household support for education, and a similar number highlighted that their parents believed education was important for girls even before they participated in SAGE. This is further discussed in Section 3.4.

> *"They (my parents) said SAGE would help me since they failed to pay my fees. So, they encouraged me to learn. The neighbours were also happy, and they even encouraged their children to join SAGE. No one tried to stop me from joining SAGE."* – SAGE Learner, Matjinge

> *"Another thing that makes children drop off is because of lack (of money), not having the school requirements like uniforms, fees and the child ends up dropping out because of lack (of money). And for some it's because they stay on their own, with the parents not around and they end up getting pregnant, and after that, they don't go back to school because they see themselves as matured and old to go back there"* – Community Members' FGD, Matjinge

> *"My parents had no money, I actually got a place for Form 1 then my father sold a cow to pay for the fees, but it could not sustain me for the whole secondary school. Then I went to look for a job in Marange trying to raise school fees, but I later became sick."* – SAGE Learner (GWD), Hotsprings

> *"I think parents cannot afford to take their girl children to formal schools, some of the parents they do not value educations and they delay the children to attend lessons because they would be doing house chores. Some parents don't value education. Those who could not afford formal education came here and attended life skills training like hair dressing, others got basic education like reading and writing."* – Community Educator, Hillview

> *"Hunger is causing parents to choose between sending their children to school and buying food. Some parents they cannot afford to feed their children as well as sending them to school as they will say it is better to buy food than sending children to school on an empty stomach."* – Community Member, Masvaure

Girls with disabilities also faced additional challenges in transitioning back to school. Although attitudes towards educating disabled children have improved, there is limited support for them in schools and ill-treatment by peers. A parent of a learner with a disability in Sagambe stated, *"We value sending disabled*

children to school, but the teachers to attend to them are unavailable here. The disabled children lack the special teachers to attend to them." There needs to be a stronger support system available for children with disabilities to get them to transition back to school. For example, a teacher in Mutare Rural, who was also an NFE buddy for the SAGE hub, describes how his school accommodates the needs of disabled learners:

> *"At school, we have a resource unit specifically for those with disabilities, especially the mentally challenged. But we have others with disabilities within the system that are catered for in the regular classes. But those who are mentally challenged, have a special class which is the resource unit. Normally in this resource unit, we do not have many; we have seven so far." - NFE Buddy, Mutare Rural*

3.2.2.2. Drivers and barriers to transition into vocational training and income-generating activities.

Vocational training was the most popular transition pathway for SAGE girls, with almost 60% of transitioned Cohort 1 and 2 girls transitioning to vocational training. It should be noted that almost all of the girls opting for vocational training have been enrolled under SAGE ISOP. While it can be assumed that the girls chose to enrol in ISOP since it was additional skills training being provided at no cost, the endline data collection – both qualitative and quantitative - shows that the ISOP component was one of the main motivating factors for a majority of SAGE learners. Given that these girls came from vulnerable backgrounds and a large percentage of these girls came from impoverished families, the ISOP component represented an opportunity to escape their vulnerabilities and financial constraints and get an opportunity to increase their household income. When asked why they joined the SAGE programme, many girls attributed it to their interest in ISOP.

> *"I joined because I wanted to do the ISOP course and have something to do in life." - SAGE Learner, Nenhowe*

> *"I joined SAGE so that I would learn skills such as hairdressing; this will help me back at home because when I would have clients, it will give me cash to meet our family needs." - SAGE Learner, Hotsprings*

> *"I wanted to learn as others and have something to do with my life. So, I joined SAGE so that I will go through skills training that will help me sustain myself and my children, like baking buns and sell them." - SAGE Learner, Hotsprings*

> *"I wanted to learn but my wish was to do a course in machine operation because in this area there are so many companies that are into mining and they hire those people, so I was wishing that if we could do it under SAGE so that I can get a job." – SAGE Learner (GWD), Chimanimani*

> *"I joined SAGE because I wanted to learn hairdressing." – SAGE Learner, Mandeya*

Figure 16: Sub-Group Wide Uptake of Vocational Training
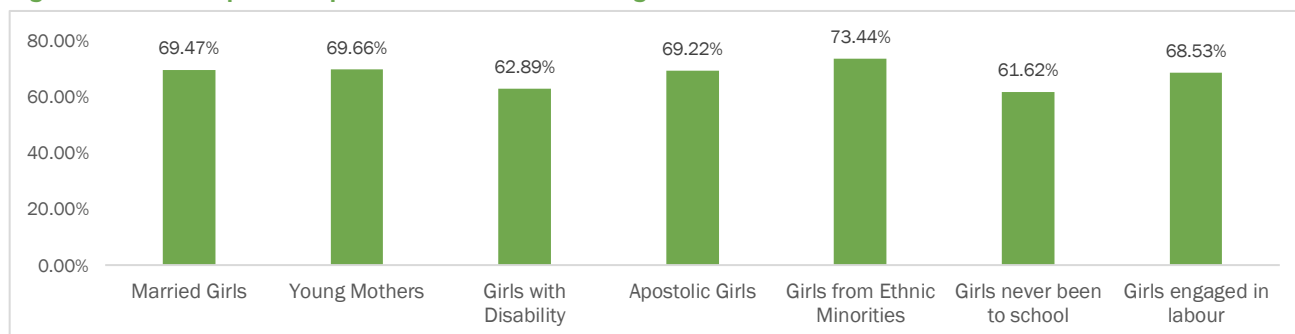
While the ISOP remained a popular transition pathway for girls across sub-groups, the sub-group-wide uptake of ISOP presented in Figure 16 shows that girls from ethnic minorities, married women and women with young girls, and girls from Apostolic communities were among the groups that found skill training most attractive as a transition pathway. Girls in these groups have likely had to previously withdraw from productive engagements due to a range of factors outside their control – marriage, children, household chores burden, gender norms, etc. This also provides credence to the fact that learners see ISOP as an opportunity to attain skills and support that would help them earn a living and become independent. One learner in Mutasa explained that husbands of young girls usually don't want them to get formal jobs, so the skills training allows them to start small businesses from their homes instead and earn income.

> *"Let's look at me as a young mother; the skill training allowed me to look after my child. Now, I can sell and get money to buy basics for my child and myself. During the lockdown, people were unable to go to work. SAGE provided me some skills and now if I am not baking, I will be doing hairdressing... because there are times when community does not have money to buy my buns." – SAGE Learner, Mutasa*

On the other hand, girls who had never been to school and girls with disabilities demonstrated a slightly lower uptake of ISOP. While the evaluation was not able to uncover the reasons for this from the endline data collection due to the transition data not being available at the time of survey instrument design, it is likely that the fact that a large percentage of the girls who had never been to school work as household helps, and they

went back to their jobs or moved across the border in search of better-paying household jobs which require certification and basic educational knowledge, particularly in South Africa.

Within ISOP, a range of trades was available for girls to choose from, but baking, hairdressing and dressmaking were by far the most widely selected trades by SAGE learners.

Figure 17: Uptake of ISOP Trades among Learners
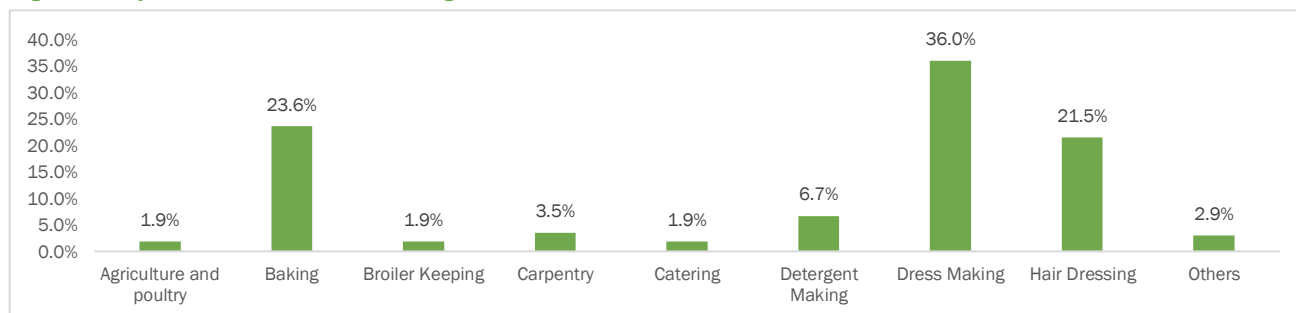
Sub-group analysis shows that girls from ethnic minorities, girls from Apostolic communities and young mothers were likely to choose male-dominated trades such as fence-making, upholstery and carpentry, respectively. Considering the background and societal values and norms in the areas where these girls come from, this shift to male-dominated trades, especially for married girls, shows a shift in how girls perceive their capacities and are challenging social constructions of what male and women trades are. Feedback from girls engaged in ISOP on their choice of trade area shows that their choices were heavily influenced by economic factors, such as their market mapping and consumer base.

Endline data also shows that the girls opting for ISOP generally had a positive experience of the skill training and that the skills developed by the girls were actively being used by them both at home and to improve their financial situation.

> *"My husband is saying it's a good thing that I joined SAGE because I'm making my own money. I'm no longer waiting for his money and my neighbours are now giving me orders, they are actually giving me orders for their birthdays and weddings."* – SAGE Learner, Hotsprings

> *"Since I did hairdressing, every woman would want to look smart and we believe that a woman has to have her hair done, so I will have clients who would come for hairdressing in return this will give me income to cater for my own needs and family needs as well, so definitely the skills will benefit us."* – SAGE Learner, Hotsprings

> *Yes, I can now support my family through baking. When I grow up, I will continue to bake and take care of my mother.* – SAGE Learner, Epworth

> *"Yes they (the sessions) were very easy to follow; even the skills training they could take us step-by-step and everyone managed to make her own skirt and even those who couldn't bake, when they completed the course, they could do it well."* – SAGE Learner (GWD), Hotsprings

> *"Yes, I applied for a job recently at ZDC as a caterer and they gave me ingredients and I managed to bake some buns as a practical interview. I also managed to roast meat and they were very impressed."* – SAGE Learner, Hotsprings

> *"Within the modules, we were reading about women who were drivers, and we were actually amazed that even women can be drivers though they did not bring that course during the skills training. This led me to choose upholstery since it is a male-dominated industry, and I am managing it now."* – SAGE Learner (GWD), Masvaure

The endline survey found that many girls who had undergone ISOP training wished to start their own businesses. Typically, this involved hoping to start a business in the trades they had trained in – including baking, hairdressing, soap-making, dressmaking, etc. Girls' participation in ISOP has provided them with the knowledge and skills to start their businesses. Most girls agreed that SAGE had provided them with a solid foundation to build a business and become successful. However, many girls suggested that even though ISOP has provided them with the knowledge, they will likely not be able to use it to better their lives due to their inability to secure finances.

> *"SAGE taught and trained me to bake so I know how it's done. I can bake twist, donuts, and cookies. These things I can bake very well. I am very sure and confident that I can open my own business. But as of now I don't have the material/ingredients or money to start the business."* – SAGE Learner, Domboramwari

> *"I am planning that if I manage to get some money to continue with my project, I will make uniforms for different schools and also make clothes for retail."* – SAGE Learner (Apostolic), Mutoko

Even though girls largely reported having a good experience with SAGE transition support, and highlighting the positive impacts it had made on their lives, the qualitative and quantitative survey found that many girls who had undergone skills training failed to make use of their training to support their livelihoods, primarily because of financial barriers. Many girls continued to face financial hardship even after graduating from ISOP,

which has forced them to either revert to their pre-SAGE pathways or do housework for others in the community. The Girls' survey found that almost 89% of girls currently enrolled in ISOP who want to start their own businesses do not have access to the financial resources to start them. Many girls interviewed as part of the qualitative survey also highlighted these financial challenges.

> *"We thought they could give us start-up kits, they trained us, of course, but we have not managed to move forward due to a lack of resources. We thought they would give us something that would sustain us after they had gone. Then after that, we will be able to sustain ourselves."* – SAGE Learner, Hotsprings

> *"They could have given us start-up kits for us to establish our businesses or even bring sewing machines for those doing dressmaking as they were doing it manually."* – SAGE Learner, Nenohwe

CEs also reiterated this point, highlighting some issues the girls faced in translating their ISOP training and experience into regular income due to a lack of funds.

> *"I think SAGE could have given learners capital to start their business. Learning hours were insufficient; the never-been-to-school girls' 2 hours was insufficient. Coming to school two days a week, they would have forgotten by the time they come to school. So basically, the time was limited."* – Community Educator, Hillview, Harare South

> *"They (girls) need help with start-up kits so that they establish themselves and they need proper saloons and baking trays and ingredients."* – Community Educator, Nenhowe

> *"They need more lessons even after graduation, they cannot independently operate, even after graduation they need to be maybe in smaller groups of 3, doing projects together until they are confident enough to work on their own. Also, after getting certificates, lessons stopped but they are not there yet."* – Community Members' FGD, Matjinge.

Financial constraints have also hampered girls who want additional skills training to achieve mastery in their trades or elevate themselves to a higher financial stratum.

> *"I'm planning to join vocational training, of course, we were trained at SAGE, but I need further training in baking so that I get the skills required for me to do catering, and also I need help with a start-up kit."* – SAGE Learner, Hotsprings

> *"I wanted to be a driver. But I am not yet because I have no money to pay for school fees to be trained in driving. I was hoping that I could raise money from the skills that I got from SAGE and pay for the fees, but still, I have nowhere to start from."* – SAGE Learner (GWD), Hotsprings

> *"I want to go to vocational training to add more knowledge on to of what I have received from SAGE but only if I got enough funds."* – SAGE Learner, Musanhi.

> *"Yes I want to (join another vocational training) but I don't have money for fees, I joined SAGE so that I will have something to do in life because I dropped out of school in Grade 7 and by then I was doing fashion and fabrics so I wanted to do it. So when we were educated that as women we can also do courses that are meant for men, I wanted to be a machine operator. So, when we were choosing courses no one managed to select it hence I was the only one who wanted to do it. So, I could not ask them to include it as a course under skills training, so I later opted for dressmaking."* – SAGE Learner, Hotsprings

> *"I want to raise money to return to school and add more knowledge and skills in dressmaking"* – SAGE Learner, Mutoko

Unfortunately, the programme was not designed to be able to provide/enable girls' access to finance. The initial design of the programme included a component of supporting the establishment of Voluntary Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) that could provide these girls with some access to finance through VSLAs. However, with the onset of COVID-19 and the challenging economic conditions, the programme decided to do away with the VSLA component due to concerns about the inability of the households to effectively contribute to VSLAs due to the negative economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This ended up removing the component of access to finance for girls to successfully realise their transition.

As mentioned previously in the transition analysis, the EE is unable to comment on the effectiveness of girls' post-ISOP transition, since there was limited post-ISOP tracking of girls to get further insight into their transition once they have graduated from ISOP. There is evidence that the programme tried to create linkages between girls transitioning from SAGE and financial institutions, with the programme data showing that only 12 girls had been able to access finance from these institutions. Given that financial barriers have emerged as a significant barrier for girls to achieve a meaningful transition, further research into ISOP graduates' pathways would help develop a comprehensive transition narrative for the SAGE programme.

3.2.3. Caregiver and community support for girls' transition

Qualitative interviews with girls, CEs, and parents/caregivers found that caregivers and community members have become much more supportive of the girls' transition to education, skills training, and self-employment. They realise that the girls who completed vocational training, have returned to their communities with skills and, in some cases, have started to earn income. However, some girls were prevented from attending by

caregivers.[26] This was particularly true for girls who stayed with stepparents or in-laws, according to KIIs with girls in Chimanimani, Mutasa, Bulilima and Mutoko. Some girls also highlighted that their husbands stopping them from attending vocational training. This issue persisted for girls who graduated and were trying to establish their businesses. Staying with in-laws significantly reduced their decision-making powers and how they could allocate their time.

CEs and CoGE facilitators were able to have positive engagement with the caregivers and reported many success stories from the girls they worked with. They also confirmed that community support for girls' transition increased after the girls enrolled in SAGE. For example, one CE from Harare South stated:

> "Yes, there are some who went back to school. I know about 14 learners who are now in formal school. I see a change in people's views because taking their children to formal school proves there is a change. It means they acknowledge that their children have potential and are taking them back to formal school. I think it's SAGE-related because it changed after SAGE came. I think that before SAGE, they knew their children needed to go to school and still did not take them, so SAGE is related to this change." – Community Educator, Hillview

> "When the programme started, the community could not see the importance of education, and they did not even see the worth of the programme. But when we started the skills training, they all wanted their children to enrol in the programme, even those who did not qualify." – NFE Buddy, Epworth

> "The engagements were necessary, and they helped a lot because their dialogue and parents could bring out their opinion. This helped the programme. As of now, children are now going to school. In the past, many had never been to school or were dropouts; now, there's a positive change because the children are now coming to school. We have more children who are now involved in schooling. I live in this community, so I have noticed a change. They might be going to SAGE, formal school or even private colleges, but children generally are going to school. In the past, we had so many never been to school and dropouts." – NFE Buddy, Domboramwari

> "Yes, the girls are proud to go to school. Parents now pay school fees for their girl children. They are now taking their children to better schools, e.g., Manyame. The husband now allows their wives to do hairdressing, vending, sewing, and baking. So, the perceptions are changing slowly." – NFE Buddy, Domboramwari

This demonstrates strong networks of support emerging from caregivers and highlights the transformative nature of the SAGE programme, which has been able to have a significant impact on the mindsets of girls, their parents, and the community at large.

3.2.4. Girls' experience with transition

Among the girls interviewed at the endline, the feedback on transition support provided by SAGE was largely positive. This is consistent with the programme's monitoring data which found overwhelming interest in and support for, particularly for the ISOP component. The girls reported that SAGE had enabled them to improve their reading skills, learn how to budget, and develop practical skills they could use to earn income independently. For example, one girl in Mutasa said, "*It gave me a future. Now, if I don't have any food or anything I want, I use my machine to sew clothes, and I will sell and get money.*" ISOP was reported to be the most valuable part of SAGE by many quantitative and qualitative respondents. 86% of girls from the endline survey who participated in ISOP identified it as the most helpful part of SAGE. **This also gives credence to the assertion that for learners, SAGE was first and foremost seen as a programme that could help them improve their life and financial situation through skills training.** Many girls interviewed as part of the endline survey also highlighted the usefulness of ISOP and skills training. Some of the quotes are presented below.

> "Yes (my life has changed after SAGE) because SAGE opened our eyes and we were trained, and now we know we can do something with our lives from the skills training we received. We can now apply for better jobs due to SAGE." – SAGE Learner, Chimanimani

> "There is much difference now because they used to ask me what your name is, and I could not answer, but now I can answer back. Now they admire me because I'm making money because of baking." – SAGE Learner, Chimanimani

Some challenges were also cited through the KIIs. One common issue was that girls felt the period allocated for skills training was too short, and they could not achieve mastery in the skills they opted for. The quantitative survey also found that only 40% of girls who had completed ISOP thought they had achieved mastery in the skills they got trained in. One of the learners reported that she was disappointed with the skills training since it was not comprehensive.

> "Yes, they provided me with the skills and knowledge, but they did not do justice to it. The training is not intense, they just took us halfway, but they managed to raise us from the ground." - SAGE Learner, Hotsprings

Consequently, they felt they didn't gain as much as they could. Several girls also said they did not have sufficient capital to start a business. Some girls also expressed that they would prefer the age limitation for the

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[26] In quantitative surveys, while most girls (almost 85%) agreed that they received support to participate in SAGE programme including ISOP from their household, only about 15% girls claimed this.

programme to be increased to allow more young mothers to participate. This may interest the programme since young mothers benefited greatly from ISOP.

Girls who started businesses with the skills gained through ISOP also describe increased confidence and respect from the community. As girls have developed income-generating skills and started their businesses, they have also increased their confidence and independence. This has contributed to positive coping mechanisms and resilience among some girls, as shown by the quotes from the girls below.

"I can now decide on whatever to do to make money like brick-making. I used to look down upon it, saying it was meant for boys and men, but now I can do it; that's where I raised money to start the business of selling stationery that I am doing currently." – SAGE Learner who had never been to school, Mafararikwa

"ISOP helped me a lot; I'm no longer idle now. We are working as a group now, we have received orders, and we are now taking care of our families. Literacy and numeracy helped me too." – SAGE Learner (GWD), Masvaure

"Now I have dreams; I have hopes; I have aspirations. I aspire to be one of the greatest fashion designers in Zimbabwe and have a beautiful house and kids. CoGE sessions opened my eyes, and now I can even see a brighter future ahead." – SAGE Learner (GWD), Changazi

Many girls also reported a change in the way their community views them. They felt that their participation in SAGE, and especially ISOP, has helped them improve their standing in their community and has contributed to the community valuing women who own and run businesses.

"People from around the neighbouring village were laughing at me, saying you're going to learn Grade 1 stuff; SAGE won't get you anywhere you are better off getting married than wasting your time going to learn silly things. They would say nothing will come out of it. Now they want their daughter to come and join, they realised that SAGE was actually impacting us with knowledge and skill." – SAGE Learner (GWD), Changazi.

"Yes, in my community, they have welcomed and accepted the step that I took to join SAGE. They now believe that I have a role to play in the community like sewing uniforms for the school children or even ordinary clothes which I will sell to them. So instead of them going to buy clothes from the market which might be far, they will now be getting the clothes closer." – SAGE Learner (Apostolic), Mafararikwa

"They are admiring me now. They used to avoid walking with me to the shops because I was so dirty. Now I'm somebody. Now we are of the same class." – SAGE Learner (Apostolic), Mutare Rural

In addition to earning income, the endline survey also found that many girls who transitioned into a paid job or self-employment reported increased income following their ISOP training. As seen in Figure 18, 55.90% of girls reported an increase in their income post-SAGE, with 40.77% reporting unchanged income. Only 3.33% of girls reported a decline in their income after involvement in SAGE.

Figure 18: Change in Income Post-SAGE (Girls, Self-Reported)
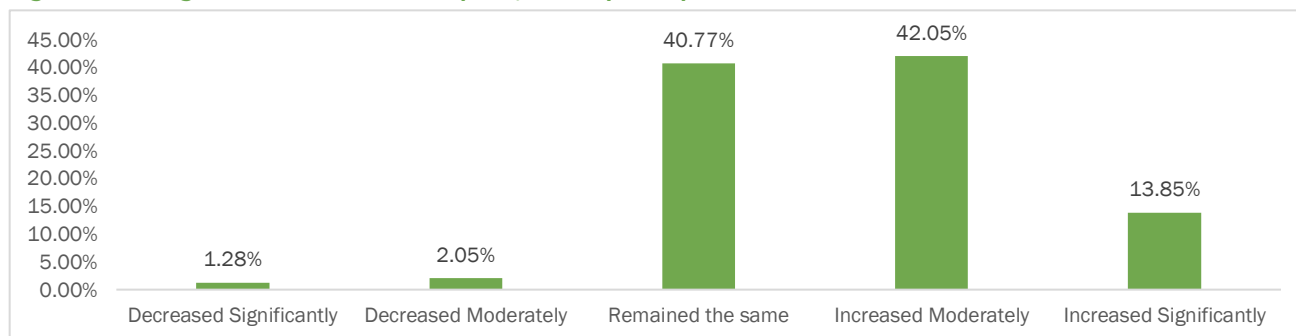
It is important to consider this reported increased household income due to SAGE in the context of the general downturn in the Zimbabwean economy (much like all other countries). The pandemic caused significant economic disruptions, including the closure of businesses, restrictions on travel, and decreased economic activity. It can be argued that had COVID-19 not caused significant disruptions in people's livelihoods and income generation ability, the income impact of SAGE might have been even higher.

These girls have used this increased income to fund their education and their children's education, buy food, improve access to healthcare, and invest back into their businesses to enhance their income potential further.

Box 2: Transition Experience of a Girl with Disability

Winnet resides in a rural community in the Manicaland region's Mutasa District in the village of Chikuku. She continues to live with her parents and her three brothers. She participated in the SAGE project and had the chance to participate in the Integrated Skills Outreach Programme (ISOP). She spends most of her time in the carpentry shop, completing her apprenticeship under the guidance of a reputable and experienced carpenter in her community. Winnet had difficulties interacting with others because of her extreme stammering; people frequently didn't listen to her. When she first heard about SAGE, she was concerned about how her peers would accommodate her. **"When I started attending ATL and CoGE lessons, my life started to change for the better, "** said Winnet. She was grateful for the chance to participate in the SAGE project. She was unable to read and write effectively before SAGE. She found it challenging to

read texts, especially those written in English. She said that after taking ATL lessons, she can now read anything, including text messages written in English. She emphasised that ATL lessons helped to develop her literacy and numeracy skills. In addition, Integrated Skills Outreach Programme (ISOP) has strengthened her household income, improving their livelihoods at the household level. She said, "Life was so difficult for me before SAGE; I could not afford to buy basic things, lotion, and even sanitary pads, but now I can buy my toiletries and **help around the house due to carpentry skills obtained through SAGE. Since finishing ISOP, I have produced a bed and kitchen unit and sold them; the money was useful for supporting my household. I thank SAGE and teachers for their patience and support."** She is currently attached for six months at a local carpentry shop, and after her attachment, she expressed her interest in opening her carpentry shop. Her supervisor at the carpentry shop indicated that she is dedicated to her work, and they have appealed to CBM to buy her a tool kit comprising of an electrical circular saw, plain, rotor, jigsaw, and grinder.

Source: SAGE Most Significant Change Stories, Plan International

These findings were also highlighted in the outcome mapping undertaken by the SAGE programme in 2022, which found increased levels of happiness, financial independence, and empowerment after transitioning to various SAGE pathways. Many girls report that the increase in income has provided them with a sense of achievement and purpose.

"I started selling cupcakes two months ago and am making a profit of £40.00. Although I have few clients, I am happy I have something that gives me money." – SAGE Learner, Epworth

"I can buy my clothes for myself and my baby, including Pampers". – SAGE Learner, Mutasa

"I'm saving money and taking care of myself and my children. I'm no longer waiting for my husband. I can even afford to buy myself some lotion." – SAGE Learner, Mafararikwa

"It will help me in the sense that even my own family that I have now will benefit. I did not go to school, but now I know it is important for a child to attend school. Also, as a person, you should be able to use your own hands to make some money by doing different things such as carpentry and dressmaking, amongst other things." – SAGE Learner (Apostolic), Mutoko

"As men, we have times when life becomes hard for us because we have to take care of the family, but now, we are now helping each other with my wife because she will be coming home with something, and we combine, be it school fees or books, she will tell me that she has managed to pay or buy them. So, it's a good thing to me." – Spouse of SAGE Learner, Chikukwa

Overall, SAGE has provided strong transition support to girls across sub-groups, which has improved confidence, self-efficacy, resilience, and empowerment among SAGE learners and has contributed directly to improved livelihoods, financial independence, and happiness among the learners and their households. There is also strong evidence to suggest that the successes SAGE girls have shown through their transition pathways have inspired others in the community to support girls' participation in formal education, vocational training, jobs, and businesses.

3.3. Sustainability

This section explores the extent to which the outcomes, processes, and structures that have been achieved and/or set up as part of this programme will continue to benefit girls and young women even after the programme has ended. Sustainability was a key programmatic area of interest right from the very start. From the programme's TOC, the SAGE programme purposed to, among other things, build structures, support policies, and equip stakeholders with the skills and tools needed to advocate for and support girls' education and gender equality. To embed sustainability as a key programmatic outcome, SAGE supported activities at three levels: Systems, Community, and Learner. The programme has achieved all its outcome-level indicators for sustainability, even as some sustainability concerns remain.

Outcome Indicators	Summary of findings
O3.1: # of community leaders reporting that CBLHs will continue to function after the project ends.	Monitoring data indicates that 88 community leaders who were part of HDCs were confident the Hubs would continue post-programme. Many also indicated they were willing to commit their own resources to support hub continuation. Programmatic data also indicates that of the 44 hubs supported to start income-generating activities to support the running of CBLH, 74% were profitable.
O3.2: Commitment from district-level stakeholders to continue monitoring and support SAGE initiatives	More than 50% of all learning observations were conducted during joint monitoring activities between MoPSE, the Ministry of Youth (MoY), and the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender, and Small Medium Enterprise Development (MWAGSMED). From the endline data collection, several officials were confident that the buy-in and support garnered by the programme means a cohort of stakeholders will continue advocating for the continuation of SAGE activities.
O3.3: SAGE-supported materials on ATL and inclusive and gender-responsive education approved by relevant government ministries	MoPSE has approved ATL learning materials, which are currently used to influence education changes in Zimbabwe. While ATL materials were developed closely with the relevant ministries, particularly the Curriculum Development and Technical Services Department (CDTS), CoGE materials were not developed with close collaboration from the MWAGSMED. As such, CoGE materials have currently not been adopted widely by the MWAGSMED. Implementing partners are also engaging with the MWAGSMED to have the CoGE materials adopted.

3.3.1. Sustainability at the systems level[27]

Overall, the SAGE programme has achieved some good progress in embedding sustainability at the systems level, but challenges – particularly related to the government's financial commitment to continue/scale-up the successful SAGE interventions – remain. There has been demonstrated uptake and usage of the SAGE learning materials by the relevant ministries, as well as evidence that the programme has strengthened the coordination of child protection systems at the national and community levels. The programme has also brokered relationships that will likely continue supporting learners as they transition from skills training. Several key informants highlighted that the close alignment of SAGE programmatic components with government needs, priorities, and policies, as well as the implementing partners' intentionality to work closely with the relevant ministries from the beginning helped the project in generating goodwill and interest from all relevant stakeholders.

3.3.1.1. Uptake of SAGE accelerated learning materials and support approaches within MoPSE

The ATL SAGE materials have been approved by MoPSE, and stakeholders believe these will continue to benefit the education sector in Zimbabwe. KIIs with Government stakeholders indicated that ATL materials would likely continue to be used by the ministry due to their close alignment with the ministry expectations and guidelines. In developing the materials, the programme

> *"We can use the [ATL] materials because it was produced in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, so we can use it though the challenges may be production of those modules, the financial capacity to produce them. I think that's where we might have some challenges but if we want to use them, we can use them"* – District Lifelong Learning Coordinators

team worked closely with MoPSE, particularly the Curriculum Development and Technical Services Department (CDTS), to co-design, develop, and evaluate the ATL materials. Government stakeholders engaged during the endline evaluation indicated that this process allowed MoPSE to quality assure and ensure that the materials are developed per the government's expectations and national curriculum guidelines. This close alignment and collaboration is the basis of MoPSE's confidence in using and adopting SAGE ATL materials. These materials have now been uploaded to the Ministry's website, making them readily available for the wider cohort of interested stakeholders. ATL materials are also being adopted to benefit marginalised learners outside the SAGE programme. In particular, extracts from SAGE's ATL session guides and learner workbooks were adapted to contribute to the development of National Literacy and Numeracy catch-up learning material, which was launched in late 2021 by MoPSE, with co-ordination from World Vision

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[27] The evidence contained in this sub-section also relates to the analysis of IO5: strong and active partnerships with MoPSE officials and other civil society actors actively advocate for more inclusive, gender-responsive education policies. In order to manage the length and readability of the report, we have not duplicated this analysis in Section 3.4.

Zimbabwe. Materials were printed and distributed with funding support from UNICEF to over 600 teachers and 13,000 learners in communities outside of SAGE operational areas. This uptake and usage of SAGE material is a signal of the relevance of and potential continued use of the material in supporting GoZ's NFE priorities. Aside from the ATL materials, there is also evidence from the endline KIIs and FGDs that NFE buddies (which are in most cases teachers from nearby schools), and Head Teachers are also using CoGE manuals to facilitate guidance and counselling even in their schools. A representative from the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (MWAGSMED) pointed out that the materials developed by SAGE on gender are being used to train young women and those in schools; however, since the MWAGSMED was not directly involved in developing CoGE materials, it is unable to adapt the materials widely since they are not ministry approved. FGDs with the SAGE consortium indicate that efforts are underway to engage MWAGSMED so they can approve and further roll-out CoGE material.

> *"Plan had developed materials on gender and we were using these materials to train the young women and others in school. We should have been engaged right from the beginning where we do the inception, strategies, have an agreed scheduled to meet and update each other on what was being made. For example, materials for girls training on gender, its great materials we would have wanted to use. But with government protocol, we can't just take that without it being approved. But had we developed this [material] together, we would have had no issue adopting this"* - National MWAGSMED official

The programme's close alignment with existing government priorities and policies has positioned the programme as a critical anchor project that directly responds to and implements some of the government's key priorities. SAGE programme components are closely aligned to key policies such as the NFE policy, the Education Sector Strategy Plan, and the new curriculum, which is focused on improving access to quality equitable and inclusive education, especially for OOS learners. On the other hand, the SAGE CoGE component is aligned with both the government's School Health Policy- which advocates for the provision of a comprehensive school health package, as well as being positioned to address the national priority of achieving gender equality, especially through removing underlying negative gender norms which create barriers for girls to access education. Some key informants described the programme as an extension of ministry activities, speaking to its potential relevance.

The programme's close collaboration with the relevant ministries was catalytic in building buy-in and ownership from the very start. Within MoPSE, there was close collaboration with not just CDTS but also with Learner Welfare and Psychological Services (LEPSI) and Non-formal Education (NFE) departments. Co-design involvement guaranteed strong alignment with relevant policies, such as NFE policy and national curriculum guidelines and expectations. Some stakeholders

> *"[SAGE should] continue engaging all stakeholders like they did. They were great in consulting us as a ministry. I think this is why this went very well"* - National MoPSE official
>
> *"These [district officials] are very critical because the head office doesn't have direct contact [with the community]. They are the ones that manage leadership in the community. They are very critical in managing and engaging the community"* – National MoY official

indicated that the close engagement from the very start has allowed them to assume ownership of the programme and confidently advocate for its implementation at the national and district levels. It is important to note that the programme intentionally engaged national and district-level government stakeholders. This was lauded by some key informants as crucial for establishing ownership at all levels and with the right people. The engagement of district officials was especially recognised as essential for ensuring buy-in and support. Key informants indicated that this level of engagement ensures officials closest to the ground are appropriately equipped to continue advocating for the programme's implementation in their communities.

3.3.1.2. Post-transition support for ISOP graduates

The programme engaged several government ministries and other stakeholders to support the successful transition of girls post-ISOP. To illustrate, the programme engaged with the MWAGSMED, which has so far managed to provide loans to learners transitioning into self-employment after completing the ISOP programme. The programme has supported 934 learners in opening bank accounts. This is not only a key positive outcome for the girls but also paves the

> *"The programme has really supported the Government to achieve vision 2030, and the Ministry in particular. They have assisted to reach areas where the ministry could not reach."* - National MoY official
>
> *"The project was some kind of an extension of Ministry activities, MoPSE, Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Internal affairs, so it was well coordinated."* - National MWAGSMED official

way for potential future collaborations and support for the learners. MWAGSMED representatives affirmed that the partnerships between the SAGE programme and the Ministry had laid a foundation to continue supporting the learners. Likewise, the programme enlisted the support of MoY to provide certification for the skills gained by the learners. This partnership is discussed further in the girls' outcomes section below. Lastly, through government partnerships, the programme has also secured support from other stakeholders, such as the Zimbabwe Women's Microfinance Bank (ZWMB), for providing access to finance to ISOP graduates. Table 32 lists some of the support provided by the programme to support ISOP graduates.

Table 32: Post-ISOP Support Provided to Learners

Type partner/resource	Type of support provided
Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (MWAGSMED)	Linking graduates to existing Ministry resources such as loans and supporting learners to open up bank accounts
Ministry of Youth	Providing certifications to recognise the skills gained from skills training formally
Zimbabwe Women's Microfinance Bank	Provision of loans
Post Transition manuals	Detailing the type of support available to learners post-transition

The programme has also leveraged existing community structures to showcase some learners' work and facilitate market linkages. 54% of the girls reached in the 2022 post-exit survey, conducted by the programme, indicated that it had supported them in accessing markets to sell their goods. Local government leaders have been enlisted as key champions for creating visibility around the work and products of graduates. As a result, several government officials have become key advocates of the programme, and they speak highly not only of its relevance but of its effectiveness in supporting

> *"I liked the aspect that after basic literacy and numeracy, they proceeded to life skills, and this is also in line with the new curriculum which advocates that children should be encouraged to pursue what they are gifted in. I think the Government needs to emphasise on this. I have seen the things that SAGE girls make, I have taken some of their items to Victoria Falls where we sold some, it was on the World Literacy Day. And we came back with the monies, and gave it back to the hubs. They [learners] also went to shows that were exhibited by Women Affairs and their [they] got a chance to showcase their things even at Trade Fair. That showed that those children can actually make a living from what they have learnt through master crafts."*
> - District Lifelong Learning Coordinator

vulnerable girls to attain better outcomes. If continued, this support will be key in supporting girls' livelihoods, especially as they utilise the skills they have learned from the programme.

Despite these efforts, some key informants highlighted the need to further expand the cohort of partners and ministries to support stronger linkages for the learners once they graduate from skills training. In addition to supporting market linkages, learners and community members indicated that programme partners should engage partners capable of supporting other transition pathways, particularly further skilling. The evaluation is aware that the programme has engaged master crafts to support further skills, which will be discussed below under the learners' sustainability outcomes.

3.3.1.3. Strengthened coordination of child protection case management and accessibility of identity documents.

The SAGE programme has invested in strengthening the capacity of Child Protection Committees (CPC) in the community. Within CPCs are community child care workers who report directly to the Department of Social Development (DSD). The capacity-building efforts are aimed at improving child protection case management to respond effectively to child safeguarding and protection cases. At the community level, the programme revitalised existing community structures, particularly the CPCs, which have empowered communities to support the well-being of young girls and women. Evidence shows that the community is already using these structures to protect children and ensure safeguarding. For example, Hub Development Committees (HDCs) have started playing a key role in ensuring child safety and monitoring child protection issues at the community level. Programme data shows that 28.8% (17/59) of child protection cases reported between Q15 and Q17 came through the CPCs. Endline survey data also finds that a large percentage (92.7%) of learners know where to go for support if they experience violence. Overall, there has been an increase in reporting of child protection concerns, and these established community structures are increasingly being used when reporting these cases. These findings point to strengthened child protection reporting and case management at the community and national levels.

3.3.1.4. Programme partners committed to support future delivery of programmatic components.

The programme has participated in several learning/dissemination events to support decision-makers with critical information regarding OOS learners and information on child protection and safeguarding. This helps ensure that critical decision-makers and policymakers are equipped with the right information when making appropriate decisions. The programme has held learning events to disseminate key learning to relevant stakeholders. For example, programme partners have been part of the Education Coordination Group and collaborated with the Education Coalition of Zimbabwe (ECOZI) and several others to advocate and disseminate relevant key learnings. This aligns with the programme's target outcome of equipping relevant stakeholders with critical research that they require to make informed decisions. These engagements have already resulted in tangible outcomes and support for the programme. For example, a key commitment from a dissemination meeting held in March 2022 was to support learners in accessing identity documents (IDs). Following this, the programme supported 214 SAGE learners to access IDs. Further plans are in place for

programme partners to continue participating in learning events to disseminate key learnings emerging from the programme's endline evaluation.

3.3.2. Sustainability at the community level

The programme's efforts to engage a broader range of stakeholders through intergenerational dialogues and men's clubs, establish community structures to support girls' learning, revitalise and strengthen the government's child protection mechanisms at the community level, and build capacity of a range of stakeholders to manage CBLHs and child protection systems have equipped communities with the skills, tools, and structures they need to continue supporting the education of girls and women and their overall well-being. However, several challenges to the programme sustainability at a community level exist. For example, despite now having several established hubs in the communities, a lack of incentives for community volunteers and a lack of resources to replicate similar models in the future have been flagged as a potential sustainability risk. Likewise, while the programme has succeeded in shifting community perspectives on girls' education and gender equality, the continuation of communal engagements through men's clubs, peer-to-peer groups, and integrational dialogues are hinged on the community leaders' commitment and willingness to expand and scale up the SAGE efforts. Lastly, some sustainability approaches implemented by the programme, such as supporting hubs to run income-generating activities or supporting girl-led CoGE sessions, have limited data to indicate whether these approaches successfully enhance the programme's sustainability.

3.3.2.1. Shift in community attitudes

Evidence from the quantitative survey with parents/caregivers and qualitative interviews with a range of community stakeholders conducted as part of the endline evaluation shows that SAGE has positively contributed to shifting community perspectives on the importance of girls' education and communal and cultural aspects around gender roles and norms. The endline survey with parents/caregivers finds that the average gender attitude score for parents/caregivers has increased to 9.22 (out of 12), compared to 8.23 at baseline. 72% of the parents/caregivers surveyed at endline demonstrated a high gender attitude score, compared to 25% of community members at the baseline. Results from FGDs conducted with a range of community actors[28] provided insight into the

> *"It [women's participation in leadership] is important, I discovered that we have many women than man and women should be included in leadership."* - Spouses FGD participant, Mutare Rural
>
> *"There should be equality, and the couple should help each other. The men should allow his wife to go to work or vending so that they help each other at home."* – Caregiver, Madlambuzi
>
> *"In my case I have only boys I don't have a girl child, but I have trained them to do all the household chores, so it depends on households how they train their children."* – Community Member, Masvaure
>
> *"In Bulawayo- there was a certain girl who composed some music. She had a disability that you could not see. I was impressed, if someone could be supported in such a way that they could make a living, that was very good."* - National MoPSE official

improvements in the Gender Attitudes index. It was found that across all these stakeholders, a much larger network of support is available to girls. There is now a high level of appreciation and understanding of gender norms, the importance of girls' education, and girls' transition. This is evident from the responses provided by the stakeholders to the qualitative interviews and FGDs as well as from the programmatic data, case studies, and outcome mapping conducted by the SAGE programme. There is also increased support from religious communities and increased support for education reported by caregivers and girls themselves. Detailed analysis of community attitudes and gender norms has been conducted as part of Section 3.4, IO.4.1.

Data from the endline survey, shown in the Table 33, shows the strong shifts in the community attitude towards girls' education and gender norms. The attitudes related to girls' education have seen a drastic shift, with more than 90% of parents/caregivers highlighting the importance of investing in a girl's education. The community views on traditional gender norms have also seen a significant shift, even if not as drastic as that for girls' education.

Table 333: Parents and Caregiver Attitudes Towards Girls' Education

Endline survey question	Proportion of respondents showing positive attitude
Even when funds are limited, it is worth investing in GIRL's education	97.40%
A girl is just as likely to use her education as a boy	96.50%
The most important reason that sons should be more educated than daughters is so that they can better look after their parents when they are older.	11.90%
If there is a limited amount of money to pay for tutoring, it should be spent on sons first.	89.09%

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[28] Girls, parents/caregivers, partners/spouses, community members, young boys, and HDC members,

A woman should take good care of her own children and not worry about other people's affairs.	59.67%
Women should leave politics to the men.	34.55%
A good woman never questions her husband's opinions, even if she is not sure she agrees with them.	36.03%
When it is a question of children's health, it is best to do whatever the father wants.	26.45%
If they want, daughters should be able to work outside the home after they have children	87.11%
Daughters should have just the same chance to work outside the homes as sons.	95.87%
Daughters should be told that an important reason not to have too many children is so they can work outside the home and earn money.	55.54%
I would like my daughter to be able to work outside the home so she can support herself if necessary.	91.40%

Programmatic efforts that facilitated dialogue among different stakeholders were found to have played an important role in shifting community mindset. CoGE sessions and boys' clubs have been instrumental in shifting mindsets towards empowering girls and women, especially regarding their participation in social and economic matters. Most young men and community members interviewed at the endline agreed that girls should have equal opportunities as their male counterparts to participate in leadership positions or that girls should have equal opportunities to access education.

The programme has also achieved positive outcomes around the Apostolic community's buy-in and commitment to supporting girls' education. Due to the prevalence of early marriage and a lack of education for girls and young women in Apostolic communities, SAGE invested in concerted efforts with the Apostolic communities to advocate for supporting girls'

"We in Apostolic community strongly believe in polygamy and most of us marry off our daughters at a very tender age as early as 11 years. Our leadership have now started preaching the gospel of not touching any underage to congregants, but it takes time for people to understand that people are still practicing that disgusting act." - Spouses FGD participant

education. Programme partners such as Apostolic Women's Empowerment Trust (AWET), as well as the HDCs played a significant role in ensuring targeted engagement and dialogues with key stakeholders geared towards changing perspectives and acting where necessary. This has contributed to a strong buy-in and support for the programme activities, particularly around changing gender and social norms among the Apostolic community and its religious and community leaders. The EE finds evidence of Apostolic communities not only shunning child marriages but that many leaders are now encouraging young girls and women to enrol in school and receive an education. The analysis of household support for learning presented in Section 3.4 (IO4.3) shows that the household support for learning amongst the Apostolic community has increased significantly, with 93.14% of the girls belonging to the Apostolic community reporting a high support for education. This has shown a significant increase from only 5.80% girls from the community reporting a high support for education at baseline evaluation. The high enrolment of girls belonging to the Apostolic community in SAGE also indicates an increasing acceptance for girls' education among the community. At the start of the programme, the target enrolment for Apostolic girls was 19%. However, the actual enrolment numbers for girls from Apostolic community far exceeded the target, with 61.50% of SAGE girls coming from Apostolic communities. The discussions with the SAGE consortium also highlighted incidents of Apostolic community leaders advocating for girls' education and shunning early marriages. AWET indicated that some Apostolic community leaders are now speaking out openly against early marriages, even in their churches. Some have invited girls to speak about such issues themselves.

In addition to positive attitudes towards educating girls, parents and caregivers increasingly favour girls accessing employment outside the home – although this might also result from the COVID-19-induced financial hardship for a large percentage of the rural population. A key factor contributing to these changes in attitudes regarding girls – including GWDs – was the programme material developed to dispel long-held negative perceptions around learners with disabilities and gender roles and norms for girls and young women. There was intentionality to include a range of examples that exemplify deep-rooted stigma around the types of opportunities available to different learners. Several learners highlighted the impact of stories showcasing GWDs who had gone on to acquire skills and consequently attain employment upon graduation or girls who had

"I realised that Kudzai was a hearing-impaired girl who managed to re-enrol in school via SAGE since she now had a sign language assistant. She also got determined to open her own hairdressing shop to help fellow people with various disabilities proving that "disability is not inability."

"that story about Chiedza and Zanele where they are sewing. Chiedza and Zanele were new friends. Zanele had her own sewing company. Zanele was given a lot of orders to sew school uniforms before she asked Chiedza for help. Chiedza came and helped Zanele to sew the uniforms. Chiedza was paid a nice dress for assisting Zanele." – SAGE Learner, Chimanimani

acquired employment traditionally associated with men. Learning materials thus both empowered learners and, in the process, shifted their perspectives. 95.87% of parents/caregivers surveyed at the endline agreed

that daughters should have just the same chance to work outside the homes as sons do, 91.40% agreed that their daughters should be able to work outside the home to support themselves, 87.11% agreed that daughters should be able to work outside the home after they have had children. These positive responses point to increasingly supportive community attitudes likely to continue benefiting girls in the SAGE communities.

There is also an indication that communities are setting up supportive communal structures and providing leadership to ensure girls and young women will continue to be supported in their quest for education and against harmful cultural practices. In particular, community leaders and HDCs have helped set up structures that are locking in future support for learners from Apostolic communities. With the support of AWET, 15 GBV Rapid Response Committees have been set up in Apostolic communities to prevent and report any GBV cases at the community level. Likewise, programmatic data indicates that through the SAGE's men's clubs, there is now a bigger inter-faith church group for Apostolic men called "Dare Guru", which has been set up to support the well-being of girls and young women. Members of the Dare Guru clubs have drafted a constitution aligned with the national constitution provision on the rights of the child, non-discrimination, and the Marriages Act. Table 34 below lists examples of community groups set up both by the project and the community to support the well-being of women and young girls.

Table 34: Groups at the Community Level Committed to the Well-Being of Girls and Young Women

Community structure	Established by	Role
Gender-based violence rapid response committees	Community	Committees set up in 15 Apostolic communities to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.
Dare Guru	Community	Apostolic men's clubs set up to support the well-being of girls and young women. The groups' activities are aligned to support children's rights and non-discrimination.
Boys and girls peer-to-peer clubs	Project	Clubs set up to encourage dialogue between boys and girls in the community.
Intergenerational dialogues	Project	Clubs set up to encourage inter-generation conversations between men and women in the community.

These changes have set precedence and are critical signals for a different, more positive trajectory for girls who have traditionally remained marginalised in these communities. While efforts in facilitating intergenerational dialogues and CoGE sessions have yielded key benefits in changing community perspectives, it is currently not clear the extent to which there will be leadership to continue convening these dialogues at the community level. For example, programmatic data indicated that it was often hard to mobilise men and women for inter-generational dialogues due to competing social and economic priorities and needs. This is especially true in more urban areas where people spend significant time trying to make ends meet. It is thus not clear the extent to which leadership for communal structures such as the Apostolic men's Dare Guru club will continue.

Another risk to note is that while there is a demonstrated shift in perspectives around gender roles and SRHR, some traditional views – like teaching children about contraception methods might encourage promiscuity – still remain widespread. Some community members were also worried that educating girls might lead to them disrespecting their

"They tend to disrespect spouses when educated basing on the fact that they don't need a man to be happy/they can take care of themselves as they will have a source of income."

"They will look upon man's earnings and they divorce if they are earning more than the husband." – Community Members FGD, Mutoko

parents, family members, and specifically husbands, as they may no longer need them for financial support. The FGDs with programme partners also highlighted some instances where CoGE facilitators were uncomfortable delivering certain information in the sessions. The programme countered this with refresher training of facilitators to help dispel their issues and to bring clarity around the issues of gender equality, women's agency and SRHR to the facilitators as well.

3.3.2.2. Community capacity to support learning and social development of OOS learners

Capacity building

The programme has partnered with the government to provide targeted capacity building for CEs, who are key to the successful implementation of the ATL SAGE programme components at the hubs. Programme data indicates that in conjunction with teaching colleges, the SAGE programme trained over 200 CEs on child-centred learning pedagogy, ATL learning materials, and disability inclusion in learning. The programme also trained NFE buddies to equip them to provide continued mentorship support to CEs. NFE buddies are crucial in providing extra support to CEs and ensuring CEs are continuously supported to grow. All the CEs interviewed as part of the endline evaluation reported how these engagements and guidance from NFE

buddies allowed them to improve their teaching practices and will continue to benefit the CEs and the learners in the future. Some of the comments made by the CEs on the continued benefit of the NFE support are presented below.

> *"Yes, they (NFE buddies) made us better teachers, they taught us how to look at the class, and see that they all understood."* – Community Educator, Madlambuzi
>
> *"The buddy would teach me some of the things that I did not know, even if SAGE ends today, I will be in touch with her and I will always remember her as someone who trained me on what should be done when we are in the classroom and how to manage the classroom and what to display."* – Community Educator, Changazi
>
> *"Our relationship with the buddy was good, we worked well together. There were times where we faced challenges with the modules, and we would go and ask her to explain. For example, with Mathematics, there would be a topic that is hard to interpret, she (buddy) would give us expert knowledge and it would make it easy. I will use her lessons whenever I am working with girls."* – Community Educator, Domboramwari
>
> *"She would come some time and assist us presenting our lessons and there was a time when she said your language is too high for our learners, so I toned it down. That kind of assistance interventions helped us quite a lot. Now I know how to approach lessons for girls with low literacy."* – Community Educator, Hotsprings

The programme also invested in building district and school-level officials' technical capacity. It trained district-level and school officials so that they were able to interpret and apply the learning materials correctly. Towards the end of the programme, it was intentional to have district and school officials play a bigger role in delivering the CPD to CEs. This has positioned government officials to continue delivering professional development support to future CEs/volunteers. To supplement the CPD, the programme also invested in developing manuals, facilitator handbooks, training guides, and videos, among other things, that will be available to these stakeholders even after the SAGE programme has ended. The programme has plans to consolidate material packaged so they are helpful for both the relevant ministries and the community as reference points for future volunteers. This suite of capacity-building tools and efforts is crucial for ensuring that communities have a critical mass of well-equipped individuals to continue building capacity for others even after the SAGE programme has ended. As such, there is sustained capacity to support future volunteers and efforts to continue educational needs for OOS learners post-programme closure.

One significant risk to the sustainability of this community led NFE delivery model is the current recruitment and deployment of teachers to address gaps in staffing at the school level, which affects the programme as some of its volunteers are trained teachers awaiting deployment by the Ministry. The 2020 Education Sector Analysis report highlights a need for 197,000 teachers to implement the new competency-based curriculum. The number of teachers in the sector in 2019 was 139,616. The education sector analysis (ESA) further highlighted that the Ministry does not have the capacity to produce the required number of teachers. So, the concept, adoption and use of CEs trained under SAGE appear to be a relevant, short to medium-term solution to improving teacher supply, especially in the NFE sub-sector. After completing SAGE, many CEs are also looking to find employment sources to supplement their incomes. To respond to this, SAGE has instituted on-the-spot training for new volunteers and helped establish a peer-to-peer support network for NFE buddies and CEs to help rapidly skill new volunteers.

> *"The teachers implementing the ATL are qualified teachers so there is the possibility of high turnover which may lead to a loss of principles as the community works towards replacing teachers who leave."* - KII, Plan International, Zimbabwe
>
> *"I intend to open my own my business to sustain myself. The SAGE programme used to give me money but now I need something to sustain my livelihood. The money I got from SAGE I would buy 10 kgs of mealie meal and a bar of soap. So, I do not know if the Hub will still be able to give me an allowance. So, it is difficult to survive so I am thinking that if God will help me so that I can get funds and be able to buy and sell things from my own home."* – Community Educator, Bulilima

Community structures

The programme invested in establishing community structures to support learning, but sustainability challenges remain. A key success of the programme was its ability to embed itself in the community through establishing CBLHs and satellite hubs when learning was adapted due to COVID-19. The

> *"From the last discussion, it won't be a problem to adopt especially the hubs, but it would be important if they were sufficiently equipped so they are treated as satellite vocational training centres. We are unable to equip the 11. So, if these can be fully equipped, taking these over administratively would be easier"* – National MoY official

proximity of the hubs to the community was key in removing some barriers, such as the long distance that prevented girls from accessing school and establishing community buy-in and ownership.

The programme has invested in building the community's capacity to manage the hubs. Starting in Year 4, efforts had been made to shift the management and oversight of hubs to community leadership by establishing HDCs and strengthening their capacity. The programme has been involving HDC members in programme training, and to establish clear roles and responsibilities for the HDCs to lead the continuation of interventions post-SAGE. SAGE has also been working to support HDCs in developing Action Plans for the continuation and sustainability of learning hubs. HDCs have been supporting learners by securing supportive

equipment like wheelchairs for GWDs and helping interested SAGE graduates access government programmes like BEAM to support their transition into education.

While utilising the community-led model has been a critical programmatic success and a potential indicator of sustainability, a lack of financial resources may challenge these community structures' sustainability. The ability for these hubs and for learning to continue depends on the availability of the resources needed to support incentives for volunteers and provide any other supportive equipment needed. Stakeholders indicated that while there are strong intentions to continue, there is a lack of financial resources to provide incentives to CEs, and NFE buddies and to scale up this model.

In anticipation of this funding challenge, the programme has - in Year 4 - invested in supporting income-generating activities such as poultry farms for the hubs to generate financial resources to support hub functioning. 85 out of 88 hubs were supported with £200 as capital to start these activities. The programme is also setting up a 'Sustainable Volunteer Incentive Scheme' (SVIS), which is intended to continue supporting the hubs after the programme ends. However, the results on the effectiveness of these sustainability measures are not available since they were only started towards the end of the programme. Some HDC members indicated that these measures were not proving successful for them.

> *"We had a programme that was set up by plan, were they say can you suggest a programme which could sustain this programme and we suggested poultry. We are trying but now it's not bearing fruits. It is only when you are asked to continue with the programme that you realise that it needs money, poultry won't support as we are making profit of 40 USD."* – Community Educator, Chimanimani

Given all these issues, the EE believes that **there are high risks to the sustainability of community-led hubs due to its heavy reliance on community intent to continue supporting the hubs, especially in the absence of a regular source of funding.** While the programme has invested in building the capacity of the community and has increasingly shifted the ownership of the hubs to the community, there is a risk that in the absence of regular monitoring and accountability measures, the community-led model will end up being abandoned. Discussions with government officials at the national level indicated that if the hubs were fully equipped and if the community is able to sustain them, the Government could continue supporting the hubs administratively.

> *"We would very much want to continue but however as I have alluded, we are not in a financial capacity to tackle some of the programmes. If you look at the SAGE programme it was well funded, the CES had some monthly allowances and the COGE facilitators as well and the buddy and the head teachers have communication allowances. So, if you see if you look at those allowances and as I have alluded that the non-formal education was failing because if lack of funding, we will come back to the same thing. We will not be able to fund them or pay them monthly, so when Plan International came with this noble idea we accepted it, we know that we have some financial challenges in paying our personnel"* - District Lifelong Learning Coordinator

In its discussions with the GEC FM, SAGE has acknowledged that they expect that some of the hubs will not be able to sustain themselves. A consortium representative expressed as part of the FGDs that if they had the opportunity to redesign the SAGE programme, they would add an additional component on building the capacity of the government officials to mobilise and allocate financial and human resources to develop, strengthen, and manage CBLHs and leverage these structures to deliver NFE across the country. While community-led structures ensure higher participation and quality engagement with the girls and community members, government-led structures help ensure programmatic sustainability.

> *"Earlier GEC funding was aimed at developing the infrastructure needed to support vulnerable girls to access education and learning. It included identifying the need and barriers, working backwards from the barriers, and designing infrastructure that did not previously exist. GEC projects like SAGE were successful models of co-production with government and key stakeholders, but they had to create infrastructure where none previously existed. The funding distribution within some major donor models like GEC, coming down through NGO's led to a stand-alone infrastructure aligned to formal and non-formal infrastructure, but not embedded within the existing government infrastructure. The funding did not invest significantly in developing sustainable system reforms and enhanced staffing at national, district and local levels. The SAGE model has impacted significantly on national policy and practice development for NFE, it has worked directly with district level officials, local primary schools, school leaders and teachers, to shape, support and deliver the programme. But the programme has been managed by Plan and not by national, district and local school infrastructure. If funding is then removed, even with strong plans in place to secure local level investment to continue running the hubs, their leadership, the required training and the ongoing management will be in question. I think FCDO now realises that this model of funding in isolation is not sustainable. If you fund an entire staffing infrastructure and then remove that funding, then many governments – like Zimbabwe – do not have enough funds to take on the whole infrastructure in order to sustain them. There is now an FCDO shift to technical support within relevant ministries, working to ensure that policy and infrastructure developments are funded through existing structures, supported by funding parameters and funding agreements. This is welcome, but funding models need to support the required government investment, while also utilizing the expertise in civil society and INGO's that can enable the national developments to be cascaded and implemented at a district and community level. National models of technical assistance to support systemic change and national school improvement will only work if infrastructure throughout the system grows to support it. Utilizing the expertise and models already generated through long-term GEC investment can act as an evidence base and a springboard for wider system reforms. The SAGE project has shaped the GoZ NFE policy and has proven the effectiveness of the community-led delivery models for NFE, but demonstration of the model, rather than ownership of the model by government actors may have hindered the projects sustainability goals"*- FGD, Plan International UK

3.3.3.   Sustainability at the learner's level

The literacy, numeracy, and life skills attained as part of the SAGE programme have not only allowed girls to improve their social and economic well-being but will likely continue to benefit them after the programme has ended. CoGE, in particular, has been highly instrumental in building confidence and enhancing the girls' self-efficacy and confidence. Many girls have transitioned into skills training, gaining skills necessary to give access to the labour market.

3.3.3.1. Access to skills

Learners have gained critical literacy and numeracy skills that will continue to benefit them even after the programme has ended. Many learners are using these skills to access employment opportunities they previously could not access. Many learners indicated that they had not been able to read, write, and even do simple math before joining the programme, which affected their self-confidence. Some could not access or keep jobs, such as those working as shopkeepers. 40% of the learners have successfully transitioned into employment after the programme, positively impacting their income levels. Most SAGE learners feel that they are now better prepared to succeed in their jobs and businesses, primarily due to their improved skills through SAGE.

> *"Even myself, I learnt a lot from this module even on numeracy because even at the market where I go and sell if you do not know maths, how to add and subtract you can even give someone the wrong change…even more than they should get which can negatively affect a business venture."* – SAGE Learners, Chimanimani
>
> *"When people come to buy my things on the market, I can now calculate the correct change. So that means that I will now have some profit."* – SAGE Learner, Mutasa

CoGE has equipped girls and young women with the relevant knowledge and skills to speak up, defend, and demand their rights confidently – this will continue to benefit them even after the programme ends. The endline survey indicates that 65.8% of SAGE girls reported high self-efficacy scores (seen in Section 3.4 above). Some learners have been able to take up leadership positions, are now negotiating for better and safe sex, are speaking out and acting against child abuses, and are defending the rights of PWDs, a key illustrator of their now confidence and changed mindsets. CoGE has provided learners with critical knowledge about SRHR and gender equality. This knowledge has empowered girls, young women, and their partners with the information that they need to challenge harmful social and cultural norms and stand up for their rights. Many learners have reported a significant shift in their attitudes and understanding of their roles as young women, mothers, wives, and partners at the community level. Many girls indicated they now know they are equal to their husbands/male counterparts.

> *"The most significant change brought by SAGE was a change of mindset about the value of a girl child. Through CoGE sessions, I now know that I matter and can strive to be something other than a housewife. I now know how to take better care of my family and myself and there is now peace in my life. I hope the programme reaches more girls. I recommend Plan International do campaigns in our community to educate people on the importance of the girl child."* - SAGE Learner
>
> *"The most significant change brought by SAGE is the presence of peace in my marriage. Through the Champions of Girls' Education sessions, I can now handle marital issues with maturity. I though being beaten was right and never reported it to anyone. CoGE enlightened me about my rights and gender-based violence, which I in turn shared with my husband at home. Through this, my husband is no longer abusive and we have peace at home"* – SAGE Learner

The programme is piloting girl-led CoGE sessions, potentially a key sustainability anchor. It is important to note that the pilot has only started in Year 5 of the programme, and there are no results around the success of this pilot as of the date of preparing this report. This is important given that incentives for CoGE facilitators have ceased, and there are concerns that this might discourage facilitators from carrying it forward.

3.3.3.2. Post-transition support for ISOP graduates

Many girls have been supported to access skills training under the ISOP component. Currently, ISOP remains the most sought-after transition pathway, with 64.8% of Cohort 1 and 2 learners at the endline transitioning to ISOP upon completion of ATL. Endline data indicates that 68.27% of Cohort 1 and 2 learners demonstrated vocational competencies at the end of ISOP, meaning a large percentage of SAGE learners have acquired valuable skills that they can use to access employment or start businesses.

> *"[ISOP] started off very well but after the skills they need support. Somethings require a lot of resources like machines as they are now skilled in sewing but they don't have machines, the ovens for baking, but the ones who are doing hairdressing are doing very well, they already own some saloons in our township. These two groups of learners could have benefited if they could get after training support if they get some sewing machines even if they get in the form of groups or cooperatives. If they get like 10 machines, they would sew some uniforms and sale at affordable prices and become self-employed, empowered…When people just go out and people don't have the necessary equipment, they can stop at what they learned. So, this is a key component other than giving people money for individual equipment."* - Community

The programme adopted a community-led skills training approach to ISOP, where local master crafts were being used to deliver the skills training for the learners. Master crafts are community-based artisans willing to train learners in a skill that master crafts operate in, for example, sewing. Some of the ISOP graduates have gone on to become master crafts

themselves. Using master crafts embeds the skills training component within the community, a key sustainability approach. As more learners become master crafts, this will provide a cohort of community-based artisans who can impart critical skills training.

While many learners are transitioning into ISOP and acquiring valuable skills, there is currently limited data to indicate the extent to which learners attain quality transitions after ISOP. In particular, despite ISOP equipping learners with key skills, several challenges might threaten the extent to which the skills they have gained from ISOP will be beneficial. To illustrate, some parents highlighted that while they would love to support their children to go on and start their businesses or access jobs, they lack the means to do so. As such, while the girl might have learnt how to bake cookies or sew clothes if she or her family cannot purchase raw materials, this makes it difficult for her to turn these skills into income-generating activities. While the unemployment rate in Zimbabwe is reported to be relatively low, at 5.1% in 2021, entry into the labour market is limited, especially for marginalised girls, even more so, since the COVID-19 pandemic.[29] This has meant that many girls who graduate from SAGE either return to working as household helps or cross borders in search of better economic prospects. This concern is something that was highlighted by several KII informants at both the national level and the district level. Several stakeholders acknowledge this weak link to the labour market.

3.3.3.3. Linking learners with other government platforms

To support girls' transition, the programme has engaged key ministries, like the MWAGSMED and the MoY, to provide post-ISOP support for the learners, especially as they venture into self-employment. These ministries have demonstrated affinity to taking practical steps to support the transition of SAGE learners – a positive indicator of sustainability. The MWAGSMED has been actively supporting these learners to access financial support, and the MoY has also been a key advocate for the SAGE programme at the cabinet level.

In addition, the programme invested in ensuring the existing community structures, such as Community Child Protection Committees, are functional and hence a helpful resource available to young girls and women should they need the services and support provided by them. Several of the girls indicated that they now not only know to report certain things, for example, forced or child marriages, but that they know they can go to these existing structures and get the support they need. Throughout the programme, there has been an improvement in the number of child abuse cases reported through these channels. As such, these will ensure that girls have the tools they need in their time of need.

While the immediate community of the girls has been impacted, the extent of spill-over effects to communities outside those targeted by SAGE is not known. This might become a concern as the girls transition into work and the real world. To mitigate this, SAGE has set up post-transition guides for girls who have transitioned, providing specific details on safeguarding response mechanisms. It has also developed a post-transition guide to support girls to access transition support. The guide details stakeholders either at the learning hub or local government that, for example, is helping with market fairs, and they have also linked the girls to supportive institutions providing loans/help to open bank accounts.

3.4. Intermediate outcomes

This section analyses the programme's achievements against its intermediate outcome (IO) targets. The analysis of IO 5[30] has not been included in this write-up due to a significant overlap of analysis with Section 3.3. For an understanding of the programme's achievements on IO5, please refer to Section 3.3.1. Overall, the programme has been able to achieve a majority of its IOs. The evaluation finds that the programme has not been able to achieve its IO targets around girls' attendance, self-efficacy, and empowerment. Two IOs – self-efficacy and empowerment – even though show strong results based on the qualitative data collected by the EE, likely failed to meet the programme targets due to particularly ambitious targets set by the programme. The evaluation finds that at the baseline evaluation, the sample had a much higher representation of married and young women and a lower representation from the highly vulnerable groups such as girls with disabilities, girls from ethnic minorities, and girls belonging to Apostolic communities (which ended up being more than 60% of SAGE learner universe). This likely led to the baseline evaluation results – specifically around self-efficacy, gender attitudes and SRHR attitudes, being overestimated, leading to high endline targets. The endline survey also had an overrepresentation of girls with disabilities and girls belonging to ethnic minorities, which might have contributed negatively to some IO results falling short of the target.

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[29] https://tradingeconomics.com/zimbabwe/unemployment-rate
[30] The evidence contained in this sub-section also relates to the analysis of IO5: strong and active partnerships with MoPSE officials and other civil society actors actively advocate for more inclusive, gender-responsive education policies. In order to manage the length and readability of the report, we have not duplicated this analysis in Section 3.4.

Intermediate Outcome 1 – Highly marginalised adolescent girls regularly attend high-quality, accelerated learning sessions.

IO.1.1 - % of highly marginalised adolescent girls regularly attending sessions

Supporting girls and young women to attend SAGE sessions regularly is central to the programme's theory of change. It posits that girls' learning outcomes will be supported by regularly attending high-quality, accelerated learning sessions and increasing their self-efficacy and life skills. By the mid-point, the programme identified girls' attendance as a significant concern, and the programme commissioned a specific study to identify barriers to and opportunities for SAGE to support learners in improving their attendance for learning sessions. Barriers to attendance were further compounded by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. To ensure access to learning for highly marginalised learners, the programme continued using its four responsive and flexible learning pathways and its catch-up activities to ensure that all existing and new learners could utilise their opportunity to accelerate their learning progress. This resulted in learners choosing their preferred mode of learning, thereby improving attendance and retention of the learners and enabling SAGE to attain its highest-ever rate of reach and frequent attendance. Establishing 32 satellite hubs also enabled more girls to access learning as the distance to the hubs was reduced. Overall, these interventions have resulted in more girls being able to attend learning sessions at the hub level.

Due to challenges in data availability, the evaluation has only been able to use the attendance data for seven quarters, from Q12 to Q18 (May 2021 to Jan 2023), to calculate the attendance figures. This period is deemed to be ideal for assessing the programme attendance since, by this time, a large number of COVID-19-related restrictions had been lifted, thereby minimising the impact of COVID-19 on attendance, and the programme would have undertaken three years of adaptations to improve the programme attendance. Unfortunately, despite the support provided by SAGE to the learners to improve attendance and the adaptations carried out by the programme, the overall attendance has fallen short of the programme target. The analysis of programmatic attendance data shows that only 48.73% of girls whose attendance data was available from the four quarters, attended at least 65% of ATL sessions. This is a significant shortfall from the programme target of 65% of girls attending at least 65% of sessions.

Figure 19: SAGE Learners in Attendance Bands
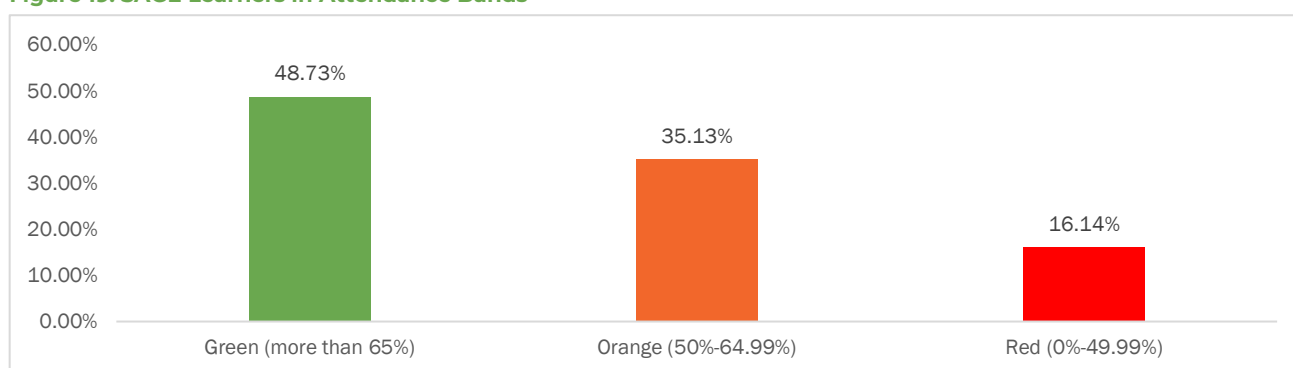
Looking at sub-group distribution, the girls from ethnic minorities and girls who have never been to school showed lower than average attendance, with only 29.46% and 36.23% of girls from these two sub-groups achieving at least 65% attendance.

Figure 20: Sub-Group-Wide Attendance Rates
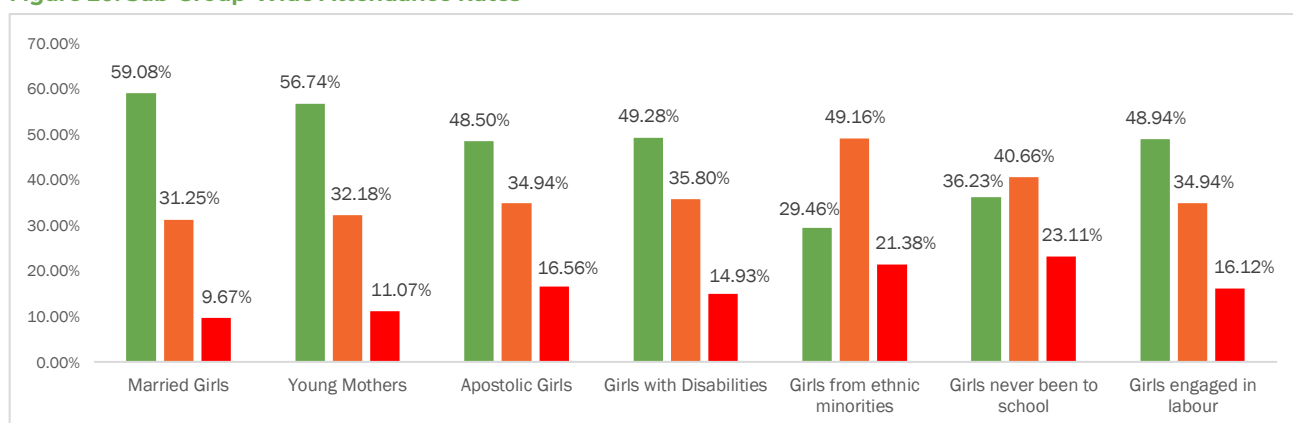
Additionally, looking at the average attendance across sub-groups (Table 35), the average attendance was highest for married girls, young mothers, and girls engaged in labour. In contrast, girls from ethnic minorities and girls who had never been to school had the lowest attendance.

Table 35: Average Attendance across Sub-Groups

Sub-groups	Average attendance[31]	Average attendance if you do not belong to this sub-group
Overall	62.97%	N.A.
Married girls	65.97%	61.39%
Young mothers	65.18%	61.57%
Apostolic girls	62.84%	63.18%
Girls from ethnic minorities	58.50%	63.18%
Girls with disabilities	63.67%	62.93%
Girls never been to school	59.77%	63.12%
Girls engaged in labour	63.02%	61.14%

Barriers to attending sessions

As highlighted in SAGE's alternative midline report, household chores burden (including childcare responsibilities) was the biggest barrier to girls' attendance at SAGE sessions, especially among older girls. This was also the most common reason given by girls surveyed at the endline for the attendance study for missing ATL sessions (cited by 51%) and CoGE sessions (cited by 49.7%). The highest proportion of girls who cited this barrier was in the 18-22 age group, reflecting the likelihood of older girls bearing greater domestic responsibilities and is linked to known entrenched gendered norms which expect girls and young women to fulfil a particular role within the household. The second most common reason cited by girls for missing ATL and SAGE sessions was sickness, with 48% of girls claiming it to be the reason for missing sessions. This may also point to these girls' low availability and access to healthcare services.

Figure 21: Barriers to SAGE Attendance as per Endline Survey
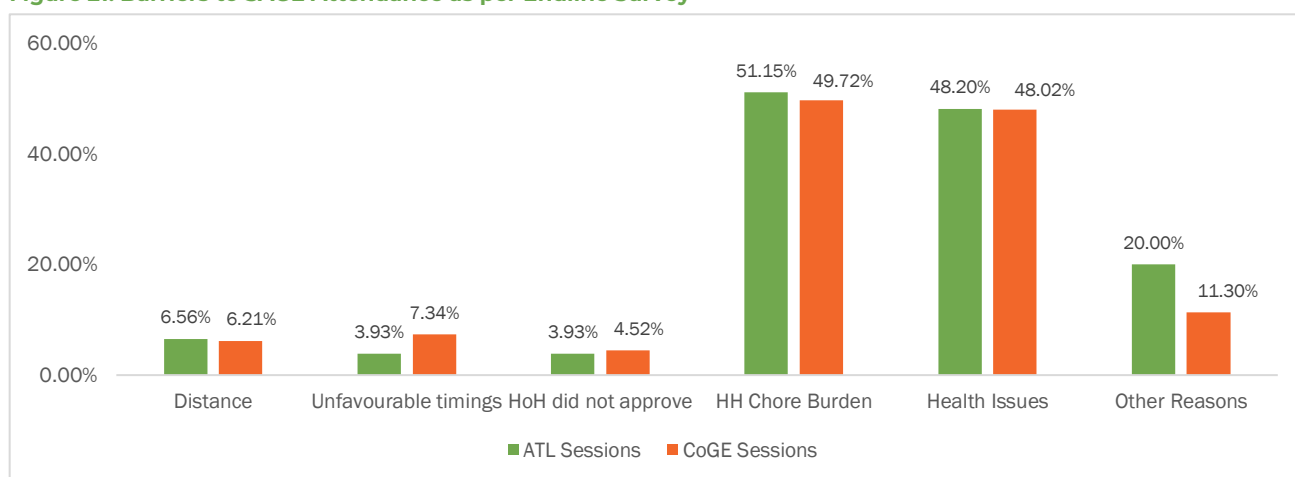
The CEs corroborated their challenges in getting girls to attend the sessions. They highlighted household chores, childcare responsibilities, early marriages, and girls' engagement in income-generating activities as key barriers.

> "The main challenge is that they come late, they say they would have been busy with chores, and I always tell them that they should talk to their parents so that they give them time to do school work. And some were always absent and would say that they had to look after their younger siblings or be absent even for the whole term and say that their mothers had gotten jobs as maids, and they had to look after the homestead. And some would go and look for work in Botswana and then when they find it hard, they come back again." - Community Educator, Bulilima

> "Biggest challenge is early marriage, we started with big number, but numbers started to deteriorate due to early marriages, looking for jobs somewhere. What I noticed here is they need something in hand. If they don't receive anything they drop. Some are working as house girls and shopkeepers where you earn little money. If you say you are getting something they will come in numbers." - Community Educator, Mutoko

IO.1.2 – % of community educators using inclusive, gender-sensitive pedagogy approaches

SAGE programme introduced inclusive, gender-sensitive and girl-centric pedagogical approaches. The CEs were trained on these approaches, explicitly focusing on engaging with girls with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. SAGE CPD to CEs also included practical training on how to apply participatory learning methods such as group work, role-play, discussions, peer-to-peer learning, etc. In the endline survey, more

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[31] Average of sessions attended per quarter as a percentage of overall sessions conducted per quarter (session frequency)

than 95% of students reported positively about their views of the curriculum, pedagogy, and support provided by CEs.

Evidence from learning observations conducted by the SAGE consortium and girls' feedback during endline interviews demonstrate that CEs were employing inclusive gender-sensitive pedagogy approaches, contributing to learners' improved learning scores. The SAGE team conducted 25 lesson observations in Q16 and discovered that CEs were using learner-centred approaches to teaching. They found that 96% of CEs further explained and simplified instructions in local languages when learners struggle to understand specific concepts. Throughout Year 4, a total of 186 lesson observations were conducted, and results showed high percentages of over 95% in key areas, such as learners having access to reading and writing materials (98%), educators clarifying when learners appear to have difficulty understanding (96%), and environmental accessibility (97%). Additionally, CEs provided targeted support for girls with hearing and cognitive disabilities to ensure their active participation in learning. Girls' feedback corroborates the observed teaching practices, with one girl sharing that her teacher always reserved the front seat for her, spoke aloud so she can hear, and ensured that she understood the instructions.

> *"My teacher would always reserve the front seat for me, and she speaks aloud so that I can hear. The CE always checks if I have understood the instructions"* - Girl with hearing impairment, Outcome mapping sessions, Hatcliffe

Another observed important teaching practice employed by CEs was that of inviting questions from learners during learning sessions and encouraging them to challenge the gender status quo, which regards boys as better performers than girls when it comes to education. CEs reinforced messages from Learner Workbooks, which show girls in successful positions and venturing into male-dominated business fields to encourage girls to break the gender ceiling, an example noted is that of one of SAGE's stories which are focused on the Akashinga, Zimbabwe's all-female anti-poaching rangers. Feedback from MoPSE officials revealed that the programme had done well in building the capacity of CEs to deliver quality learning sessions in hubs.

> *"The learning delivery by CEs is very impressive. Actually, some of them are demonstrating improved capacity when compared to in-service teachers,"* – District Lifelong Learning Coordinator (DLLC)

Figure 22: Pedagogical Approaches Used by CEs, asReported by SAGE Girls.
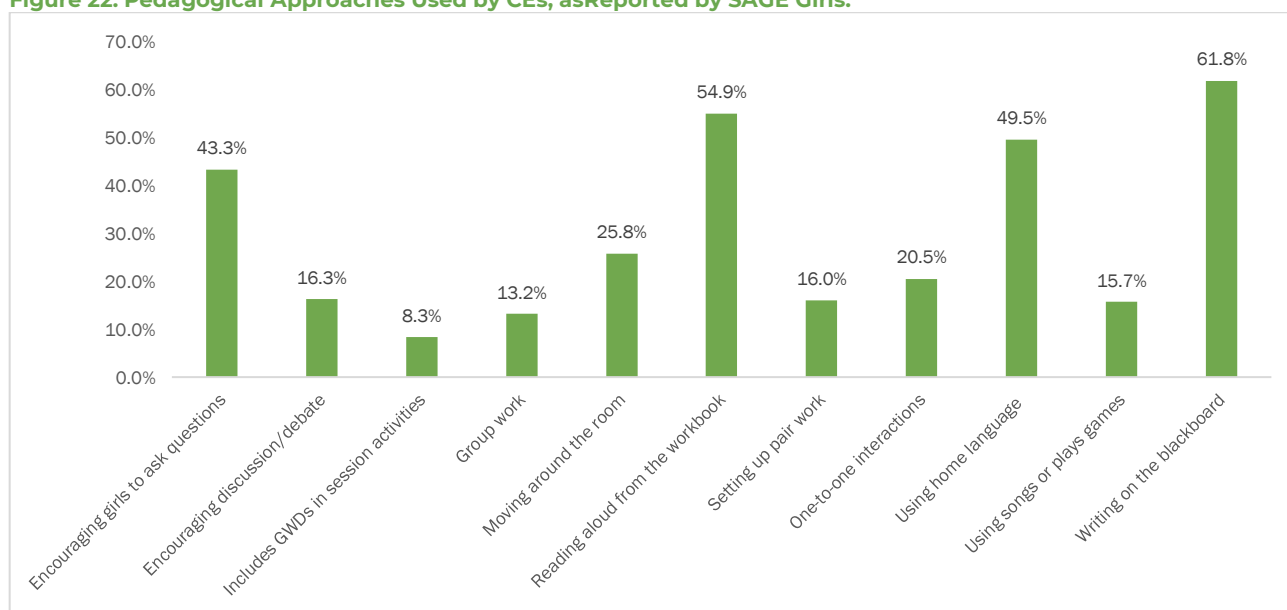
Periodic girls' surveys conducted by the SAGE programme team also found evidence that the CEs were using a range of inclusive approaches to ensure learners could understand the content, and where needed specific, contextualised, individualised support was provided to learners. Figure 22 shows the inclusive approaches used by CEs, as reported by SAGE girls.

In their KIIs, CEs highlighted how they ensured inclusion and peer learning among students. Overall, the CEs found group and pair learning to be most effective in supporting some weaker learners to learn through interaction with advanced learners.

> *"The methods we use in teaching comprises of groups, grouping students with the same characteristics and challenges. We also have teacher exposition; this is when the teacher stands before the class and explains. I will be doing everything, and the students will be listening, and finally, we had the question and answer as a teaching method. This is usually used in fast learners where the teacher will be just asking questions, and the students will be responding."* – Community Educator, Changazi

"I would demonstrate first let's say during counting, I would demonstrate the values of numbers from thousands to tens. Then after that I will give them group work and I will move around checking, and I will be commenting. And to those that needed help I will ask if anyone was willing to help then they will be assisting each other as students." – Community Educator, Nenhowe

"We could use rhymes and games during lessons. It would motivate the child to come to school, we could also play football and other games. Some would not be interested in schoolwork but just the games. Even when we were marking their books, we could put stars or write motivational comments such as good and well-done." – Community Educator, Changazi

"Those girls who have never been to school they enjoyed the games, and some activities liked them together with those who had disabilities - they liked those activities." – Community Educator, Katsukunya

"I think the best approach was practical learning or learning through play. It was easy for them to learn. Learning through play. Games assist them to understand easier. If they use their hands, they understand better. We have different groups of students and the never-been-to-school learning through play is the best approach and it is good for them. Hands-on is also good for the never-been-to-school." – Community Educator, Hingwe

"Question and answer, it was effective, but you could notice that they are struggling to answer, you could have explained everything to them, and they will pretend as if they have understood but when you start asking questions, they become blank, but group work was effective. I actually dropped the teaching approach because some of the learners would start laughing at each other and they lose confidence." – Community Educator, Changazi

During KIIs with girls, the most commonly cited teaching practice that helped them was support for struggling students. Girls reported that teachers provided one-on-one support to help students sound out words using phonics.

"Yes, she (CE) would explain till you understand, she would use good examples which are practical like for numeracy lessons. If it's addition she would ask us to go get counters so that we can actually count physically. This was good because you would easily understand. She was very accommodative; she would make sure that everyone in class would have understood what she would be teaching before moving forward." - SAGE Learner, Nenhowe

"Our teacher was patient with us. He helped me when I faced challenges in understanding what he was teaching us over the phone. So he would come in person and then later explain everything to me." - SAGE Learner (never-been-to-school), Mafararikwa.

"Yes, at SAGE they were treating us differently. They could teach us according to our pace and challenges and they could explain things better which was different from schools." – SAGE Learner (MG), Mafararikwa

"They were using simple examples that we could understand easily for example if they ask us to do a poultry project, they could explain every stage until the final stage of selling the chickens, which was different from formal schools they could just rush things but at SAGE they were taking us step by step." - SAGE Learner (GWD), Hotsprings.

One key outcome of the inclusive and participatory learning practices followed by the CEs was that they were able to build strong relationships with the learners, and there is ample evidence of learners confiding in the CEs, reaching out to them for life advice and general mentorship. Outcomes such as these demonstrate the effectiveness of empowering CEs to work with OOS children in their communities. Not only did the CEs lead the literacy and numeracy modules, but they also became a new source of mentorship, accountability, and support throughout the entire transition process.

"In guidance and counselling if the girl had a problem, the CE would counsel her, and she would feel loved and feel better and she will attend the sessions. The SAGE programme came for the children and when we see that a girl is not going to the hub, we invite her to hub, and she knows that she has not been abandoned. She is like any other girl in the formal school, and she will benefit from the education she lost." – NFE Buddy, Nyabane

Given the evidence cited above, there is a clear indication that the CEs were using inclusive, girl-centric, and participatory approaches that made learning easy, fun, and interesting for the girls. In looking for the factors that contributed to the adoption and use of these teaching approaches, the CEs highlighted the importance of the CPD provided by the SAGE programme, the role of the NFE buddy in working with them to improve their practices, and the community of peer-learning that the programme supported.

"The mentorship programme helped me because she would come and observe me during lesson delivery and she would write creates, so after the lesson she would identify my strengths and weaknesses during lesson delivery and classroom assessments she would highlight areas to focus on especially those who were playing during the lesson and not participating." – Community Educator, Nenhowe

"Yes, we linked as clusters with Bambadzi, Hingwe and Madlambuzi. We shared about our challenges and how to handle them. We have shared ideas. If the other hub struggled with a topic, we would share how we would do it and help each other solve the problems we have in the teaching experience." – Community Educator, Hingwe

"We were communicating with our colleagues and peers from other hubs on WhatsApp groups and they will tell us their encounters and we would ask them questions regarding teaching and lesson delivery as well and they would ask us as well and we would help them." – Community Educator, Changazi

"If they had a problem or I had a problem we would meet and discuss. If there were cases related to SAGE, they would come to me, and we would discuss how to handle the case and find a solution. If the problem was big, we would escalate it. We had a good relationship." – NFE Buddy, Nyabane

"We did monthly workshops meeting as buddies and community educators and we would be given topics and we discussed on these topics. It was very beneficial because we could notice our mistakes and provide solutions to them." – NFE Buddy, Hotsprings

One of the particular areas highlighted by the CEs that helped them was the guidance and training to engage and support girls with disabilities. Many of the CEs consulted as part of the data collection highlighted the heightened challenges that GWDs face in accessing learning. They credited the SAGE CPD and support provided by the programme to help them reach out to and support learners with disabilities better.

"We were taught that when we teach GWDs, we mustn't discriminate against them, but treat them the way we teach the rest of the learners. So isn't when we are teaching others, after they finish reading and are now writing, I would attend to her and make her read on her own before she could write." – Community Educator, Madlambuzi

"It was difficult to handle GWDs without the skills because without the training we did not know how to handle them. All we knew was that we needed to teach them. It would be not easy because we needed to know how to handle them because they have their own way of them. We need to occupy them so that they learn. Also, we needed to position them accordingly in class so that they were in a good place without disturbing other children. I am thankful that SAGE gave me this training" – Community Educator, Hingwe

"Let's say we have a child with disability, we were taught on how to handle the child, for instance we have a blind child, what are we expected to do especially when the child comes to school for the first time, what are we supposed to do so that the child feels welcome and learn together with others and these include orientation and show the child where the toilets are, the offices and everything." – Community Educator, Changazi

"We have a girl who was physical challenged, and we were given a desk that accommodates her, and we also have support from CBM. They gave us assistive devices. We have about 15 girls. The one I brought to you had bigger challenge, she got challenge on hearing, seeing and she was given spectacle and hearing aid. They also gave us movable white boards and I would push them closer to learners with challenges." – Community Educator, Hotsprings

"Yes, she would explain till you understand, she has a passion for teaching, so she does it wholeheartedly. I remember my first days before I got eyeglasses. I could not see the board clearly. She would always ensure that I sat in the front row, and patiently explained a concept until I understood." - SAGE Learner (GWD), Changazi.\

Intermediate Outcome 2 – Highly marginalised adolescent girls have increased self-efficacy and life skills

As part of the programme design, SAGE incorporated the Champions of Girls' Education (CoGE), which aims to foster positive gender attitudes among adolescents and encourage healthier relationships and practices. The CoGE curriculum delivered by volunteer CoGE facilitators in a two-hour weekly session supports girls to explore key issues, including self-esteem, sexual reproductive and health rights (SRHR), gender-based violence (GBV), early marriage and economic empowerment. CoGE facilitators were supported through a programme of initial and refresher training held in person or remotely, depending on the status of lockdown restrictions. The consortium, with the support of representatives from ministries, including the MWAGSMED, provided ongoing monitoring and technical support.

The analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data collected at endline shows that the programme has improved girls' self-efficacy and life skills. While endline survey data shows that SAGE has fallen short of its end-line target on the self-efficacy score and the SRHR score, the qualitative discussions with girls provide extensive evidence of the programme contributing to improvements in girls' self-efficacy and life skills. As discussed in the following sub-sections, SAGE girls have reported improved communication skills, self-confidence, participation in public meetings, starting their businesses, playing a more vocal role in local politics, etc. The evaluation also finds that even though the self-efficacy and SRHR index scores are lower than the programme target, it is in line with some other similar programmes where these indices have been used. The baseline evaluation report noted that the self-efficacy score observed at the baseline was exceptionally high and contradicted the findings of the gender analysis. Given this, there is a possibility that the self-efficacy scores observed at the baseline evaluation did not correctly represent the actual status of self-efficacy, gender and SRHR norms and that the programme targets were overestimated based on this. Additionally, there were other factors, both within the programme's control and outside, that may have contributed to the low achievement of the programme's self-efficacy results. These include the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's agency and empowerment, CoGE's limited focus on the concepts of self-efficacy and self-esteem, and the economic barriers – which were further exacerbated by COVID-19 – faced by the SAGE girls who come from some of the most vulnerable groups in Zimbabwe. These are further discussed in the analysis of IO2.1.

The evaluation finds that even though the programme has not been able to achieve its targets on self-efficacy and SRHR KAP, it was able to contribute positively to building girls' life skills as well as their self-confidence

and belief in their abilities. There are several examples – discussed in the following pages – of the programme's positive impact in this area.

IO.2.1 - % of highly marginalised adolescent girls demonstrating improved self-efficacy

The Self-Efficacy Index[32] for IO2.1 contained 6 items, which included questions related to overcoming challenges, achieving goals, perceptions of personal capabilities, and perceptions of individual performance on tasks. The endline survey found that while a large proportion of girls (65.79%) had high self-efficacy scores, the programme could not achieve its target of 90% of girls achieving a high self-efficacy score. Compared to the baseline, the mean self-efficacy score has dropped from 2.67 to 2.43, and the percentage of girls achieving a high score (minimum 75% score) on the index fell from 85.58% to 65.79%. One of the likely reasons for this reduction in girls' self-efficacy is the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a large body of evidence that has documented and assessed the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and a sharp decline in gender-related indicators – particularly around women's empowerment, self-efficacy, and agency across the world. Similar trends have been noted in Zimbabwe[33][34] while also noting that the impact on women's agency and empowerment in rural communities has been even more severe. This impact of COVID-19 can partially explain the reduction in self-efficacy seen among SAGE beneficiaries. Another factor that may have contributed to the fall in the self-efficacy indicator is the insufficient focus on incorporating social-emotional learning into the CoGE curriculum. CoGE's main focus had been on gender equality, gender roles, and girls' education. There was only limited coverage of the concepts of self-efficacy, self-esteem, and economic empowerment. Another factor that may have contributed to the low self-efficacy scores could be the severe financial barriers faced by the girls that comprise of the SAGE learner universe. A large percentage of SAGE learners came from economically vulnerable households, and financial barriers have come out as the biggest barrier to the girls' successful transition into education, skill development, and self-employment. A number of girls reported in the endline survey that they are unable to secure funds to start their businesses, which may have led to them answering negatively to the self-efficacy questions, e.g., "I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges" or "I believe I can succeed at almost any endeavour to which I set my mind."

In addition to these factors that may have contributed to a low self-efficacy score at endline, there is also a possibility that the baseline self-efficacy scores were not reflective of the reality. The baseline evaluation report noted that the self-efficacy scores observed at baseline were exceptionally high and did not reflect the data collected through qualitative methods. It further noted several girls reporting high levels of stigma and discrimination within learning environments from peers and/or teachers, frequently citing low self-esteem as a barrier to improving self-efficacy and life skills.

Table 36: SAGE Self-Efficacy Scores (Overall and Sub-Groups)

Sub-groups	Baseline			Endline		
	n	Mean score	% with a high SE score	n	Mean score	% with a high SE score
Overall	416	2.67	85.58%	606	2.43	65.79%
Married girls	67	2.71	86.40%	322	2.61	76.64%
Young mothers	86	2.66	83.10%	379	2.57	73.54%
Apostolic girls	131	2.67	85.80%	388	2.42	63.66%
Girls from ethnic minorities	14	2.38	71.40%	107	2.52	71.96%
Girls with disabilities	12	2.57	91.70%	71	2.07	50.70%
Girls never been to school	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	32	2.40	62.50%
Girls engaged in labour	201	2.69	85.40%	497	2.50	68.81%

The endline data reflects that young mothers and married girls show the highest level of self-efficacy, followed by girls belonging to the Apostolic church. This finding reflects the broad trends that are seen across learning, transition, and empowerment, whereby girls from these three sub-groups are found to have responded better to the SAGE programme than any other sub-groups. This is likely because many married women and young mothers live in nuclear families and have developed a higher level of independence and deal with the responsibilities of managing their household. This is also in line with the global evidence base, which suggests that married girls, on average, demonstrate higher self-efficacy. One study conducted in Bangladesh[35] also

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[32] For comparability and uniformity, the endline uses the same questions and indices used at the baseline stage.
[33] UN Women Zimbabwe. (2020). Rapid gender assessment of the COVID-19 pandemic in Zimbabwe. https://zimbabwe.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/09/rapid-gender-assessment-of-the-COVID-19-pandemic-in-zimbabwe
[34] Mudekunye-Mahaka, I., & Chiwanza, K. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 on women's economic empowerment in Zimbabwe. Journal of International Women's Studies, 21(9), 162–174. http://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol21/iss9/13/
[35] Mehra, S., Sinha, M., & Choudhary, S. (2015). Early marriage, age of menarche, and female schooling attainment in Bangladesh. Journal of Biosocial Science, 47(4), 481-499.

found that married girls had higher levels of self-efficacy than unmarried adolescent girls. The researchers suggested that this may be due to the increased responsibilities and roles that come with marriage, which can provide opportunities for girls to develop and demonstrate their capabilities.

Girls with disabilities show the lowest mean self-efficacy score and the lowest proportion of girls that score high on the Self-Efficacy Index. This is in line with the hypotheses that girls with disabilities, through years of discrimination and stigma, have developed low self-esteem and internalised negative beliefs about their abilities and potential. These can also be caused due to limited opportunities for independence available to these girls since childhood, and lack of access to support networks, such as friends, family, and peers, due to social stigma, discrimination, and physical barriers. The self-efficacy score for GWDs at endline has seen a significant drop compared to the baseline, with the mean self-efficacy score dropping from 2.57 to 2.07, and the percentage of girls reporting high self-efficacy score dropping from 91.70% to 50.70% at endline. Due to the limitations of the pre-post evaluation design, compared to an experimental or a quasi-experimental design, the EE is unable to specifically pinpoint the reasons for the sharp decline, and the qualitative interviews with GWDs also do not offer any explanation for this. It is likely that this drop in the self-efficacy score is caused by a mixture of exacerbated financial challenges faced by these girls due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the challenging economic context in Zimbabwe and the fact that it is difficult for these GWDs to achieve successful transition in absence of access to finance for enrolling into education, skills development, or self-employment. It should, however, be noted that the baseline self-efficacy score was based on a very small sample of 12 GWDs and did not match with the qualitative responses of the GWDs.

Another point worth noting is that when asked whether the girls thought their self-confidence has improved since joining SAGE and if they think they will be able to overcome the challenges they faced, the response was overwhelmingly positive. Almost 80% of girls reported that they felt their self-confidence had improved since participating in SAGE, and 82% reported that they could overcome challenges.

Figure 23: SAGE Girls' Self-Reported Improvements in Confidence
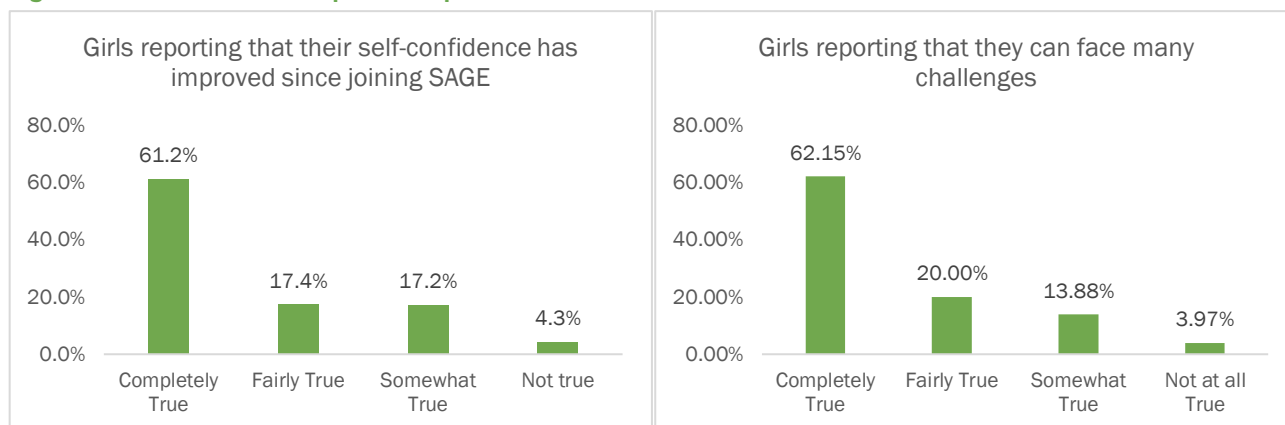
This improved self-confidence and self-efficacy also comes through in the KIIs with the girls, where many girls highlighted SAGE's impact in improving their confidence, sense of self-worth, and belief in their abilities. The data points to many girls having persisted in their SAGE learning journey and achieving high learning outcomes. This was particularly visible in girls with disabilities and girls who had never been to school, who rose above the barriers placed upon them to improve their learning outcomes significantly. Improved self-efficacy can also be seen through the higher number of girls transitioning into businesses and jobs. As mentioned in previous sections, girls were found to be more likely to start businesses or look for jobs in the trades they were trained in under ISOP and those matching their areas of interest.

"Before I joined SAGE, I had no aspiration, no hope, especially as a GWD who had dropped out of school in Form 1. I never thought I would do something or become someone better. Now I have dreams and hopes, and I believe I can achieve them. In terms of communication, I have greatly improved. I can now speak English better, numeracy I can now add, subtract, or even multiply, which now helps me even as I would want to count money or change from the shops, which is a good thing." – SAGE Learner (GWD), Mafararikwa

"Let's look at me as a young mother. The education made me able to look after my child. Now, I can sell and get money to buy basics for my child and myself. During the lockdown, people were unable to go to work. I acquired some skills, and now if I am not baking, I will be doing hairdressing... because there are times when the community does not have money to buy my buns." – SAGE Learner, Chimanimani

"I did not think I could do anything before SAGE, but now I can bake during functions and sell even during community gatherings." – SAGE Learner, Mutare Rural

"I'm saving the money and taking care of myself and my children. I'm no longer waiting for my husband. I can even afford to buy myself some lotion." – SAGE Learner who had never been to school, Mafararikwa

Engagements with the girls also indicate that girls' confidence has improved following their acquisition of skills in ATL and through CoGE sessions. Young mothers reported being able to support their children and siblings with foundational literacy and numeracy skills and homework.

> *"SAGE will help me when my child attends school. I will be helping him with his homework. I will not be going to find help from others."* - SAGE Learner who had never been to school, Mafararikwa

> *"After doing my ATL sessions, my literacy skills improved greatly, and I have improved my reading and writing skills. I am confident that when my child enrols for school, I will not struggle to help him with his schoolwork".* – SAGE Learner, Bulilima

> *"I was a shy person. I could not stand in front of people, and also, I could not dress properly, and people used to see me as someone old, and now they are mistakenly taking me as my younger sister. SAGE has changed my life."* – SAGE Learner (MG), Mafararikwa, Mutare Rural

Younger participants of SAGE are also able to pass on the information they learned. A 13-year-old girl in Mutasa reported that she is now helping her seven-year-old sibling to make maths additions since she is now good at it. *"By helping her, I will also evaluate myself on how good I am now at reading English words."*

Girls are now able to speak confidently in community and church gatherings. Findings show that girls from the Apostolic communities can now make their own decisions without the influence of religious beliefs and spouses and that they can now express their opinions in household decision-making to their husbands.

> *"Yes, talking to people, I am confident. I'm now confident with what I do. I can now read confidently if someone asks me to read. Even at home, I can now decide independently."* - SAGE Learner (Apostolic), Domboramwari

> *"When it comes to decision-making in my family, we now do it collectively; we sit down on which school our child should attend. Even the smallest thing like what to eat, we now decide this together as a family… it is so funny".* – SAGE Learner (Apostolic), Mutasa

IO.2.2 - % of highly marginalised adolescent girls demonstrating improved knowledge, attitudes, and practices on gender and SRHR

Building girls' agency is key to SAGE's gender transformative approach. To improve girls' agency, the programme was building their knowledge, confidence, critical consciousness, and ability to speak out about issues, identify risks and self-protect, and engage in mobilising and influencing others. Results for IO2.2 are reported as scores on two indices. Girls were asked 17 items to assess their gender KAP, addressing themes such as women in the workplace, girls' education, and gender roles in the home.[36] Additionally, girls responded to questions about sexual and reproductive health topics such as sexually transmitted diseases, examples of sexual and reproductive health rights, and practices around SRHR topics. Because this indicator measures two different KAP categories, two separate indices are used for this indicator. The programme target for this indicator was a 20% increase in mean scores for both indices. **The evaluation finds that SAGE has significantly exceeded its target on the gender KAP with a demonstrated increase of 37% but has fallen slightly short of the target for SRHR KAP, which shows a 15.31% increase in the mean SRHR KAP score over the baseline.**

Gender knowledge, attitudes, and practices

Table 37: Girls' Gender Attitudes and Practices Scores by Sub-Groups

Sub-Groups	Baseline			Endline		
	n	Mean score	% with high gender KAP score	N	Mean score	% with high gender KAP score
Overall	415	1.05	2.89%	606	1.44	48.01%
Married girls	67	1.13	3.40%	322	1.47	55.27%
Young mothers	86	1.12	5.20%	379	1.46	53.29%
Apostolic girls	131	1.03	1.7%	388	1.43	47.16%
Girls from ethnic minorities	14	0.99	14.3%	107	1.44	45.79%
Girls with disabilities	12	0.98	0%	71	1.35	32.39%
Girls never been to school	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	32	1.37	37.50%
Girls engaged in labour	201	1.08	3.4%	497	1.49	55.14%

Table 37 above shows that the SAGE programme has led to a significant improvement in both the mean gender KAP score for SAGE learners and almost half the girls now scoring a high gender KAP score. The data shows that the improvements in gender KAP have happened consistently across the sub-groups, with the mean score for each sub-group improving by around 35%. The data also shows that girls with disabilities, unfortunately, continue to score relatively low on gender KAP, and less than a third of GWDs scored a high

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[36] all negatively worded items were re-coded in reverse, resulting in a scale with higher scores indicating more positive perceptions.

gender KAP score. While this is a significant improvement from 0% GWDs reporting a high KAP score, the low gender KAP score also points to the many underlying issues, discriminations, biases, and deep-seated beliefs about dependence on others, especially men, that affect the GWDs. Girls with disabilities experience social stigma and discrimination based on both their gender and disability. This can lead to exclusion, marginalization, and negative attitudes from their families, communities, and even educational institutions. Such discrimination can undermine their self-esteem, confidence, and motivation. While the EE has found evidence of improving community attitudes towards GWDs, which is likely a factor in the improved gender KAP score for GWDs, addressing the challenges facing GWDs in the long run will require a comprehensive approach involving inclusive education policies, awareness campaigns, teacher training, accessible learning materials, and community engagement to ensure that girls with disabilities have equal opportunities to acquire knowledge and develop positive attitudes and practices.

One sub-group that has shown tremendous improvement is the girls belonging to Apostolic communities. 47.16% of Apostolic girls reported a high gender KAP score, compared to less than 1.70% of girls reporting a high score at the baseline. This points to the significant success the programme has had in engaging with the Apostolic community. While there are still some areas where Apostolic communities have space to improve (such as empowering women, early marriage, etc.), there are clear inroads that SAGE has made, particularly with girls from Apostolic communities – as shown through the significantly improved self-efficacy and gender KAP indicators.

> *"At CoGE, the main issues taught were the rights of women. Culturally women were mistreated with no rights, so they were now teaching us that as women, we have our rights, and we were supposed to stand up for them, which was very important. There was the issue of gender, the equal access to opportunities between men and women. I really liked that one because at least now I know that I can attend school just like the boy child, I can also go to work like the boy child, I can be in leadership positions like the male counterparts which was previously not recognised by our culture. Also, the issues of sexual violence and gender-based violence - these are issues we would always face in the community but without the knowledge of where we would report but now, we have been enlightened we now know how to deal with these issues, thanks to SAGE."* - SAGE Learner (GWD), Nenhowe

> *"When we were growing up, we were taught that the household chores belong to the girl child and when they were educating children, preference was given to the boy child neglecting the girl child as she was labelled an inferior person who would later be sold when she got married. So CoGE was an eye opener to us."* - SAGE Learner, Changazi

Interviews with SAGE learners as part of endline data collection provide examples of girls showing improved knowledge about gender norms. Among other things, there is a particularly improved understanding and knowledge of GBV and IPV among women and of redressal mechanisms. Many girls reported using knowledge gained through SAGE to tackle GBV-related issues.

> *"There was a time when I fought with my husband, and he was chasing me out of the house, so I reported him to the police, and they come and counsel him and educate him on my rights."* – SAGE Learner, Hotsprings

> *"I have knowledge now on how to report cases of abuses and gender-based violence and I can help other women as well by educating them especially those who had not been to SAGE."* – SAGE Learner, Mutoko

> *"Yes, I can stand up against violence, I'm now in a position where I can educate fellow women on their rights, equal access to opportunities, ways of dealing with sexual violence amongst other issues."* - SAGE Learner, Mafararikwa

> *"Yes, I can now stand for myself and if I am with my boyfriend I can now go and get pills if I have unprotected sex with him and I do not trust him."* - SAGE Learner, Matjinge

The endline data collection also found that most girls credited the knowledge gained through CoGE for their improved outlook towards their own and men's roles.

> *"Before I joined SAGE, I had no hope in life. My hopes were shattered when I realised my parents did not have money to pay for my school fees. I was now looking forward to getting a man who would want to marry me and start my own family. All this is because of beliefs which are in our communities. I now have the knowledge I had not acquired before, now I can talk about my rights, I can now talk about gender issues of equality. I thank SAGE for this opportunity."* - SAGE Learner, Chimanimani

> *"Yes, CoGE helped me to be able to stand up for my rights. It has opened up my eyes. I now know that I have equal access to opportunities in life with men which we never knew about in the past."* – SAGE Learner, Mutare Rural

To understand the specific areas where girls have demonstrated improved knowledge and attitudes, the evaluation team broke down the gender KAP index into sub-indices to assess improvements across a range of gender norm themes – stereotypes, perception of masculinity, girls' aspirations, domestic roles, sexual relationships, and violence and blame. The sub-index scores are presented in Table 38. As can be seen, the girls show improvement in understanding and knowledge across all gender dimensions. However, the improvement is particularly pronounced in girls' perceptions of masculinity, gender dimensions of sexual relationships, and their attitudes towards violence and blame.

Table 38: Gender Knowledge and Attitude Improvements by the Thematic Group

Thematic groups	Index items	Baseline mean score	Endline mean score	% Improvement in mean score
Gender stereotypes	Boys are naturally better than girls in maths and sciences. Girls and women can be good leaders.	1.48	1.70	14.86%
Masculinity	Boys lose respect if they cry or talk about their problems. If someone insults a man, he should defend his reputation with force if he has to. A man should have the final word about decisions in his home.	0.56	1.10	96.42%
Aspirations	Higher education is just as important for girls as it is for boys. Young women should have the same opportunities to work outside the home as young men.	1.73	1.83	5.78%
Domestic roles	Men and women should share equal responsibility for household chores and childcare. A woman should obey her husband in all things.	0.93	1.07	15.05%
Sexual relationship	If a girl says no to sex, her partner should respect that. It is a girl's responsibility to avoid getting pregnant. A girl should be able to decide who and when she marries.	0.69	1.44	108.70%
Violence and blame	It is not a girl's fault if a male student or teacher sexually harasses her; it is the fault of the male involved. Girls wearing short dresses provoke boys. A girl or woman never deserves to be beaten. A woman should not tolerate violence to keep her family together. A man using violence against his wife or girlfriend is a private matter that shouldn't be discussed outside the couple.	1.17	1.50	28.20%

SRHR knowledge, attitudes and practices

In analysing the girls' knowledge, attitudes, and practices towards SRHR, the evaluation used an SRHR index made up of 30 items and scored on a scale from 0–30. **Overall, the endline survey finds the mean SRHR KAP score of 17.20, 15.31% higher than the baseline score (14.91). This is slightly under the programme target of a 20% increase in the mean SRHR KAP index score.** While there has been an improvement across the board in SRHR KAP index scores, the proportion of girls scoring a high SRHR KAP score[37] has declined. At baseline, 10.84% of girls had a high SRHR index score. At the endline, this proportion has dropped down to 5.16%.

Table 39: SAGE Self-Efficacy Scores (Overall and Sub-Groups)

Sub-groups	Baseline			Endline			% Improvement in SRHR score
	n	Mean score	% of girls with high SRHR score	n	Mean score	% of girls with high SRHR score	
Overall	415	14.91	10.84%	465	17.20	5.16%	15.31%
Married girls	67	19.40	N.A.	311	17.85	5.79%	-8.00%
Young mothers	86	19.14	N.A.	363	17.97	6.06%	-6.11%
Apostolic girls	131	14.98	N.A.	305	17.13	3.93%	14.35%
Girls from ethnic minorities	14	16.00	N.A.	79	17.66	2.53%	10.37%
Girls with disabilities	12	10.38	N.A.	40	16.63	5.00%	60.21%
Girls never been to school	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	21	17.07	4.76%	N.A.

The endline quantitative data shows that while girls with disabilities have shown a significant increase (60%) in the SRHR KAP scores, married girls (-8%) and young mothers (-6%) have shown a slight decrease in the SRHR KAP scores. Both these disparities can be attributed to the relatively small sample size for both these sub-groups in baseline evaluation, which could have wrongly estimated the baseline SRHR KAP scores. Given that the endline sample for all three sub-groups was much higher than at baseline, the mean scores at the endline are expected to provide a more representative picture of SRHR attitudes and practices among these sub-groups.

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[37] Girls scoring above 22.50, the 75% mark on the scale, are considered to have a high score.

The programme has made significant progress in supporting girls to improve their knowledge of sexual and reproductive health rights through concerted engagement and knowledge dissemination through the CoGE programme. While the endline KIIs interviews with SAGE girls did not provide detailed insight into how SAGE has explicitly contributed to improving girls' SRHR knowledge, many girls highlighted the knowledge gained through CoGE.

> "On gender, we learnt that both women and men have equal access when it comes to the position of leadership and is equal in the workplace, and a woman can do what a man can do. On sexual violence, we were taught that as a woman, you should not be forced into having sex without your consent; if such issues happen, you should report it to the responsible authorities. On gender-based violence, we learnt that if there is violence at the household level or community level, there was a need to report to the nearest Village Health Worker who would in turn report to the responsible authorities." – SAGE Learner (Apostolic), Mafararikwa

> "CoGE sessions opened my eyes, and now I can see a brighter future. I now know my rights, I now know my value as a woman, that no one should abuse me sexually, and I also know that there is a gender balance between men and women. On issues of gender-based violence, I am now aware of where to report if it happens." - SAGE Learner, Mutare Rural

> "SAGE lifted us, and through CoGE, I learnt a poem I was reciting to others. This area is a diamond mining area, and girls flock here and are into prostitution. So, I recited the poem to them so they could make good decisions in their life. So, through SAGE, they can have something good to do with their lives." - SAGE Learner (GWD), Chimanimani

Intermediate Outcome 3 - Highly marginalised adolescent girls have improved levels of market-relevant livelihood skills

While there are clear examples of girls improving their market-relevant skills, SAGE has only partially met its target for this intermediate outcome. Girls participating in SAGE reported improved support networks, but only 63% scored high on the Empowerment Index, lower than the 80% target. Empowerment scores were particularly low for girls with disabilities, those who never attended school, and those from Apostolic communities. Factors such as cultural beliefs and limited economic independence may contribute to these low empowerment scores. Despite this, the SAGE programme has positively impacted girls' confidence, decision-making, and leadership skills. Furthermore, 100% of girls demonstrated vocational competencies after the ISOP training. Issues such as accelerated training and limited training resources could explain the lower achievement in vocational competencies at the end of ISOP.

IO.3.1 - Girls have felt empowered to make informed and relevant choices on their transition pathways that best account for their individual circumstances

Generally, we find the support network available to SAGE girls has improved, and many girls report having seen strong support from their families for transition. However, this has not translated into a sense of empowerment over decisions related to their transition pathways. The quantitative data collected at the endline shows that only 63% of SAGE girls scored high on the Empowerment Index[38] against the programme target of 80% of girls. The empowerment score is particularly low for girls with disabilities, girls who have never been to school and girls from Apostolic communities. These groups also show the lowest percentage of learners with a high empowerment score. The empowerment score for married girls and young mothers is the highest, with 17.86 and 17.68, respectively, in line with their performance on all other SAGE indicators.

Table 40: SAGE Empowerment Scores by Sub-group at Endline

Sub-groups	N	Mean score	% with high empowerment score
Overall	606	16.43	63.53%
Married girls	322	17.86	74.22%
Young mothers	379	17.68	63.87%
Apostolic girls	388	16.23	60.82%
Girls from ethnic minorities	107	17.32	71.69%
Girls with disabilities	71	13.79	42.25%
Girls never been to school	32	16.00	50.00%
Girls engaged in labour	497	16.46	62.37%

Like self-efficacy, several underlying factors and social backgrounds affect the empowerment score for the SAGE girls. The endline survey data shows that almost 70% of the girls scoring 'low empowerment score' belonged to the Apostolic community. Some Apostolic communities may have cultural and traditional beliefs

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[38] The endline evaluation uses the Tipping Point Adolescent Empowerment Index, which asks girls 8 questions about their confidence to achieve life goals, achieve desired education, access healthcare, leaving home whenever they want, speaking about girls' problems in the community, refusing marriage if not desired, working for money or in income generation if wanted, and working for money or in income generation if the family objected. The mean score observed for this index across other studies has been 16.02 (out of 24). In line with this observed mean, we categorise girls achieving an empowerment score of more than 16 as achieving a high empowerment score.

that lead to the low empowerment of girls. These include highly patriarchal beliefs where men are seen as the head of the family and have more power and authority than women. This can lead to girls and women being viewed as less important and less capable of making important decisions. Other prominent practices and attitudes of the community towards education, early marriage, engagement in public life, and limited opportunities for women in community leadership may reinforce gender stereotypes and limit the roles that girls and women can play in society. These beliefs may be deeply ingrained and difficult to change, even in the face of evidence that challenges their validity. Apostolic girls also traditionally have limited access to resources and opportunities to be economically independent. This dependency on men can perpetuate a cycle of disempowerment, as girls lack the means to make choices and assert themselves.

Given the particularly vulnerable status that girls belonging to the Apostolic community face as well as being a large part (61%) of the SAGE learner universe, this can explain the lower-than-expected percentage of SAGE learners reporting high empowerment scores. Further establishing the drivers of low empowerment scores, a 'statistically significant' difference was found in the empowerment scores for girls belonging to the Apostolic communities and those not a part of the Apostolic community.

Additionally, a majority (71%) of girls that have never been to school, as well as girls with disabilities (60%), come from the Apostolic community. Their low empowerment scores stem from some of the beliefs of the Apostolic community and further affected by the stigma, discrimination and internalised biases towards girls with disabilities, and from their sense of dependence on others for financial support for girls who have never been to school.

Given that this indicator was only included in the programme log frame after the mid-term evaluation, no comparison is available to assess improvements in the Empowerment Index. However, the evaluation notes that there is substantive qualitative evidence, both from the endline data collection and from the outcome mapping exercise undertaken by the programme team, that points to an improvement in girls' empowerment – including for girls from Apostolic communities – as a result of SAGE.

There are examples of SAGE learners actively participating in public discourse about issues that affect them. They are now active in governance issues within their community structure. Girls are taking up leadership positions and advocating for gender equality, girls' education, and girls' rights in their communities.

> *"As a young mother, I am now a secretary for a political party (party name disclosed). Through SAGE, I learned to challenge myself for positions in our community structures. Through these positions, I can now push for the needs of other women in our community".* – SAGE Learner, Mutoko

> *"Before the schools were closed, we performed in a drama session here at Makomo Primary School. The dramas highlighted issues we are taught here at CoGE, mainly about gender-based violence, where to report it, and the need to promote gender equality."* – SAGE Learner, Epworth

> *"My family and community have seen a positive change in me. They see I am now educated and can provide for my family through my skills. They respect me more now, and I can contribute to my community by teaching others and selling my products."* – SAGE Learner (Apostolic), Musanhi

> *"They now have confidence even in speaking; you know it's different from being a driver with a driver's license and the one without a license. Once they have certificates, they have more self-confidence."* – Spouse of SAGE Learner, Chikukwa

Apostolic girls are now able to speak out and utilise the relevant referral pathway in reporting child marriage and abuse cases. In the outcome mapping exercise undertaken by the programme, girls in Mutare shared that they are now reporting child marriage cases to DSD and Victim Friendly Unit (VFU) in the district. The Apostolic girls shared that they now understand that a girl child should be 18 or older to get married and that every girl has the right to choose who she wants to marry.

> *"I can report to social welfare or police if they force me to get married before I reach 18 years. More so, I have a say to accept or deny the proposal to get married to a man."* – SAGE Learner (extracted from Outcome Mapping Report)

> *"Before, I used to think that getting married at a young age was an achievement and would leave a good life with my husband taking care of me, but when I enrolled at SAGE, I learnt that as a girl, I can do income generating skills and be able to take care of my needs without the help of a husband or boyfriend"* – SAGE Learner (extracted from Outcome Mapping Report)

> *"I feel I am empowered. I can deny getting married when I'm not ready."* – SAGE Learner (Ethnic Minority), Hingwe

Other girls also felt confident about their ability to engage their local community members to improve their understanding of and attitudes towards girls' rights. Girls who have undergone CoGE are supporting other girls in their community to counsel and guide them on sensitive topics like GBV.

> *"Before I attended the CoGE sessions, I did not have enough knowledge about my rights and how to report abuses. But now, I feel more confident and empowered to educate and counsel other women in similar situations. I can share the knowledge I have gained through the sessions and help them understand their rights and how to report any abuses or violations."* – SAGE Learner (GWD), Masvaure

There was also evidence that the vocational training provided to girls under the ISOP component has driven empowerment and self-reliance among the girls. Many girls highlighted their newfound financial independence and ability to make decisions about their and their children's futures.

"I learnt that I have to be independent as a woman and not to depend on someone. I learnt dressmaking and now my husband bought me 2 machines and I'm doing wonders." – SAGE Learner, Musanhi

"I can now wear my two skirts and a mask that I made myself. I am looking forward to learning how to make other designs such as dresses, and blouses and being able to sell them." – SAGE Learner, Mutoko

"I can buy my clothes for myself and for my baby, including Pampers". – SAGE Learner, Bulilima

"I can now work for my family; I can now plan with my husband even if he says we cannot do it but as someone who has an end goal, I will strive to complete what I'm thinking of. I can now care for my family from my business." – SAGE Learner, Sagambe

"I now have the knowledge of how to calculate profits and they (ISOP trainers) said we should take into consideration the price of the material, the amount of effort I have put before I put a price on something to give me a profit." – SAGE Learner, Mutasa

The findings on girls' improved empowerment were also corroborated by other stakeholders, including the parents/caregivers, community members, CEs and the NFE buddies, who all highlighted the increasingly visible and important role that SAGE girls are playing in their households and the community.

"She (my wife) was hesitant, she lacked confidence but now she is very confident and has self-esteem. It really helped because she could not even ask for help from anyone, but now, she can easily go to the neighbours and ask for assistance, and now she can even sell things, convincing customers to buy, and she is now clever and can even speak to the whites. She is even upgrading in decision making at home." – Spouse of SAGE Learner, Musanhi

"Most of them have gained confidence; they can now stand for themselves. Long back, they couldn't criticise husbands in terms of decision-making in their homes, but now they know they also have a say in that house." – Caregiver, Manhemba

"Now they all know how to make money; they are doing all sorts of businesses that are helping them to sustain themselves and the family." – Community Member, Masvaure

"Yes, they are now very confident they are now making money from all corners, and they are helping us to raise the family." – Community Member, Masvaure

These findings suggest that the SAGE programme has positively impacted the lives of girls in Zimbabwe. The programme has helped to build girls' confidence, decision-making power, and leadership skills. It has also enabled them to earn income and become financially independent while promoting inclusivity and challenging discriminatory behaviour. Overall, the SAGE programme appears to be contributing positively towards empowering the most vulnerable girls.

IO 3.2 - % of marginalised girls who demonstrate vocational competencies at the end of the training

As part of the ISOP training, the girls were expected to go through the vocational competency assessments conducted by the Ministry of Youth (MoY). These competency assessments tested the knowledge and skills of the ISOP graduates on basics of the trade, their ability to handle basic tools of the trade, and their ability to put the skills learnt by them. For example, for the dressmaking competency assessment tested girls on their knowhow to mark and cut fabric, tack fabric, shape fabric, interface/bind, and make seams and hems, etc.; and as part of the competency assessment for carpentry, girls were tested on their knowhow of measuring and marking, cutting, nailing and driving the nail through, and putting knowledge into practice by making a push-tray. SAGE data shows that of the 3,551 girls from Cohort 1 and 2 that attended ISOP, 100% of girls demonstrated vocational competencies at the end of the training. This is above the 80% programme target.

Table 41: Vocational Competencies at the End of ISOP Training

Sub-groups	n	Number demonstrating competency	% Demonstrating vocational competencies
Overall	3,551	3,551	100%
Married girls	2,509	2,509	100%
Young mothers	2,736	2,736	100%
Apostolic girls	3,060	3,060	100%
Girls from ethnic minorities	192	192	100%
Girls with disabilities	380	380	100%
Girls never been to school	185	185	100%
Girls engaged in labour	3,453	3,453	100%

Most girls interviewed and surveyed at the endline gave largely positive feedback on ISOP training. The quantitative survey found that only 40% of girls who had completed ISOP, thought they had achieved mastery in the skills they got trained in. Some girls indicated that given the accelerated nature of the ISOP training, and the highly compacted session structure, they only received limited hands-on training. One of the learners reported that she was disappointed with the skills training since it was not comprehensive.

> *"Yes, they provided me with the skills and knowledge, but they did not do justice to it. The training is not intense, they just took us halfway, but they managed to raise us from the ground."* – SAGE Learner, Hotsprings

Consequently, these girls felt they didn't gain as much as they could. Additionally, there were some issues with the availability of machines to practise the skills the girls were being taught. Given that SAGE had to rely on the machines/material from master craft persons, there was only a limited number of machines and materials available for ISOP girls to practise the skills they were learning. This was a major challenge cited by community members, caregivers, and spouses of the girls. Some of the examples of issues raised by the stakeholders are presented below.

> *"They should limit theory and add more practical. They should bring sewing machines and other machines to help these girls and young women better. Taking for instance, in science you might not have a laboratory then students are always seeing the vacuum flask on a diagram, the day they will see that a flask is a container they will be shocked that they were wasting time visualising it as something else. Hence what we are saying, don't just bring books with diagrams, bring machines here so that these girls will have an experience and appreciation of what they are."* – Community Member, Masvaure

> *"They were so many girls, and their resources were limited. They were taking turns to use the machines. So, SAGE could have provided more machines per hub so that they gain experience with them as well."* – Community Member, Mandeya

> *"They could have improved on their practical's because they had not enough resources and material to use especially in carpentry they had no timber, hammers, and other things were not enough. Even those who were doing dressmaking, they had no sewing machines."* – Community Member, Masvaure

> *"When they made dresses, they used the teacher's sewing machine and after the lesson the teacher had to take the machine back with them so machine aid would help."* – Community Member, Hillview

> *"I thought they should raise the level at which these girls are graduating at, maybe it's because it was free of charge, I don't know but it was better if they managed to train them in baking buns, they could have trained them to bake the cakes that even the President can eat. That's the level that I'm talking about. If they can sew baby clothes, they can teach them how to sew clothes for elders. We appreciate where they have taken us so far, but we wish they can raise it to higher levels."* – Spouse of SAGE Learner, Musanhi

Intermediate Outcome 4 - Communities demonstrate more positive gender attitudes and actively support and protect girls

As a gender transformative programme, SAGE adopted an inclusive and gender transformative approach, recognising that gender norms and inequalities present significant barriers to girls fully realising their right to education and making autonomous life choices. As part of this approach, the programme actively sought to engage with and transform gender and social inequalities by engaging community members, caregivers, spouses/partners, adolescent boys, and religious and community leaders. SAGE also adopted an intersectional approach, recognising that gender inequalities may be exacerbated by other intersectionality and marginalisation, including disability, religious identity, ethnicity, age etc. and therefore applied tailored strategies to respond to these dynamics. These strategies included setting-up girl and disability-friendly hub infrastructure through community engagement, institutionalising and engaging stakeholders on inclusive safeguarding and protection, as well as prevention and response to gender-based violence (GBV), conducting inter-generational dialogues to bring together multiple stakeholders to discuss girls' rights, SRHR issues, gender equality, and girls' access to education.

IO.4.1 – % of community members demonstrating improved gender attitudes

To analyse changes/improvements in community members' gender attitudes, qualitative and quantitative data were collected as part of the endline. Quantitative data was collected to understand community attitudes and perceptions towards gender. Questions from the parents/caregiver survey, based on the Gender Norm Attitudes scale[39], were used to understand their perceptions of gender norms, girls' education, SRHR, and GBV, and an index was developed to analyse their gender attitudes and perceptions quantitatively.

The evaluation finds that the programme has successfully contributed to improved gender attitudes in the SAGE communities. The average Gender Attitude score for parents/caregivers at the endline was 9.22 out of 12, compared to 8.23 at baseline evaluation. The evaluation also finds that 72.07% of the parents/caregivers

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[39] Nanda, Geeta. "Compendium of Gender Scales." Compendium of Gender Scales, September 2011. https://www.c-changeprogram.org/content/gender-scales-compendium/pdfs/4. GEM Scale, Gender Scales Compendium.pdf.

surveyed at the endline had a high gender attitude score, compared to 25.06% of community members at the baseline. This shows around a 47 forty-seven percentage point improvement in the number of community members reporting a high gender score, against a target of 50 percentage point increase.

Table 42: SAGE Parents/Caregivers' Gender Attitude Scores at Endline

Sub-groups	Baseline			Endline			% Improvement in gender attitude score
	n	Mean score	% with high gender attitude score	n	Mean Score	% with high gender attitude score	
Overall	415	8.23	25.06%	606	9.22	72.07%	15.31%
Married girls	67	N.A.	N.A.	321	9.22	72.27%	-8.00%
Young mothers	86	N.A.	N.A.	378	9.28	72.75%	-6.11%
Apostolic girls	131	N.A.	N.A.	387	9.20	72.09%	14.35%
Girls from ethnic minorities	14	N.A.	N.A.	107	9.41	75.70%	10.37%
Girls with disabilities	12	N.A.	N.A.	71	9.37	65.63%	60.21%
Girls never been to school	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	32	9.22	69.44%	N.A.

Results from FGDs conducted with a range of community actors provide insight into the improvements in the Gender Attitudes Index. We find that across all these stakeholders, a much larger network of support is available to girls. There is now a high level of appreciation and understanding of gender norms, the importance of girls' education, and girls' transition. This is evident from the responses provided by the stakeholders to the qualitative interviews and FGDs as well as from the programmatic data, case studies, and outcome mapping conducted by the SAGE programme. There is also increased support from religious communities and increased support for education reported by caregivers and girls themselves.

Intergenerational dialogues and men's clubs were introduced within the CoGE component to ensure boys' and girls' commitment to gender equality is supported by their families and their communities. The evaluation finds that these engagements have improved the communities' attitudes towards traditional gender norms. Bringing young men and young women together with other members of their families and communities brought a greater understanding of the issues faced by young girls within the communities. Dialoguing with decision-makers in their communities was particularly powerful. It allowed girls and boys to exercise their agency and identify positive actions to combat harmful practices that the community would support.

Establishing 88 men's clubs provided a forum for SAGE to work with adult men, targeting fathers and husbands of participating adolescent girls and guiding them through a curriculum which explored positive masculine role models and challenged entrenched negative gender attitudes and practices. This has strongly impacted men, who are now more cognisant of gender roles and barriers for women and appreciate equality of responsibilities. Gender equality has become an increasingly important issue in various communities. Men now recognise the value of supporting women in their roles, whether in the workplace or with domestic tasks. This shift in attitudes has given women more opportunities and a greater appreciation for their contributions to their families and communities.

> *"There should be equality, and the couple should help each other. The men should allow his wife to go to work or vending so that they help each other at home."* – Caregiver, Madlambuzi

> *"Yes, our views have changed because now as a man I can go to the borehole and fetch water whilst my wife is cooking or washing the dishes, or I can go and sell tomatoes whilst my wife is doing something else so that we share responsibilities rather than overburdening one side saying I'm the man I only do this and this. I can even sweep the house."* – Young Men FGD, Changazi.\

> *"In my case I have only boys I don't have a girl child, but I have trained them to do all the household chores, so it depends on households how they train their children."* – Community Member, Masvaure

> *"Back then for a woman, being married it was you have entered into something serious that you have to accept everything that the man says but now we can share ideas and she can also take part in decision-making. Back then she was treated like someone who just come to be controlled by someone, it has changed now."* – Community Members, Masvaure

Largely, the qualitative discussions found that men are now also participating more in household chores and childcare, breaking traditional gender norms; however, there were also a few comments made in FGDs with the community members that highlight some push-back and concerns around how improved empowerment and income generation by women might cause a shift in the status quo and that women may stop respecting their families and husbands if they did not need their financial support. These comments and concerns were, however, expressed by an extremely small number of community members and were met with disapproval and disagreement by the other community members participating in the FGDs.

The EE found that the SAGE communities are also embracing the idea of shared responsibilities and the benefits that come from gender equality such as reducing abuse, empowering women, and fostering independence. As discussed in previous paragraphs, husbands are also participating in household chores and childcare, with a number of SAGE learners crediting the successful completion of their SAGE engagement on the support – with household chores and childcare, provided by their husbands. In the FGDs, community members and young men also spoke about the increasing number of double-income households in their communities, where both husband-and-wife work and earn money to provide a better standard of living for their children and their families.

> *"Yes, it is important because as a man I have my own profession and I did it because I wanted to take care of the family and my wife has another profession and we can work together for our family. So, through gender equality it means in my absence, my wife can take my position and take care of the family and even paying school fees, so to me gender equality is essential."* – FGD with Spouses of SAGE Learners, Musanhi

> *"Community now is appreciating if the girl child is working because she can also create jobs for others in the community if maybe she has a shop, so they really support those girls working outside the house. They actually emulate them because they are doing a good thing.* – Spouse of SAGE Learner, Chikukwa

> *"Yes, I think there are changes because they now allow learners to come to the Hub to acquire skills. Husbands are now allowing their wives to join lessons yet a long time ago the men would not allow their wives to work but now we see the husbands allowing and encouraging their wives to come and learn."* – Community Educator, Hingwe

> *"It's a good thing because she will be working and bringing something to the table, so they will be helping each other in taking care of the families. The community really appreciate women who helps their husbands in taking care of the families, some families are being taken care of by women whilst the man is doing nothing. She will be working for her family, so the community appreciates women who work for their families very much."* – Young Men FGD, Changazi

> *"It depends on the households; we always used to laugh at each other as many when we saw a man fetching water, we could say he was given a love potion, but now we are loosening the burden on the girl child and our wives by helping them with household work, so, as a result, she won't be affected in going to school. That's why we said it is also good to engage the community in these issues."* – Community Member, Masvaure

There is also a high level of agreement that engaging the community through SAGE has been crucial in promoting gender equality. Community members have noticed positive changes as more people are educated about the importance of equal opportunities for all genders. This includes encouraging parents to be involved in their children's education and ensuring equal access to education for boys and girls. Awareness programmes have also led to a better understanding of consent and sexual violence, resulting in more respectful relationships.

> *"It is important to engage the community in issues around gender equality because people need to be educated so that they know about it, now you can do it now this programme should continue because it was the one that was engaging communities around these issues and people have changed their views towards gender equality; especially men."* – Spouse of SAGE Learner, Chikukwa

> *"Community needs to be educated in areas around gender equality because our generation they think that it is not good to help each other in raising families. Women can also do some work meant for the men and vice versa, so it is important to engage them in these issues."* – Community Members, Masvaure

> *Yes, even on family planning we were educated that we should not bear many children as if we are dogs. We have to plan how many children we want to have then we budget for them, so without SAGE we had many unwanted pregnancies She will be breastfeeding, yet she is pregnant as well, but SAGE came and educated them on those issues.* - Boys and young men FGD, Changazi

> *"Gender equality reduces abuse because it also helps empower the girl child because once the girl and the boy are put at the same level, they encourage the child. If a woman waits for a man to provide for everything, she is more likely to be abused but if she can also work, she is more independent."* – Caregiver FGD, Komboniyatsva

Several people agreed that if given an opportunity, they would further engage with and educate as many community members as possible to improve women's situation in their communities.

> *"I would organise lessons where I teach parents about the importance of a child and how education betters their lives. I would teach what a child is and how important they are, and then we will see what steps to take to protect them. I would encourage parents to be close to teachers and head teachers, as they could get assistance."* – Community Member, Matjinge, Bulilima

> *"We are learning through CoGE, then we go into the community and educate those not part of the CoGE sessions about the effects of sexual violence. If we see that this man has problems, we sit him down and educate him on how to live well with his wife."* - Boys and young men FGD, Changazi

Many community members and caregivers attribute this change in attitudes to the sensitisation conducted by SAGE and the intergenerational dialogues. This progress seems to have built upon the successes that SAGE achieved at midline, which also showed positive religious leader support. In addition to changes in traditional gender norms, improved knowledge and attitudes around early marriage and sexual abuse have also been noted. The communities are better equipped to deal with these issues, and there have been examples of the

knowledge provided to them through CoGE being translated into action. HDCs – which comprise of community and religious leaders – are now actively shunning child marriages and abuse by reporting cases to the police. In Chimanimani, the HDC successfully reported four cases of child marriages that are now being resolved in the courts of law. The cases were reported through DSD and VFU following the establishment of CPCs within Apostolic churches. Several such incidences have been reported.

> *"We are being encouraged to report cases of abuse, and the perpetrators are getting arrested by the police. They also encourage us not to enter extramarital affairs with married men or women."* – Community Member, Nenhowe

> *"I learnt about the issue of sexual violence I learnt that I must agree with my wife before having sex - not to force her if she is not in the mood. I used to think that as a man it's my right to have sex every day but through CoGE, I learnt that we must agree to it first with my wife. If I force her, I would have raped her."* – Boys and young men FGD, Changazi

> *"Sometimes the wife would be saying she is tired of having sex for almost 3 days, leading to sexual violence. So, the husband would suspect that she is having an extramarital affair so he would rape her. It has changed through education because we were taught that we have to agree before sex and if so, your partner says no then wait until she is ready."* - Boys and young men FGD, Changazi

The Apostolic community was of particular interest to SAGE because of practices that promote GBV, including early marriage, that frequently occur in the community. When it comes to early marriage, even though there is wide agreement on it being an issue for girls in the community, early marriages are still prevalent, especially in areas with a high Apostolic population. Reasons for early marriages include religious beliefs, lack of education and household issues. Sometimes, unplanned pregnancies also lead to marriages within these communities.

> *It's really a painful thing but some people they don't care, if you try to talk to them, you will get a response that you have to mind your own business, but when the child comes back, they will now start to ask for help. Would you think I will be in a position to help them?* - Community Members, Masvaure.\

> *"It (early marriage) is very common; we belong to an Apostolic community which firmly believes in polygamy, and most of us marry off our daughters at a very tender age, as early as 11. Our leadership have now started preaching the gospel of not touching any underage to congregants. However, it takes time to understand that people still practise that disgusting act.* – Spouses FGD, Mafararikwa

In an FGD with community members, one informant said that she has witnessed up to four early marriages arranged in her community and that the issue is increasing. These reports suggest that some child protection issues persist among Apostolic communities in Manicaland province.

IO.4.2 – Perception of safety and security amongst girls in the community

Results for IO4.2 are reported as girls' mean scores on a Perceived Safety Index (PSI). The PSI consists of 5 items on the girl's survey asking about girls' knowledge of safe places and their perception of community safety. The index is scored by adding each girl's responses resulting in a scale of 0.00 to 5.00, with a higher score indicating greater perceived safety. At the endline, the average PSI score is 4.30 out of 5, with 83.31% of girls receiving a high score at or above 3.75, 75% of the scale. This is significantly higher than the baseline, where the mean score was 3.56, with 54.81% of girls reporting a high PSI score. The evaluation finds that SAGE has achieved its target of 80% of girls reporting high PSI scores.

Table 43: Girls' Safety Perception Index Scores

Sub-groups	Baseline			Endline		
N	Mean score	% with a high PSI score	n	Mean score		% with a high PSI score
Overall	415	3.56	54.81%	593	4.30	83.31%
Married girls	67	3.75	64.40%	317	4.49	90.45%
Young mothers	86	3.71	61.00%	372	4.45	89.78%
Apostolic girls	131	3.63	58.30%	378	4.34	84.92%
Girls from ethnic minorities	14	3.50	57.10%	104	4.19	78.85%
Girls with disabilities	12	3.00	41.70%	64	3.80	59.38%
Girls never been to school	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	30	4.20	73.33%

The mean score for all sub-groups was in the high PSI score range (above 3.75), which means that the programme has been able to help girls from all sub-groups feel safe in the learning environment and has contributed to their general safety and well-being by working with the community leaders and other community groups. It should be noted, however, that around 40% of girls with disabilities scored a low PSI score. As shown in Figure 24 below, these low scores are mainly driven by a lack of safe spaces within the communities where girls could meet and talk freely or take shelter in case they feel unsafe at home.

Figure 24: Parameters of Girls' Safety
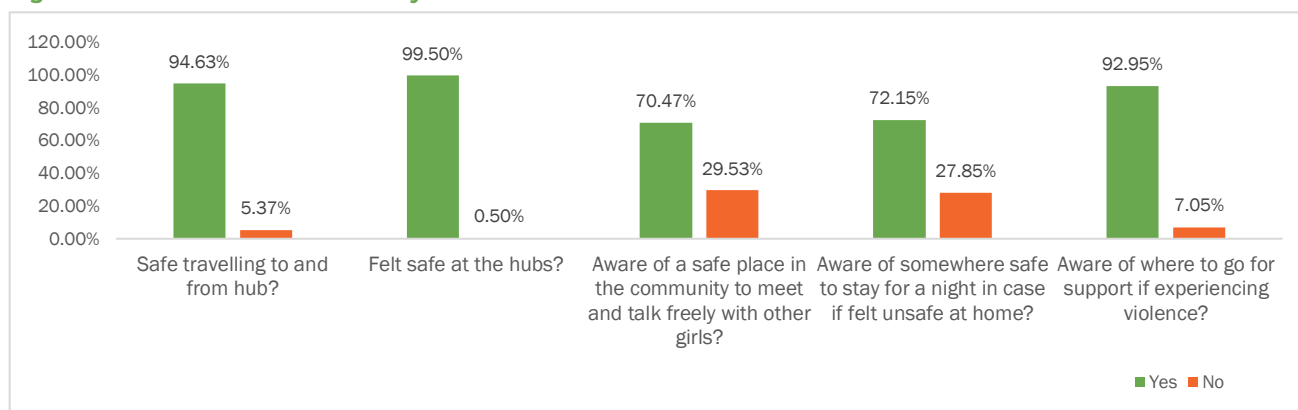
A sub-group-wise analysis of the two indicators related to safe spaces finds that the awareness of safe spaces was the lowest among GWDs (53.52%), the girls who had never been to school (65.63%), and girls from ethnic minorities (67.29%). These are some of the most vulnerable girls, who have also scored the lowest on self-efficacy. The limited exposure these girls have traditionally had to education and social networks has meant that their knowledge of the issues of protection and their opportunities to meet and discuss their issues in discrimination and judgement-free spaces have been limited. Even though the evaluation notes that SAGE's focus was on ensuring girls' safety and feeling of security at the hubs and within their households – aspects on which the programme has been successful, given the deep community entrenchment that SAGE achieved, a lack of focus on working with community-leadership to create and popularise safe spaces for girls feels like a missed opportunity.

While there is still some work to be done to ensure safe spaces for girls in their communities, the programme has achieved strong results in improving girls' safety and security. As shown in Figure 24, the programme has successfully made girls feel safe in hubs. It has provided knowledge to girls to understand the redressal mechanisms available to them in case they experience abuse or violence. Many girls interviewed at endline reported that SAGE (particularly CoGE) has helped them become more aware of the protection and safeguarding issues and has given them the knowledge of protection mechanisms available.

> *"We learnt about girl child rights, boy child rights, reading, we also learnt about gender roles how women are oppressed and how to stand up for ourselves."* – SAGE Learner, Domboramwari

> *"I didn't know about sexual abuse; the sessions opened my eyes, and now I can tell my husband if he is abusing me. CoGE educated me."* – SAGE Learner (GWD), Sagambe

> *"Also, we were taught in issues of abuse even by our husbands so now we know the types of abuses that we can experience as married women and how to report them; we can even report our husbands if they abused us. Now I cannot be abused. The CoGE facilitator was good. He would teach us that we should not be afraid to report our husbands to the police and that if I have an issue that is troubling me maybe if my parents have wronged me, I should confide in someone if I'm not willing to report them to the police.* – SAGE Learner, Mandeya

> *"With CoGE, we learnt about sexual violence, GBV, and rights. Now I know my rights will not be abused, or my rights cannot be violated because I now know where to report if there are cases of abuse, for example, sexual violence."* – SAGE Learner (GWD), Nenhowe

> *"I now have the courage that when I am being abused, I can tell someone or report it with the police."* – SAGE Learner, Madlambuzi

> *"CoGE we were taught about general well-being, sexual violence, GBV, physical violence, rights, and living and working together. We would always be abused due to lack of knowledge, but CoGE sessions came and enlightened us. Now we can stand for ourselves and say no to issues like early marriage and gender-based violence."* – SAGE Learner, Changazi

The programme was particularly successful in ensuring safety and protection at the CBLHs, demonstrated by 99.50% of girls reporting feeling safe at the hubs, and 94.63% of girls feeling safe travelling to and from the hubs. This was primarily done by ensuring appropriate support was provided to girls, and the needs and concerns of the girls and their families were kept in mind while identifying the location for setting up CBLHs and ensuring that girls' safety and protection – both physical and emotional - was kept front and centre while making programmatic decisions. The EE notes that the SAGE mid-line report uncovered some incidences of bullying, with 1.5% of girls reached at the mid-line stage reporting bullying and abuse as a reason for missing learning sessions. The EE did not come across any such reports or concerns at the endline, either through the quantitative or qualitative data collected. Discussions with SAGE managers highlighted that the programme further strengthened its safeguarding approach, reporting mechanisms and behavioural standards for learners as well as volunteers based on the findings of the midline report. Some of the additional measures taken by

SAGE to address the issues of bullying and abuse among learners included monthly awareness-raising to girls on safeguarding standards and reporting mechanisms by reinforcing messages in modules; including a module on bullying and hub codes of conduct in CoGE sessions; and refresher training for hub volunteers on safeguarding standards and their code of conduct.

One of the reasons that SAGE has been able to achieve strong results on girls' safety and security is the safeguarding approach that was built into the programme design and delivery. The project safeguarding approach identified the risks within the context and recognised vulnerabilities and risks to the different groups and those most marginalised involved in the project. The team carried out regular risk assessments and assessed risks to all project interventions. The project also provided training to project staff, CEs, CoGE facilitators, community leaders, community members, and men and boys in the community on the importance, processes, and procedures to strengthen safeguarding and child protection.

> "We were trained on how to interact with girls, what to do and what not to do. We were also taught about reporting channels in cases of abuse or areas where the girls need help. These pieces of training were helpful even to the community because when we had these sessions, we would invite community leaders, CCWs, local police and other stakeholders to go and spread the word in the communities. Hence, everyone knows the reporting channels." – Community Educator, Katsukunya

> "SAGE trained us on our aspect as community educators. They explained that safeguarding is about protecting learners here at the hub, and we shouldn't be bullies and beat them; they are fragile. We should handle them with care. We should avoid nepotism, unprofessional communication with children or WhatsApp. Also, we should set our ground rules at the hub to guide us and know what is required and not required." – Community Educator, Musanhi

> "I had an experience of gender-based violence at home, and I told her. My husband's relatives would mock him, saying he married an uneducated wife. Hence, she (Community Educator) came to my house and explained everything to my husband. After that, we live peacefully, so whenever I had challenges, I would tell her." – SAGE Learner, Sagambe

In strengthening community-based protection mechanisms, SAGE partnered with the DSD to enhance referral, psychosocial support, and reporting mechanisms. DSD officers were part of the training of volunteers on local referral pathways and cascaded the MHPSS training to all volunteers. Their participation helped volunteers in gaining a greater appreciation of the role of DSD in child welfare issues. Volunteers were also aware of the community-based child protection structures that work with DSD, which directly contributed to volunteers reporting 10 cases. This sustainable approach is expected to aid the reporting of protection cases even after the end of the SAGE programme.

SAGE also built the capacity of CPCs to ensure that they were well prepared to deal with cases and offer protection services at the community level, as per their mandate, and CPCs were made aware of referral pathways so they could handle and deal with cases effectively and efficiently. It is also anticipated that during future lockdown restrictions, CPCs will be able to assist and support survivors of abuse at the community level and ensure they liaise with relevant service delivery organisations for appropriate support. The programme also strengthened collaboration between CPCs so they can assist in raising awareness on safeguarding together with community volunteers and lead on safeguarding training themselves.

IO.4.3 – % of marginalised girls who feel they are given appropriate support to stay in a learning environment

Results for IO4.3 are reported as a mean score on the Support for Education Index, which measures girls' perception of learning facilities through a SAGE Learning Hub sub-index and perceived caregiver support for education on a Caregiver Support sub-index. The Support for Education Index uses ten items from the girls' survey. It is scored on a scale of 0.00 to 10.00, with a higher score indicating that the girl has better quality CBLH learning facilities and perceives more support from her caregiver.

A large majority (92.8%) of SAGE girls surveyed as part of the endline felt that they received high support to stay in the learning environment. This shows a 137% increase in the support for education score compared to the baseline and that the programme has achieved its target of a 50% increase in girls reporting high support for education scores.

Table 44: SAGE Learners' Support for Education Scores

Sub-groups	N	Mean score	% with a high score	n	Mean score	% with a high score
Overall	416	7.81	39.00%	596	9.30	92.79%
Married girls	67	7.34	18.60%	317	9.39	92.43%
Young mothers	86	7.53	15.60%	373	9.40	93.03%
Apostolic girls	131	7.63	5.80%	379	9.33	93.14%
Girls from ethnic minorities	14	8.21	21.40%	104	9.35	93.27%
Girls with disabilities	12	6.83	0.00%	66	9.55	98.48%

Girls never been to school	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	31	9.10	87.10%
Girls engaged in labour	201	7.60	7.90%	491	9.33	92.33%

The evaluation finds that while the support for education was high across the sub-groups, girls who had never been to school before SAGE showed the lowest mean score and the lowest percentage of girls reporting a high score on this indicator. While the evaluation is unable to conduct additional analysis on this to calculate if belonging to one sub-group has a significant likelihood of low school support due to a tiny number of girls with low school support scores, the qualitative data collected from girls and other stakeholders provides support for education across all sub-groups.

Almost 98% of SAGE girls reported that their caregivers encouraged them to attend SAGE sessions in person or through any other learning modes available during COVID-19 (phone, door-to-door, small groups) and allowed them enough time to attend sessions and practice what they had learnt. 589 out of 606 girls (97.2%) surveyed at endline also believed that their parent/caregiver/spouse believed that education was important for girls. The only area where the support provided to girls was relatively low was buying them things like pencils, notebooks, etc., to practise what they had learnt. Only 85% of girls reported that they received this support. This was the only question that tried to interrogate the financial support the families were able to provide SAGE girls to continue their learning under the programme, and the 'relatively' low number of girls getting this support points to the inability of households of these vulnerable girls to support their education financially.

Even with these financial constraints, the girls reported that they were very happy with the support they received from their families. Many of them credited their successful completion of SAGE to the support provided by their spouses, parents, and extended families.

"My parents wanted me to learn, no one stopped me, and they wanted me to learn so they supported me." – SAGE Learner, Hingwe

"Yes, they (my parents) were very supportive because there were times when I was doing house chores and when it's time for SAGE, they could tell me to stop and go attend SAGE lessons." – SAGE Learner, Domboramwari

"My husband was very supportive. He actually told me that since I dropped out of school, I should join SAGE. I was the first one to register." – SAGE Learner, Changazi

"Actually, when I told them (my in-laws) that I joined SAGE they were so happy, the encouraged me to go on with the project since it would help me in the future probably by becoming a source of income. The community also welcomed this idea and were very happy. They saw it as a very good thing. – SAGE Learner, Hotsprings

"They were very supportive; they actually liked the idea of me joining SAGE. The community encouraged me to persevere and be serious with the lessons for they said it will become my source of income in the future. They encourage using one's hands to make and earn a living." – SAGE Learner (GWD), Nenhowe

"I could complete SAGE because I had support from my husband. He never denied me coming to school. Some could not finish because their husbands later denied them from coming to the sessions." - SAGE Learner who had never been to school, Mafararikwa

Girls also gave examples of how the views of some community members had changed towards educating their girls.

"During the CoGE sessions, we could attend the lessons with our husbands at times, then they would talk about equal rights between men and women, talk about equal access to employment, education and even equal access to positions of leadership; this helped us a lot because our husbands now have changed their cultural beliefs they are now accommodative, they now allow us to further our studies, to go to work which is a positive step." – SAGE Learner, Nenhowe.

"Those close to me were very supportive and encouraged me to go for it; however, not everyone was happy. People from around the neighbouring village were laughing at me saying you're going to learn Grade 1 stuff; SAGE won't get you anywhere you are better off getting married than wasting your time going to learn silly things. They would say nothing will come out of it. Now they want their daughter to come and join; they realised that SAGE was actually impacting us with knowledge and skill." – SAGE Learner, Changazi

"My husband's siblings they were trying to tell my husband that you can't educate a woman because once she finished if she secures a job, she won't be submissive to you and she won't be respecting you anymore. Now their views have changed because they can now see that I can do something with my life." – SAGE Learner, Changazi

"Yes (the reaction of people around me changed) because they can see there is something good with this thing and they are now asking how they can also join SAGE, some were uneducated like me, but they could see my husband helping me, so they were motivated." - SAGE Learner who had never been to school, Mafararikwa

These improved attitudes towards and support for education were also highlighted through FGDs with community members, caregivers, CEs, and other men in the communities. In almost all FGDs, there was widespread support for education, which extended to both girls and boys and young mothers. The community members acknowledged that educating girls is essential, as it can benefit the girl and her family. They agreed that boys and girls should be encouraged to attend school and achieve the highest level of education possible.

Some benefits of educating girls cited by the community members included better job prospects, helping their husbands, a higher possibility of girls helping parents in their old age, and bringing honour to their families.

> *"SAGE taught us about the importance of educating the girl child, issues of abuse and how to live within the community and as families, they taught us that we should not stop educating our children at Grade 7, but we should send them further even to vocational training centres for them to have skills training."* – Boys and young men FGD, Changazi

> *"Community members now understand that children are equal and it's important to send Mary and John to school; they have since moved from the African patriarchal mentality of saying the male child is important."* – Community Member, Katsukunya

> *"If a girl is educated, she can help her husband and send something to her parents at home. So, it's an investment for both families."* – Community Member, Matjinge

> *"It is very important to educate girls because they don't normally forget to take care of their parents, unlike boys, back then they used to say if you educate a girl child, you could have raised another family because she would support her husband's family and the in-laws which are not true."* – Spouse of SAGE Learner, Chikukwa

> *"If you educate them even if she gets married, she will carry your honour because she will be doing great things wherever she is. They will thank the parents for educating her."* – Spouse of SAGE Learner, Chikukwa

> *"If you educate a girl child, she won't have problems in her marriage because she will not depend on her husband only, she will be bringing something to the table helping her husband. So, her marriage will be good. So, it is very good to educate the girl child even if her husband dies, she can take care of the family."* – Young Men FGD, Changazi

> *"The issue of educating children was important to me because when I educate my children if they pass or have a skill training, they will take care of me when I become old. Also, if you educate your children, they will have knowledge even in crossing robots or travelling to bigger cities they won't have challenges.* – Young Men FGD, Changazi

These findings discussed above provide a stark contrast to the findings from Section 3.2: Transition, which finds that only 4.91% of SAGE learners from Cohort 1 and 2 transitioned into education, and the likely reason for this contrast is the financial constraints that a large population covered by SAGE faces. While there is a widespread understanding of the importance of education and the intent from the parents/caregivers to provide education to girls, they are unable to afford school fees and thus have to resort to getting girls engaged in income-generating activities or getting them married at an early age.

> *"What we can only do is educate them about the importance of education, that there is nothing we can do to send them back to school; we cannot afford to send ours as well. We can only make sure when the donors come, we can register them as they have many challenges. We cannot help them as the presidential inputs scheme is also helping us."* – Community Member, Masvaure

3.5. Value for money

In this section, the project is discussed through the lens of Value for Money. Following guidance from the GEC FM, a "light touch approach to Value for Money (VFM) analysis" was adopted for SAGE's endline evaluation. Overall, the evaluation finds that while the programme provided strong value for money overall, the programme demonstrates below average value for money on sustainability – primarily because of numerous risks to the sustainability of programme interventions and results due to no clear financial support to enable the continuation of community-led activities.

The total cost of the programme until January 2023 was £10,794,756. The majority of this was allocated to the local fee (33.27% - which includes the cost of the programme staff at national and district levels, honoraria, incentives, and other communications expenses paid to the SAGE volunteers, and other locally procured consultancies and research), the international fee (15.15% - which also included the costs for various research and evaluation activities sub-contracted by the programme) and hotel accommodation and subsistence costs (16% - a large portion of which was the cost of training and related travel and subsistence for volunteers, staff and other stakeholders over five years). Other significant delivery costs included training material (8.83%), education supplies (3.33%), and expenses related to procurement and management of project assets, including IT equipment, vehicles, construction, etc. (6.76%). The project overheads and support costs were around 12.50%, which is in line with other GEC projects implemented by INGOs. Figure 25 shows the programme costs disaggregated by major budget lines.

Figure 25: SAGE Programme Costs, end of Q18
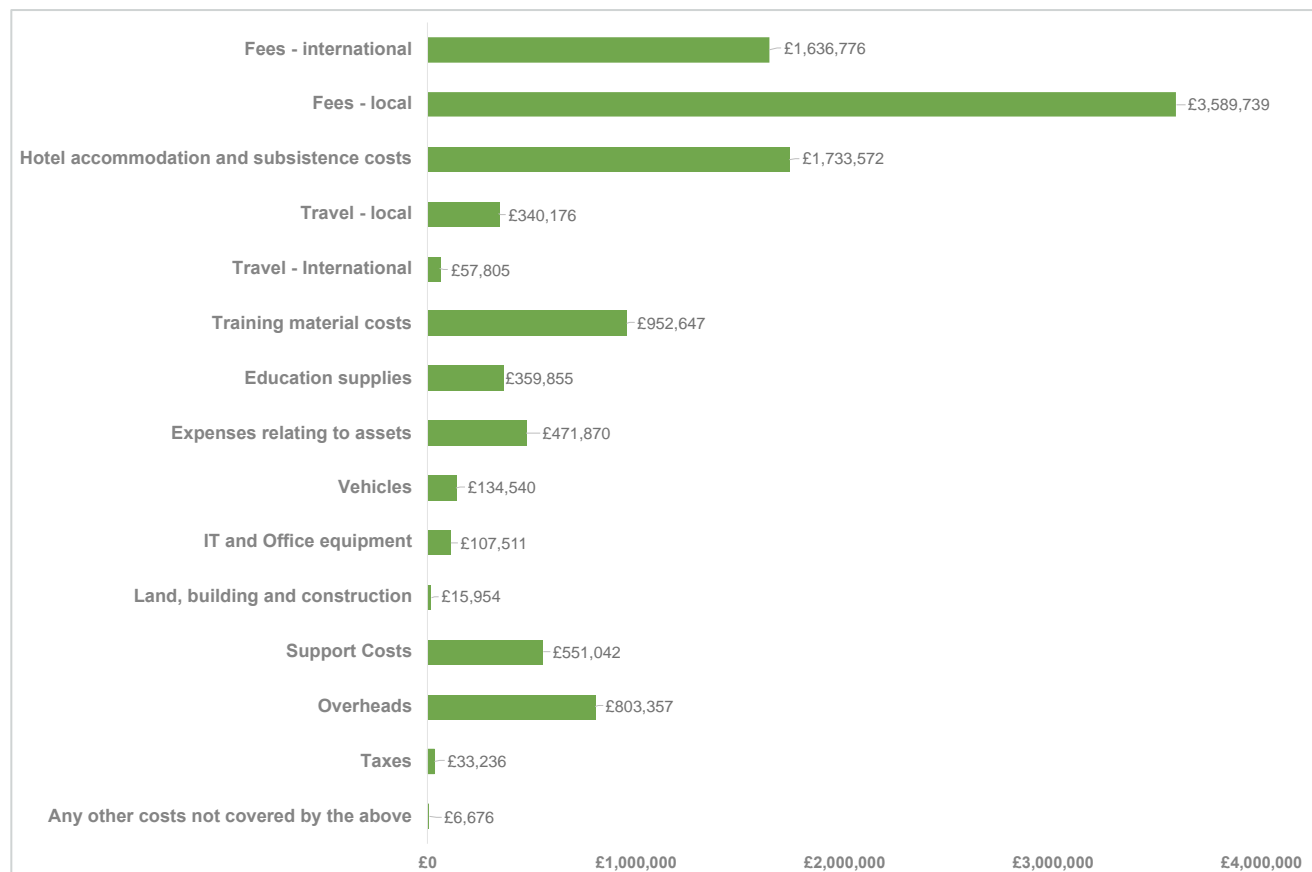
Relevance

In this section, consideration is put into whether SAGE has invested in the right interventions and approaches to respond to the needs of disabled and marginalised girls. The SAGE programme adopted a multi-dimensional approach of targeting vulnerable girls' learning and transition needs while addressing wider social and gender norms by engaging men, community and religious leaders, and adolescent boys to address community mindsets.

The evaluation finds that this multi-dimensional approach is appropriate for a programme like SAGE, and extensive external research supports the appropriateness and success of similar approaches in similar settings. The analysis also finds that the community-based approaches adopted by the programme to facilitate the learning and transition of OOS girls deliver value for money and have ensured alignment of the programme delivery strategy with government strategies.

The programme interventions were designed, delivered, and improved in partnership and through engagement with the ministries, community organisations, learners, and caregivers. The programme conducted a detailed gender analysis at the baseline to assess the key barriers for girls and tailored its approaches and delivery modalities to ensure the programme could address the identified barriers. These barriers included poverty/financial constraints, harmful cultural norms and practices, domestic duties, vulnerability to sexual violence and menstruation. These barriers, combined with the additional barriers often experienced by girls with disabilities, can further exacerbate their exclusion.

To address these, and to ensure the programme was able to engage the community members and leaders to change their mindsets and to ensure community ownership of the interventions, the programme adopted community-led approaches that involved training volunteer teachers and CoGE facilitators from within the communities on delivering accelerated learning, using inclusive and girl-centred approaches, and to lead CoGE sessions. The programme also adopted a community-based approach to skill training through ISOP, where master crafts from within the communities were identified and capacitated to provide training to SAGE learners opting for ISOP.

This community-based approach met the needs of girls with disabilities well, and the programme found it easier to deliver sequentially planned activities effectively and efficiently. Having the community provide spaces and infrastructure for the CBLHs also enabled the programme to engage economies of scope since the learning hubs were used for most SAGE outputs, including ATL, CoGE, and ISOP, thereby reducing the fixed operating cost for the programme overall.

Cost Effectiveness

SAGE consisted of six interconnected output areas, namely:

- **Output 1:** Highly marginalised adolescent girls are able to access high-quality accelerated learning programmes.
- **Output 2:** CEs and formal sector NFE mentors are trained and supported to employ inclusive, gender-responsive teaching strategies.
- **Output 3:** Highly marginalised adolescent girls and boys are supported to learn about and discuss life skills and their SRHR through remote and community-based modalities.
- **Output 4:** Adolescent girls are supported to participate in skills development opportunities.
- **Output 5:** Adolescent and adult champions of gender equality engage others in their communities in dialogue on girls' rights.
- **Output 6:** Programme evidence and learning - including highly marginalised girls' voices and experiences - are shared with key decision-makers at the district and national levels.

Figure 26 below shows the cost of each output area at the end of Q18.

Figure 26: Total Cost per Output Category
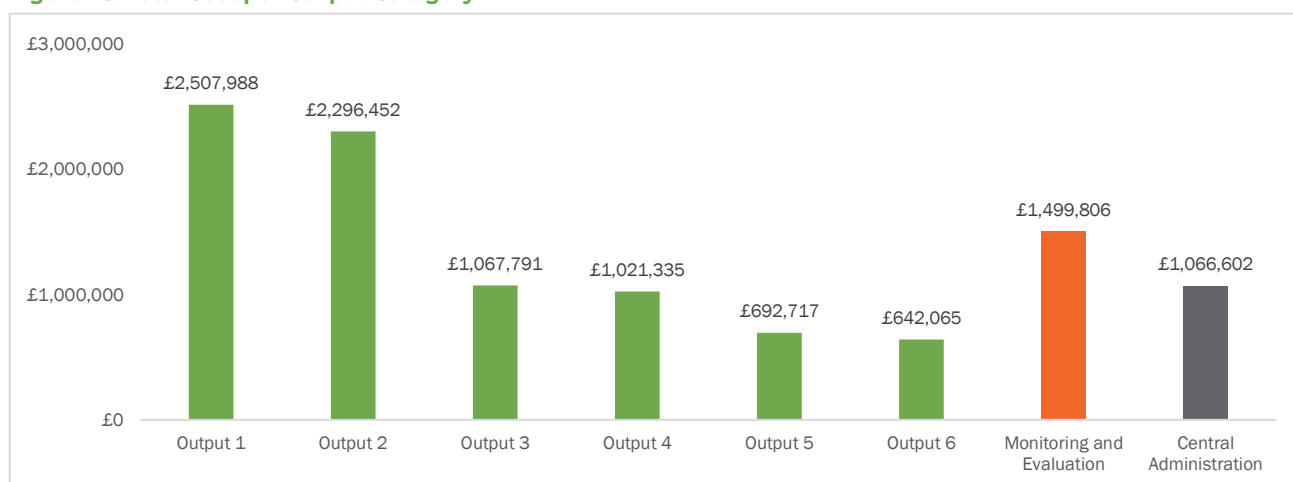
The programme spent the greatest proportion of funds on Output 1 – Accelerated Teaching and Learning, and Output 2 – Training CEs and NFE buddies to utilise inclusive and gender-responsive teaching approaches. Both these components have seen extensive adaptations and additional interventions to ensure attendance and to overcome the additional delivery challenges caused due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The programme had to integrate a multi-modal approach to delivering both the (i) ATL sessions – which included implementing learning in small groups, door-to-door, and through phones; and (ii) the CE training, which included delivering training through WhatsApp and other technology platforms. Both these measures were highly effective in ensuring that the programme components continued and that the learners and CEs continued to engage with the programme. Output 1 also included costs for supporting girls with disabilities through adaptations in the

learning hub infrastructure and learning material and providing specific support to some GWDs in accessing assistive devices, vision tests, etc. Outputs 3 (CoGE Sessions) and 4 (ISOP) represented around 10% of the programme costs.

Overall, through its six output areas, the project has been able to provide learning support to 13,460 girls, transition support to 8,547 girls (including ISOP training to 6,000 girls) and has trained 254 CEs and 75 NFE buddies on inclusive, gender-responsive teaching approaches over five years. The programme has also engaged 13,460 girls through the Champions of Girls' Education (CoGE) component. The programme has also engaged boys, men, and other community members in dialogue around gender equality, social and gender norms, and girls' education through platforms like intergenerational dialogues and men's clubs. Table 45 below presents the programme's outputs achieved under the output areas.

Table 45: Beneficiary Number by Project Components

Programme outputs	Beneficiaries for output areas
Output 1: Highly marginalised adolescent girls are able to access high-quality accelerated learning programmes	
Girls engaged in literacy and numeracy sessions through Accelerated Teaching and Learning	13,460
Output 2: CEs and formal sector NFE mentors are trained and supported to employ inclusive, gender-responsive teaching strategies	
Community educators trained	254
NFE mentors trained	75
Output 3: Highly marginalised adolescent girls and boys are supported to learn about and discuss life skills and their SRHR through remote and community-based modalities	
Girls engaged in life skills and SRHR training through CoGE sessions	13,460
Output 4: Adolescent girls are supported to participate in skills development opportunities	
Number of girls trained through ISOP skills training	6002

Looking at the effectiveness of each output area, it becomes apparent that the programme demonstrated excellent value for money across almost all SAGE output areas. Output 1 (ATL Sessions) delivered literacy and numeracy support to 13,460 out-of-school girls with significant gains in learning and transitions. The per-learner cost of delivering Output 1 (Table 466 below) was around £186 over two years, or £93 per learner per year. The evaluation further finds that, on average, a SAGE learner has gained between 3 and 4-grade levels across literacy and numeracy through the ATL component. This means that the programme was able to provide 1.52 years of learning improvements for every £81 ($100) spent. This is slightly higher than the benchmark of 1.4 years of additional learning for every £81 ($100) spent on community-based learning programmes identified by the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) and The Malala Fund.[40]

Similarly, high value for money can be seen in all other programme outputs – particularly CoGE, ISOP and engaging community members. The programme spent only around £170 per beneficiary to provide skill training, and many beneficiaries highlighted the benefit this training has had on them. Around 60% of the girls who had undergone ISOP training indicated their incomes have increased since graduating from ISOP. This is particularly important to note in the backdrop of COVID-19 and other economic challenges the country has been facing. The programme has also seen strong results in improving girls' life skills, knowledge and attitudes towards gender roles, equality, and SRHR. Through the endline interviews and the outcome mapping exercise, girls reported strengthening their competencies in communication, negotiation, and decision-making about their own lives. There is greater solidarity among them as they support one another in continuing their education and pursuing income-generating work. The changes show girls exhibiting critical awareness of safeguarding, personal hygiene, disability inclusion, and strengthening their confidence, skills, and social capital for making progressive life choices. At the endline survey stage, around 65% of girls were found to have high self-efficacy and empowerment scores, and around 50% of girls were found to have high SRHR scores. Even though these numbers fall slightly short of the ambitious targets the programme set for itself, these results still signify a strong improvement since baseline and demonstrate a strong value for money for the CoGE component at a per beneficiary annual cost of just around £16.5. In addition to the SAGE girls, the programme has been extremely successful in shifting community and men's mindsets around gender and social norms through engagements like men's clubs and intergenerational dialogues.

Table 46: Per Beneficiary Cost of Project Components

Outputs	Per beneficiary annual cost
Output 1: Highly marginalised adolescent girls are able to access high-quality accelerated learning programmes	£93

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[40] United Nations Girls' Education Initiative and Malala Fund, 'Spending Better for Gender Equality in Education: Why the quality of financing matters for girls' education, and what to do about it', New York, 2021. Available at: https://www.ungei.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/Spending-Better-for-Gender-Equality-in-Education-policy-note-2021-eng.pdf

Output 2: CEs and formal sector NFE mentors are trained and supported to employ inclusive, gender-responsive teaching strategies	£1,396.02
Output 3: Highly marginalised adolescent girls and boys are supported to learn about and discuss life skills and their SRHR through remote and community-based modalities	£16.46
Output 4: Adolescent girls are supported to participate in skills development opportunities	£170

Some factors contributing to the programme's cost-effectiveness include grounding the programme in community structures and using community-based approaches to improve access and participation for girls across all output areas. As part of its outcome areas, SAGE supported girls' access to learning environments (ATL, CoGE, ISOP), participation (operating satellite hubs, providing multiple modes of learning, helping in addressing barriers such as childcare and household chore burden through flexible timing) and quality (inclusive, gender-sensitive, and participatory pedagogical approaches).

The programme also enhanced its overall cost-effectiveness by effectively integrating technological solutions into its operations. Through continued reflection on the use of the technology and feedback from volunteers, SAGE modified its approach to WhatsApp usage by making it more volunteer and practice driven. The modified approach allowed the integration of offline tasks, which volunteers would practice before the remote WhatsApp training. Through this approach, volunteers received training, which included: disability support, progress assessments; screening assessments; psychological First Aid training; supporting virtual reflective conversations; and learning differentiation. Training materials were succinct, accessible, and compatible with smartphone access. Two-hour WhatsApp workshops for facilitators posed key questions grounded in the case studies provided. Later, the model moved to small group training with sessions focussing on 'Plan, Do, Feedback, Reflect' with staff from hubs across districts working as sustainable geographical communities of pedagogic practice. As COVID-19 restrictions eased, the training model became a blended CPD model, with the benefits of the hybrid approach recognised and retained.

The programme only started collecting and reporting on activity-wise expenses in Year 2, so the evaluation has not been able to conduct an activity-level analysis. However, based on the output level analysis, the evaluation finds that the programme and its components have produced strong programme outcomes for the right people at an optimal cost.

Efficiency

The evaluation finds that SAGE was implemented efficiently, with strong adaptive management principles integrated into the project. The programme faced a range of challenges throughout the implementation period – such as currency fluctuations that significantly impacted the ability of the project to continue the whole six-year period, fuel price fluctuations in Zimbabwe, and the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused the programme to implement a range of additional measures and interventions – including the introduction of multiple learning modes, adapting the learning and CE training material to enable phone-based learning, introducing mental health and psychosocial support for girls, etc. Despite these challenges and uncertainties, the programme has achieved all of its output targets and the learning and transition outcomes in the initially agreed project budget. This speaks to the programme's strong management and the ability to adapt to changing contexts and in the face of challenges. The programme was also able to successfully integrate beneficiary feedback to ensure the programme remains relevant to the beneficiaries' needs and with the government plans and priorities.

Figure 27: Annual Cost per Beneficiary in Monitoring and Evaluation and Central Administration
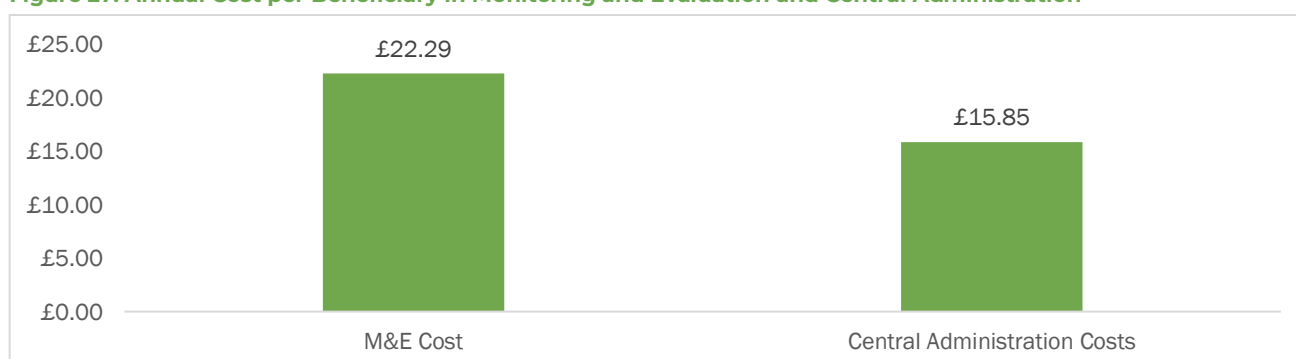
The programme spent around £1.5 million on monitoring, evaluation, and learning; and £1.06 million on central administration function (ref. Figure 26). These come to around 17% and 11% of the overall programme costs, respectively and are in line with other GEC projects. In terms of annual cost per beneficiary, SAGE's annual per beneficiary monitoring and evaluation (M&E) cost was around £22, and the administration came to around £16. These are much lower than some of the other GEC-funded programmes, particularly those integrating access, participation, and quality for girls with disabilities.

These cost figures show that the programme has been able to invest well in both managing and monitoring the programme. The programme was able to leverage its investment in monitoring, evaluation and learning to improve its ability to continually collect data and feedback, use it to improve programme delivery and communicate the programme results to beneficiary groups, community leaders, and government partners. This has contributed significantly to the programme's efficiency and effectiveness.

M&E is especially important for programmes like SAGE which work with girls and other members from highly marginalised groups. Targeting the right beneficiaries is particularly complex when a SAGE-like multi-pronged approach is used, as this involves multiple layers of interventions with varying levels of support for girls with different needs and engagements with community and government stakeholders to enable mindset change, build sustainability etc.

SAGE has invested well in M&E resources, used the data to inform the design, and undertook very good research, which was shared internally and externally. It was able to put in place a consistent, well-designed data collection and synthesis system to measure results on an ongoing basis and inform programme management based on learnings from it. As a result, the M&E spend for SAGE was significantly lower than other comparable GEC projects.

Similarly, the programme has leveraged its project management investments well, ensuring strong partnership management, coordination, and results management. SAGE was delivered by a consortium of seven organisations across Zimbabwe and the United Kingdom. These partners included universities, international NGOs, and civil society organisations (CSOs), and there was a need to employ a strong management and coordination mechanism to effectively engage and leverage the programme partners – both internal and external. In addition to the internal consortium partners, the programme was also able to generate strong partnerships with community leaders, religious leaders, and civil society organisations to roll out its community-facing interventions – both in hub learning activities (ATL and ISOP) and behaviour change activities with all relevant stakeholders (CoGE, men's clubs, intergenerational dialogues, girl-led CoGE sessions pilot).

Sustainability

The EE has assessed the project's sustainability on systems, community, and girl levels and finds that SAGE provides limited value for money on sustainability. While the programme has been able to achieve some sustainability results – particularly around the adoption of ATL materials and the community's gender attitudes, strengthened child protection systems, and improved community capacity to take ownership of the hubs – several risks to sustainability remain. A detailed analysis of the programme's sustainability and challenges has been conducted in Section 3.3. One of the biggest risks to the sustainability of the community structures and community-led approaches implemented by SAGE is the lack of financial commitment from GoZ or other development partners to continue SAGE's successful interventions. Even though it proved to be extremely cost-effective, the programme's focus on a community-led approach to learning has inherent sustainability challenges and a dependence on the community's continued interest and ability to finance these interventions.

SAGE has worked extensively to build community capacity to take a leadership role in sustaining the CBLHs and the programme's ATL and CoGE components. Even though the community has been capacitated and there is recognition of the value of supporting OOS learners through CBLH, a lack of financial and human resources to support the implementation and monitoring of the community-led model (through CEs, CoGE facilitators and master crafts) is a significant risk to the continued functioning of the hubs. The continuity of the CBLHs is now largely dependent on community will and in the absence of any formalised monitoring and accountability measures in place, there is concern that the hubs and the community-led model will be abandoned by the community leaders.

In the last six months, the programme has also instituted a number of measures to enhance sustainability and provide some financial bandwidth to the hubs. These measures include supporting community-managed income-generating activities for each hub as a way of availing volunteer stipends, training NFE buddies to provide mentorship to volunteers, on-the-spot capacity building for new volunteers to enhance rapid onboarding, as well as piloting girl-led CoGE sessions in some hubs. These measures, if successful, can alleviate some of the sustainability concerns, but given that these measures have only recently been put in place, there is no evidence to assess the effectiveness of these measures. There are also concerns around the possibility of these measures to ensure a sustainable source of financial and human resources for hub functioning, the possibility of elite capture of income-generating projects, and the likelihood of these measures to make up for the likely capacity gaps due to high volunteer turnover.

3.6. Reflection on key results

Based on the log-frame indicators agreed with the GEC FM, the evaluation finds that SAGE has achieved most of the programme outcomes. The evaluation further notes that although some intermediate outcomes

were not met, the programme has achieved higher-order outcomes. This could have happened due to a few reasons – (i) the programme set itself high targets for intermediate outcomes; (ii) the ToC pathways were not sound; or (iii) issues with assumptions.

On further analysis, the evaluation finds that it is likely that the programme set the targets for girls' agency, self-efficacy, and normative change-related intermediate outcomes a bit high. One of the reasons for this is the difference between the composition of the baseline evaluations sample (on which the programme targets were based) and the actual SAGE learner universe as it was operationalised. **The baseline evaluation had a much smaller sample of girls from the Apostolic communities and girls from ethnic minorities** due to the low representation of these sub-groups in the initial districts where the SAGE roll-out started. In reality, **girls from Apostolic communities formed more than 60% of the SAGE learner universe.** Endline analysis and literature available in the public domain highlight the stringent patriarchal norms and gender roles followed by many of the Apostolic communities, which leads to an inter-generational cycle of low self-efficacy and agency for women. The baseline data could not fully capture this due to its sample composition. This likely led to the programme setting high targets, particularly around the intermediate outcomes related to girls' efficacy, agency, gender and SRHR KAP, community's gender KAP, etc. While there is evidence that the programme has had success across all these areas, the achievement ended up falling short of the programme targets. The issues and challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, where the entire world – including Zimbabwe - saw a slide back on almost all indicators related to women's agency and self-efficacy[41], as well as an increase in the incidence of GBV and IPV[42], a particularly negative impact on the progress made on gender equality and traditional gender roles[43] and further contributed to a less than expected impact on some of these indicators targeted by SAGE. The programme, in updating the logframe – the last of which happened in August 2021, did not factor in the impact that COVID-19 had on these indicators in its programme targets.

On the learning pathway, the evaluation finds that the programme results reflect the causal chain of higher attendance and inclusive, gender-responsive pedagogy leading to improved learning results. Section 3.1.4 delves deeper into how these intermediate outcomes contribute to the achievement of the learning score improvement of girls. While the programme was able to roll out inclusive pedagogy across the programme sites, it faced challenges in getting girls to attend the ATL sessions regularly. The evaluation finds that only around half the SAGE learners attended 65% or more learning sessions, with the average SAGE attendance at 62.97%. While the evaluation finds that achieving a 63% average attendance is still a strong achievement given that around 96% of the learner universe was involved in labour (informal or formal) and given the movement and logistical challenges posed by COVID-19. Among the reasons for the low attendance were household chore burden and health issues, both exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. One other possible reason for less than desirable number of learners attending at least 65% of the sessions was likely the fact that a large number of girls enrolled in SAGE had previous experience with schools (with many girls having studied up to Grade 7) and had likely attained some basic knowledge of the three subjects taught under SAGE. There is an indication from KIIs that some girls felt they were unable to get much out of the ATL sessions in the beginning since all learners were starting from the very scratch – letter sounds, letter recognition, number recognition – which potentially led to low attendance figures initially, until their cohort caught up to the girls' level is understanding. This was not seen universally but does indicate why the girls could still achieve high learning improvements even though less than half attended a majority of ATL sessions.

Finally, on the transition pathway, the programme has achieved high-level transition outcomes, with 77.61% (5,201)) of the SAGE learners in Cohorts 1 and 2 transitioning into the four transition pathways agreed upon with the GEC FM. A majority of these learners (3,551) have transitioned into the ISOP programme, with employment (1,387), education (331) and self-employment/business (204). **This outcome level result has been achieved even though the intermediate outcome of empowerment was not achieved – among other things, due to the programme potentially setting a high target for the empowerment indicator.**

While the evaluation notes that the four transition pathways were agreed upon with the GEC FM, in its view, **there are issues with the way the programme has defined transition**. Including ISOP participation – a SAGE component – as a high-level outcome conflates the real impact made by the programme. This is particularly true in light of the fact that the endline evaluation and the programme monitoring data find that ISOP was by far the biggest motivation for the learners to join SAGE due to its potential to help them improve their income generation potential. If the programme allowed direct enrolment of learners in ISOP, these

[41] UN Women Zimbabwe. (2020). Rapid gender assessment of the COVID-19 pandemic in Zimbabwe.
https://zimbabwe.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/09/rapid-gender-assessment-of-the-COVID-19-pandemic-in-zimbabwe
[42] Vhembo, T., & Mavetera, N. (2020). Gender-Based Violence amid COVID-19: Exploring the Experiences of Women in Zimbabwe. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 17(16), 5949. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17165949
[43] Mudekunye-Mahaka, I., & Chiwanza, K. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 on women's economic empowerment in Zimbabwe. Journal of International Women's Studies, 21(9), 162–174. http://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol21/iss9/13/

learners would have taken it up from the get-go. Discussion with the Plan UK highlights that going through ATL and CoGE and achieving a basic level of literacy, numeracy, and financial literacy is important for the learners to make the most of the vocational training provided under ISOP. However, this assumption is not visible in the ToC.

Furthermore, the ToC (presented in Annex 1) defines its **intermediate transition outcome** as "Highly marginalised girls have improved levels of market-relevant livelihood skills". This outcome statement assumes that these girls have gone through the ISOP programme and now have improved skills. In this light, the evaluation believes that using ISOP participation as a successful transition and an indicator of high-level outcomes is inaccurate, thereby potentially not reflective of the real transition impact the programme has had. There is a clear rationale – and a logical pathway – for girls transitioning into education, jobs and self-employment being identified as the programme's impact. However, the rationale for ISOP participation to be identified as a programme outcome is unclear. **In the evaluation's view – given the way the ToC states its transition outcomes – in addition to girls transitioning into education, jobs, and businesses directly after ATL, monitoring and reporting the post-ISOP pathways of girls would have been a better (although more expensive and intensive) indicator of the programme's transition impact.**

4. Key Findings

This section provides the findings of the analysis according to the evaluation questions. Given that most of the analysis has been conducted in the Key Results section above, this section aims to use the findings of the Key Results section to answer evaluation questions. The relevance sub-section discusses the fit of the SAGE programme with the needs of the project's target beneficiaries, communities, and the country's context. The coherence sub-section assesses whether the project complemented the government policies and other projects in the non-formal education space in Zimbabwe. The effectiveness sub-section presents SAGE's achievements against its objectives and discusses the extent to which project interventions under each programme component influenced the achievement of results. This subsection further provides findings relating to the success and challenges that may have contributed to or hindered the achievement of results. The efficiency sub-section discusses the programme implementation, its challenges and adaptation strategies. The impact and sustainability sub-sections then follow. The impacts section discusses the impacts of SAGE in line with the ToC. A summary of findings and conclusions against the Evaluation Questions is provided in Table 47 below.

Table 47: Summary of findings and conclusions against the evaluation questions

Evaluation question	Summary of findings and conclusions
EQ1: To what extent were the objectives and design of the programme, including the underlying theory of change, valid, and did they respond to the needs, priorities and policies of intended beneficiaries, communities, and the country?	The endline evaluation finds that the SAGE programme was aligned with the needs of its beneficiaries and their communities. The girls expressed via interviews and surveys that the programme equipped them with diverse skills that catered to their learning and personal and family basic needs. Regarding the relevance of the programme design, girls who participated in the KIIs highlighted gains and positive transformation in the ATL and ISOP components of the programme. Also, over 80% of girls with disabilities who participated in the household survey expressed that the learning resources utilised were adapted to their specific needs. General feedback from the girls suggests that the ISOP programme could be more relevant by providing business and financial lessons and support to enable girls further to successfully progress through transition pathways.
EQ2: To what extent did they remain responsive to the needs, priorities, and policies of these groups when circumstances changed?	The evaluation finds that SAGE successfully maintained its relevance by adapting interventions and delivery strategies based on evidence generation and use. It was highly responsive during the COVID-19 pandemic, adopting a multi-stage approach to address changes in priorities and events in Zimbabwe. Some components of SAGE's response plan aligned with MoPSE's Catch-Up Strategy, which included content delivery through multimodal learning, learner enhancement strategies, teacher enhancement strategies, and observing standard operating procedures for COVID-19.

SAGE also responded to the needs of learners, CEs, and the broader community by incorporating changes based on feedback. Key adaptations included shifting to a multi-modal learning model, transitioning professional development training for community volunteers to WhatsApp sessions, reducing absenteeism for SAGE learners, and adapting learning materials for disabled learners. The programme also made changes to the ISOP component design and incorporated mental health and psychosocial support for girls during the COVID-19 pandemic. |
| **EQ3: To what extent was the programme consistent with and complementary to other interventions and policies?** | The evaluation finds that SAGE was designed to align with and complement the Government of Zimbabwe's (GoZ) policies and priorities. It focused on engaging government stakeholders to enhance the programme's value and sustainability and has successfully integrated government participation at various levels. SAGE is closely aligned with Zimbabwe National Development Strategy 1 (2021-2025), Education Sector Strategic Plan, and the Non-formal Education policy. Key areas of alignment include human capital development, improving access and quality of non-formal education, and ensuring accessibility and inclusiveness for marginalised groups. The programme has also successfully contributed to operationalising the GoZ Non-Formal Education Policy by emphasising flexible learning, recognition and certification, coordination and partnerships, quality assurance, and resource mobilisation. Overall, SAGE is highly aligned with the government's policies and priorities, particularly in non-formal education. |
| **EQ4: Was the programme managed efficiently? To what extent did the programme adopt and apply 'adaptive management' practices?** | The evaluation finds that SAGE was managed efficiently and incorporated adaptive management principles in its design and delivery. It successfully achieved its objectives within budget, despite challenges from currency fluctuations and COVID-related restrictions and measures. The programme has shown a strong ability to monitor the context and incorporate lessons and beneficiary feedback to improve its delivery approach and implementation strategies. Key factors for this were close collaboration among staff and stakeholders. The project was delivered by a consortium of seven organisations from Zimbabwe and the UK, fostering strong partnerships with community leaders, religious leaders, and government representatives. Despite issues inherent in large consortiums, the partnership was described as excellent, and the programme was able to leverage the individual expertise of all consortium partners. SAGE invested significantly in monitoring and |

Evaluation question	Summary of findings and conclusions
	evaluation, focusing on learning and adaptive programming. This approach allowed the project to remain relevant and effective in a changing context.
EQ5: To what extent were the objectives and intended results of the programme achieved, including differential results across sub-groups?	The SAGE programme has achieved mixed success in meeting its targets and objectives. It has effectively improved learning outcomes, particularly in literacy and numeracy, and successfully transitioned girls into various pathways. Notable improvements were seen among girls with disabilities, girls who have never been to school, married girls, and young mothers. However, the programme has been less successful in achieving intermediate outcomes such as regular attendance, self-efficacy, and skills acquisition.
	SAGE successfully supported the transition of girls with disabilities, married girls, young mothers, and Apostolic girls. The programme faced challenges with girls from ethnic minorities and girls who had never been to school. The programme achieved intermediate outcomes in inclusive, gender-sensitive pedagogy, improving knowledge of gender and SRHR, social norms, and partnerships, but fell short against targets for self-efficacy, empowerment, and attendance. Sustainability has been embedded at various levels, but threats such as lack of leadership and funding constraints remain.
EQ6: What major factors influenced the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives and intended results?	SAGE is a comprehensive programme that aims to achieve its objectives through various interconnected interventions. Key factors contributing to its success include the collaborative approach towards programme delivery, a co-creation approach, and flexible programme adaptation and budget management. The programme involved beneficiaries in the design process and adapted to girls' changing needs.
	Factors that have contributed towards the achievement of learning outcomes include consulting beneficiaries as part of the programme design process and throughout implementation, ensuring that CEs were trained appropriately to deliver the programme content and support girls and their differing needs, and ensuring that the pedagogical approach and class composition was girl-centric and composed of girls with mixed learning abilities.
	Factors that have contributed towards the achievement of transition outcomes include collaboration with government structures to enable a transition to schools and remaining responsive to girls' transition aspirations, as seen in the inclusion of the ISOP skills training programme as a transition pathway.
	Factors contributing to achieving sustainability outcomes include the co-creation approach taken at the programme's design stage with relevant ministries and intentional efforts to engage key community groups through partners.
EQ7: To what extent did the programme generate or contribute to generating significant higher-level effects, whether positive or negative, intended, or unintended?	SAGE is a gender transformative programme that successfully addresses barriers to girls' learning through girl-focused and community-focused interventions. It has improved literacy and numeracy skills, leading to increased social functionality, access to employment, and higher income levels. The programme has also supported girls with disabilities and fostered self-efficacy and confidence. Skill acquisition through ISOP has enabled girls to access employment opportunities, and transition support has facilitated access to financial services. Over 55% of girls who transitioned through SAGE reported increased income. SAGE has also changed community perspectives on girls' education, creating a supportive environment for female learners. The programme has contributed to capacity-building and supported government priorities in areas where resources were limited.
EQ8: To what extent was the project successful in building sustainability within the enabling environment for change at the girl, family, community, and system levels?	The SAGE programme has seen mixed sustainability results. On the systems level, the programme has successfully generated strong ownership of learning materials among the government and other stakeholders, established buy-in and ownership at national and district levels, and fostered collaboration with various ministries. However, the lack of resources to support scale remains a challenge.
	At the community level, the programme has shifted perspectives in favour of girls' education and gender equality, supported the establishment of community structures for child protection, and built the capacity of stakeholders for continued out-of-school learning support. Yet, the absence of financial commitment from the government or other development partners threatens the sustainability of these structures.
	Regarding girl-level sustainability, the programme has successfully imparted valuable knowledge and skills, contributed to improved self-efficacy and empowerment, and established support systems for child protection. These achievements are expected to continue benefiting girls even after the programme's conclusion.
EQ9: What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability?	At the systems level, the SAGE programme's close collaboration with key government ministries, alignment with government priorities, and focus on out-of-school learners ensured strong ownership, buy-in, and adoption of ATL materials.
	Local partners facilitated stakeholder buy-in at the community level, while community-based learning hubs allowed communities to witness the programme's progress. Capacity-building efforts created a critical mass of individuals to provide leadership and support learning. Intergenerational dialogues and clubs facilitated mindset changes.

Evaluation question	Summary of findings and conclusions
	At the girl level, targeted holistic support and CoGE sessions enhanced girls' self-efficacy and understanding of their rights—programme materials aimed to dispel negative perceptions around learners with disabilities and gender roles.
	Cross-cutting factors include engaging various stakeholders, designing the programme with sustainability in mind, and remaining responsive and adaptive to emerging findings and needs. The programme supported capacity building for facilitators and educators to interpret and implement learning materials correctly.
EQ10: To what extent will the net benefits of the programme continue?	There are indications that the programme's activities and interventions to foster sustainability at the systems level and the girls' level will continue, given the programme's recognition and appreciation among key government personnel and ministries, strong stakeholder buy-in, and adoption of its materials by MoPSE and development partners like UNICEF and World Vision.
	At the girl level, the programme has successfully built learning, life skills and confidence among SAGE learners. There is ample evidence of improved participation of girls in public life, governance, shunning early marriage, and reporting incidence of GBV and IPV, and many girls also expressed their intention to continue to share their improved knowledge and life skills with other younger girls in their communities. The programme has also provided girls with skills and knowledge to transition into better-paying, dignified income-generating activities. However, the economic climate in Zimbabwe and the lack of financing available to these girls prove a significant hurdle for them to use the skills they've learnt to earn a decent living. This is also seen in many girls transitioning from ISOP working as household helps – a job that they likely already had before participating in SAGE.
	At the community level, the programme has been able to foster strong buy-in from religious and community leaders, has been able to shift the mindsets of communities significantly, established GBV Rapid Response committees, and trained of HDCs, NFE buddies, school heads, and district leaders. However, given that there is no clear path to financial support for managing, maintaining, and running the community-led models to deliver ATL, CoGE and ISOP, the continuation of these interventions remains a big question mark.
EQ11: Did the programme demonstrate good value-for-money approach?	The SAGE programme effectively addressed the needs of disabled and marginalised girls in Zimbabwe through its multi-dimensional approach, community engagement, and cost-effective methods. Although the programme demonstrated excellent value for money across most areas, sustainability concerns persist. Financial stability and the continuity of the CoGE component require attention for long-term success. Securing financial commitments, developing robust income-generating activities, and institutionalising the CoGE model will be essential to enhance sustainability.

4.1. Relevance

This section explores the relevance of the SAGE programme to its beneficiaries' needs and how it fits into the education and development goals of the communities and the country as a whole. The following discussions explore the effectiveness of the SAGE programme over the past four years and the extent to which the programme has evolved to remain relevant in light of COVID-19 and other shocks that have occurred at the national and community levels.

Project's alignment with beneficiary needs

Relevance of the programme design

The evaluation finds that the design and development of components of the SAGE programme were conducted through a multi-stakeholder engagement process. This included a design workshop and periodic meetings with all relevant stakeholders. Girls from the target communities were engaged in FGDs to understand their profiles, needs and challenges better. The FGDs conducted by the programme during its inception led to many adaptations based on the stakeholders' feedback. Some of these included the introduction of satellite hubs and ensuring a functional nature of the ATL material that related to girls' everyday life.

The OU led the co-design of the ATL component of the programme in close coordination with MoPSE to ensure alignment with the curriculum needs of students in non-formal education settings. Furthermore, ISOP was also developed to give community-based vocational training to boost the girls' and their families' income-generating prospects. The programme also successfully collaborated with CBM Global Disability Inclusion to identify and address challenges specific to girls with disabilities. They provided assistive devices, made adaptations to hub spaces to ensure it was accessible to girls with physical disabilities, and contributed to the inclusive education training of community volunteers. Additionally, CBM also supported linking hubs with organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), the creation of accessible learning materials, and community sensitisation and awareness-raising on disability inclusion etc. At the programme design stage, partnership with AWET allowed sustained engagement with community leaders within the Apostolic

community in the targeted districts to learn more about current challenges unique to their community and review sensitive content embedded in the CoGE modules. While the CoGE modules focused on enhancing the self-esteem and confidence of girls, they also ignited discussions on issues related to gender rights, sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) in Module 4, and the need for the economic empowerment of not just boys but also girls. Consultations with Apostolic community leadership helped to check if the participants in the CoGE sessions would be comfortable and receptive to the discussions and content. As a result of these consultations, adaptations were made to the presentation of some CoGE content to better suit the Apostolic community's needs. However, AWET suggested that an additional focus on the economic strengthening of the communities could have made the programme more impactful.

> *"With the Apostolic community, it is a different group –the largest group found in informal settings within Zimbabwe's context. As much as the programme managed to meet outcomes and goals, we feel that it could have also focused on activities or other things that could help with alternatives to problems within the community. A huge problem is on the issue of poverty levels – the Apostolic community is in the lowest wealth quantile. If the project had more focus on improving people's livelihoods, that would have been good. There seemed to be a gap in livelihoods for people, even with ISOP and transition. This would have resulted in more community buy-in." – AWET.*

With knowledge of the Zimbabwean educational system, educational needs, and landscape of the learning environment, specialists with expertise in developing curricula and course materials designed these specialised programmes. The community-based approach was also utilised in adapting the CPD of volunteers, the men's clubs, and intergenerational dialogue components, as they also addressed challenges that affect the quality of girls' educational experiences and the social and gender norms upheld in their communities. Interviews with girls and other external stakeholders highlight that the various programme components, especially the ATL and ISOP components, have addressed their needs and have contributed to the development of the participating communities.

Relevance to the needs and priorities of the country

SAGE design was closely aligned with and supportive of Zimbabwe National Development Strategy 1 (2021-2025) and the Government's Non-formal Education (NFE) policy. SAGE design supported NDS and NFE policy's key thematic areas of access and equity, quality, and relevance, governance, and accountability. The programme responds to the growing challenge of declining student retention rates and the exclusion of girls. Zimbabwe has encountered a high transition rate (85%) from primary to secondary education[44], the total number of out-of-school adolescents in Zimbabwe has also increased by about 35% between 2017 and 2021[45] which suggests that the educational system has struggled to ensure equitable and inclusive education in the country.

Zimbabwe National Development Strategy 1 (2021-2025), the country's first Medium Term Plan, focuses on economic, social, and political development.[46] One of its key priorities is human capital development which aims to build a skilled workforce that adequately supports the economic growth needed for sustainable development. The 2020 Education Sector Analysis (ESA) report analysed the MoPSE budget, including actual spending on non-formal education. It highlighted evidence that suggests some of the education sub-sectors had not been adequately planned for in the past.[47] The NFE sub-programme had an estimated budget of USD 1.0 million at the lower education level for 2019-20. By September 2019, expenditure was USD 61 million – a 5770% rise - and by year-end, the projected expenditure was as high as USD 81 million. The government of Zimbabwe realises now more than ever that investing in the education, health and well-being of young people is critical for promoting inclusive and sustainable development. In addressing the challenge of student retention and the rising number of OOS children and adolescents, the national development plan aims to increase access to educational opportunities and improve the country's education quality. This will be achieved through development initiatives and private-public partnerships.

The 2021-25 Education Sector Plan (ESP) builds on the goals and objectives of the national plan with a specific focus on the education sector. It recognises the need to address the challenges of achieving equitable and inclusive education with a gender lens. To achieve this, the ESP proposed targeted strategies and interventions, which include:

- Enhancing the quality of education by improving the teaching methods and learning materials to ensure that students acquire relevant skills and knowledge that meet the demands of Zimbabwe's current economy.
- Strengthening the capacity of teachers and education administrators through training and professional development programmes.
- Promoting gender equality in education by addressing the root causes of gender disparities such as poverty, early marriage and cultural norms and practices.

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[44] UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) Zimbabwe Country Profile; Education and literacy theme. Accessed at uis.unesco.org/en/country/zw
[45] Ibid
[46] Government of Zimbabwe (2020) National Development Strategy (2021-2025 NDS 1).
[47] Government of Zimbabwe, UNICEF (2021) Education Section Analysis report.

- Encouraging parental and community involvement in education, particularly in supporting girls' education.
- Ramping up the monitoring and evaluation processes of education projects and programmes to ensure they are effective and equitable.

According to the findings of this evaluation, the SAGE programme's goals and strategies were highly aligned with the Government of Zimbabwe's national plan, priorities, and policies. The programme strongly supports the government's long-term vision of improving human capital and economic development by strengthening the skills and capacity of some of the country's most vulnerable girls and teachers. District-level consultations with community members and government officials support this finding.

> *"I think there have been a lot of great strides that can be recorded in terms of the outcomes intended by SAGE and intended outcomes by MoPSE. From a functionalist perspective, since SAGE was introduced, we have observed improved mobilisation of resources, reporting structure and provision of material or resources through the programme. We have managed to capture and fulfil some of the things the ministry had failed to do because of economic challenges. We've seen SAGE fill all those gaps that the ministry could not do, personnel training, literature, and other things."* **–** District Lifelong Learning Coordinator

> *"The major concern was not only to educate out-of-school learners but also to put them on track so we can reduce issues like crime and make them entrepreneurial etc. So, the coming of the SAGE programme helped. Most of those engaged are now fluent in numeracy and literacy and are now informed."* – Curriculum Development and Technical Services Department (CDTSD) Representative

> *"The programme has supported the government, particularly the MoY, to achieve Vision 2030. They have mainly assisted in reaching areas where the ministry could not reach with funding. The element of literacy (in the programme) is critical. For the technical element, e.g., carpentry, a lot of literacy is required, making it a complete package with useful components. Without the literacy component, it makes achieving the technical aspects (of the programme) harder."* – Ministry of Youth Representative

> *"The project was some extension of ministry activities - MoPSE, MoY, Ministry of Internal Affairs so it was well coordinated and ran smoothly. At the national level, collaboration was taking place but not as much as we would have wanted. We were unaware of what was taking place for some of the programme components. But this does not take away from the benefits. Coordination should just be escalated to the national level so that all will be in order in terms of policy guidance. In terms of what could have been done better, stronger linkages for the girls could have been developed. If we develop the capacities of the girls after that, then what? What can we provide them after, and where can they be employed? They need to be linked with different ministries to create proper certification."* – Ministry of Women's Affairs Representative

Relevance to the needs of the critical sub-groups among vulnerable girls

Existing research supports the notion that investing in girls' education benefits society economically. According to a World Bank report, increasing investment in girls' education leads to high economic growth. It reduces poverty and child marriage and may reduce maternal and infant mortality in a country.[48] The report also states that each additional year of schooling for a girl increases her earning potential by 10% to 20%.[49] The SAGE programme focused on the education and upskilling of marginalised girls. SAGE targeted support to out-of-school adolescent girls (10 to 19 years) from particularly disadvantaged and vulnerable backgrounds (like girls with disabilities, girls from the Apostolic community, girls from ethnic minorities, etc.). These girls have had limited access to education due to various factors: financial challenges, access to educational institutions, religious beliefs and social norms, low voice, early marriage, and teenage pregnancy. At its core, the programme was a gender transformative programme which made audacious efforts to tackle gender norms and inequitable mindsets and attitudes held by girls, boys, and other members of their community.

The programme also adopted sensitive delivery approaches, such as creating safe environments in which all beneficiaries, particularly pregnant girls, girls with disabilities, and ethnic minorities, feel safe to ask questions and share information to ensure that a diverse pool of young girls attend and benefit from the ATL, CoGE, and ISOP learning sessions provided by the programme. Other ways SAGE tried to make the programme gender-sensitive and gender transformative, included:

- Providing learning and training sessions at a convenient time and place for the girls with consistent follow-ups. (gender sensitive)
- Creation of learning hubs and satellite hubs within districts where the girls reside to mitigate logistics and other issues. (gender sensitive)
- Using teaching methods that promote participation and engagement among girls. (gender transformative)
- Providing aids and adapting learning materials to meet the needs of girls with disabilities. (gender transformative)

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[48] World Bank (2018) Missed opportunities: The high cost of not educating girls. Retrieved from: https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/28840/9781464810961.pdf
[49] Ibid

In terms of meeting the needs of the key sub-groups of girls, the evaluation finds that SAGE has been relevant and effectively meets the primary needs of most girls. Up to 87% of the girls' survey respondents indicated that SAGE addressed challenges that inhibited their access to education. While 84% of girls indicated that the programme presented no financial constraints as there were no affiliated fees, about 27% of working girls and 41% of girls with household responsibilities highlighted that the programme offered some flexibility that allowed them to learn while staying committed to other responsibilities. Evidence from the interviews with girls further reinforces the notion that the programme provided the opportunity for them to achieve some of their learning goals despite the fact that their families could not financially support them through formal school programmes. Young mothers reported during interviews, that they were relieved that the CEs accommodated the idea of them bringing their babies to the learning hubs and were delighted that they can use their new vocational skills to support their basic needs. The household survey further revealed that 96% of respondents indicated that they think the information provided in the CoGE sessions was helpful, while 90% of respondents agreed that the skills learnt under ISOP were also helpful and beneficial to the girls.

The analysis presented in Annex 4 on key characteristics and barriers at baseline and endline further supports the finding that the programme has been able to meet girls' needs and address these key barriers identified at baseline. Of these five key barriers (long distance to CBLH, lack of safety net for GBV, lack of right to education, lack of an enabling environment for quality education and menstruation), the percentage of girls who reported experiencing these barriers decreased substantially from baseline to endline (See Annex 4).

Responses from the girls' survey showed that about 95% of girls who have graduated from the programme and who want to either go to formal school, a non-formal education programme or enrol in vocational training feel that their participation in SAGE has helped to prepare them to join formal schools, non-formal education, or vocational training compared to 67% of girls who have not yet graduated from the programme.

Figure 28: SAGE's success in preparing girls for future success.

Furthermore, 95% of girls felt that the programme gave them sufficient training support to earn a living from their ISOP trade. The survey also reveals that over 83% of girls with disabilities who participated in the girl's survey felt that the learning materials utilised during learning sessions were adapted to their needs. However, there were a few records of girls with disabilities who mentioned they required braille support, and the absence of braille learning materials somewhat limited the effectiveness of ATL lessons.

> "ISOP helped me a lot; I'm no longer idle now. We are working as a group now, we have received orders, and we are now taking care of our families. Literacy and numeracy helped me too." – SAGE Learner (GWD), Masvaure

> "Yes, from my hub, we had those who were visually impaired and those with hearing impairment; we both received assistive tools. I was seen by a medical doctor, something my parents could never afford; then, I was given eyeglasses. Those with hearing were also seen by medical doctors and were given hearing aids. These helped a lot as it made our learning easier, and we felt much loved as GWDs." - SAGE Learner (GWD), Changazi, Chimanimani

> "I faced no challenges in attending SAGE sessions. Even when we were late, our teachers treated us very well. They knew we were married women, and leaving the husband at home was hard when everything was not in order. We even came with our children here at the hub since we had teachers who were taking care of our children." – SAGE Learner who had never been to school, Mafararikwa

Relevance to the needs of the communities

Child marriage and teenage pregnancy are widespread challenges girls face in Zimbabwe. This has been partly due to poverty, lack of education and gendered norms in communities that discourage girls from seeking family planning services.[50] Other gendered norms that perpetuate gender stereotypes and trigger

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[50] UNICEF (n.d). End child marriage, empower women. Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org/zimbabwe/end-child-marriage-empower-women

child abuse are also common in Zimbabwean communities.[51] With knowledge of this, the SAGE programme also rolled out relevant interventions to address harmful gender and social norms within the targeted communities. These interventions included CoGE sessions for boys to explore discussions on gender rights and issues and the intergenerational dialogues established to facilitate discussions adopting positive gender attitudes and positive masculinity among boys, men, and local leaders.

The evaluation found high counts of positive transformation in most of the girls' families and among community members. The household survey shows 87% of caregivers/parents felt the SAGE programme addressed issues preventing girls from attending school earlier. Of the 527 parents/caregivers who affirmed that the SAGE programme addressed challenges young girls face attending school, 84% confirmed that the programme helped address financial constraints as the learners were not required to make any monetary commitments to participate. Up to 41% of the respondents also reported that the programme provided flexibility for the girls to learn while maintaining responsibilities at home. However, consultations with girls, NFE mentors/buddies and other community members provide varying feedback regarding changes observed in the communities.

"To a lesser extent, females have accepted that everyone can do anything, regardless of gender. They have accepted that it is also important to send the girl child to school as she is equal to the boy child. However, the problem is with the elderly, who still feel it's not worth sending a girl child to school. This generation still feels that the boy child cannot be seen doing household chores. When they see a man helping his wife with chores, they will say, "Oh, my son has been bewitched." There is a need to educate them further regarding these issues." – SAGE Learner (GWD), Changazi

"The programme helped our children; now they know issues of abuse, the dangers of early relationships, they can even give counselling to their peers." – Community Member, Domboramwari

"These gender issues were surprising; when I was growing up, I wondered how a woman could be a motor mechanic, but when I came to CoGE, I realised nothing was wrong with it. Even us as boys we can also be motor mechanics; you start small as a spanner boy then you upgrade to a motor mechanic. It's just an issue of having equal opportunities. Some (girls) could not regularly attend because their husbands or parents denied their reasons to come, but, in the end, these husbands supported the girls." – NFE Buddy, Hotsprings

Project's continued responsiveness and adaptation

The evaluation finds that the SAGE programme was able to improve its relevance over time through successive adaptations to its interventions and delivery strategies. SAGE incorporated iterative project management based on evidence generation and use. Several adaptations were made to the SAGE design during project implementation based on learning from monitoring and research efforts. SAGE generated evidence through special studies; progress reports; project monitoring systems and tools (quarterly girls' surveys, observation tools, perception surveys, LPA, etc.); monitoring reports; and the alternative midline evaluation. The SAGE management strategy was agile and iterative, adapting to context changes and learning based on evidence generated.

SAGE was found to be highly responsive during the COVID-19 pandemic, taking a multi-stage approach to address changes in priorities and events in Zimbabwe. A needs assessment was conducted to understand better the evolving needs and changes that needed to be made at the girl, community, and volunteer levels, which resulted in the Immediate Response Plan, which laid the groundwork for the Medium-Term Response Plan. The evaluation finds that some components of SAGE's response plan aligned with MoPSE's Catch-Up Strategy, an inclusive plan to be used during emergencies.

Table 48: SAGE Alignment with MoPSE Catch-Up Strategy

MoPSE's Catch-Up Strategy	SAGE's response
Primary categories include content, learner, and teacher enhancement strategies: • Content delivery through multimodal learning via radio, television, WhatsApp, and other sustainable online learning platforms. • Learner enhancement strategies including the enhancement of guidance and counselling services, child protection Committees (CPCs), school health services. • Teacher enhancement strategies including team teaching, multigrade teaching and use of learning area platforms (LAPs).	• Utilising technology to ensure continuity in student learning and the professional development training of CEs remotely. • Establishing linkages between community-based Child Protection Committees (CPCs) and the Department of Social Development at the district level to strengthen safety and protection services. • Integrating mental health and psychosocial support services into CoGE sessions to aid girls and boys to develop positive coping mechanisms. • Adjusting the teaching and learning materials for both the ATL and CoGE sessions to be delivered remotely.
Other strategies included:	• Observance of standard operating procedures for COVID-19.

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[51] Ibid

- Prioritisation of the availability of water, sanitation facilities in schools.
- Observance of standard operating procedures for COVID-19 and other influenza-like illnesses prevention and management.
- Adoption of the MoPSE's standard guidelines for the coordinated prevention and management of COVID-19 at all learning institutions.

- Providing face masks, handwashing soap and other sanitary resources at learning hubs to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

In addition to adaptations to remain aligned with the government priorities and policies, the programme was also found to be responsive to the needs of the learners, CEs, and the broader community. The programme incorporated several changes to the delivery strategy based on programme learnings and beneficiary feedback. Key changes to the implementation and delivery of the SAGE programme primarily consisted of the shift from a single-modal learning model to a multi-modal learning model, which volunteers would use to teach and engage the girls. These included door-to-door check-ins, lessons via telephone, learning via community-based small groups and continued hub-based learning as lockdown restrictions declined. On the other hand, the programme transitioned its professional development training for community volunteers from in-person to WhatsApp sessions. This allowed for volunteers to receive training on screening assessments and disability support, amongst others.

Additionally, the programme also made adaptations to reduce absenteeism for SAGE learners from the in-person sessions. These included the introduction of satellite hubs for girls who had issues accessing static learning hubs, arranging for assistants and help at the hub to take care of young children while their mothers attended SAGE lessons, and providing bicycles and airtime to CEs to provide individual lessons to girls who could not attend ATL sessions. The programme also adapted the learning material to ensure girls with disabilities could access and benefit from the workbooks. Girls' survey revealed that more than 86% of girls felt that the learning material was adapted to their specific needs.

> *"During this (COVID-19) period, it was hard, but we tried our best because we worked with the hub development committees. We looked for spaces outside with toilets, space, and water, grouped the learners, and had masks and sanitisers. We did not stop teaching them until SAGE gave us money to use phones; they gave us airtime. We also found that sometimes the parents of the children would have travelled, and the children did not have access to the phone. Sometimes the phones would not be charged because there would be no place to charge them or insufficient sunlight to solar charge them. So, we ended up agreeing to use masks and sanitisers. If I had two children, we would space them so that they are safe. We, as facilitators, went to teach them from those places. We did follow-ups on those groups. SAGE gave us airtime also to make phone calls."* – Community Educator, Hingwe

> *"At first, we could come to the hub, and we were observing the guidelines like social distancing, but as time passed, we could not come because of the restrictions. When schools were closed, we could not come until the lockdown was over."* – Adolescent boy, Mandeya, Mutasa

> *"Our teacher was a good person and patient with us. He helped me when I faced challenges in understanding what he was teaching us over the phone, so he would come in person and explain everything to me later. The CoGE facilitator was also good; he would help us whenever we had challenges. He was very approachable."* – SAGE Learner who had never been to school, Mafararikwa

The programme also made other adaptations that focused on the learners. One of the most important of these included changing the design and delivery model of the ISOP component. Initially, the ISOP component was expected to partner with specialised vocational training institutions and provide up to 10% of the SAGE learners with residential, vocational training on the trades of their choice. However, based on the extremely high interest in ISOP and skill training seen through the baseline evaluation, and given concerns raised by some learners about travelling away from their homes to participate in these training, the ISOP component design was changed to incorporate community-led components with the participation of master craftsperson from within the community. This change had some negative impact on the rigour and depth of vocational skills training, with many girls, caregivers and community members reporting concerns around a truncated 2-month skill training, with not enough machines and material available for learners to practise the skills, etc. However, the change in the programme design had also been successful in providing a much larger percentage of the OOS girls an opportunity to develop marketable skills and engage in productive activities through improved employment and self-employment opportunities. This had also led to a much larger percentage of SAGE learners reporting improved incomes after participating in SAGE.

Another key adaptation mechanism adopted was around safeguarding. The project put in place a project safeguarding monitoring framework, which monitored the appropriateness and effectiveness of the project's safeguarding approach, activities, processes, and interventions on a regular basis, sought feedback from all direct and indirect stakeholders and adapted its safeguarding approach throughout the project. Based on its continuous effort to remain supportive of the safeguarding needs of the girls, SAGE incorporated well-being, mental health, and PSS support for girls during the COVID-19 pandemic based on the reports of increased GBV incidents and increased household chore responsibilities for women, internationally. This adaptation was

extremely well received by the girls, with many interviewed at the endline happy that the programme was thinking about their well-being even during COVID-19.

4.2. Coherence

Complementarity with government policies

From the design phase, SAGE has been cognisant of the need to engage government stakeholders to enhance the value of the programme and to enhance the sustainability of the programme. To this effect, the programme has been very intentional and strategic in making sure that the programme speaks to the government priorities, incorporates the government's participation at federal, district and community levels, and, as much as possible, relies on government systems and processes to implement or expand its operations.

Given this intentional approach to ensure government buy-in, the evaluation finds that the SAGE programme is highly aligned with and complements the GoZ policies and priorities. SAGE has put in a lot of effort to align implementation strategies with national NFE policy and government guidance – especially around COVID-19-related adaptation strategies adopted by the GoZ – while contributing to evidence generation and policy dialogue with the Government of Zimbabwe through several key ministries. There is a close alignment in policy between the interventions of SAGE and the goals outlined in Zimbabwe National Development Strategy 1 (2021-2025), Education Sector Strategic Plan, and Non-formal Education policy.

Table 49: Coherence between SAGE and GoZ Policies

Finding	GoZ's priorities, plans and strategy	How SAGE aligned with the GoZ policies and priorities
SAGE was aligned with GoZ's interest in developing the skills and capacities of young girls and CEs to enhance their ability to add value to the labour force, contributing to economic growth and development.	The Zimbabwe National Development Strategy 1 (2021-2025) includes human capital development as a key priority which aims to build a skilled and healthy workforce to support economic growth and development.	The SAGE programme aimed to: • Provide girls in eleven districts with foundational and vocational skills training in readiness to pursue economic opportunities. • Provide capacity development training to community volunteers. • Employ a non-formal education mentorship system to cascade and reinforce teacher support.
The SAGE Consortium and the GoZ were aligned regarding improving the access and quality of non-formal education, safeguarding, and psycho-social support available to girls within learning environments and communities.	Priority 2, 3, and 4 of the 2021-2025 Education Sector Strategic Plan included plans to: • Enhance curriculum and assessment. • Provide adequate safeguarding and learners' support. • Enhance teachers' capacity. These are all expected to improve access to high-quality, equitable and inclusive education.	The SAGE programme: • Improved access to quality of education by establishing 88 accessible and girl-friendly Community-Based Learning Hubs across the districts. • Trained and equipped CEs with skills in inclusive education for ATL sessions, front-line safeguarding mechanisms, and other psycho-social skills to adequately support girls at the learning hubs and in the community.
The SAGE programme was in high alignment with the non-formal education policy.	The Non-formal Education policy was designed to support capital development by facilitating access to education by all citizens and permanent residents of Zimbabwe who never attended school, dropped out, or did not take advantage of the educational opportunities available.	The SAGE programme: • Targeted its intervention at girls from marginalised groups; those who were pregnant, dropped out or never attended school and other community stakeholders in part to change their mindset and attitudes towards girls' education and gender norms. • Equipped the girls with foundational literacy and numeracy skills.

Specifically, SAGE aligned itself very closely with the GoZ Non-Formal Education Policy. Historically, although the NFE policy has been in place for some time, the government has had little success implementing the policy provisions successfully, largely due to funding challenges. The Government started the Zimbabwe Accelerated Learning Programme (ZALP) to provide accelerated learning support to out-of-school learners and to support their transition back into formal education. However, the programme tapered off, and nothing much has happened to operationalise the NFE policy since then.

SAGE worked with the ministries of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE), Youth (MoY), Women Affairs, Gender, Small to medium Enterprises Development (MWAGSMED), and Public Service, Labour, and Social Welfare (MPSLSW), to ensure the programme's alignment with the NFE policy provisions, and to make sure the government's learnings from its previous NFE efforts were incorporated into the programme design. Some of the ways SAGE operationalised the priorities of the GoZ NFE policy include:

1. **Accessibility and inclusiveness:** In line with the policy priorities, SAGE sought to provide equal access to education for especially marginalised groups, out-of-school girls, and girls who missed out on formal education. It also emphasised gender equity and the inclusion of learners with disabilities.

2. **Flexible learning:** The NFE policy promotes a flexible and diverse curriculum tailored to the needs of learners, offering a wide range of learning opportunities that cater to various interests, abilities, and contexts. In line with this, the SAGE programme incorporated a multi-modal approach to learning provision, including using low-cost, widely available technology solutions such as WhatsApp to provide lessons to OOS girls. The programme also worked with the MoPSE to co-design the ATL learning material. This helped (i) align the material to the GoZ guidelines; (ii) enable the adoption and roll-out of the material widely across the country through any current or future NFE interventions; and (iii) incorporate MoPSE learning from their previous programme to ensure the learning material is contextualised and easy to understand.

3. **Recognition and certification:** The policy aims to create a framework that recognises and certifies the skills and knowledge acquired through non-formal education, ensuring learners can integrate into the formal education system or the labour market. The SAGE ISOP component directly responds to this priority. The programme worked with the Ministry of Youth to formalise the ISOP component. It institutionalised a process of the MoY conducting vocational competency assessments at the end of ISOP and providing certificates to successful participants recognised by the labour market. Many girls post-ISOP have reported being able to apply for jobs that require vocational certifications.

4. **Coordination and partnerships:** The NFE policy emphasises the need for collaboration between various stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, private sector organisations, and community groups, to deliver effective non-formal education programmes. The SAGE programme engaged with a range of organisations from across the ecosystem, including group-specific CSOs such as AWET and CBM, to make sure beneficiary voices are incorporated into the programme delivery modalities and that the programme is able to test and prove a delivery model that works for all stakeholders and sub-groups in Zimbabwe.

5. **Quality assurance:** In line with the NFE policy, the programme established and maintained high-quality standards for non-formal education through regular monitoring, evaluation, and capacity-building initiatives. As reported by the SAGE programme staff, the data and research generated by the SAGE programme have been used by the government to refine policy and respond to parliamentary questions and reports.

6. **Resource mobilisation:** The policy underscores the importance of securing adequate funding and resources to support non-formal education initiatives. This was an area that GoZ had been struggling with since the launch of the NFE policy. SAGE has been able to provide a strong evidence base and a proof-of-concept for the implementation of almost all provisions of the NFE policy, which can make it easier for the government to identify financial resources and funding internally or through other development partners to scale up SAGE interventions and to continue the programme outcomes.

Overall, the evaluation finds that SAGE was highly aligned with the government's policies and priorities, particularly in the NFE space. The evaluation could not find evidence of other programmes implemented in Zimbabwe focused on the non-formal education of out-of-school girls, so it is difficult to analyse coherence with other donor efforts in this space.

4.3. Efficiency

Programme management

This section on efficiency addresses whether the project was efficient in terms of its expenditure of resources and management practices, and collaboration mechanisms within the project.

General efficiency and resource utilisation

The project staff interviewed for this evaluation reported that SAGE achieved its objectives within budget and that a key factor in this achievement was the close collaboration between the staff and other parties involved in the project activities. It should be noted that this has been in the backdrop of significant budgetary challenges faced by the programme in the face of currency fluctuation and additional measures that needed to be put in place due to COVID-19-related challenges.

It is clear that the budgetary challenges caused by currency fluctuation and the resultant programme design changes, such as (i) reducing the programme period from 6 years to 5 years; (ii) reduction in the number of districts the programme could roll out into; and (iii) reduction in the length of the ATL exposure from 3 years to 2 years for each girl. However, the programme was able to be responsive to the changing context, budgetary realities, and the feedback from the implementation staff, learners, and community members to effectively pivot and adapt to maintain its relevance and effectiveness.

The evaluation finds that, overall, the project was managed well and efficiently. This can be attributed to Plan International UK's emphasis on having a strong technical and financial monitoring process that can help the programme constantly assess the quality of the activities, learn, and adapt when necessary. Project staff also suggested that, throughout the implementation process, the project maintained sufficient control of implementation processes and monitored the activities accurately.

Management and partnership approach

SAGE was delivered by a consortium of seven organisations across Zimbabwe and the United Kingdom. These partners included universities, international NGOs, and civil society organisations (CSOs), and there was a need to employ a strong management and coordination mechanism to effectively engage and leverage the programme partners – both internal and external. While the programme faced issues expected from a large consortium – such as added bureaucracy, longer time to make programming decisions, etc., it was able to sufficiently draw upon the strengths of the consortium partners and bring their expertise to bear. All partners interviewed in the endline evaluation describe the partnership as 'excellent' – respectful, complementary, and constructive. The consortium was able to bring together strong international technical knowledge as well as strong contextual knowledge and implementation history through its consortium partners.

In addition to the internal consortium partners, the programme was also able to generate strong partnerships with community leaders, religious leaders, and civil society organisations to roll out its community-facing interventions – both in hub learning activities (ATL and ISOP) and behaviour change activities with all relevant stakeholders (CoGE, men's clubs, intergenerational dialogues, girl-led CoGE sessions pilot). The programme also demonstrated its strong partnership approach by engaging with the community to set up hub development committees and revitalise the child protection committees. The programme has especially been able to generate a strong momentum with respect to safeguarding and child protection, and many communities have started reporting cases of women and child abuse, early marriage, etc. to the child protection committees, GBV Rapid Response committees, police, community leaders and other government redressal mechanisms.

Finally, strong partnerships have also been developed with government representatives at all levels to engage at the policy and operational levels and to generate buy-in and sustainability for the project activities and interventions. As discussed in the Coherence section, the programme has always prioritised a partnership approach with the government – through at least four ministries – to ensure government support and to leverage available government resources. While the programme has only seen limited success in leveraging financial resources (largely due to the government's financial constraints) to continue the SAGE model as it is, there has been a lot more success in integrating the SAGE interventions, learning material, and ISOP certification in the NFE education and skill development system within the country.

The programme ensured periodic meetings, joint monitoring visits, etc. to foster strong management and coordination with the government. The programme staff found this two-way information flow particularly valuable and useful. This effective communication system fostered collaborative relationships between SAGE and the government, as the interviewed staff suggested that government entities were always willing to help and support whenever their help was needed. Before implementing activities at the community level, meetings took place inside the communities to inform them of the project intent, activities, and expectations, which, according to project staff, also helped improve the quality of the project.

Learning and adaptive programming

The evaluation finds the SAGE programme to have effectively integrated the adaptive management principles into the programme design and management processes and procedures. It is noted that the GEC fund manager has also established processes such as the RAM, which encourage and nudge the GEC projects to be adaptive, establish procedures to synthesise learnings periodically, and use them to improve programme design, delivery, and management.

SAGE's investment in and focus on monitoring and evaluation were considerable. The programme team regularly used the intensive data collected through the monitoring and evaluation system to generate research outputs and periodic monitoring reports. It incorporated joint synthesis and learning opportunities, where the consortium came together to review the programme's progress, identify areas of improvement, and make decisions based on lessons identified and learned. The monitoring initiatives helped the project reflect on its performance and adjust its strategy where required. In addition, the project invested in conducting and disseminating research, special studies and lessons learned related to specific topics of interest. Finally, GEC required external evaluations at the outcome level, at baseline and midline, as course correctors and inflexion points for the project.

This investment in M&E and research, combined with an openness for iterative and flexible project management, enabled SAGE to learn and adapt project delivery based on evidence. The numerous adaptations to project design and delivery have been described under EQ2 (see findings under Relevance

above) and improved the project's response to the project context. Some of the key adaptations made by the programme included:

- **Adopting a research-based alternative approach to assess girls' learning**, based on consideration of the SAGE girls' backgrounds and circumstances, their possible prior learning experiences (both formal and informal), the purpose of the SAGE programme and the experience of SAGE hub volunteers in carrying out assessments.
- **Updating the ISOP delivery model from a vocational training institute-based model to a community-based model** and integrating community-based master crafts to lead ISOP training. This also involved working closely with the Ministry of Youth to institute a formal vocational competency assessment process and provide certificates for successful completion.
- **Initiating satellite hubs** for girls with long distances to the static hubs.
- **Adopting a multi-modal approach to ATL session delivery** – at hubs, in small groups, door-to-door, and through phones, incorporating principles of distance and flexible learning to ensure girls can continue learning despite challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and related movement restrictions.
- **Integrating provision for well-being checks and psycho-social support** to help girls during the pandemic.
- **Incorporating technology solutions** to deliver personalised capacity and professional development support to the SAGE volunteers.
- **Initiating measures such as the 'Sustainable Volunteer Incentive Scheme'** and girl-led CoGE sessions to enhance the programme's sustainability at the community level.
- **Involving a range of on-ground organisations** to ensure ongoing, high-quality engagement with community and religious leaders, and men in the community to enable mindset change interventions and generate support for other SAGE interventions.

The above are just a few adaptation measures adopted by the programme based on monitoring data and beneficiary feedback. Many other changes made to the programme strategy and sustainability approach have helped the programme immensely.

4.4. Effectiveness

Performance against key indicators

Overall, the SAGE programme has achieved mixed success in meeting its targets and objectives set at baseline. While the programme has been successful in achieving its outcome-level targets, more limited success is observed for intermediate outcomes. **Table 11** summarises the project results for outcomes and intermediate outcomes. It indicates programme effectiveness and further clarifies the pathways through which the programme has worked to achieve success and effectiveness at the outcome level.

SAGE has been particularly effective in improving learning by providing the necessary educational and environmental inputs and adaptations to ensure girls can grasp foundational literacy and numeracy skills. Indeed, at EPA, an average SAGE learner achieved literacy and numeracy scores equivalent to Grade 5 proficiency. Additionally, the SAGE programme enabled girls with the weakest literacy and numeracy capabilities at baseline to improve their learning scores the most at the EPA. There has also been a substantial decrease in the percentage of learners achieving scores in the white/zero score band for each literacy and numeracy subtask, as well as overall.

Generally, the improvement in learning described above applies across all subgroups. Across all cohorts, subgroups that saw the greatest improvement in literacy and numeracy scores include girls with disabilities, girls who have never been to school, married girls, and young mothers. This highlights how SAGE effectively addressed the findings of the mid-term assessment, which found a need for targeted and specific support for girls who have never been to school and girls with disabilities.

SAGE was successful in achieving its target of 60% of girls (from Cohorts 1 and 2) transitioning successfully, with 61.68% of girls transitioning into at least one of the programme's four defined transition pathways. 52.69% of girls transitioned into the ISOP programme that the SAGE programme aimed to provide girls access to. In terms of access, the SAGE programme has effectively supported girls' transition in this regard. However, what girls do after graduating from the ISOP programme is unclear. Thus, there is a limited understanding of girls' 'real life' transitions after graduating from ISOP. Only 4.91% of SAGE girls transitioned into formal/non-formal education, and the remaining girls transitioned into fairly-paid employment (20.58%) or self-employment (3.03%). There is a lack of understanding of what girls' employment activities were at baseline. Thus, the proportion of girls who entered into fairly-paid employment or self-employment for the first time (as opposed to returning to a job they had before participating in the SAGE programme) is unclear. Regardless of these limitations, these transition results highlight girls' prioritisation of transition pathways that either directly involve or lead to income generation, reflecting the difficult economic circumstances many girls and their families find themselves in.

SAGE was particularly successful in supporting the transition of girls with disabilities (93%), with married girls (77%), young mothers (76%) and Apostolic girls (68%) also reporting high rates of transition. The programme was less effective in supporting girls from ethnic minorities and girls who have never been to school to transition into one of the four pathways.

The SAGE programme has successfully achieved some sustainability at the systems, community, and girl levels. This has contributed to the programme's overall effectiveness and increases the likelihood that the positive outcomes achieved by the SAGE programme will continue once the programme ends. However, at some of these levels, some factors threaten the sustainability of the programme that need attention. The primary threat to the continuation of the SAGE programme's positive outcomes is the lack of leadership and financial resources to support the continuation of key components.

In terms of intermediate outcomes (IOs), the SAGE programme has been particularly effective in the areas of inclusive, gender-sensitive pedagogy (IO.1.2), improving knowledge of gender and SRHR (IO.3.1), social norms (IO.4, including community members improving their gender attitudes, girls' perceptions of community safety and support for girls to stay in school/learning) and partnerships (IO.5). IOs that have fallen short of achieving their targets include empowerment (IO.3.1), self-efficacy (IO.2.1) and regular attendance of sessions (IO.1.1). Detailed analysis and discussion of the reasons for this achievement/non-achievement of these IOs is provided in Section 3.4.

Underlying factors contributing to results.

SAGE is a complex programme comprising many intertwined and interconnected interventions that come together to achieve the overall programme results. Across the SAGE programme and its outcomes as a whole, several key factors have enabled the programme to achieve its objectives. One of the most important factors has been the fact that the programme was delivered in close collaboration with the Government of Zimbabwe, and this was crucial in enabling the programme to respond with agility to contextual challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the high inflationary economic environment in Zimbabwe, hence ensuring that SAGE remained appropriate and effective.

The co-creation approach to designing the SAGE programme has also contributed towards achieving programme objectives, most notably learning and sustainability. The co-design process was multi-stakeholder, with substantial involvement from relevant ministries, Plan International and consortium partners, and was informed by context-specific evidence from the MoPSE. Input into the programme design was also derived from beneficiaries to understand their needs and ensure that the programme addressed these. The programme also remained responsive to girls' needs as these became clearer or changed throughout implementation and were adapted where needed. The specific ways in which the co-design process has influenced the achievement of outcomes are elaborated on in the learning and sustainability subsections below.

Alongside this, the flexible approach towards programme adaptation and budget management taken by the fund manager has been crucial in ensuring that the programme objectives have remained realistic and responsive to the changing context. For example, the SAGE consortium negotiated using a portion of the SAGE midline evaluation budget to support volunteers' capacity development to learn how best to support girls' learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. This capacity development of CEs and volunteers was important for ensuring that the pandemic did not threaten girls' learning progression and that learning outcomes remained achievable. The programme also invested well in building the monitoring and reporting systems within the programme to ensure the programme was able to capture and make decisions on up-to-date data and research and that the beneficiary feedback was captured at least on a quarterly basis to enable the programme to remain responsive to the emerging needs, priorities, and feedback of the beneficiaries. Below are some other key factors that were identified as contributing to achieving the key outcome results.

Learning

Three factors have been identified as critical to achieving SAGE's learning outcome. These include consulting beneficiaries as part of the programme design process and throughout implementation, ensuring that CEs were trained appropriately to deliver the programme content through the use of inclusive approaches, and ensuring that the pedagogical approach and class composition leveraged the varied learning background of the SAGE learners through peer learning, group work, etc.

Involving girls in the programme's design has ensured that components that aimed to support girls' learning progression functioned to do so and that adaptation to these components took place where required to remain relevant to girls' changing needs. For example, girls expressed the need for childcare support to enable their full participation in learning, and so this was integrated into the programme from the design stage. Similarly, constant engagement and input from girls highlighted barriers preventing girls from regularly attending ATL sessions at the CBLHs, such as far distances or conflicting activity schedules. This input informed responsive

adaptations aiming to increase attendance, including flexible time schedules for ATL sessions, providing girls with bicycles for travel and developing satellite hubs to reduce distances travelled.

Girls and leaders from the Apostolic community were engaged during the design stage to ensure that learning materials were appropriate and that programme buy-in and support for Apostolic girls' learning was achieved within this community. Engaging with and receiving input from girls with disabilities during the programme's design phase was not prioritised intentionally. This resulted in some components that could have further supported girls with disabilities not being included in the programme design. For example, CBM expressed the importance of engaging with the parents of girls with disabilities and capacitating them to support their child's learning in ways most responsive to their individual needs and to support CEs and improve programme retention of girls with disabilities. Parent-to-parent support groups could have been helpful in this regard.

Many girls attributed their learning improvement to the support provided by CEs in social learning environments such as the CBLHs and small groups. The training and continuous professional development of CEs is thus an important factor that has contributed towards learning achievement, and there have been clear efforts to ensure that this training has girls' learning needs as the core priority. For example, many CoGE facilitators were drawn from the Apostolic community to ensure the acceptability of the information being taught within this community. The programme lacked role models, potentially taking the form of facilitators, CEs, or general champions for girls with disabilities, however. Additionally, CEs were not well trained to support girls with disabilities in terms of learning in the programme's initial stages. However, once this became clear, partnerships with specific teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe were made to provide CEs with the required skills and competencies to support girls with disabilities and effectively deliver sessions in ways that were attentive to their needs. This highlights how the programme's adaptive nature was informed by direct feedback from beneficiaries, enabling continued progress towards learning outcomes.

In addition to the support provided by CEs, qualitative data analysed in Section 3.1.4.3 highlights the important role of the girl-centric, gender-sensitive and inclusive pedagogical approach taken by the SAGE programme and that the CEs were trained in. Girls not only credited these teaching methods and CE approaches to helping them improve their learning but also their confidence as learners. Another factor that likely contributed to these improvements in learning and confidence was the decision to mix girls who had low school experience with girls who had prior school experience, encouraging peer-to-peer learning and support alongside the support from CEs and the appropriate pedagogical approach.

Transition

Two factors are key elements contributing to achieving SAGE's transition outcome. These include collaboration with government structures to enable a transition to schools and remaining responsive to girls' transition aspirations, as is seen in the inclusion of the ISOP skills training programme as a transition pathway.

Limited success was achieved for the transition to schools, whereas greater success was achieved for the transition to vocational training programmes and wage/self-employment. This highlights girls' preference for transition pathways that have income-generating potential. While there was limited success for school transitions, a key factor that supported girls' transition to schools was SAGE's collaboration with existing government structures at the community level and with other organisations working in the formal and non-formal education space in Zimbabwe.

A primary driver for the success achieved in the transition into vocational training and income-generating pathways was girls' motivation to join the ISOP skills training programme, given that this component represented an opportunity for girls to escape their vulnerabilities and financial constraints and increase their household income. The SAGE programme's inclusion of access to this programme was responsive to the high proportion of girls who expressed their desire to learn vocational skills at baseline and is a key factor that has contributed to the achievement of this outcome.

Sustainability

Two key factors have been identified as key elements contributing to achieving SAGE's sustainability outcome. These include the co-creation approach taken at the programme's design stage with relevant ministries and intentional efforts to engage key community groups through partners.

The SAGE project was able to achieve key sustainability objectives by ensuring that these ministries were substantially involved in programme design at inception. This engagement and input from key ministries ensured that the programme was designed to address existing issues and key priority areas that ministries were already aiming to address through existing strategies. For example, multi-level government stakeholders were substantially involved in the development of ATL materials, and this has contributed to their uptake and usage within relevant government ministries and as part of government initiatives, including the Catch-Up Strategy implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Intentional efforts to engage key community groups through partner organisations, such as the Apostolic community, will contribute towards the programme's sustainability at a community level. Through the support

efforts of AWET, the programme has achieved buy-in from key members of the Apostolic community, including local and religious leadership. Community members have also been trained as part of the programme's various components to support learning and social development for out-of-school learners post-SAGE and continue advocacy efforts. Such advocacy efforts have played an important role in shifting community perspectives in support of vulnerable girls accessing an education. Partnerships forged to support girls with disabilities were less intentional and apparent at the design stage. Thus, there is a risk that outcomes for girls with disabilities will not be as sustainable. There have, however, been efforts to forge partnerships with local service providers and organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) who can support girls with disabilities as the programme is ending.

4.5. Impact

SAGE contribution to impact

SAGE was able to identify barriers to girls' learning and transition and utilised a multi-pronged approach to addressing them through a mix of girl-focused and community-focused interventions. It has had a strong positive impact on the girls and communities it targeted and the government's policy response to NFE. Some of the key impacts that the programme has had are discussed below.

Learners have not only improved literacy and numeracy, but these skills have led to several other benefits, including increased social functionality, employment access, and income levels. Several stakeholders indicated that a key impact of the programme had been the improved numeracy and literacy abilities, especially for those girls who had previously had no education. Some girls had previously been unable to read a basic sentence or even write their names. This often led to decreased social functionality, for example, being unable to read text messages on cell phones or help their children with homework. Stakeholders indicated that with improved literacy, girls are now able to do many of these things, and this has impacted their self-efficacy and functionality positively. With the ability to read, girls can now comfortably navigate complex aspects of business - like digital banking, which adds significant value to them. Likewise, some girls can now help their children with homework as help is needed. Lastly, implementing partners noted that improved numeracy had facilitated other positive unintended impacts, for example, being able to read and comprehend cyclone warning messages sent out by the government.

Like literacy, numeracy skills have also yielded several positive outcomes for the learners. Chief among them is that girls can now do basic math, which aids access to employment opportunities and supports them in managing their businesses well. Some learners indicated that they had previously been unable to maintain some jobs due to their inability to give out the correct change. As such, having these numeracy skills is helping them function better in jobs such as sewing, which requires measurement, and jobs that require them to count money.

The programme was very intentional to work with and provide the support needed to help GWDs thrive as part of the programme. This yielded several positive results for GWDs. On the whole, there was intentionality to include stories of GWDs who have gone on to graduate and access employment as part of the learning materials and CEs were trained to support GWDs. Additionally, the programme also provided assistive devices to learners with disabilities. For some of them, these devices not only allowed them to function better, for example, through better visibility, but in some cases, they were the very first devices they received. This combination of support created a very conducive environment for learners with disabilities. On the whole, fellow learners not only dispelled long-held negative perceptions of PWDs but the GWDs themselves left the programme with improved self-efficacy and confidence.

End-line data indicates that the CoGE lessons and topics covered have increased self-efficacy, confidence, and empowerment among the girls. These sessions have empowered girls with the knowledge and information they need to make informed SRHR decisions and stand up for and demand their rights. Many of the girls indicated that they feel empowered to say no to early or unwanted marriages and that they now know in cases where this is being violated to report this to officials. Girls spoke extensively of their now-changed mindsets around their capabilities as young women. They know they can be more than just mothers, and they can pursue any sorts of employment that they desire. Implementing partners also noted that girls now have a great sense of agency and have become better at decision-making. They also spoke highly of the extent to which the CoGE lessons have supported girls from Apostolic communities to stand up for their rights and needs.

The skills attained through ISOP have allowed girls to access employment opportunities. Stakeholders indicated that the girls who attained skills that do not require intense capital to start a business, like hairdressing, have gone on to start their businesses. Girls gave several examples indicating that they are using the skills gained from ISOP to run their businesses. In cases where the girls were not yet using the skills to access employment, it was often due to a lack of the resources or capital needed to start the business. In addition, the certification received upon completing ISOP training has facilitated many girls to have better access to employment opportunities, especially in cases where some form of certification is required, like in

catering. This is especially important given that the government of Zimbabwe has issued a directive for all employment seekers to possess some form of certification delineating their skill levels, including access to jobs in the informal sector.

The transition support offered by the programme has allowed girls to not only successfully transition but also to access opportunities that they have traditionally been unable to access. For example, while many of the girls had previously been unbanked, the programme has supported up to 900 to open bank accounts. Likewise, despite being considered high-risk, the programme has facilitated access to loans for several girls. Lastly, stakeholders supporting the successful transition, such as HDCs, MWAGSMED, and the Zimbabwe Women's Micro-Finance Bank, have gone above and beyond to support the girls. Some HDCs have secured BEAM support to enable those girls willing to transition back into school.

Increased access to employment opportunities and the ability to successfully operate personal businesses has positively impacted the income of the girls and their families. More than 55% of girls who transitioned through SAGE reported an increase in their income post-SAGE, with around 40% reporting unchanged income. Only 3% of girls reported a decline in their income after involvement in SAGE. It is important to consider this reported increased household income due to SAGE in the context of the general downturn in the Zimbabwean economy (much like all other countries). The pandemic caused significant economic disruptions, including the closure of businesses, restrictions on travel, and decreased economic activity. It can be argued that had COVID-19 not caused significant disruptions in people's livelihoods and income generation ability, the income impact of SAGE might have been even higher. These girls have used this increased income to fund their education and children's education, buy food, improve access to healthcare, and invest in their businesses to further enhance their income potential.

The programme has led to changed perspectives and appreciation of girls' education by the community members, especially among those belonging to the Apostolic community. This has led to a safe and supportive environment for girls and women. The community was engaged from the design stage, and the programme made concerted efforts to engage key leaders to shift the communities' perspectives on long-seated harmful norms such as early marriage and a lack of education for the girls. Mindsets and limited opportunities to access education for girls. Implementing partners highlighted that some communities targeted by SAGE have traditionally not valued education, and early marriages are common practice. The SAGE programme engagements, especially through intergenerational dialogues and men's clubs, shifted perspectives for leaders and the wider community. Emerging data from implementing partners and the girls themselves indicates that most community members and community leaders now favour girls' education and also openly shun early marriages. The Apostolic leadership in some communities has also talked about the importance of educating girls during prayer meetings, and some have invited girls to speak about such issues themselves. In addition, the programme's engagement with communities has led to the establishment of schools in communities where there were previously none.

Implementing partners credited these achievements to the SAGE programme and the intentional efforts to engage community leaders. Several steps have been taken to increase safeguarding and child protection at the community level. Many parents and spouses engaged during the endline evaluation responded in favour of providing equal opportunities to both women and men. Additionally, community members are increasingly open to using community structures such as Child Protection Committees to report child protection and safeguarding issues, unlike in the past. Government officials spoke about the value of these changed mindsets and how the programme has left communities with a better appreciation of the importance of education and issues of gender equality.

Girls also gave several examples of how their community's perceptions of them have changed since the launch of SAGE. Girls indicated that there were instances when they were mocked for joining the programme, but after seeing the impact the programme has had on their lives, the community has been a lot more appreciative of the girls' abilities and their opinions. Endline data supports this with several of the girl's community or family members who had been unsupportive pre-SAGE being supportive of them and their attendance of the programme post-SAGE. Some girls also indicated that the community now recognises them and even invites them into leadership positions as a result of the changed mindsets. Holding communal graduations was cited by the implementing partners as an intentional programmatic strategy to showcase the programme's positive outcomes and consequently influence community perspectives further.

The training provided by the programme has been instrumental in building capacity for a range of stakeholders at the community level including head teachers, community, and religious leaders, and NFE buddies, among others. 78% of NFE buddies said they have incorporated lessons and good practices they came across through SAGE capacity building as well as through the peer-to-peer learning opportunities provided under the programme. Likewise, CoGE materials are being used to facilitate guidance and counselling sessions. Some of the CEs indicated that SAGE provided their very first classroom, giving them an opportunity to gain more skills.

Another major impact of the programme was the ability to support the government in implementing core government priorities, especially in areas the government could not reach due to constrained resources. For example, SAGE ATL programmatic components were closely aligned with the government's priorities and provided an avenue through which the government could achieve some of its intended target outcomes under the NFE policy. The programme also shifted government perspectives around NFE in the country, e.g., by supporting OOS learners through CBLH and satellite hubs, the programme demonstrated what was possible and how OOS learners can be supported through community-based structures. Likewise, using community-based master crafts, the programme demonstrated alternatives to skills training, especially in supporting those learners who want to remain close to their communities or homes.

4.6. Sustainability

Sustainability at the individual, family, community, and system levels

Overall, the SAGE programme has seen mixed results with respect to sustainability. While the programme has been able to generate strong ownership of some of the SAGE components – including the learning material – among the government, there are significant risks to the programme's sustainability at the community level. The programme utilised a community-led approach to delivering ATL, CoGE and ISOP components through the learning hubs and has implemented some measures to generate ownership of these hubs and the components with community leaders – including setting up and capacitating HDCs, initiating hub-level income generation projects to sustain the hubs' functioning, initiating sustainable volunteer incentive scheme, and initiating a pilot on girl-led CoGE sessions. While the intent and activities to foster sustainability are clear, the results of these actions remain to be seen. One of the most significant risks to the sustainability of these community-led structures is the lack of funding support from the government or any other development partners. While there is a clear indication from community leaders about their intent to support the functioning of the learning hubs – with action plans developed jointly by 44 HDCs and SAGE, financial constraints may pose significant challenges for these communities to engage, train and retain CEs.

Systems level Sustainability

The programme has been successful in having ATL learning materials approved and consequently adopted by MoPSE and other development partners. These materials are currently available on the government website, making them readily available to stakeholders to access the internet at all times. These materials are also acknowledged in key government documents and by key government ministries such as MoPSE. Lastly, other development stakeholders, like UNICEF and World Vision, are adopting and supporting the use of ATL materials to benefit other learners outside the SAGE target areas. The key factors contributing to this include:

- The ATL learning materials were closely aligned to key government policies such as the NFE policy, the Education Sector Strategy Plan, and the new curriculum focused on improving access to quality, equitable and inclusive education, especially for OOS learners. On the other hand, the CoGE component is aligned with both the government's School Health Policy which advocates for the provision of a comprehensive school health package, as well as being positioned to address the national priority of achieving gender equality, especially by removing underlying negative gender norms which create barriers for girls to access education.

- In developing the materials, the SAGE programme engaged extensively with and co-designed materials with relevant ministries. This ensured that the materials aligned with government expectations, facilitating faster adoption.

- The programme's focus on out-of-school (OOS) learners directly responded to an existing need in Zimbabwe at the systems level. Programmatic data indicate that learning materials for lower primary OOS learners were unavailable, making the SAGE programme a critical anchor project that directly responds to and implements some of the government's key priorities.

Programmatic and endline data also indicates that the strong stakeholder buy-in and support achieved by the programme has resulted in ownership of the programme at the national and district level. All 88 HDCs were confident that the hubs would continue running post programme. Several are also willing to commit personal resources to continue supporting the hubs. The strong stakeholder ownership was mainly due to the programme's collaborative efforts with national and district level governments. Key informants from both the national and district level governments indicated that this close collaboration was key in putting the programme at the forefront of the right stakeholders and ministries and that these stakeholders will likely continue supporting the programme.

The SAGE programme intentionally built the capacity of relevant ministries to ensure they would continue monitoring the successful rollout of programmatic components. The programme conducted joint monitoring visits with government representatives from different ministries, including MoPSE, MoY, and MWAGSMED. This joint monitoring was good for both capacity-building for future monitoring and continued ownership of the programmatic components.

The stakeholders enlisted to support the post-skills training transition have shown a willingness to continue to do so. The programme enlisted the support of stakeholders such as the MWAGSMED and others such as the Women's Micro Finance Bank to provide post-ISOP transition support to graduates. The MoY is also currently providing certification to successful ISOP graduates.

The SAGE programme's capacity-building for CPCs has strengthened child protection case management at the community level. Additionally, this revitalised CPCs has established accountability structures that will remain available to girls should they need them.

Overall, the programme has been able to garner buy-in and ownership at the systems level, which will positively impact the continuation of the programme. However, despite the demonstrated willingness to continue, a major cited challenge was the lack of resources to support various government efforts to scale. Potential risks to the programme's sustainability, particularly at the systems level, are discussed in the next section.

Community level sustainability

SAGE was able to demonstrably shift community perspectives in favour of girls' education and gender equality. Major wins were registered within Apostolic communities, where leaders firmly accepted and welcomed the SAGE message and components. Implementing partners highlighted the role community

> *"CoGE facilitators were affiliated with the Apostolic community. [It was] more acceptable for them to teach the girls. Girls were accepting of the facilitator and the information they were teaching. [In addition], access and acceptability was not an issue."* - FGD, AWET representative

and religious leaders are playing in speaking out against child/early marriages and in favour of girls' education. Many SAGE communities are demonstrating their commitment to girls' education and normative change by building community structures such as men's clubs to continue intergenerational dialogues, and there are efforts to build schools to support learning within the communities. Some of the factors that contributed to the shift in the community mindsets included:

- The use of local partners, like AWET and CBM, played a vital role in garnering stakeholder buy-in at the community level. AWET's involvement within the Apostolic community meant they had an in-depth understanding of internal dynamics and were well-positioned to communicate effectively with the right leadership. Similarly, CBM's experience working with persons with disabilities worldwide informed programme components' design and delivery to effectively cater to the needs and demands of learners with disabilities. The community trusted these organisations, which facilitated faster buy-in and support.

- Having community graduations allowed communities to partake in SAGE achievements and witness the extent to which learners who have remained traditionally side-lined, like GWDs, can achieve particular positive outcomes. The implementing partners highlighted the extent to which Apostolic leadership, partners, and parents supported holding community-based graduations. They indicated that these motivated them to enrol even more girls on the programme.

- Programme components such as intergenerational dialogues, men's clubs, and peer-to-peer boys' clubs were found to have effective in engaging a range of stakeholders and facilitated conversations that changed mindsets.

In addition to changing mindsets, SAGE has also successfully supported the establishment of community structures that are now available to support child safety and child protection matters at the community level. A notable example is the Child Protection Committee and community clubs such as peer-to-peer clubs. SAGE built the capacity of CPCs to ensure that they were well prepared to deal with cases and offer protection services at the community level, as per their mandate, and CPCs were made aware of referral pathways so they could handle and deal with cases effectively and efficiently. It is also anticipated that during future lockdown restrictions, CPCs will be able to assist and support survivors of abuse at the community level and ensure they liaise with relevant service delivery organisations for appropriate support. The programme also strengthened collaboration between CPCs and the DSD so they can assist in raising awareness on safeguarding together with community volunteers and lead on safeguarding training themselves. Volunteers were also made aware of the community-based child protection structures that work with DSD, which directly contributed to volunteers reporting 10 cases. This sustainable approach will likely aid the reporting of protection cases even after the end of the SAGE programme.

The programme has also undertaken several measures to build sustainability of the community-based learning model to ensure that ATL, CoGE and ISOP continue after the end of the programme. The programme invested in building the capacity of CEs and NFEs, and they also supported HDCs, schools officials, and MoPSE district officials to increasingly take on leadership and ownership of the hubs. To ensure effective capacity-building, the programme invested in training, supporting HDCs to develop hub action plans, and building a library of resources in the form of manuals and training videos that will be available to support continued capacity-building and leadership of the CBLHs. Among other factors, the programme's concerted

capacity-building efforts were deemed crucial in creating a critical mass of individuals well-positioned to provide leadership and support learning at the community level. Likewise, some CEs indicated that SAGE was their first classroom experience; as such, they were motivated to be capacitated further and to participate as volunteers. Another important aspect is that the trained CEs will likely carry forward some of the training and teaching methods learned as part of SAGE into their classrooms. This will be instrumental in having SAGE learning materials continuously to indirectly influence education systems in Zimbabwe.

While the programme has succeeded in implementing sustainability measures, some sustainability risks remain. The biggest challenge that poses a risk to the sustainability of programme components is the absence of any financial commitment from the government or any other development partners. Even though the programme has instituted sustainability mechanisms such as the Sustainable Volunteer Incentive Scheme, the hub-based income-generating activities, and the girl-led CoGE delivery model, these were instituted close to the end of the programme, and the success of these mechanisms is not yet clear.

Girl level sustainability

Overall, the programme has imparted valuable knowledge and skills that will continue to benefit girls even after the programme ends. The numeracy and literacy skills have enabled girls to access and retain employment. Likewise, the programme's skills training has enabled girls to acquire valuable skills that are useful in helping them access employment and will continue. Several stakeholders, including the girls themselves, are confident that these skills will continue to benefit the girls even after the programme has ended. At the girl level, targeted holistic support, from enrolment to skills training to avail transition support, was key in ensuring the girls left the programme with critical skills that will continue to benefit them even after the programme has ended.

Aside from skilling, the programme's CoGE sessions have contributed positively to improved self-efficacy, empowerment, and self-worth. Many learners indicated they now have the knowledge and confidence to challenge deep-seated harmful practices such as forced or early child marriages. Establishing community structures such as the CPCs has provided support systems that the girls can access in cases of child safety and protection issues. Several girls interviewed as part of the endline data collection indicated that they now know where to go if there are any concerns or issues regarding child protection and child safety. The changed perspectives highlighted in the community section above indicate that the programme has succeeded in establishing a supportive environment for girls within their communities. And lastly, the programme has engaged a cohort of stakeholders well-equipped to support learners as they transition from skills training, e.g., the MWAGSMED.

The content of the learning materials was a major factor contributing to the successful impartation of skills and knowledge that will continue benefiting the learners. Programme materials were developed to dispel long-held negative perceptions of learners with disabilities and around gender roles and norms for girls and young women. There were several examples from the programmatic data where learners said the most impactful learning materials for them were stories that showcased GWDs who had gone on to acquire skills and consequently attain employment upon graduation or girls who had gone on to acquire employment in jobs traditionally associated with men. Learning materials thus both empowered learners and, in the process, shifted their perspectives.

Cross-cutting factors contributing to programme sustainability

A major success factor of the programme implementation was the extent to which the programme engaged a wide range of stakeholders from the beginning. Several examples, including the engagement of national and district-level officials, were mentioned above to demonstrate the extent of reach. Implementing partners indicated that communities, for example, the Apostolic community, were also consulted at the design stage. This allowed the programme components to be adjusted to maximise buy-in and support. AWET indicated that to ensure the CoGE components were welcomed in the Apostolic community, engagements were held to sense check if the content of the CoGE sessions was presented in a manner acceptable to the community. Following this, adjustments were made to components of sexual and reproductive rights components. This level of engagement for a wide cohort of stakeholders was key for stakeholder buy-in and ownership at all levels.

Programme design considered sustainability right from the beginning. Many programmatic components were geared towards building sustainability. For example, in addition to capacity-building, the programme also developed manuals and training materials, and it was intentional to transition the leadership and ownership of the hubs to local leaders. Additionally, to enhance community buy-in and support, the

"Yes, adaptations were made to suit the community. [We] consulted members of the Apostolic community on modules. For example, modules on sexual and reproductive health. [We] had a discussion on whether material were relevant to Apostolic girls. For example areas speaking about condom use, etc." – AWET

programme resorted to having community graduations to dispel the negative perceptions of the programme.

Lastly, learning materials were designed so that the learners were learning how to read and write, and the stories told by the training materials also influenced their mindset shifts.

The programme implementation remained responsive and adaptive to emerging findings and needs. This allowed the programme to embed key sustainability elements along the way. For example, when the programme noted a high volunteer turnover, it resorted to on-the-spot capacity building. Likewise, the programme shifted to supporting hubs to develop income-generating activities to combat the emerging challenge of a lack of volunteer incentives. However, as mentioned above, this approach has only recently been piloted, and there is no clear evidence of the extent to which it will support volunteer incentives sustainably. The programme also supported capacity-building for facilitators/educators to ensure they are well-equipped to correctly interpret and implement learning in their teaching environments and hubs.

Continuity of SAGE benefits

Likelihood of sustainability of systems-level results

The is evidence that the programme's success in achieving systems-level results – including the adoption of SAGE learning material, the effectiveness of the community-based NFE model, and improved management and coordination of the child protection systems, and the benefits of these interventions will continue. The SAGE community-based learning model is now recognised by key government personnel and ministries. The latest Government's ESSP (2021-2026)

> *"We do have established hubs already, we have the printed modules in place. I don't see any hitch in terms of sustainability of the programme. But I understand that the teachers were given a stipend. So, it's not clear if the teachers will continue to teach if this appreciation is not there anymore. As a ministry, we will try to see what and how we can support this to support those who are teaching. We will advocate to see if we can extent a hand to those in the hub so they continue."* - Ministry of CDTSD

has broadened its definition of access to include more innovative ways of 'reach'. The new definition now encompasses non-traditional methods of learning, such as community and home-based learning, that have been core to and demonstrated by the implementation of the SAGE model. In collaboration with the ECOZI, the SAGE programme was one of the examples presented to the Zimbabwe Parliamentary Committee on Education, which sought to explore how to strengthen the NFE in supporting OOS learners in Zimbabwe.

ATL materials are also being adopted to benefit marginalised learners outside the SAGE programme. In particular, extracts from SAGE's ATL session guides and learner workbooks were used by MoPSE in the national literacy and numeracy catch-up learning material, launched in late 2021 by MoPSE. These learning materials were printed and distributed with funding support from UNICEF to over 600 teachers and 13,000 learners in communities outside of SAGE operational areas. This buy-in from MoPSE is not only a stamp of approval but also a key indicator of the potential continued use of the SAGE learning materials.

While the SAGE learning material has been adopted by the MoPSE, a lack of funding commitment from government and development partners to continue or scale up SAGE interventions is a significant risk to the continued benefit of SAGE's community-led approach.

Likelihood of sustainability of community-level results

Continuation of positive community perspectives

The strong buy-in and commitment from religious and community leaders, especially Apostolic community leaders who are now advocating for girls' education and shunning early marriages, are likely to continue. Several stakeholders indicated that some Apostolic community leaders are now

> *"[I] Think it will continue because we have the education and ministry of education who is involved. There are other partners working in communities, local leadership, religious leaders committing to continue to protect the girl child"* - AWET

speaking out openly against early marriages, even in their churches. Implementing partners gave examples that signal continuation, for example, Apostolic leaders establishing schools to support learning for girls in their communities. Likewise, the outputs of the results above, for example, the establishment of men's clubs and gender-based violence Rapid Response committees, are firm indications that positive outcomes around community perspectives will likely continue.

Despite the positive results above, there was an acknowledgement that continuing intergenerational dialogues and the men's clubs will depend on community leadership and will. While implementing partners were confident that there is strong enough leadership within the Apostolic community to continue supporting these structures, it is not clear the extent to which this will be supported, especially in the absence of financial resources. Girl-led CoGE sessions have only recently been piloted, and there is no data on their effectiveness and sustainability yet.

Continuation of learning for OOS learners

The programme has trained HDCs, NFE buddies, school heads, and district leaders to equip them to continue providing volunteer capacity building in the future. There have been concerted efforts to have these stakeholders take on more of the leadership role. Several have been supported to develop action plans on

how they plan to continue supporting the continuation of the hubs moving forward. Programmatic monitoring data indicates that some of the 88 HDCs contacted during programme monitoring said they would allocate their resources to support the continuation of the hubs. The feasibility of this, however, is not certain to the evaluation, and this level of support can only be evidenced post-programme closure.

While the community has been capacitated, and there is recognition of the value of supporting OOS learners through CBLH, a lack of resources to support the community-led model (through CEs, CoGE facilitators and master crafts) and the smooth running of hubs are major risks to the sustainability of these structures. Another risk to this community-led model is that the GoZ is also experiencing a shortage of teachers, and many of the trained CEs are being recruited to teach within government schools, leading to high volunteer turnover. The programme has instituted several measures to provide sustainable financial bandwidth to the hubs, including supporting community-managed income-generating activities for each hub to availing volunteer stipends. However, there is a lack of clarity about the possibility of these activities providing a sustainable source of funding for the hubs and the extent to which elite capture can be avoided. The programme has also trained NFE buddies to provide mentorship to volunteers, and there has been on-the-spot capacity building for new volunteers to enhance rapid onboarding. Similar to the success of income-generating activities, it is unclear how these mitigation measures will make up for the likely capacity gaps due to high volunteer turnover.

Girl-level sustainability

At the girl level, a major risk was the extent to which the girls would benefit from the skill training received during ISOP. Several stakeholders highlighted the financial constraints and lack of funding available to these vulnerable girls to successfully convert the improved and newly acquired marketable skills into income-generating activities. For example, while girls have gained valuable baking or sewing skills, a lack of equipment is likely to result in unused skills and hence, little benefit to them outside, improving their self-efficacy. The programme has taken steps to engage different stakeholders who can support girls' further transition – such as engaging banks and financial institutions to help girls open bank accounts and avail of bank loans; however, the outcomes have been limited. Only 12 girls have been able to avail of financial support from formal financing sources for their businesses.

4.7. Value for money

The SAGE programme's multi-dimensional approach to addressing the needs of disabled and marginalised girls has proven highly relevant and effective. The programme's focus on engaging community members, leaders, and government partners in designing, delivering, and improving interventions has been instrumental in its success. The programme demonstrated excellent value for money across almost all SAGE output areas, with the ATL component providing a significant return on investment. The programme's cost-effectiveness can be attributed to the community-based approach, flexible learning options, inclusive teaching, and technology integration in its operations.

SAGE was implemented efficiently, with strong adaptive management principles integrated into the project. Despite various challenges throughout the implementation period, the programme achieved its output targets and learning and transition outcomes within the originally agreed project budget. The programme's investment in monitoring, evaluation, and learning was well utilised, contributing to its efficiency and effectiveness.

While the programme successfully addressed the needs of disabled and marginalised girls in Zimbabwe, providing them with valuable learning support, transition support, and opportunities for personal growth and empowerment, the programme's value for money from a sustainability perspective remains below average.

Even though the programme has been able to drive sustainability in various aspects (such as the adoption of ATL materials by MoPSE and other development partners, improvements in community attitudes and practices around gender norms and girls' education, capacitating community leaders, and strengthening child protection structures), there are concerns regarding the financial sustainability of the interventions and results. Despite being cost-effective, the community-led approach relies on the community's continued interest and ability to finance the interventions. While SAGE has supported income-generating activities for the hubs and trained NFE buddies for mentorship, there is uncertainty about the long-term viability of these measures, particularly in addressing capacity gaps due to high volunteer turnover. Additionally, there are sustainability concerns around the continuity of the CoGE component. A girl-led CoGE pilot was launched in some hubs, but the results are not yet available. Given the limited time between the pilot's launch and the programme's completion, it remains unclear how effectively SAGE will institutionalise this model if it proves successful.

In conclusion, while the SAGE project has shown significant achievements in certain areas, concerns around financial sustainability and the CoGE component raise questions about its long-term impact. To improve the project's sustainability, it is crucial to secure financial commitments from the government or other development partners, develop more robust income-generating activities, and ensure the successful institutionalisation of the CoGE model.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Learning

Strong improvements in literacy and numeracy scores of SAGE learners are seen. **Overall, the average SAGE learner has shown statistically significant improvements in literacy score (39.70 points) as well as numeracy score (32.63 points). More than 75% of SAGE learners have improved their literacy and numeracy scores, with an average SAGE learner showing 3 to 4-grade levels of improvement in their foundational literacy and numeracy skills to achieve Grade 5 proficiency.** In terms of score improvement, SAGE improved the learning scores most for those who had been the weakest learners at baseline. This is consistent with the project's theory of change, which focused on foundational skills. Non-learners (at baseline) – on average, improved their learning by three grades and jumped up to two colour bands between IPA and EPA. There was also a significant drop in the percentage of learners getting zero scores on all sub-tasks. In line with the wider evidence base, the learning score improvement for literacy was stronger between IPA and MPA, compared to the second half (MPA to EPA). For numeracy, the learning score improvements were uniform across the two periods.

Learners, caregivers, and community members attribute improved learning outcomes to the programme's inclusive pedagogy, CE support, and the learning environment at the CBLHs. The evaluation finds overwhelmingly positive views of the SAGE learning curriculum, the structure and delivery of instructional sessions, SAGE's pedagogical approaches, and the overall impact of active teaching methods. Qualitative evidence shows that the project effectively delivered teaching and learning in a student-centred way, especially through in-person sessions in learning hubs (throughout the programme) and in small groups (notably during COVID-19 school closures). At the endline, nearly 75% of SAGE learners attributed their learning success to the support provided by CEs, particularly by explaining the content and answering questions to aid understanding and comprehension; 20% specifically attributed it to SAGE's pedagogical approaches. **The KIIs conducted with girls highlighted the specific importance girls placed on group learning environments**, notably the support provided by CEs and peers and SAGE's overall design, which established flexible pathways and delivery modalities that facilitated regular participation and attendance by helping girls overcome engagement barriers such as childcare, session timing, family pressures, household responsibilities, etc. Phone-based learning had limited uptake and interest among girls primarily due to difficulties in accessing and charging phones. During COVID-19 lockdowns, many girls were unable to take time out of their day to complete phone-based lessons due to heightened household chore burdens.

Continued professional development of CEs was found to be a key success factor in achieving learning results for SAGE learners across sub-groups – particularly GWDs. SAGE used inclusive, gender-sensitive and learner-centred pedagogical approaches as part of the SAGE programme. CEs were trained on these methods, with a specific focus on engaging GWDs, girls who had never attended school, and other subgroups marginalised from formal education environments. Lesson observations found more than 90% of CEs employed these approaches, including delivery adaptations for GWDs to encourage inclusion. Among other approaches, CEs regularly invited questions from learners and encouraged them to challenge the gender status quo, which regards boys as better performers than girls when it comes to educational achievement. CEs reinforced messages from learner workbooks, which show girls in successful economic and livelihood activities and venturing into male-dominated jobs to encourage girls to break the gender employment ceiling. CEs also built strong relationships with their learners, and there is ample evidence of learners confiding in CEs, reaching out to them for life advice, and engaging in general mentorship. **Many CEs highlighted the challenges that GWDs face in accessing learning opportunities and credited the training and support provided by SAGE to help them more effectively reach out to and support GWDs in sessions.**

The evaluation finds a direct correlation between higher attendance and learning scores. While the programme conducted an analysis of factors hampering girls' attendance in the hubs and implemented a range of strategies – including establishing satellite hubs, child-care services, and introducing multiple delivery modalities – to improve attendance at the hubs, these strategies had limited success. More than 97% of SAGE learners were engaged in labour before and throughout their engagement with SAGE. The economic turmoil in Zimbabwe over the last five years, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, meant that nearly all girls could not afford to skip work to focus on their education.

5.2. Transition

In terms of the transitions, several main conclusions can be drawn. **SAGE has achieved its target around the number of girls who successfully transitioned into one of the four programme transition pathways. However, there are concerns around the way transition has been defined by the programme.** Enrolling into SAGE's own ISOP component (a 2-month skill training programme) upon completing the 2-year ATL component has been defined as a successful transition by the programme, but there is very limited post-ISOP

data available to assess the impact or effectiveness of ISOP as a standalone measure of a successful transition. As part of the endline survey and KIIs, some girls and community members highlighted that ISOP's truncated, two-month skills training curriculum did not provide enough time for girls to practise their new technical skills, nor did it provide enough exposure to current technologies for skill areas, relying instead on a limited number of machines and materials from local businesses and master craft persons for girls' practical skills training. **In the absence of detailed programmatic data available on post-ISOP results for these girls, the evaluation has not been able to sufficiently ascertain the impact of transition under SAGE.**

Regardless of the effectiveness of transitions after the skill training, **ISOP was the biggest motivator for girls to join and participate in SAGE.** A majority of girls confirmed they joined SAGE to access its skills training programme, ISOP. This is evidenced in transition analysis, where ISOP represented the largest transition pathway by far, with 52.69% of SAGE learners enrolling in ISOP. Given that these girls come from vulnerable backgrounds and a large percentage from impoverished families, **the ISOP component represented an opportunity to escape their vulnerabilities and financial constraints and increase their personal and household income.**

The transition data also shows that only 4.91% of SAGE learners transitioned to formal or non-formal education, indicating that **vulnerable girls are more likely to use their new foundational learning competencies and improved vocational skills to advance short-term income opportunities rather than transition back to school.** Most SAGE participants came from impoverished backgrounds, and when coupled with COVID-19-related challenges, a large majority chose to transition into vocational training (ISOP) or to work in the formal or informal economy. Findings indicate the particularly vulnerable nature of girls and their families: they focus on transition pathways expected to immediately contribute to earnings and secure personal and household financial security.

The evaluation also finds **a strong, positive correlation between the likelihood of successful transition with girls' self-efficacy and empowerment index scores: higher scores on each index were linked to higher transition rates**. This points to a direct link between the work SAGE did under the CoGE component to build girls' agency, their ability to advocate for their transition, and their overall likelihood of transitioning. Girls from subgroups with relatively high self-efficacy and empowerment – such as married girls and young mothers – were more likely to successfully transition post-SAGE.

Qualitative data collected from girls, parents/caregivers and community members highlight that SAGE created numerous positive, sustainable changes amongst girls in a number of areas, including better preparedness for future learning, resilience, increased income, improved confidence, and self-efficacy. All these are expected to contribute to girls' long-term transition. However, the **lack of access to finance for vulnerable groups remains the key barrier to girls' successful transition.** SAGE data shows that the number of girls transitioning into businesses was low, but those transitioning into employment was around 40%. On the self-employment pathway, there are some examples of girls starting their small businesses post-ISOP. However, given the SAGE girls' particularly vulnerable nature, many do not have access to funding to start their businesses or buy ingredients (baking) or materials (hairdressing kits, sewing machines, etc.). These groups traditionally rely on non-formal funding sources, but with the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the population in rural Zimbabwe had little to no disposable income to provide funding. This drove many SAGE graduates back to their work before the programme (including as household help). SAGE facilitated the opening of bank accounts for around 900 girls, but only 12 girls were reported to have been able to secure funding from formal institutions for their businesses.

5.3. Life skills

SAGE helped to promote resilience and positive coping mechanisms among girls who participated, which was particularly significant in light of the many challenges that COVID-19 presented to communities and girls. CoGE has been instrumental in building life skills and supporting girls to explore key issues, including self-esteem, sexual reproductive and health rights (SRHR), Gender-Based Violence (GBV), early marriage and gender-responsive economic empowerment. Through the endline interviews and the outcome mapping exercise, girls reported strengthening their communication, negotiation, and decision-making competencies about their own lives. There is greater solidarity among them as they support one another in continuing their education and pursuing income-generating work outside of the home. Girls expressed critical awareness of safeguarding, personal hygiene, disability, and gender inclusion and exhibited strengthened confidence, skills, and social capital for making progressive life choices.

Engagements with the girls across the different sub-groups indicate that **girls' confidence and decision-making power have improved after acquiring skills in ATL and through CoGE sessions.** Young mothers reported that they are capacitated to support their children and siblings with foundational literacy and numeracy skills and homework. Findings from Mutare, Mutasa, and Mutoko Hubs, which have the highest population of Apostolic communities, show that girls from this subgroup are now participating in decision-making at the community level as well as at their households. Young mothers are more active and assertive in

household, school and community conversations about issues that affect them and their children and are active in governance issues within their communities. **Outcome mapping conducted by the programme also identified examples of women's increased participation in community leadership and advocating for gender equality.**

Analysis of endline survey responses and the qualitative interviews with girls shows that **many young women and men who participated in SAGE and CoGE demonstrated improved knowledge, understanding and appreciation of SRHR.** Young mothers shared that they can now better negotiate safe sex and discuss sexual and reproductive health issues with their partners and spouses. After participating in CoGE, girls are aware of the implication of unprotected sex, the use of contraceptives, child marriage and how and where to access SRHR services. Girls stated that through CoGE sessions, they are now knowledgeable and confident enough to ask their spouse about circumcision, and some have positively influenced them to get circumcised to protect their female partners from cervical cancer and other sexually transmitted diseases. There is also a greater understanding among young men and women of sexual consent as a sexual and reproductive right. A majority of girls, boys, and young men interviewed at the endline highlighted that they now actively seek the consent of their partners before engaging in sexual activity.

5.4. Gender and social norms

SAGE has helped communities to develop more supportive attitudes towards girls' education, and improved understanding of gender equality, women's rights and GBV. The endline survey of parents/caregivers found that the mean Gender Attitude score has improved by 11.62% between endline and baseline, and 72.07% of caregivers demonstrated high gender attitude scores at endline, compared to 25% at baseline. There has been a positive shift in perception among caregivers, community and religious leaders, spouses, and men in the community on the value of educating girls and young women; and improving and evolving negative or limiting traditional social and cultural norms around gender roles and gender equality. **Men's clubs and intergenerational dialogues have been highly successful in engaging communities, especially men, in dialogue around gender roles and equality, women's rights and girls' education.** Men now recognise the value of supporting women in their roles, whether in the workplace or in domestic tasks. SAGE communities are embracing the idea of shared responsibilities and the benefits that come from gender equality such as reducing abuse, empowering women, and fostering independence. Husbands are participating in household chores and childcare, with a number of SAGE learners crediting the successful completion of their SAGE engagement on the support – with household chores and childcare, provided by their husbands. This shift in attitudes has given women more opportunities and a greater appreciation for their contributions to their families and communities.

Community attitudes toward GWDs have also improved. In qualitative discussions with GWDs, they reported being treated better – with more respect and recognition of their critical contributions to homes and communities – after graduating from SAGE. They were previously viewed as a social and financial burden to their communities with a bleak future. Many GWDs now feel that their improved knowledge, skills, and engagement in income-generating activities post-SAGE have encouraged people to treat them now with respect and dignity.

The evaluation also notes improvement in knowledge and recognition of the need to curb early marriage, particularly within traditional groups like the Apostolic community. Within the Apostolic community, several positive steps were taken to address early marriage, including community leaders creating CPCs, and increased reporting of the cases of early marriage. However, as in many vulnerable communities across Southern Africa, COVID-19 increased incidences of early marriage and unplanned pregnancy due to the economic collapse and hardships many families face due to economic lockdowns. Many SAGE communities have taken steps to tackle these increasing challenges, with many incidences of early marriage reported to authorities and CPCs for action.

5.5. Safeguarding and child protection

The programme has been able to contribute to girls' feeling of safety and security at the learning hubs, in their households, and in communities. Overall, 83.31% of the girls surveyed at endline reported a high safety perception at endline, compared to 54.81% at baseline. One of the reasons that SAGE has been able to achieve strong results on girls' safety and security is the **safeguarding approach that was built into the programme design and delivery.** The project safeguarding approach identified the risks within the context and recognised vulnerabilities and risks to the different groups and those most marginalised involved in the project. The team carried out regular risk assessments and assessed risks to all project interventions. The project also provided training to project staff, CEs, CoGE facilitators, community leaders, community members, and men and boys in the community on the importance, processes, and procedures to strengthen safeguarding and child protection.

The programme prioritised the integration of safeguarding across all SAGE project activities to create a safe and inclusive environment where all programme participants, staff, volunteers, partners, and associates could thrive and feel secure and supports people to understand, exercise their rights and report any concerns. At the community level, the programme led awareness-raising and knowledge activities through CoGE, intergenerational dialogues, and men's clubs to improve girls' and community members' understanding of GBV and IPV. It also provided knowledge to girls to understand the redressal mechanisms available to them in case they feel abuse or violence. Many girls interviewed at endline reported that SAGE (particularly CoGE) has helped them become more aware of the protection and safeguarding issues and has given them the knowledge of protection mechanisms available.

In addition to its efforts to improve community understanding and awareness of safeguarding and child protection, SAGE also contributed to revitalising and strengthening community-based protection mechanisms and built the community and government capacity to enhance referral, psychosocial support, and reporting mechanisms. DSD officers were involved in the programme in training volunteers on local referral pathways and cascaded the MHPSS training to all volunteers. Volunteers were also aware of the community-based child protection structures that work with DSD, which directly contributed to volunteers reporting 10 cases.

5.6. Sustainability

While the programme has achieved progress in implementing a range of sustainability measures, several risks to sustainability remain. Overall, the SAGE programme has achieved some progress in embedding sustainability at the systems and community levels. The programme efforts have led to demonstrated uptake and usage of the SAGE learning materials by MoPSE, strengthened coordination of child protection systems, improved community attitudes towards girls' education and gender norms, and established and strengthened hub-development committees with a commitment to continue SAGE's community-based learning model. However, **there is a lack of clarity around how the SAGE model and the various community-based structures it helped develop will be funded and sustained going forward.** Even though it was not a programme goal to secure funding for the programme's scale-up, the lack of a clear intent from the government or any other donor/development partner to take over the proven effective SAGE approaches means that there is a high likelihood that the results generated by the programme will be hard to sustain. Recognising this, SAGE has put in place some sustainability measures such as a community-managed 'Sustainable Volunteer Incentive Scheme' to help set up income-generating activities – such as poultry farms – to help generate income to sustain the operations of learning hubs and to provide incentives and honoraria to community volunteers. However, given that these measures were put in place in the last six months of the programme, there is not enough data to measure the effectiveness of these sustainability measures. **There is a possibility that some of the hubs will not be able to sustain themselves, in the absence of financial or human resources, as well as in the absence of continued monitoring and accountability measures.**

5.7. Additional findings

Married girls and young mothers, who together form almost 45% of the SAGE learner population, showed stronger positive results compared to other sub-groups. Across long-term and intermediate outcomes from SAGE, married women and young mothers have improved the most. This is evidenced in learning outcome gains; successful transitions post-SAGE; improved life skills, confidence, and self-efficacy; and better attendance in NFE programming. Before SAGE, many girls, even though keen to continue formal learning, had dropped out of school due to financial challenges, unexpected pregnancy, or early marriage. This aligns with findings shared by girls in the KIIs, whereby married women and young mothers reported that SAGE gave them a second chance at gaining an education and employable skills.

While other sub-groups – namely, girls belonging to the Apostolic community and ethnic minorities, GWDs and girls who had never been to school – have also benefitted from the programme and have shown improvements in learning and transition, have largely lagged in improved life-skills and empowerment. This is likely the result of the highly vulnerable nature of girls btransitelonging to these sub-groups and the stigma, discrimination, and traditional social and normative barriers faced by these girls, which require specific strategies tailored to the context and challenges of each of these groups.

Some of the targets set by the programme – particularly around girls' life skills and community attitude changes – were found to be ambitious to be achieved in the project's life cycle. The programme set a target of 90% of girls achieving high self-efficacy, yet SAGE fell short of achieving this, with around 80% demonstrating a high score on the empowerment index. These targets were positively ambitious, but in practice, were high standards for a programme like SAGE to achieve in the time available, requiring major cultural and social practices to evolve significantly in a short time within highly vulnerable, traditional community settings with highly entrenched patriarchal practices and historically regressive attitudes.

One of the reasons the programme set high targets was due to relatively high baseline scores on similar indices. However, it should be noted that the Apostolic community, which needed the most investments to improve traditional gender attitudes and practices, formed more than 60% of the SAGE programme's learner base. At baseline, Apostolic girls only constituted around 25% of the sample; this number increased significantly throughout programme implementation. This might have led to baseline values for all targeted communities and subgroups appearing higher than they were, possibly leading to underperformance in life skills targets at the endline. Endline analysis of girls' empowerment scores further strengthens this point: analysis shows a statistically significant difference in empowerment scores between Apostolic and non-Apostolic girls across the programme. Endline evidence also demonstrates that, despite assignment into other subgroups such as young mothers, married girls, GWDs, girls who have never been to school, etc., being part of the Apostolic community is the main driver of low empowerment overall.

6. Recommendations

6.1. Overall

Expand the community-based delivery of learning and skill development programming

SAGE's community-based approaches to learning, life-skills development, and technical skilling for employability have proven to be effective in supporting girls to achieve learning and transition. The programme improved girls' foundational literacy and numeracy proficiency by 3-4 grade levels on average, and many girls reported learning employable skills through ISOP, which they believe are market relevant and have helped them improve their incomes.

These programme components have also been highly cost-effective at around £93 per year per girl for ATL and £170 per girl for skills training. They demonstrate highly successful inputs that provide value for money through community-based, community-owned development. Given the highly cost-effective nature of the interventions, their alignment with the government's policies and priorities, and their effectiveness in delivering results, it is strongly recommended that these community-based approaches are scaled up in Zimbabwe to ensure OOS girls across the country can benefit from similar investments.

Moreover, SAGE has proven that locating programming close to home, within households and communities that stand to benefit from NFE interventions, is highly effective in leveraging confidence, relationships, and local support and buy-in for successful outcomes. Evidence shows that what matters for results to be achieved is inexorably linked to trust and embedded in the belief that **who** delivers programming and **where** it is delivered matters just as much as **what** inputs are provided and **how** they are delivered and achieved.

Ensure ongoing community engagement and continually incorporate beneficiary feedback to adapt programme design, operations and inputs that encourage deeper buy-in and ownership throughout the life cycle of a project and beyond.

SAGE prioritised community engagement – including the buy-in of community and religious leaders, girls and boys, caregivers, household heads, spouses, education leaders and teachers – to design, deliver and monitor the programme. Further quarterly review and reflection engagements were held as part of the monitoring process, where stakeholder feedback was collected and integrated into the next round of activities. The programme adopted and incorporated clear and specific adaptive measures based on beneficiary experiences and feedback to improve future inputs.

This directly contributed to the programme's success and its ability to grow even under the most difficult conditions during COVID, helping create a distinct brand for SAGE and furthering its reputation amongst girls and communities. This also secured a commitment from community leaders to support future initiatives and establish stronger community structures for sustainability. Any future programme involving community-driven development should build similar systems, processes, and structures for the community to effectively engage with and provide feedback and learnings to the programme leadership and managers. This will secure their continuation and embed them in the local communities where they can continue operating and benefitting future generations.

6.2. Learning

Link community-based learning hubs to local primary schools for ownership and sustainability.

One mechanism for enabling wider roll-out and sustainability of SAGE CBLHs is to engage local primary schools to 'adopt' one or more nearby hubs to oversee their functioning and delivery of NFE and learning programming, including possibly for local skilling initiatives, together with the community and religious leaders and local government. This includes the development of operational and maintenance standards for hubs; ongoing identification, training, and capacity building of local CEs; conducting community-led learning assessments; and monitoring the quality of systems, services, facilities, and individuals involved in the delivery. This is a robust, locally owned, managed, cost-effective approach to maintain and expand SAGE's CBLH model across the country while securing value for money regarding the human, physical and financial resources associated with establishing and running NFE programmes in Zimbabwe.

Integrate learner-centred, active, inclusive and gender-sensitive teaching approaches into NFE programmes, with regular refresher training provided to all educators supporting and implementing these methods.

The learner-centred, active, inclusive and gender-sensitive teaching methods employed under SAGE's NFE curricula were greatly appreciated and widely adopted by CEs, girls, community members and NFE buddies, ultimately helping girls from different communities and subgroups, notably GWDs and girls who had never been to school, to significantly improve their learning, SRHR and employable skills. These approaches also improved teacher engagement in formal schools and ISOP centres near SAGE's communities and learning

hubs. The Government of Zimbabwe's competency-based curriculum recognises the need for and directs teachers in formal schools and training institutions to follow inclusive and participatory teaching methods.

SAGE's proven and effective methodologies and pedagogy can further embed these principles and practices, aiding and motivating teachers and their learners to engage in teaching and learning practices in positive, active, inclusive and gender-sensitive ways – overall bettering learning environments and educational outcomes for all. Therefore, SAGE's training curricula, instructional methods and pedagogical approaches should be included in national pre-and in-service teacher professional development for formal and non-formal education curricula, and teachers should be trained countywide to use these approaches more routinely.

Integrate relevant and appropriate technologies for teachers' continuous professional development and delivery of NFE programmes.

SAGE has effectively integrated specific, targeted, low-cost technology solutions to support the ongoing professional development of non-formal educators and teachers. Many CEs and teachers found SAGE's phone-based CPD useful and accessible, especially during COVID-19 lockdowns and in highly rural areas, where they continue developing and honing their professional skills from home. The Government of Zimbabwe should further integrate these inputs and other low-cost technology solutions into their teacher professional development plans and expand these options to deliver teaching and learning programming where possible.

6.3. Transition

Conduct research on post-ISOP transition pathways for girls and the effectiveness of sustainability measures

The evaluation finds that there is limited evidence on the post-ISOP transition of girls; in our view, this is an important piece of evidence to assess the high-level transition outcomes of the programme. Therefore, it is recommended that GEC and SAGE programme conduct a tracer study to complement the endline evaluation findings and identify the transition pathways and transition success of girls after graduating from ISOP.

The programme should also conduct research to understand and unpack the effectiveness of the various sustainability measures put in place or piloted by it – including the sustainable volunteer incentive scheme, girl-led CoGE sessions, and the HDC-led CBLH management. Understanding the effectiveness of these measures is extremely important to better understand the sustainability prospects of the programme approaches.

Ensure skills training provides intensive and relevant practical and work-based learning experiences alongside effective financing for securing entry into employment or self-employment following certification.

One area where the SAGE programme achieved limited success was developing strong vocational competencies among ISOP participants that translated into decent work opportunities following graduation. This was primarily due to the short length of the skills training programme, limited exposure to work-based learning opportunities, and the limited budget for financing the ISOP component and access to start-up capital and material goods for girls to open small businesses. To enable OOS girls to develop strong, market-relevant skills, future programmes should ensure a sufficient budget for skills training, practical work-based experience, and funding to establish or grow small businesses. SAGE proved that girls who achieved a high level of mastery in technical and financial skills had better transition results regarding income and work opportunities. Plan should widely disseminate this lesson and incorporate it into policy and programme designs in the future.

Integrate financial inclusion component into programming focused on OOS girls.

While the programme's multi-pronged approach included building life skills and agency for adolescent girls, the programme could not implement its initially planned component for developing and strengthening Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs). Evidence showed that despite a widespread desire among girls to transition back into formal education, access further vocational training opportunities, or enter the world of work, they could not do so due to severe financial constraints and persistent household and family responsibilities.

While SAGE provided some content around financial literacy to girls through CoGE and facilitated the opening of bank accounts for around 900 participants, the relative absence of programme-provided start-up capital and the overall lack of independent collateral among vulnerable girls to access their financing for transitioning to decent employment remained a massive challenge. Thus, future programmes must incorporate components of financial inclusion, small business incubation and access to finance for vulnerable girls to sufficiently support impacts related to employment and improved lives and livelihoods following similar initiatives.

6.4. Life Skills

Expand life skills for girls to advance their self-efficacy and empowerment and to better support overall learning and transition outcomes.

There is evidence from SAGE and wider research that improved life skills are crucial for supporting the empowerment and confidence of adolescent girls, which in turn boosts their participation in social and economic activities. Improved self-efficacy and empowerment also facilitate adolescent girls' participation and retention in formal and non-formal education. An explicit focus on developing basic foundational literacy and numeracy skills is also central to allowing OOS youth, especially girls, to maintain a basic level of academic and functional knowledge that permits and secures their entry into public and economic life.

SAGE's ATL and CoGE programme components are highly effective in achieving these outcomes: the evaluation finds extensive evidence that (1) girls have improved knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding critical foundational and employable skills; 2) demonstrable enhancement of their voice and participation in household decision-making and public service engagement due to their newly acquired foundational and socioemotional skills; and 3) reduced GBV in households, schools and communities due to their expanded personal agency.

The national NFE policy is recommended to incorporate SAGE's foundational and life-skills model for OOS girls who do not have access to similar instructional content under the country's CBC curriculum. Moreover, expanding content to include aspects of entrepreneurship and financial management skills will provide an even greater basis for improved productivity and recognition of women's key role in the economic and social development of their homes, communities, and greater society.

6.5. Gender and Social Norms

Intensify efforts to address negative gender-related social norms and attitudes.

Another SAGE component that generated significant results involved the programme's approach to engaging local, traditional, and religious leaders and community members to address the prevailing negative social, cultural and gender norms that prevent women from accessing education and engaging in economic activities within and outside the home. This involves challenging traditional gender roles that restrict these practices and bar women from effective participation in daily life. Yet, while the programme successfully initiated mindset change, more need to be done to expand and broadly embed these beliefs and their corresponding behaviours and practices.

A large part of Zimbabwe's population consists of women belonging to various religious sects, including the Apostolic community, who have intrinsically patriarchal and often regressive views about women's roles in society and the home, and early marriage and exclusion from public and economic life remains a common practice. The transformative approaches followed by SAGE to generate dialogue on these issues and expose them in public and private life have proven effective in addressing some of these conditions. If scaled up, these have the potential to reach and engage a larger population to acknowledge and address negative social and normative behaviours on a wider scale.

In addition, future programmes must seek to embed positive practices, routines and behaviours that promote and enforce women's education, civic engagement, and economic participation in daily life so that they can realise the impact of these investments on their personal and family wealth, health, and dignity.

Continue addressing the specific needs of marginalised populations to enhance programming efficiency and promote better equity and equality between men and women.

Evidence from the programme and more widely available research findings suggest that married girls, young mothers, GWDs, and individuals belonging to certain religious and ethnic minorities are more prone to dropping out of school, achieving limited learning gains, and realising poor school and life transitions. In Southern Africa, many children and adolescents also fail to complete school or realise their work potential due to orphanhood or belonging to a child-headed household. Future programmes must be intentional in adopting localised, contextualised, acceptable approaches to generating change, including incorporating differentiated and appropriate modalities and inputs to generating change, including incorporating approaches that are targeted to improve access, participation, education quality and employment outcomes for highly marginalised and vulnerable populations.

6.6. Sustainability

Build demand, ownership, and accountability for community-based initiatives to ensure success and sustainability

While the community-based approaches implemented by SAGE proved efficient and cost-effective, the programme only implemented processes such as the Sustainable Volunteer Incentive Scheme and Girl-Led

CoGE Sessions towards the end of the programme. This means that the programme, and the endline evaluation, could not fully explore the effectiveness of these processes and document the sustainability of the community structures developed under SAGE to administer and maintain them. It is thus important for future programmes to initiate thinking, establishment, and ownership of these (or similar) measures from inception, allowing the duration of the programme for ensuring their effective operation, monitoring, and management. Impacts can also thus be realised during the project timeframe rather than only upon the initiative's closure or after completion.

Community-based structures and approaches should be complemented by strong government engagement and technical assistance from local authorities and civil society to strengthen delivery, management, and monitoring capacities.

Delivering learning and skills training to vulnerable and excluded OOS girls through community-based approaches, local delivery mechanisms, and locally managed institutions like CBLHs are extremely efficient and cost-effective models that support girls' learning, transition, and life outcomes. These approaches – in addition to requiring localised investment and extensive capacity-building support to local communities – also require deep engagement with local authorities, civil society, and government stakeholders at local, district and regional levels to enable ownership, financing, transparent oversight, and effective monitoring upon programme completion.

The effectiveness of civil society and government engagement and the sustainability of programme results can be further strengthened and secured by providing technical assistance to civil society and government representatives on issues such as evidence-based policymaking, planning and programme management, monitoring, and financial and human resource mobilisation. This will ensure the successful continuation of programme interventions and foster deeper and more effective integrated community-driven development, leading to greater health, wealth, and education outcomes for all involved.

Annexes

Annex 1. Project design and interventions

A-1-1. Programme Context

Zimbabwe is a young country in Southern Africa, with a population of nearly 16 million people. A third of its population are children and adolescents between the ages of 10 and 24.[52] Zimbabwe has a population growth rate of 1.5%, and its population is projected to reach over 18 million people by 2025.[53] Zimbabwe ranks 146th out of 191 countries on the Human Development Index, indicating that the country's standard of living is low, and that the government faces significant challenges in providing its citizens with access to quality education and healthcare.

While Zimbabwe has seen some improvements in a few quality-of-life dimensions, such as reduced malnourishment and increased literacy among adults, the country has also seen increased poverty rates and inequality over the last decade.[54] The number of people living below poverty increased from 3 million in 2011 to 6.6 million in 2019.[55] In addition to income poverty, the outlook on Zimbabwe's multidimensional poverty appears bleak. Evidence from the 2019 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index suggests that 25.8% of Zimbabweans are characterised as multidimensionally poor, i.e., they live in households deprived in 1 of 3 MPI indicators (Health, Education, and standards of living).[56] A further 26.3% were also classified as vulnerable to multidimensional poverty.[57]

Of further concern, 90% of the extremely poor in 2019 lived in rural areas, and 1.6 million were children. These numbers are concerning because to cope with extreme levels of poverty, families and households often turn to negative coping mechanisms such as taking children out of school or foregoing formal healthcare to avoid costs.

Prior to COVID-19, Zimbabwe's economy was already in a recession, and the macroeconomic environment was under significant strain, with inflation at 231%[58] and the GDP shrinking by at least 6% in 2019.[59] During the same year, the unemployment rate was 16%, and nearly 45% of the youth were not enrolled in school, employment, or training.[60] Zimbabwe's economic crisis has been characterised by a general decline in economic activity, hyperinflation, and a severe foreign currency shortage. To address these issues, the government introduced a new currency, the Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) dollar, which was intended to alleviate the shortage of foreign currency, but it failed and was devalued. Since its onset, the COVID-19 pandemic has further disrupted economic activities and has had significant adverse effects on Zimbabwe's economy.

The economic crisis has caused a decline in the country's economic engagement confidence. The economic challenges have contributed to limited access to quality education and employment opportunities among marginalised groups, especially girls. In the past few years, the government has undertaken some measures to support individuals and the society at large, including monetary policy reforms and the implementation of stimulus packages.

Overview of the education sector in Zimbabwe

There are two components to Zimbabwe's education system: formal education and non-formal education. The formal education system of the country comprises pre-primary education, five years of tuition-free and compulsory primary education, four years of lower secondary education, two years of upper secondary education, and tertiary education, while the non-formal education system provides educational programmes to people who have never been to formal school.

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) is primarily responsible for pre-primary, primary and secondary education, while the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development (MoHTESTD) is responsible for higher education and also provides teacher education and technical and vocational education (TVET). The development and implementation of education policies are a shared responsibility of both ministries. Other key government ministries contributing to the education system include the Ministry of Health and Child Care (MoHCC), who plays a major role in the development of early

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[52] UNFPA (n.d) World Population Dashboard: Zimbabwe.
[53] Zimbabwe Statistical Agency. (2019). Population Projections.
[54] Dhiraj Sharma (2022) Contradictory trends in Zimbabwe: Human development indicators improve but poverty rises and inequality widens. Available online.
[55] The Guardian (2021) Half of Zimbabweans fell into extreme poverty during Covid-19. Available online.
[56] UNDP, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (2022) Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)
[57] Ibid
[58] UNICEF (2020) Zimbabwe Country Office Annual Report.
[59] AFDB (n.d) Zimbabwe Economic Outlook
[60] Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (2019) Labour Force and Child Labour Survey Report.

childhood development and school health and hygiene policies and the Ministry of Public Service, Labour, and Social Welfare (MoPSLSW) who contributes to the delivery of social assistance to young people.

While the government plays a significant role in the planning, coordination, and implementation of education reforms in the country, non-state actors also contribute to the education landscape and support services in Zimbabwe. These actors include international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), funders and donors, private sector actors and civil society organisations (CSOs).

Progress and Remaining Challenges in Education

In the two past decades, the Zimbabwean government with support from partners have made visible efforts to improve access and quality of education in the country. In 2006, the United Nations in collaboration with the government and civil society organisations established the first National Girls Education Strategic Plan which provided a roadmap of how to provide quality education while addressing cultural issues like early marriage, domestic abuse and economic exploitation of girls.[61]

In a bid to improve the quality of education in primary schools, Zimbabwe has participated in several rounds of the Southern and East Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) regional examinations. Over 5,000 grade 6 learners and their teachers across 190 schools participated in and got assessed on their reading and Mathematics skills in Zimbabwe in 2013. The results revealed that up to 31% of grade 6 pupils did not achieve the acceptable level of reading proficiency.[62]

Furthermore, the government established its national non-formal education policy in 2015 which paved the way for alternative pathways for adolescents and adults to continue education. The non-formal education programmes available include basic literacy programmes for individuals who have never had the opportunity to attend school and those who dropped out of school.[63] On the other hand, the state also provides a primary school programme for adults, part-time continuing education classes and distance learning options for those interested in secondary-level education.

Despite the efforts made, access to quality education remains a challenge for some boys and girls in Zimbabwe. Household poverty, abuse, remoteness, poor infrastructure, insufficient and insufficient teachers are all cited as key barriers to accessing quality education.[64]

Zimbabwe currently lacks an explicit inclusive education policy and a girls' education policy. However, the country's constitution, specifically Article 56, stipulates that both men and women have equal rights to education opportunities. Furthermore, the National Gender Policy for 2013-2017 was developed to eliminate gender discrimination and inequalities in all spheres of development, including education and training.[65]

Presently, the draft 2019-2030 School Financing Policy aims to ensure fully-state funded, free basic education for all[66]; the education budget allocation has steadily declined from 22% in 2015 to 15% in 2022.[67] This falls short of the 20% benchmark of the Dakar declaration and suggests that more work needs to be done to improve education planning and financing and ensure that sector and national priorities are met. While the government has made efforts to provide free basic education, families are often still expected to pay fees and levies, which is a financial constraint.

Human capital development and innovation are among the national priorities outlined in the Zimbabwe National Development Strategy 1 (2021-2025). This strategy indicates that human capital development and innovation investments will bring Zimbabwe closer to attaining Vision 2030 and the status of a middle-income society by 2030. Its situation analysis highlights the decline in the quality of education and the delivery of basic literacy and numeracy skills and also reveals that secondary school dropout rates are becoming an increasing cause for concern - up to 30% of girls are dropping out of Forms 3 and 4.[68]

The primary causes of these dropouts include child marriage, adolescent pregnancy, and excessive tuition costs - and the strategy document highlights specific actions that will be rolled out to address these challenges and others affecting education access and quality. This includes the establishment of the Zimbabwe Education Development Fund (ZEDF), full operationalisation of education policies, including the Inclusive School financing policy, Zimbabwe school health policy and strengthening private-public partnerships to

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[61] Reliefweb (2006) Zimbabwe's launches ground-breaking national girls' education strategic plan. Available online.
[62] SACMEQ IV Project International Report: A study of the conditions of schooling and the quality of education. Available online.
[63] MoPSE (2015) The national non-formal education policy for Zimbabwe.
[64] UNICEF Zimbabwe (n.d) Quality Learning and Skills Development. Available online.
[65] MWAGCD (2013) The National Gender Policy (2013-2017).
[66] MoPSE (2020) Education Sector Analysis report.
[67] UNICEF (2022) Maximising Returns to Public Expenditure: The case for more and better spending on Human Capital Development. Available online.
[68] Government of Zimbabwe (2020) National Development Strategy 1 (2021-2025).

improve infrastructure development.[69] The strategy document, however, does not clearly present a clear line of action in addressing non-finance challenges related to inclusive education.

COVID-19-related Challenges and Government response

In 2020, during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Zimbabwe's GDP further declined by 7.4%, putting the economy in a more fragile state. Due to the widespread of the respiratory infectious disease, people across the world, including those in Zimbabwe, were forced to stay at home and were faced with a myriad of challenges, including limited access to social services, limited to no learning time and loss of jobs for an extended period of time.[70] Schools fully closed for a total of 34 weeks and were partially open for about 11 weeks[71] and disrupted the learning experiences of up to 4.6 million children across different education levels in Zimbabwe.[72] In fact, up to half Zimbabwean population were faced with extreme poverty partly due to the layered impact of Covid-19 [73].

This turn of events made it abundantly evident that COVID-19 was not merely a public health emergency; it exacerbated pre-existing challenges in numerous sectors and the economy. Restructuring the expenditures for capital projects to address health-related expenditures and other pandemic-related expenditure emergencies was among the initial measures implemented to relieve pressure at the peak of the lockdown period.[74]

Other interventions included the introduction of a ZWL$ 18 billion (£ 39,984,300) economic stimulus package in May 2020 intended to improve access to economic and social infrastructure, provide liquidity support to manufacturing sectors, expand social safety net programmes, and support the recovery of small and medium-sized enterprises.[75]

In addressing the shock to the education sector, MoPSE conducted a needs assessment to better understand the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic reduced learning time and induced learning loss among children and adolescents in Zimbabwe.[76] In Zimbabwe, The MoPSE Catch up strategy was developed and rolled out in 2021.

The Catch-Up Strategy aimed to ensure continuous teaching and learning at all times and during emergencies like the lockdown. The implementation consisted of an accelerated syllabus, a blended teaching and learning model and components addressing the need for clinical support for learners with special needs and counselling services to address issues such as teenage pregnancy, child marriage etc. In promoting school health and environmental safety, the strategy also emphasised the need for schools to fully comply with the standard operating procedures for the prevention and management of COVID-19 cases.

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[69] Government of Zimbabwe (2020) National Development Strategy 1 (2021-2025).
[70] United Nations Zimbabwe (2020). Immediate Socio-economic response to COVID-19 in Zimbabwe.
[71] UNESCO (2022) Global monitoring dashboard of school closures caused by COVID-19.
[72] UNICEF (2021) Providing a learning solution for millions of in and out of school children in Zimbabwe
[73] UNICEF Zimbabwe (2021) Half of Zimbabweans faced extreme poverty in 2020 due to COVID-19: Rapid Poverty Income Consumption and Expenditure Survey (PICES). Available online.
[74] United Nations Zimbabwe (2020). Immediate Socio-economic response to COVID-19 in Zimbabwe.
[75] United Nations Zimbabwe (2020). Immediate Socio-economic response to COVID-19 in Zimbabwe.
[76] World Bank (2022) Learning in Crisis: Prioritizing education & effective policies to recover lost learning. Available online.

A-1-2. SAGE Theory of Change

Outcome

Learning | **Transition** | **Sustainability**

Assumed causal link: If girls regularly attend accessible, community-based learning sessions, staffed by well-trained and supportive Community Educators, they will attain desired learning outcomes. Girls' acquisition of life skills and improved self-efficacy and confidence will also in turn contribute to and support their learning.
Evidence base: Strong*

Assumed causal link: If girls have improved skills, access to financial resources, and information about available opportunities – as well as improved financial and emotional support from their families – they will be able to transition into further formal or informal education, training, or (self-)employment, as they desire.
Evidence base: Promising

Assumed causal link: If communities adopt more positive and supportive attitudes toward girls' education, and if the larger policy environment is made more responsive to girls' needs, girls will enjoy a more enabling environment that supports their education, and project impacts will be sustained.
Evidence base: Promising

Intermediate outcome

- Highly marginalised adolescent girls regularly attend high-quality, accelerated learning sessions
- Highly marginalised adolescent girls have increased self-efficacy and life skills
- Highly marginalised adolescent girls have improved levels of market relevant livelihood skills
- Communities adopt more positive gender attitudes and are mobilized to support and protect girls
- Strong and active partnerships are formed with Ministry officials and other civil society actors to advocate for more inclusive, gender-responsive education policies

Output

- OOS adolescent girls are able to access high-quality accelerated learning programmes
- Community educators & formal sector NFE mentors are trained and supported to employ inclusive, gender-responsive teaching strategies
- Adolescent girls and boys are supported to learn about and discuss life skills and their SRHR
- Adolescent girls and their families are supported to participate in skills development opportunities
- Adolescent and adult champions of gender equality engage others in their communities in dialogue on girls' rights
- Programme evidence and learning - including girls' own voices and experiences - are shared with key stakeholders at district and national level.

Activities

- Inclusive, accelerated learning materials developed
- Provision of school supplies
- Childcare support organized
- Engagement with parents and local/religious leaders to challenge stigma and enable girls' participation

- Training for community educators and formal sector NFE mentors on inclusive, gender-responsive teaching strategies
- Ongoing follow-up support and continuing professional development for community educators and formal sector NFE mentors

- Champions of Change: parallel modules for adolescent boys and girls to address issues around healthy relationships, GBV, SRHR (including MHM), etc.
- Engagement with parents and local/religious leaders to enable adolescents' participation

- Information and support sessions on opportunities and transition options
- Support to register with formal schools for girls who wish to re-enrol
- Community-based vocational training provided through the Ministry of Youth's Integrated Skills Outreach Programme
- Mentorship from local female businesswomen
- Apprenticeships with local businesses

- Intergenerational dialogues involving young people and community decision-makers
- Youth-led community awareness raising on gender equality and the value of education for all girls
- Men's groups for husbands/fathers of adolescent girls led by champions of positive masculinity
- Training and capacity-building for community-based child protection committees.

- Participatory girl-led research
- Partnerships/alliances with other civil society organizations
- Leading contribution to the Girls' National Education Forum
- District-level and national-level Girls' National Education Forum conferences held, involving key civil society and Ministry stakeholders.

Barriers

Time poverty
Domestic burdens limit girls' time to study or attend education/training

Poor quality school infrastructure
Schools are often not girl-friendly or accessible for girls with disabilities

Distance
Long distances to school + lack of safety in transit

Quality of instruction
Under-qualified teachers not adequately trained in their subject matter or in inclusive, gender-responsive teaching strategies

Limited opportunities for adolescents to learn about and discuss their SRHR

Attitude
Conservative religious attitudes prevent open discussion about SRHR'

Limited skills development opportunities
Those with low educational attainment, limited economic resources, and/or mobility constraints have few options available to them.

Limited opportunities for community-level dialogue and discussion on gender issues

Weak community-level protection mechanisms
Community-based protection mechanisms are often inactive and/or insufficiently child-friendly and gender responsive.

Non-gender responsive education policies
Policies are not informed by or responsive to girls' experiences and needs.

Lack of coordination among civil society actors interested in supporting girls' education

Cross-Cutting Barriers

Economic barriers
High cost associated with schooling/training present significant economic barriers to girls seeking to access education and training

Low perceived value of education
Poor quality of instruction, limited employment opportunities, and traditional gender roles and expectations contribute to negative perceptions of the value of education for girls.

Stigma around young mothers and girls with disabilities
Stigma and shame among parents and among girls themselves prevent young mothers and girls with disabilities from accessing opportunities

Gender-based violence and harmful practices
High rates of early marriage and early pregnancy due to cultural and religious norms, prevalence/acceptance of sexual violence, transactional sex, limited knowledge of SRHR, etc.

Discriminatory religious, social, and gender norms
Discriminatory norms and attitudes that undervalue girls and constrain their opportunities

A-1-3. Validity of the Theory of Change

A review of SAGE's Theory of Change (ToC) concludes that large parts of the programme ToC remain valid. The ToC was last updated in August 2021 and reflected the programme's intervention design well. The programme faced several contextual challenges, including an unstable economy, unfavourable currency exchange movements, and COVID-19, which have impacted parts of the ToC.

The evaluation also notes that some missing pieces – such as access to finance component and technical assistance to the MoPSE – would have made the programme design and the ToC more robust. The SAGE learning pathway is strong and supported by evidence, showing that girls regularly attending accessible, community-based sessions led by well-trained educators achieve desired learning outcomes. The Transition pathway, however, is weak and insufficient, primarily due to a lack of financial support and unclear definitions of transition. The programme does not fully support girls' transition into education, skill training, or self-employment. The Sustainability pathway is valid but faces concerns mainly due to external factors. The programme has positively impacted community attitudes towards girls' education and has engaged with the government for policy adoption. However, the financial commitment from the government remains uncertain, putting the continuity of the programme at risk. The evaluation suggests that supporting out-of-school girls' access to finance and providing additional technical assistance to MoPSE to strengthen evidence-based decision-making and their capacity to mobilise financing from government sources and development partners to operationalise NFE policy could strengthen the programme's sustainability.

Learning

The evaluation finds the SAGE learning pathway strong and backed by evidence. The pathway posits that if girls regularly attend accessible, community-based learning sessions staffed by well-trained and supportive CEs, they will attain desired learning outcomes. Girls' acquisition of life skills and improved self-efficacy and confidence will also, in turn, contribute to and support their learning. The evaluation found strong links for both attendance and life skills to improve girls' learning, and the programme conducted activities to address the barriers girls face in accessing education – including financial constraints, distance, time poverty, poor infrastructure, and poor quality of instruction. The programme also allowed girls to learn about and discuss their gender rights and SRHR.

The evaluation finds that the impact chain has played out as expected, and the endline evaluation has validated the indicative correlation between improved attendance and learning score improvement, as well as between improved self-efficacy and learning score improvement.

Transition

The evaluation finds that while the impact pathway for 'Transition' in the programme ToC is valid and supported by evidence, the impact pathway for Transition needs strengthening. The programme should also reconsider how it has defined the high-level 'Transition' outcome, to ensure alignment with the ToC.

The programme theorises that if (i) girls are supported to participate in ISOP skill training, are exposed to mentorship and apprenticeship, and are provided information about opportunities and transition options (output), the girls will (ii) have improved levels of market-relevant skills (intermediate outcome), and (ii) they will be able to transition (back in some cases) into formal or informal education, further training, employment, or self-employment; assuming that the girls and their families have access to financial resources and information about available opportunities.

The evaluation finds that the programme, in its current form, does not fully support the girls' transition the way the ToC has defined it. When the programme was initially designed, it included a component of access to finance through a VSLA component along with the ISOP/Skill training component to provide girls with skills and financial means to successfully transition into education, further skill development, or businesses. Together, these components were able to 'theoretically' respond to all of the barriers identified by the programme at the design stage.

However, with the onset of COVID and the challenging economic conditions, the programme decided to do away with the VSLA component due to concerns about the inability of the households to effectively contribute to VSLAs due to the negative economic impacts of the COVID pandemic. This ended up removing the component of access to finance for girls to successfully realise their transition. The endline evaluation finds that the biggest barrier to girls' successful transition into three of the four pathways – education, skill training, and self-employment – remains a lack of access to finance. Plenty of evidence[77][78] is available in the public domain about the effectiveness of savings and loan groups in supporting women's empowerment and their

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[77] van Bastelaer, T., & Holvoet, N. (2016). The Impact of Savings Groups on Women's Agency: Insights from three African countries. Journal of Development Studies, 52(11), 1627-1641.
[78] Gash, M., & Odell, K. (2013). The Evidence-Based Story of Savings Groups: A Synthesis of Seven Randomised Control Trials. SEEP Network.

successful transition into education, skill training and entrepreneurship. Having dropped this component, the programme's response to support girls' transition ended up being incomplete, leading to many girls transitioning through the programme having to return to their old jobs or move to bigger cities or across the border to work as household helps. Even though the programme tried to support girls' financial inclusion by helping them connect with banks to open bank accounts and provide some basic financial literacy through ISOP, it was not found to be sufficient to improve girls' access to finance. While the evaluation is cognisant that SAGE was not designed as an economic empowerment programme, we believe that by removing the VSLA component, the programme ended up not addressing the biggest barrier to girls' transition.

Another point of discussion for the transition impact pathway in the ToC is how the programme has chosen to define the transition. Among its four transition pathways, the programme identifies girls enrolling into the ISOP component (also co-designed by the SAGE programme) as a sign of a successful transition. The evaluation finds this to be an inaccurate representation of transition. According to the programme ToC, running the ISOP programme is a programme activity, and supporting girls to participate in ISOP is an output level indicator. SAGE defines its intermediate transition outcomes as "Highly vulnerable girls have improved levels of market-relevant skills." This assumes that the SAGE girls have already undergone the ISOP training and achieved a basic skill level. This also means that ISOP participation should ideally be an output level indicator rather than an outcome level indicator. SAGE would benefit from looking at 'post-ISOP pathways' of girls – into vocational training, jobs, and self-employment/business to enable assessment of the programme's transition outcome and to validate the programme ToC as it is defined.

Sustainability

The evaluation finds the ToCs sustainability pathway valid, even though sustainability concerns remain – largely due to conditions outside the programme's control. The programme's sustainability pathway assumes that if communities adopt more positive and supportive attitudes toward girls' education, and if the larger policy environment is more responsive to girls' needs, girls will enjoy a more enabling environment supporting their education, and project impacts will be sustained. Although the programme's approach to utilise community-led models for the delivery of learning and skills support to OOS girls was in line with the programme's objectives and backed by evidence, the programme's sustainability could have benefitted from an additional component of technical assistance to the MoPSE on mobilising financing to support the operationalisation of the GoZ NFE policy and SAGE's successful interventions.

As part of the endline evaluation, there is strong evidence of a shift in the community's attitudes toward gender norms, girls' education, and equality of roles. Many girls demonstrate profound changes in their skills and knowledge, and confidence within the home and the community. There are also some signs of community uptake, largely in support of beneficiaries attending SAGE sessions and, more structurally, in the intent to continue the community-led learning delivery models. The programme has also supported hubs to constitute hub development committees and develop hub-level sustainability action plans. It also implemented a 'sustainable volunteer incentive scheme' and 'girl led CoGE sessions' to ensure continuity of SAGE approaches; however, the results for both these interventions are unclear at endline evaluation.

Similarly, the programme has prioritised engagements with government representatives at all levels to ensure the government adopts the programme's interventions, evidence, and learnings. It has succeeded in getting the government to adopt the material, lessons, and learnings of the programme, but given the inability of the government to commit financial resources to continue to support the CBLHs, the continuity of the programme interventions remains at risk. The economic conditions in Zimbabwe and other budgetary priorities mean that the MoPSE has been unable to identify the fiscal space to support its NFE policy ever since the policy was developed. The programme's sustainability pathway could have been strengthened by additional support to the ministry to identify and mobilise financing from government and development partners to support the operationalisation of the NFE policy. This would also necessitate the engagement and involvement of development partners such as the FCDO and UN Agencies.

A-1-4. Details of SAGE programme components

Accelerated Teaching and Learning

This component was intended to provide out-of-school girls with high-quality, accelerated learning in 88 Community-Based Learning Hubs and eliminating barriers to education through free, accessible, inclusive, and flexible learning opportunities. With the onset of COVID-19 and lockdown measures, the programme adapted a multi-modal delivery model that enabled volunteers to support girls via phone, at the household (door-to-door) and in small community groups.

At its core, the ATL aimed to provide accelerated literacy, numeracy, and English skills for OOS learners. To meet this need, the ATL team, led by OU, and in close collaboration with the Core Review Group including members MoPSE, developed a set of learning materials that were geared towards providing a contextualised accelerated learning programme. The materials were tailored to specific learning needs to ensure full

accessibility to a wide due to the diversity in learners with some having never been to school while others having had some form of education despite dropping out before attaining a certain level of competency. Due to the close collaboration with MoPSE, the ATL materials have been adopted by the government and they will now be accessible to enhance learning for all other OOS learners in Zimbabwe.

The ATL materials included sessions guides for CEs who were volunteering to deliver the ATL materials, and they also included learner's self-study workbooks that allowed learners to continue learning even outside the school. A unique aspect of the learning materials was a weekly unity story, which was informed by local knowledge and girl led contributions. This was intended to make the learning as impactful and meaning for the girls as possible.

The teaching and learning materials for ATL were adjusted during COVID-19 to ensure girls were able to continue learning. To illustrate, the programme developed learning cards that established the key learning objectives from each unit/module that would enable the girls to complete the module's assessment. The learning cards were designed around telephone learning activities and small group learning, among other changes. More recent adaptations involved developing audio versions so as to reach those learners who were unable to access cell phones. Outside COVID-19 adaptations, learners spent a total of four hours per week engaging with ATL materials.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of Community Volunteers

The implementation of the SAGE programme relied heavily on the use of volunteers to deliver the learning materials and manage the SAGE everyday activities like ATL and CoGE sessions. To meet this need, the programme relied primarily on CEs, who were fully trained teachers in the community either waiting deployment for teaching or who had retired from teaching, to deliver the different SAGE components that required facilitation, like ATL and CoGE. The uniqueness of the ATL and CoGE modules necessitated capacity building efforts to ensure the CEs were able to effectively deliver the learning and support the learners well. As such, the programme invested in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to ensure that the CEs were trained and supported to employ inclusive gender -responsive teaching strategies.

This component was intended to support CEs to enhance their capacity to deliver inclusive, gender-responsive pedagogy, through a range of methods including creating mentoring linkages with the support of District-level education officials, virtual and in-person trainings and establishing reflective Communities of Reflective Practice (CORP)

The programme also used CPDs to impart niche skills and capacity building to ensure the CEs as well as NFE buddies were capacitated to deliver programmatic components well. Examples include the following.

- **Disability Training:** Through CPD, CEs had the opportunity to be trained on how to effectively work with and support learners with disabilities. The training focused on helping the CEs to recognise when a learner needs help and to consequently ensure that the classroom is set up in such a way that is easily accessible to them. In cases where a learned needed an examination, this was arranged by the CE and where necessary assistive devices like reading glasses or wheelchairs were provided to aid learning. For most CE's, despite being fully trained teachers, the training provided by the programme on disability inclusion was a first for them and as such an extremely valued component by them.

- **Gender and Inclusion:** CEs were also trained on gender and inclusion matters for the purpose of ensuring that the trainers can apply a gender inclusive lens in their teaching. All volunteers received this training including those running the CoGE components mentioned above. The trainings are intended to support staff to identify existing intersectional barriers to girls' participation and empowerment and to adopt girl centred rights-based approaches to address these barriers.

- **Adapting ATL and CoGE sessions during COVID-19:** During COVID-19, the programme invested in capacity building of Community Volunteers to help them adjust both ATL and CoGE learning materials to the new context. For ATL, CEs were trained to adjust learning materials to more virtual means of training such as phones or to door-to-door sessions and small group sessions. For CoGE, CFs were trained to integrate PSS activities into existing CoGE modules to ensure that they are better situated to recognise and provide mental wellness support to learners who had been affected variously by COVID-19.

Adaptations were made to use WhatsApp to continue CPD during COVID-19: To continue providing CPD during COVID-19, the programme reverted to using WhatsApp for purposes of staying in contact and providing training for volunteers. WhatsApp was eventually made more volunteer driven to create and encourage ownership. Through WhatsApp, volunteers were able to receive disability support, progress assessments, screening assessments, Psychological First Aid training, supporting virtual reflective conversation and learning differentiation.

To ensure continued professional development, the programme provided CEs with Non-Formal Education Buddies who are acting as mentors. NFE Buddies are trained to provide mentorship support through

monitoring visits where they observe the CE's teaching habits and provide feedback as necessary. There has been intentionality to provide continued skills training and refreshers for all the different components.

Champions of Girls Education Sessions (CoGE)

The Champions of Girls Education Component supported Adolescent boys and girls to learn about and discuss life skills, their SRHR, gender rights, and economic empowerment. The overall goal was to help them to improve their self-esteem and life skills through the different CoGE modules. Secondly, the COGE component also encompassed adults interested in championing gender equality. The original intention was to support CoGE through three different sessions.

- **CoGE Boys Modules:** This male only session intended to bring young boys together to discuss a host of topics including how they can be champions and supporters of girl's education, girls' rights, and overall gender equality. In addition, boys also discussed SRHR, gender roles, empowerment issues, among others. These groups were intended for boys younger than the age of 19.
- **CoGE girls Modules:** These females only sessions brought girls together to discuss several issues including SRHR, gender equality, gender roles, empowerment issues, among others.
- **CoGE girls and boys Modules:** These sessions intended to bring boys and girls together to discuss gender issues. During the duration of the programme, there was only a total of four sessions covered jointly between boys and girls, the rest were done in the gender specific groups mentioned above.

On the whole, both girls and boys spent a total of two hours per week engaging with CoGE materials. It is important to note that while boys and girls came together for some sessions, they often spent most of the time going through the material on their separately. The materials covered by each group was however similar.

During COVID-19, CoGE modules were expanded to include Psychosocial Support (PSS) for boys and girls. As such, CEs were trained to integrate Mental Health and psychosocial support with the purpose of supporting participants to cope better with the mental health strains that were arising as a result. With the help of an external service provider (REPSSI), the SAGE programme was able to integrate PSS activities into existing CoGE modules. Girls and boys also received wellbeing checks from volunteers, monthly SMSs with messaging related to safeguarding and wellbeing, all as part of COVID-19.

CoGE facilitators are provided with training to help them reflect on their own gender attitudes to equip them to support the girls and boys participating in the CoGE programme. CoGE facilitators received continuous training through reflection sessions that allow them to share experiences and good practices.

Integrated Skills Outreach Programme (ISOP)

A core element of the SAGE programme is to support girls to transition into the next stage of their life. In order to support transition, the programme picked four transition pathways including:

- Transitioning into and through key stages of formal and non-formal education
- Transitioning into vocational/life skills training
- Transitioning into fairly paid employment
- Transitioning into self-employment

ISOP is one of the transition pathways identified as part of the programme to support access to vocational/life skills training. ISOP aims to improve access to skills training through ISOP whereby girls are mentored and trained by local master crafts, who are locally based artisans able to train girls in a particular trade. The overall objectives of ISOP are to train girls and consequently increase livelihood opportunities for them and their families.

ISOP is jointly supported by both government at national and community level and by implementing partners. The programme aims to identify economic opportunities that are locally available, design and deliver an appropriate training programme, and provide the necessary post-graduation support to aid the graduate's further successful transition upon completing ISOP training.

Programmatic data list the specific ISOP objectives as the following:

- To support apprenticeship training to girls and young women from master craft persons who are found within the project localities whose skills dovetail with project expectations and beneficiary ambitions.
- To successfully transition to adulthood, youth need to obtain appropriate level of financial literacy and entrepreneurship competencies, equipping them with life skills and information they need to choose for themselves whether to pursue formal employment, self-employment, or further education.
- To standardise the SAGE ISOP signposting approach in all the implementing districts as an enabler for socio-economic empowerment of young people particularly girls and young women, for resilient and diversified livelihood opportunities in rural and urban settings.

ISOP programme is targeted at all girls graduating from the programme who are aged between 15 and 19 years. The programme was intended to run for a period of 2 months for each cohort of learners with each learner undergoing a total of 32 hours of training over the course of the two months. Learning schedules were flexible to meet the learner needs and availability and to ensure that the learners were supported to continue to attend their other commitments like ATL and CoGE in cases where this was applicable. There was intentionality to ensure the ISOP learning environment was sensitive to learner's gender, socio-economic and cultural environment.

The ISOP approach is distinct from conventional vocational training programmes in three main ways:

- Unlike conventional training schools, the ISOP programme starts out by identifying potential income generating opportunities and related training needs before designing corresponding training courses.
- Secondly, the programme involves the local community and social partners in identifying development opportunities and constraints and helping to drive forward programme implementation.
- Lastly, the programme aims to facilitate the necessary post-training support, including the provision of technical support, facilitating access to micro-credit and other financial services, helping the formation of village support groups and associations, linkages to markets etc. to ensure that girls can initiate and sustain income-generating activities, and raise productivity in trade areas for which training was provided.

Men's clubs and intergenerational Dialogues

This is targeted at for men over the age of 19 who are unable to join the CoGE groups. This group is targeted communities including men, boys, and local leaders. They also target fathers, partners, and husbands of girls in particular. The purpose of these groups is to encourage reflection on the costs of dominant masculinities and benefits of a more equitable society along gender lines. Through these dialogues, men are encouraged to adopt more positive gender attitudes and they are mobilised to support and protect girls including those with disabilities.

Intergenerational dialogues are also specifically used to engaged religious and traditional leaders. The topics covered include girl's rights, gender roles and responsibilities within households, disability inclusion and rights, girls and women's participation in decision making at household and community level, harmful practices, early pregnancy, GBV, among others. The programme intended to further identify ways in which these community and religious leaders would be supported to take practical steps to cultivate a conducive environment more effectively for learners.

Annex 2. Endline Evaluation approach and methodology

This annex describes the evaluation approach and provides detail on the technical specifications of the steps taken before, during, and after data collection.

A-2-1. Evaluation methodology

a. Evaluation Design

The SAGE Endline Evaluation uses a hybrid approach that uses data from mixed methods, based on the evaluation questions described in Table A2.1. As part of this hybrid approach, the External Evaluator led certain elements of the process (including endline data collection – both quantitative and qualitative) and the overall write-up, providing technical expertise and ensuring externality of the findings. The evaluation makes extensive use of SAGE monitoring data, including Learning Progress Assessments, data on transition, and qualitative data and analysis undertaken by the SAGE consortium, ensuring that the evaluation benefits from the contextual knowledge and expertise held within the programme.

Table A2.1: Key Evaluation Questions – Endline Evaluation of SAGE Programme

DAC Criteria	Key Evaluation Question
Relevance	EQ1: To what extent were the objectives and design of the programme, including the underlying theory of change, valid and did they respond to the needs, priorities and policies of intended beneficiaries, communities, and the country?
Relevance	EQ2: To what extent did they remain responsive to the needs, priorities, and policies of these groups when circumstances changed?
Coherence	EQ3: To what extent was the programme consistent with and complementary to other interventions and policies? To what extent did the programme adapt to changes in the policy environment?
Efficiency	EQ4: Was the programme managed efficiently? To what extent did the programme adopt and apply 'adaptive management' practices?
Effectiveness	EQ5: To what extent were the objectives and intended results of the programme achieved, including differential results across sub-groups?
Effectiveness	EQ6: What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives and intended results (with specific reference to learning, transition, and sustainability)?
Impact	EQ7: To what extent did the programme generate, or contribute to the generation of, significant higher-level effects, whether positive or negative, intended, or unintended?
Sustainability	EQ8: To what extent will the net benefits (whether financial, economic, social and/or environmental) of the programme continue?
Sustainability	EQ9: To what extent was the project successful in building sustainability within the enabling environment for change at the girl, family, community, and system levels?
Sustainability	EQ10: What were the major factors that influenced achievement or non-achievement of sustainability?
Value for Money	EQ11: Did the programme demonstrate a good value for money approach?

At the beginning of the SAGE programme, the original evaluation design was based on a difference-in-difference approach, utilising a treatment and control cohort. However, during the course of programme implementation, the changes to programme design due to the severe economic crisis in Zimbabwe and the COVID-19 pandemic prompted a revision in evaluation design. The SAGE endline evaluation adopts a pre-post evaluation model, looking at the impact the programme has had on the learning and transition of its participants across its various components, as well as identifying barriers to and drivers of the impact. The breadth of the quantitative approach allows for a statistically representative sample of programme locations and participants while the qualitative component provides context and depth to the findings of the quantitative evaluation. This dual approach also enables triangulation of findings, thus enhancing their validity.

The evaluation adopts two complementary frames of analysis – one to use quantitative and qualitative data to analyse the programme outcomes against the results framework and the second to use the quantitative and qualitative data to answer evaluation questions. These frameworks are presented in the following pages.

Table A2.2: Evaluation Framework

DAC Criteria	Key Evaluation Question	Themes to Explore	Information Sources	
			Collected by SAGE	**Collected by External Evaluator**
Relevance	**EQ1: To what extent were the objectives and design of the programme, including the underlying theory of change, valid and did they respond to the needs, priorities and policies of intended beneficiaries, communities, and the country?**	• Programme design process and considerations • Testing Theory of Change to check causal chain and links between outcomes and inputs. • Beneficiary views on the design and utility of the programme components - girls, parents, communities, volunteers. • SAGE Volunteers' views on the content and utility of CPD component • Various component modules and their alignment with best practices as well as with the programme objectives	**Programme Documentation Review**	**KIIs with SAGE Consortium:** Programme design process and considerations, barriers being addressed by the ToC, needs identification process, specific adaptations to address the needs of girls with disabilities, mothers, and other sub-groups. **KIIs with cohort 1-3 girls:** Views on the programme design and usefulness; views on whether the programme addresses the challenges faced by them in learning, transition, etc. **FGDs with SAGE volunteers:** Programme's approach suitability, beneficiary feedback, Apostolic community feedback. **FGDs with Parents/Care Givers:** Suitability of programme components to needs of community and girls.
Relevance	**EQ2: To what extent did they remain responsive to the needs, priorities, and policies of these groups when circumstances changed?**	• Journey of the programme • Programme adaptation measures • Learners' views on programme adaptations (ATL, ISOP, PSS support) and continued utility • SAGE Volunteers' views on adaptation and continued utility • Govt COVID policy's impact on delivery for girls and introduction of satellite hubs and related programme changes/adaptations	**Programme Documentation Review**	**KIIs with SAGE Consortium:** Programme design process and considerations, barriers being addressed, challenges faced, adaptation process, key adaptations, beneficiary voice in decisions. **Girls' Survey and KIIs with cohort 1-3 girls:** Continued relevance of the programme, effectiveness of adaptation measures, effectiveness of support provided to continue learning and skill training. **FGDs with Community Members:** Programme's approach suitability, beneficiary feedback, Apostolic community feedback, beneficiary voice in adaptation decisions.
Coherence	**EQ3: To what extent was the programme consistent with and complementary to other interventions and policies? To what extent did the programme adapt to changes in the policy environment?**	• Analysis of changes in policy context and corresponding programme responsiveness • SAGE Programme and Government partnership approach • Alignment of SAGE programs and governments' Non-formal Education components/priorities/needs, etc.	**Programme Documentation Review**	**KIIs with MoPSE Officials:** Programme complementarity with government initiatives, MoPSE engagement in programme design, policy compatibility.
Efficiency	**EQ4: Was the programme managed efficiently? To what extent did the programme adopt and apply 'adaptive**	• Analysis of programme components' delivery approach • Examples of programme's adaptation to changes in context. • Learning continuity • Programme's adaptations in light of COVID 19	**Programme Documentation Review**	**KIIs with SAGE Consortium:** Delivery approaches, adaptation measures, contribution of adaptations to programme outcomes, operational challenges, programme management approach. **FGDs with SAGE volunteers:** Operational processes and strategies, suitability of programme approach, contribution of adaptations to programme outcomes, feedback process

DAC Criteria	Key Evaluation Question	Themes to Explore	Information Sources	
			Collected by SAGE	Collected by External Evaluator
	management' practices?	• Contribution of adaptations to programme outcomes		
Effectiveness	EQ5: To what extent were the objectives and intended results of the programme achieved, including differential results across sub-groups?	• Programme targets vs achievement • Analysis of outcomes – to be derived from outcome analysis framework (covers Learning and Transition) • Sub-group level analysis of learning and transition, self-efficacy, livelihood skills • District-wide analysis	**Programme Quarterly and Annual Reports** **Outcome Mapping Report (Developed by SAGE)** **Learning Progress Assessment Data for cohorts 1-7 (collected by SAGE)**	**Girls Survey and KIIs with cohort 1-3 girls:** Girls' agency, self-efficacy, and confidence; knowledge, attitudes, and practices on gender and SRHR, Perception of safety and security amongst girls in the community. **FGDs with Boys, Husbands/Spouses, Parents/Caregivers, Community Members:** Perspectives and attitudes related to women's efficacy and confidence.
Effectiveness	EQ6: What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives and intended results?	• Learner experience and support • Access to appropriate materials and CBLHs • Access to adapted materials for girls with disabilities. • Safety perception • Parent engagement and support • SAGE Volunteers' engagement and capacity building support • People (who), process (when, how), product (what) • Social, economic, political norms and contexts • Incorporation of MEL for interactive and real time programme adjustments		**Girls' Survey and KIIs with cohort 1-3 girls:** SAGE learning experience and support, CE attitudes, learning pedagogy, home support, programme adaptations to accommodate needs of learners, barriers to learning. **FGDs with SAGE Volunteers:** Capacity building support, operational challenges. **FGDs with Partners/Spouses of SAGE Girls:** Safety perception, barriers to girls' education, support at home, perception of girls' responsibilities and duties, knowledge and attitudes related to girls' empowerment, education, learning, transition pathways. **FGDs with Parents/Care Givers:** Safety perception, barriers to girls' education, support at home, perception of girls' responsibilities and duties, knowledge and attitudes related to girls' empowerment, education, learning, transition pathways.
Impact	EQ7: To what extent did the programme generate, or contribute to the generation of impacts - positive or negative, intended (as per ToC) or unintended?	• Number of girls successfully transitioning into employment, alternative forms of learning, etc • Attitude changes at the community level • Girls' Self Efficacy and confidence, financial inclusion • Improved market relevant skills, contributions to local supply chains • Improved SRHR knowledge and practices • Emotional well-being • Unintended positive and negative impact on the girls, on the communities, at the national level • Changes in income/social economic well-being for the girls before and after the program	**Case Studies (developed by SAGE)** **Most Significant Change Stories** **Outcome Mapping Report** **Quarterly quantitative monitoring data (collected by SAGE)**	**Girls' Survey and KIIs with cohort 1-3 girls:** Empowerment, self-efficacy and confidence, safeguarding, transition, emotional and physical well-being, life skills, financial inclusion, opinions on school and learning, skills improvement, challenges following transition including for girls with disabilities. **FGDs with SAGE Volunteers:** Capacity improvements, career prospects, uptake of learner-centric pedagogical approaches. **FGDs with Boys:** View of women's efficacy and confidence, knowledge and attitudes related to girls' empowerment, education, learning, transition pathways, impact on boys/men themselves, their views on their own efficacy, roles within families, social structures, social, educational, and emotional development. **FGDs with Parents/Care Givers:** Parent experience and support, view of women's efficacy and confidence, knowledge and attitudes related to girls' empowerment, education, learning, transition pathways. **FGDs with Community Members:** Perspectives and attitudes related to women's efficacy and confidence, girls' empowerment, education, learning,

DAC Criteria	Key Evaluation Question	Themes to Explore	Information Sources	
			Collected by SAGE	**Collected by External Evaluator**
				transition pathways; issues or concerns within communities. ideas about inclusive and gender-responsive education, SRHR and GBV, and cultural barriers to girls' education.
Sustainability	**EQ8: To what extent are the positive impacts of the programme expected to continue?**	• Sustainability Plan • Community capacity to support learning and social development of out-of-school (OOS) learners • Champions of Girls Education (CoGE) community clubs • Views of community members on sustainability of programme benefits • Views of boys, husbands/partners, and parents on sustainability of programme benefits • Alignment between skills imparted and what employers/local economy needs-including future needs	Annual KAP Surveys	**KIIs with MoPSE officials:** District and national-level buy-in to SAGE's approach, plans for adoption and scale up, views on sustainability. **FGDs with Hub Development Committees:** Plan in place to continue the SAGE model, HCD capacity to lead NFE delivery through CLBHs, CoGE community clubs. **FGDs with Community Members:** views on sustainability of CLBHs, CoGE Clubs, changes in community knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions.
Sustainability	**EQ9: To what extent was the project successful in building sustainability within the enabling environment for change at the girl, family, community, and system levels?**	• Current indicators of sustainability • Uptake of SAGE accelerated learning materials and support approaches within the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) • Community capacity to support learning and social development of out-of-school (OOS) learners • Views of MoPSE officials, community leaders and religious leaders on sustainability of the programme outcomes.	Programme Documentation Review	**KIIs with SAGE Consortium:** Examples of adoption and sustainability, potential for scale up, sustainability at girl, household, and community level, **KIIs with MoPSE officials:** District and national-level buy-in to SAGE's approach, plans for adoption and scale up
Sustainability	**EQ10: What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability?**	• Extent of stakeholder buy-in especially government and niche communities like the Apostolic • Strength of partnerships with stakeholder including MoPSE, Community Leaders, Religious Leaders, CSOs • Risks to sustainability after programme closure	Programme Documentation Review	**KIIs with SAGE Consortium:** factors contributing to or impeding programme sustainability, potential risks to programme sustainability. **KIIs with MoPSE officials:** factors contributing to or impeding programme sustainability, potential risks to programme sustainability
Value for Money	**EQ11: Did the programme demonstrate a good**	• Relevance: Did the project invest the right amount in right activities and modalities?	**KIIs with beneficiaries, community members, SAGE volunteers, programme staff and government officials**	

DAC Criteria	Key Evaluation Question	Themes to Explore	Information Sources	
			Collected by SAGE	**Collected by External Evaluator**
	value for money approach?	• Cost-Effectiveness: did the project and its components produce outcomes at optimal cost? • Efficiency: Was the project delivered on time, within budget and incorporated good processes? • Sustainability: Is there an indication of long-term continuation of outcomes or of replication/scale-up of the project activities?	**Project documentation, monitoring data** **Programme budget, financial reports** **Outcome mapping**	

Table A2.3: Outcome Analysis Framework

Outcomes/IO	Description	Indicators	Target	Quantitative Data Sources		Qualitative Data Sources	
				Collected by SAGE	**Collected by External Evaluator**	**Collected by SAGE**	**Collected by External Evaluator**
Outcome 1 – Learning	Marginalised girls have significantly improved learning outcomes	0.1.1 - Aggregate average literacy score	65% of SAGE girls (cohorts 1-7) improve literacy score	SAGE LPA Data 1. Cohort 1: MPA and EPA[79] 2. Cohort 2-7: IPA, MPA and EPA			KIIs and FGDs: SAGE Girls KIIs: Community Educators
		0.1.2 - Aggregate average numeracy score	65% of SAGE girls (cohorts 1-7) improve numeracy score	SAGE LPA Data 1. Cohort 1: MPA and EPA 2. Cohort 2-7: IPA, MPA and EPA			KIIs and FGDs: SAGE Girls KIIs: Community Educators
Outcome 2 – Transition	Marginalised girls have transitioned through key stages of education, training, or employment	0.2.1 - % of highly marginalised adolescent girls who have transitioned into and through key stages of education (formal/non-formal); training (vocational/life-skills) or fairly paid employment (incl. self-employment)	60% girls from cohorts 1 and 2 transition into one of the transition pathways	SAGE programme Monitoring Data (transition survey, records of transition pathways, post-transition follow-up)	Endline Girls' and HH Survey	SAGE Outcome Mapping Report	KIIs: Cohort 1 SAGE Participants FGDs: Parents/Caregivers FGDs: Husbands/Partners
Outcome 3 – Sustainability	The programme can demonstrate that the changes it has	0.3.1 - # of community leaders reporting that CBLHs will continue to					FGDs: Community Members KIIs: Government Officials

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[79] There was a change in the scoring mechanism for cohort 1 between IPA and MPA, due to which only the MPA and EPA data will be used for assessing Cohort 1 learning outcomes.

Outcomes/IO	Description	Indicators	Target	Quantitative Data Sources		Qualitative Data Sources	
				Collected by SAGE	Collected by External Evaluator	Collected by SAGE	Collected by External Evaluator
	brought about (which increase learning and transition through education cycles) are sustainable	function after the project ends					
		O.3.2 - Commitment from district-level stakeholders to continue monitoring and support SAGE initiatives					KIIs: Government Officials (district and national) FGDs: Community Members FGDs: Hub Development Committee Members
		O.3.3 - SAGE-supported materials on ATL and inclusive and gender-responsive education approved by relevant government ministries				SAGE Programme Reports	KIIs: Government Officials (district and national) MoPSE Website
IO.1 – Attendance	Highly marginalised adolescent girls regularly attend high-quality, accelerated learning sessions	IO.1.1 - % of highly marginalised adolescent girls regularly attending sessions	65% of SAGE girls achieve a minimum 65% attendance	SAGE Attendance tracking	Endline Girls' and HH Survey		KIIs and FGDs: SAGE Girls FGDs: Parents/Caregivers KIIs: Community Educators KIIs: NFE Buddies
		IO.1.2: % of community educators using inclusive, gender sensitive pedagogy approaches	90% of CEs use inclusive, gender sensitive pedagogy approaches	SAGE Quarterly Surveys	Endline Girls' and HH Survey		KIIs and FGDs: SAGE Girls KIIs: Community Educators KIIs: NFE Buddies
IO.2 – Empowerment	Highly marginalised adolescent girls have increased self-efficacy and life skills	IO.2.1 - % of highly marginalised adolescent girls demonstrating improved self-efficacy	90% of SAGE girls demonstrate improved self-efficacy		Endline Girls' and HH Survey	SAGE Case Studies and MSC Stories	KIIs and FGDs: SAGE Girls FGDs: Parents/Caregivers FGDs: Community Members KIIs: Community Educators
		IO.2.2 - % of highly marginalised adolescent girls demonstrating improved knowledge, attitudes, and practices on gender and SRHR	20% above baseline		Endline Girls' and HH Survey	SAGE Case Studies and MSC Stories	KIIs and FGDs: SAGE Girls FGDs: Parents/Caregivers FGDs: Husbands/Partners

Outcomes/IO	Description	Indicators	Target	Quantitative Data Sources		Qualitative Data Sources	
				Collected by SAGE	Collected by External Evaluator	Collected by SAGE	Collected by External Evaluator
IO.3 – Skills	Highly marginalised adolescent girls have improved levels of market relevant livelihood skills	IO.3.1 - Girls have felt empowered to make informed and relevant choices on their transition pathways that best account for their individual circumstances.	80% of girls considered having a high score on an Empowerment Index		Endline Girls' and HH Survey	SAGE Case Studies and MSC Stories	KIIs and FGDs: SAGE Girls FGDs: Parents/Caregivers FGDs: Community Members KIIs: Community Educators KIIs: NFE Buddies
		IO 3.2 - % of marginalised girls who demonstrate vocational competencies at the end of the training	80% of girls who have graduated from ISOP demonstrate vocational competencies at the end of the training	Girls Skills Assessment Scores - ISOP Graduates			KIIs/FGDs: SAGE Girls
IO.4 – Social Norms	Communities demonstrate more positive gender attitudes and actively support and protect girls	IO.4.1 - % of community members (parents or caregivers) demonstrating improved gender attitudes	50% above baseline		Endline Girls' and HH Survey		FGDs: Parents/Caregivers FGDs: Community Members FGDs: Husbands/Partners KIIs: Community Educators KIIs: NFE Buddies
		IO.4.2 - Perception of safety and security amongst girls in the community	26% above baseline (minimum of 3.75 out of 5 on Perceived Safety Index)		Endline Girls' and HH Survey		KIIs and FGDs: SAGE Participants FGDs: Parents/Caregivers FGDs: Community Members FGDs: Husbands/Partners
		IO.4.3 - % of marginalised girls who feel they are given appropriate support to stay in school/ learning	50% above baseline		Endline Girls' and HH Survey		KIIs/FGDs: SAGE Participants FGDs: Parents/Caregivers FGDs: Husbands/Partners
IO.5 – Partnerships	Strong and active partnerships with MoPSE officials and other civil society	0.5.1 - Recognition and adoption of SAGE NFE initiatives by MoPSE	At least one SAGE initiative is			Project Documentation MoPSE Website	KIIs: MoPSE Officials KIIs: Programme Team

Outcomes/IO	Description	Indicators	Target	Quantitative Data Sources		Qualitative Data Sources	
				Collected by SAGE	Collected by External Evaluator	Collected by SAGE	Collected by External Evaluator
	actors actively advocate for more inclusive, gender-responsive education policies		adopted by MoPSE.				

b. GESI minimum standards

Several Endline Evaluation components address gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) standards. In particular, the sampling approach specifically stratified to include the following vulnerable groups and worked closely with SAGE programme staff to promote recruiting girls from the following sub-groups during data collection:

- Girls with disabilities
- Girls who are married
- Girls who have children and/or are pregnant.
- Girls who are engaged in labour.
- Girls belonging to the Apostolic community.
- Girls belonging to ethnic minority groups.
- Girls who have never been to school

The evaluation team also utilised the SAGE programme's GESI strategy to inform the development of both quantitative and qualitative research tools at the endline across key stakeholder groups. GESI standards, and the categorisation of GESI accommodating and GESI transformative characteristics, in particular, guided data analysis especially related to the sustainability of the project's objectives, per SAGE's logframe to key stakeholder groups. Further, at the Endline the evaluation team further enhanced efforts to incorporate girls that fall into the groups above into the data collection process to ensure that the Endline can make recommendations on how to further address gender and inclusion in similar programmes in the future.

A-2-2. Endline data collection process and challenges

Endline data collection was completed by Research Methods International (RMI), a local enumeration firm based in Zimbabwe. RMI worked closely with Genesis Analytics throughout the training and data collection process. The process of data collection and the considerations that fed into the process have been highlighted in the following pages.

a. Pre-data collection

Quantitative Sampling

As part of the endline data collection, Genesis and RMI team administered two survey instruments – (i) Girls Survey and (ii) Household Survey with Heads of Household/Caregiver, focusing on girls from Cohorts 1, 2 and 3. The total beneficiary universe from the three cohorts is as follows:

Table A2.4: SAGE Cohort 1-3 Beneficiary Universe

Cohorts	Total Beneficiaries	Subgroups						
		Married Girls	Young Mothers	Apostolic Girls	Girls with Disabilities	Girls from Ethnic Minorities	Never been to School	Engaged in Labour
Cohort 1	4456	1603	2000	2532	370	299	183	4293
Cohort 2	2283	720	828	1476	149	70	148	2131
Cohort 3	849	327	289	572	18	4	101	846
	7588	2650	3117	4580	537	373	432	7270

In arriving at the overall sample size for the survey, we assumed a 98% confidence level and 5% margin of error. This gave a minimum sample size of 507. We added approximately 20% additional sample to this to cover for non-responses and incomplete responses, thereby arriving at a final sample size of 600 girls and 600 heads of household/caregivers.

Based on the discussions with the SAGE consortium, instead of taking a proportionate sampling approach, we chose specific proportions to sample from for each cohort based on the ease of availability of girls from each cohort. Girls from Cohorts 2 and 3 were expected to be readily available for the survey since they are currently engaged in the programme, while girls in Cohort 1 were thought to be difficult to trace, since they may have moved to different communities, married, or moved for work. For this reason, while developing the sample, we proposed that 50% of the sample be composed of Cohort 2 girls and 40% sample from Cohort 1 girls. Given that Cohort 3 girls have had less exposure to the programme compared to Cohort 1 and 2 girls, we proposed that 10% of the sample be composed of Cohort 3 girls.

The following steps were followed to identify the final sample of girls and heads of household for the survey:

1. **Identifying the total Sample Size for the Survey**, using a 98% confidence interval, 5% margin of error and adding a 20% additional sample to cover for non-responses and incomplete responses. The total Sample Size for the surveys is 600.

2. **Identifying the percentage representation of cohorts**. Given the higher possibility of cohort 2 girls being available for Survey due to them just completing the ATL course, the evaluation team and SAGE consortium decided to over represent Cohort 2 in the Sample. In calculating the sample size, the team has taken 50% sample from Cohort 2 (300), 40% from Cohort 1 (240) and 10% from Cohort 3 (60).

3. **Exclusion 1.** 3 districts – Hatcliffe, Imbizo and Reigate together comprise of only 5.77% of the SAGE Cohort 1-3 universe, so the team decided to exclude these three districts while calculating the sample. This was done with a view to optimise survey logistics as well as to provide value for money to the survey exercise. This removed 485 SAGE learners (137 from Cohort 1, 267 from Cohort 2, and 81 from Cohort 3)

4. **Exclusion 2.** Following this, the team excluded all the hubs with less than 50 learners from Cohorts 1-3. This led to the removal of 15 additional hubs – Bezu 1, Bezu 2, Danda, Godlwayo 1. Godlwayo 2, Hamara (hope), Hyde Park, Kagande, Kandana, Makulela 1, Makulela 2, Malalume, Masendu 1, Masendu 2, Rangemore, St Patricks Nyanyadzi, St. Peters and Tokwana. This led to a further reduction of the sampling universe by 591 learners (387 from Cohort 1, 178 from Cohort 2, and 26 from Cohort 3). The final sampling universe after the exclusions was 6,512 girls (Cohort 1 – 3932, Cohort 2 – 1838, Cohort 3 – 742)

5. **Random Sampling, stratified by Cohort.** From the final sampling universe, a random sample of girls was drawn from each cohort (240 from Cohort 1, 300 from Cohort 2 and 60 from Cohort 3).

6. As a final step, the sampled respondents from hubs with less than 10 respondents were replaced like for like with similar samples in bigger hubs.

At the data collection stage, the team found that a lot of girls originally sampled were not available for the survey, and the survey team and the SAGE programme staff at district and hub level identified replacements for girls that were unavailable. This caused the final composition to change slightly, although the sub-group composition remained more or less similar to what was intended. The table below presents the original planned and actual survey sample.

Table A2.5: Endline Planned vs Actual Sample

Groups	Sampled for Endline		Actual Survey Respondents	
	Number of Girls	%	Number of Girls	%
Cohort 1	240	40%	285	47.02%
Cohort 2	300	50%	253	41.74%
Cohort 3	60	10%	68	11.22%
	600	**100%**	**606**	**100%**
Married Girls	254	39%	322	53.13%
Young Mothers	297	42%	379	62.54%
Apostolic Girls	429	64%	388	64.02%
Girls with disabilities	52	8%	71	11.72%
Girls from ethnic minorities	39	3%	107	17.65%
Girls never been to school	38	7%	32	5.28%

Major adaptations to sampling

The evaluation sample was adapted in the following ways:

- Unlike at baseline, the data was not collected from treatment and control groups. Rather, due to the change in evaluation design to a pre-post design, the quantitative data was only collected from the girls who had participated in SAGE.

- The EE did not collect any data on learning progress assessment. This was collected by the SAGE programme staff. The EE, however, conducted quality assurance and observation visits to ensure the EPA data being collected was in line with the programme guidance and was robust.

- Given the hybrid design of the endline evaluation, the budget considerations, and the large amounts of programme monitoring data being collected by the programme as part of its M&E system, quantitative data was only collected from girls and their heads of households. This is different from baseline, where quantitative data was also collected from adolescent boys and community members. The endline

evaluation sought to only collect qualitative data from these stakeholder groups to complement and provide nuance to the programme monitoring data and quantitative data from parents/caregivers/HoHs.

- The stakeholders interviewed through KIIs and FGDs were adapted to be better suited to answer the evaluation questions and to support quantitative analysis. This included interviewing CEs and NFE buddies, and HDC members, in addition to the stakeholders who were interviewed at baseline. To make efficient use of enumerator resources, and to ensure the analyses would be complementary, the CEs were tasked with mobilising individual members of the different stakeholders ahead of the enumerators' visit.

- Separate KIIs with CoGE facilitators were not possible primarily due to the timing of the evaluation. SAGE endline data collection was undertaken in January 2023, by which point the programme had started to transition the role of CoGE facilitators to being overseen by the community and volunteer incentives ceased in January 2023. To this end, the views, and experiences of the CoGE facilitators were captured through their inclusion in FGDs whenever they were available.

Adaptations to the data collection tools.

Since there was no formal midline data collection, the EE had to substantially enhance the tools used at baseline to ensure that they were updated according to the most recent logframe indicators and could provide key insights around programme experience, SAGE learning environment, community and household support, transition, self-efficacy, empowerment, and gender norms to answers the endline research questions. Core questions from the GEC's template for the HHS and the Girls' survey were preserved to ensure comparability of findings.

Recruitment of enumerators

We recruited 20 enumerators and 4 field supervisors for data collection. Among these, 16 were recruited to conduct quantitative data collection, and 4 for conducting qualitative data collection. Each quantitative team comprised a Field Supervisor (1 person) and 4 enumerators. The data collection team was 100% female, given the target respondents and nature of the project. Enumerators were selected based on:

- Their past experience conducting similar surveys (START4Girls, SAGE or IGATE)
- A minimum first degree in social sciences
- Minimum of 4 years collecting quantitative or qualitative data Residing in targeted districts

RMI's Field Managers oversaw each team during data collection. Genesis Analytics had overall oversight of the process and both Genesis and RMI worked with PIZ for mobilisation of survey, KII and FGD respondents and further notifications.

Training of enumerators

The training of enumerators took place in Harare in early January and ran for 3 days. The training consisted of two days for training on the programme, tools, and protocols, one day for pre-testing, and one day for debrief. The first day of training focused on an overview of the SAGE project, research ethics, COVID-19 regulations and procedures, and familiarising enumerators with the tools and administration procedures, as well as adaptations for respondents with disabilities.

The second day will be dedicated to practicing tool administration; where the quantitative team were trained on the CAPI system and how to operate the tools on tablets or smart phones, including on how to upload completed surveys on a nightly basis. Both days of the training course also covered interviewing techniques and field procedures, a detailed review of tool content, instructions on adapting to the needs of learners with disabilities, and mock interviews.

Qualitative enumerators were trained on a standardised template for recording qualitative interviews by theme and capturing data on any identifiers to facilitate data analysis. Enumerators had opportunities to practise mock interviews, including recording and transcribing KIIs and FGDs. Qualitative enumerators were also trained on the range of acceptable responses and ensuring consistency in recording and interpreting responses.

Field Supervisors received additional instructions and practice with the CAPI system to perform supervisory activities and how to comply with COVID-19 regulations within the teams. These activities included assigning districts, learning hubs, catchment communities and receiving completed interviews from interviewers, recognising, and resolving error messages, receiving a system update, distributing updates to interviewers, and simple troubleshooting, etc.

Both Genesis and RMI will also review what data points to examine during data collection to ensure transparency and completion of questionnaires/surveys (e.g., interview start/end time, details of the respondent). Also, they will note any questions whose responses may conflict so as to avoid confusion in recording responses. Supervisors will have a COVID-19 checklist that includes recording temperatures,

tracking use of masks, social distancing, handwashing with soap or sanitizer, and regular disinfection of tablets among others.

Pre-testing of data collection tools

The pre-test for the SAGE endline was done in Hatcliffe district. The team visited three hubs – 2 for quantitative tools pre-test and 1 for qualitative tools pre-test. Every enumerator had at least 2 girl and 2 HH surveys for practice. The main reasons for selecting Hatcliffe was its proximity to Harare and being one of the districts excluded from the sampling framework due to its relatively low representation of SAGE learners.

The pre-test survey helped the team to check that questions work as intended and are understood by those individuals who are likely to respond to them. Minor revisions to the tools were made following this pre-test. The pre-testing also helped the team to gauge the performance of the enumerators, and to fine tune the interview style of the qualitative enumerators. A training report was also submitted to Plan International following the completion of training and pre-testing.

b. During Data Collection

Between January 16 and February 6, 2023, enumerators from RMI collected quantitative and qualitative data from 850 people (Quantitative: 606; Qualitative: 245). There were 4 teams of quantitative data collectors – consisting of 4 enumerators and 1 supervisor each, and 2 teams of qualitative data collectors consisting of 2 enumerators each. Data collection took place in all 7 districts and the sampled hubs all at the same time.

Ethical Protocols

Genesis Analytics upholds the guidelines of the British Sociological Association for Ethical Practice in Research. All consultants were expected to familiarise themselves with these principles and practice them throughout all engagements. Principles included:

- **Autonomy:** It is a moral requirement that individual participants should (1) be treated as autonomous agents and (2) that persons with diminished autonomy are entitled to protection. We respect the autonomy of participants by giving weight to autonomous persons' considered opinions and choices while refraining from obstructing their actions unless it is detrimental to others. We selected locations – such as the CBLHs or the respondent household, for interviews and group discussions that are safe and accessible to all participants, and that appropriate adaptations are made to data collection processes to accommodate the needs of participants with special requirements.

- **Competence:** All team members abided by the principles set out in this ethical framework. Given the sensitivities arising from research of vulnerable populations all field staff received training from Genesis Analytics representatives or affiliates to ensure adoption of best practices. 100% of the data collection team was female to ensure these power dynamics do not skew the research. All enumerators interacting with girls were trained on child safeguarding and protection by Plan's team. In the case where data collection activities involved speaking to children, all Genesis and RMI staff and affiliates were required to agree to and uphold the relevant Safeguarding and Prevention of Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse policies from Plan International UK and from the firm.

- **Understanding, Consent and Voluntariness:** All respondents were expected to provide oral or written informed consent before research takes place. Participation in all research activities was voluntary. Respondents were given the information that they need to make an autonomous and informed decision about taking part in data collection, with consideration given to age-appropriate assent processes.

- **Inclusion:** All participants, including those with disabilities, were given an equal chance to participate in the study. As such, the short set of the Washington Group questions for disability research was used to screen for disabilities and provide reasonable accommodations whenever necessary. All data collection teams included at least one person who specialised in engaging with and collecting data from persons with disabilities. Additionally, the team also developed a guidance document for all enumerators to inform them of the necessary actions that they should take once a particular disability is identified. We understand that this set is not meant to diagnose or identify disabilities but is a rather used as a form to identify if reasonable accommodations can be provided at the time of the data collection.

- **Beneficence and non-maleficence:** The principle of beneficence asserts the duty to help others further their important and legitimate interests. Genesis Analytics is aware of the possible consequences of research activities. Wherever possible the team attempted to anticipate, and to guard against, consequences for respondents that can be predicted as harmful. This is important where research gives rise to intrusive conversations, uncalled-for self-knowledge, or unnecessary anxiety. Where possible, proxies in survey indicators were used to provide sensitive item formulations.

- **Justice:** The selection of participants for the data collection follows project participation status, which ensures that the sample data was meaningfully chosen for reasons directly related to the questions sought

to be answered. Genesis Analytics understands that assessment carried out throughout research activities will help the wider public understand issues of risks and vulnerability and how these affect the lives of marginalised populations. We understand justice as the ability to provide advantages to these groups outside the evaluation. Respondents were given information on how to access research results and conclusions and obtain further information.

- **Anonymity and Disclosure:** Genesis Analytics ensured the anonymity of all respondents using pseudonyms in any narratives as well as unique learner ID for each participant for all analysis. Separate files containing ID numbers attached to personal information were kept separate, and password protected with restricted access in the servers of Plan International.

Ensuring the Safety of the data collectors

To ensure the safety of the research team, the evaluation team leased vehicles to transport all personnel to data collection sites. All enumerators also carried a letter from officials that was used to access communities and benefited from SAGE community mobilisers and CEs to support them whilst in the field. This ensured the research team had support whilst in the community and travelling to it.

Replacement of unavailable sampled girls

The data collection team and SAGE identified the possibility of sampled girls not being available for the survey due to them having moved out of the communities, due to them being in jobs of in businesses, and due to them having gotten married. To this end, the team developed a replacement protocol, wherein the evaluation team shared the list of girls sampled from each hub with the CEs and community mobilisers at least one week in advance to help them mobilise the sampled girls. In case a sampled girl was unavailable, the CE would identify a replacement for them that would most closely resemble the demographic profile of the girl being replaced. These replacements were then shared with the research team, ideally at least a day in advance of data collection in the particular CBLH, and the supervisors used the SAGE learners' database to validate the replacement girls' demographic details and that the replacement girls belonged to SAGE Cohorts 1-3.

Quality Assurance Protocols

During data collection, there was a WhatsApp group for the quantitative team with all the field supervisors and the MEL Specialist, as well as RMI programme managers. The field supervisors were trained to provide daily updates that had the following information:

- Team number
- Supervisor
- Quantitative data collectors' names
- Date of visit
- District
- Safe Space name
- Number of Beneficiaries surveyed.
- Number of beneficiaries from main sample
- Number of beneficiaries from replacement sample
- Number of Girls' Combined Survey completed.
- Number of Caregiver/ Head of Household Surveys completed.
- Challenges:
- Data synced: yes/no
- Survey comments:

This measure ensured that each data collection team completed the correct number of surveys and survey type at each hub visited and allowed the Genesis and RMI teams to identify issues while the quantitative data collectors were still in or near the communities. All field supervisors followed the protocol. Additionally, the WhatsApp group was used by the quantitative team to submit questions or challenges they were having, and the MEL specialist could answer their questions and make sure all the other teams saw the response.

Once data was uploaded, data from the separate tools were linked based on the unique IDs analysis commenced using the 'R' analysis software per the guidance provided by GEC and the evaluation framework.

The RMI project managers and Genesis MEL specialist monitored real-time data submission remotely and through the WhatsApp group. Data entered was spot checked by field supervisors and the MNEL specialist for errors. Field supervisors ensured that all data was uploaded at the completion of every day that they had internet connectivity.

The use of an online mobile-based data solution also added levels of safety and security to the data collection process. Absence of paper-based data forms and real-time uploading of completed surveys minimised the risks of loss of data and/or access to data by unauthorised individuals. The need for access to mobile data (or

other internet access) did present a challenge, particularly in remoter locations, but all quantitative data collectors were briefed regarding the need to regularly return to locations with internet access.

Additional data quality control measures were employed by the team during data collection. These included:

- Sit ins – the field supervisors sat in during interviews to check if questions are being asked correctly.
- Before data synchronisation, the supervisors checked each enumerator's data for completeness, accuracy, and logical inconsistencies.
- Genesis and RMI held debriefing sessions with enumerators twice a week to communicate any data quality issues as well as to get feedback on emerging issues that may affect data quality. These were then communicated to Plan immediately for their action and support (if needed).
- Given that the CEs were directly responsible for identifying replacements for sampled girls that were not available, the team was provided real-time support to verify the learner IDs, cohorts and other demographic details of the girls using the learner database provided by SAGE.

Accommodations for Girls with Disabilities

As part of the field planning, the team developed detailed guidance for the enumerators for engaging with girls with disabilities. We also coordinated with the CEs to make sure the GWDs were accompanied by a caregiver who could chaperone the girl. The data collection team also included enumerators with prior experience of working with and collecting information from girls with a range of physical and learning impairments.

Final Sample Sizes

The final quantitative and qualitative sample sizes are presented in the following tables. The final sample size slightly exceeded the intended sample for the Endline Evaluation. Data collection took place in a representative number of CBLHs from each district. The sample only included beneficiaries from Cohorts 1-3. In total the Endline Evaluation final sample sizes were as follows: 606 SAGE learners from 45 CBLHs; 605 caregivers from 45 CBLHs. As such, on average there were 13.5 girls and caregivers surveyed per CBLHs.

Table A2.6: Total numbers of surveys completed per tool type.

Cohorts	Observations
Girls' Survey	606
Parent/Caregiver/HoH Survey	605

Table A2.7: Qualitative Sample

Data Collection Method	Stakeholder	Number of KIIs/FGDs	Sample Covered
Key Informant Interviews	Girls and Young Women participants of SAGE	50	50
	Community Educators	15	15
	NFE Buddies	9	9
	Government Officials (District and National)	10	10
	Project Partners	4	13
Focus Group Discussions	Parents/Caregivers	6	53
	Partners/Spouses of SAGE Girls	4	17
	Boys	3	9
	Community Members	7	60
	HCD Committee Members	3	11
Total		**112**	**247**

c. Post Data Collection

Survey Checks and Data Entry. To ensure all tools were completed successfully and correctly prior to data entry, Genesis conducted a two-stage quality check on paper surveys. For each enumerator, eight full cases were selected randomly. In stage 1 these cases were checked for completeness and correctness by the Genesis Analytics team. This involved a check that all responses were filled in correctly across all surveys. Enumerators were then given the opportunity to make corrections on the data-entry platform based on their mistakes through entering the data onto a second online version of the survey. In stage 2, the eight cases were checked against the final endline dataset produced by the electronic data entry with adaptations made to

the dataset for data entry mistakes. If two copies had consistent errors in stage 1 and 2, an additional eight surveys would be checked from the same enumerator until no mistakes were found. The final stage consisted of thorough data verification and validation process to produce a communicable and accessible version of the dataset. Once the quantitative data was entered, RMI and Genesis Analytics performed data quality checks as part of the verification and validation process. Checks included:

7. Range checks to ensure that all variables in the data have a valid range of values.

8. Skip checks to verify whether skip rules and other filtering patters were followed correctly by data collectors.

9. Consistency checks to verify that the information provided to one question is consistent with the information provided for related questions.

10. Typographical checks to identify typographical mistakes occurring during data entry such as digit transposition.

11. Label checks to ensure scales follow the appropriate coding method.

All qualitative transcripts were checked for correct and consistent grammar by RMI, and random checks were done on recordings to ensure that transcriptions were done verbatim. The Plan Zimbabwe team also conducted these random checks to ensure consistence and correctness of the transcripts.

Data Storage and Security. Data was stored in Genesis Analytics servers as per general data protection and regulation (GDPR) policy. To ensure the anonymity of participants, the main data set does not include personal information attached to survey or learning responses. Instead, we employed a reference system based on unique learner IDs to connect participant results to personal information in separate, password protected, and secured file. This file is known as the cohort tracking dataset and contains all relevant tracking information for the participant. During data collection data was also stored in mWater servers and protected under general data protection rules.

Quantitative Analyses. The endline dataset was merged with the learning progress assessment dataset horizontally, following the cohort tracking design. This allowed the exploration of individual- and aggregate-level differences amongst subgroups using multiple sources of data and statistical analyses. Analyses included group and individual comparisons as well as time comparisons (through paired and independent sample t-tests), association tests (through chi-square tests), and predictive tests (through linear regression analyses). We reported whenever significant test results were found at the 1% ($p<.001$) or 5% levels ($p.<05$). Because the study met the minimum sample size, this evaluation allows for the demonstration of results and development of recommendations through observations that are both representative project sites and empirically sound.

Qualitative Analyses. All transcripts were read and coded by the evaluation team following a descriptive code. The analysis consisted of drawing the main categorical discussions from the interviews and presenting them through quotes in the report. The analytical objective was to draw the main themes from these discussions to triangulate and complement findings or explore new topics and dimensions. These were presented alongside the main findings of the report.

Transcription and Translation. The interviews and FGDs were transcribed verbatim into English by the enumerators themselves. For terms that may not be easily translated, enumerators were tasked with including a footnote of the word, written phonetically, so that we me review it with our in-country team and the correct translation is used. Transcriptions were also checked by the PIZ team against the recording to check the fidelity of the transcription. Qualitative data are presented in the form of transcripts in MS Word format, accompanied with its recording.

d. Challenges in endline data collection and limitations of the evaluation design

The challenges in data collection and related mitigations have been included in Section 2.8 of the main report. Some additional limitations are provided below.

- The sample was stratified and drawn from CBLHs, which means that in line with the project's focus, a large percentage of the sample is predominantly rural. Therefore, results do not represent the overall population of Zimbabwe or in any project region. Rather, results are representative of target project populations in communities where the project was active. Interpretations from this data can only be made for SAGE project participants and relevant stakeholders engage with the project.

- The midline evaluation relied on a largely qualitative approach to assess project impact between baseline and midline. At endline, the evaluation relied on a holistic approach that used multiple evidence sources to assess and respond to evaluation questions.

- An inherent limitation of several sources of quantitative data is that it relies on retrospective self-reported data. Therefore, there is the possibility that participants had difficulties recalling important information or that they provided socially desirable responses to sensitive items, lea ding to respondent bias. Whenever possible, quantitative findings were triangulated and complemented with qualitative evidence.

- The endline follows an alternative midline evaluation that was conducted by the SAGE programme itself, and the baseline which was conducted by a separate evaluator. As such, several indicators and survey items changed between baseline and endline periods because of the project's adaptations and strategic choices. This means that new indicators have been introduced or replaced since the baseline and midline, and there are no comparators for those indicators. In these cases, the evaluation created and used additional scales or indices to capture meaningful performance indicators based on the intentions of the logframe.

A-2-3. Representativeness of the sample

Representativeness of learning sample

Given that the endline evaluation uses learning data collected by the SAGE programme, the evaluation has been able to use all the observations available for learning data. Even though the number of learners for whom learning data at each assessment point – initial progress assessment (6,700), mid progress assessment (6,829) and end progress assessment (5,716) – was different, the was able to use all available learning data in analysing the learning results. Given the size of learning data, there are no concerns around the data being underrepresented or not sufficient to conduct a robust learning analysis. The table below provides details of learning sample across the three time points.

Table A2.8: Overview of Learning Assessment Data

Cohort	Total learners in cohort	Initial progress assessment	Mid-term progress assessment	End progress assessment	Data availability			
					IPA+ EPA	IPA+ MPA	MPA+ EPA	IPA+ MPA+ EPA
Cohort 1	4,456	0	3,093	3,010	0	0	2,491	0
Cohort 2	2,285	1,477	1,188	1,073	666	1,002	984	763
Cohort 3	849	777	360	234	174	311	129	69
Cohort 4	1,996	1,081	730	429	311	702	170	153
Cohort 5	1,324	912	369	227	120	234	94	81
Cohort 6	1,386	1,289	693	362	343	601	362	362
Cohort 7	1,164	1,164	396	381	377	332	309	309
	13,460	6,700	6,829	5,716	1,991	3,182	4,539	1,737

Representativeness of the endline quantitative sample

Since the FM and the project agreed that learning data would not be collected during the endline data collection, this analysis of representativeness of the sample focuses on the endline evaluation sample used to assess other non-learning outcomes. Given that the evaluation design is not looking to track a particular group of learners across the baseline, endline and midline, there is no intent to calculate attrition. Instead, the tables presented below seek to showcase the representativeness of the endline quantitative sample across the various SAGE beneficiary distributions.

Table A2.9: Endline Evaluation Sample Breakdown by Cohorts

Cohorts	Total SAGE beneficiaries	Proportion	Girls' survey sample	Proportion
Cohort 1	4456	58.72%	285	47.02%
Cohort 2	2283	30.09%	253	41.74%
Cohort 3	849	11.19%	68	11.22%
	7588	100.00%	606	100%

Table A2.10: Endline Evaluation Sample breakdown by districts

Districts	SAGE Beneficiaries (Cohorts 1-3)		Endline Survey Sample	
	Beneficiaries No.	Proportion	Survey Sample	Proportion
Bulilima	698	9%	53	8.74%

Districts	SAGE Beneficiaries (Cohorts 1-3)		Endline Survey Sample	
	Beneficiaries No.	Proportion	Survey Sample	Proportion
Chimanimani	1,038	14%	94	15.51%
Epworth	493	6%	53	8.74%
Harare South	459	6%	58	9.57%
Hatcliffe	217	3%	0	0%
Imbizo	178	2%	0	0%
Khami	131	2%	0	0%
Mutare Rural	1,611	21%	136	22.44%
Mutasa	1,733	23%	136	22.44%
Mutoko	940	12%	76	12.54%
Reigate	90	1%	0	0%
	7,588	100%	606	100%

Table A2.11: Endline Evaluation Sample breakdown by sub-groups

Groups	SAGE Beneficiaries (Cohorts 1-3)		Endline Survey Sample	
	Number of Girls	%	Number of Girls	%
Married Girls	2,650	35%	322	53.13%
Young Mothers	3,117	41%	379	62.54%
Apostolic Girls	4,580	60%	388	64.02%
Girls with disabilities	537	7%	71	11.72%
Girls from ethnic minorities	373	5%	107	17.65%
Girls never been to school	432	6%	32	5.28%

Table A2.12: Endline Evaluation Sample breakdown by age

Districts	Endline Survey Sample
Aged 6-8 (% aged 6-8)	0
Aged 9-11 (% aged 9-11)	9 (1.5%)
Aged 12-13 (% aged 12-13)	47 (7.75%)
Aged 14-15 (% aged 14-15)	70 (11.55%)
Aged 16-17 (%aged 16-17)	80 (13.20%)
Aged 18-19 (%aged 18-19)	139 (22.93%)
Aged 20+ (% aged 20 and over)	261 (43.06%)
Total	606

Table A2.13: Endline Evaluation Sample breakdown by disability[80]

Sample Breakdown (Girls)		Endline Survey Number	Endline Survey Proportion	Variable Name
WG Child functioning questions	Domain of functioning			
Difficulty seeing	Seeing	9	1.48%	G_Q11
Difficulty hearing	Hearing	10	1.65%	G_Q12
Difficulty walking or climbing steps	Walking	11	1.81%	G_Q13
Difficulty raising objects to eye level	Physical (upper body)	3	0.5%	G_Q17
Difficulty using hands and fingers		6	1.00%	G_Q18

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[80] The approach adopted by the GEC is that a child identified as having a disability is one who is recorded as having a lot of difficulty or cannot do at all-in-one or more domain.

Sample Breakdown (Girls)		Endline Survey Number	Endline Survey Proportion	Variable Name
WG Child functioning questions	Domain of functioning			
Difficulty with self-care	Cognitive	2	0.33%	G_Q16
Difficulty with communication		14	2.31%	G_Q14
Difficulty remembering or concentrating		40	6.60%	G_Q15
Anxiety (feeling anxious)	Psycho-social	130	21.45%	G_Q20
Depression		104	17.16%	G_Q22

Table A2.14: Endline Evaluation Sample breakdown by disability severity

Sample Breakdown (Girls)		Some difficulty % (n)	A lot of difficulty % (n)	Cannot do at all % (n)
WG Child functioning questions	Domain of functioning			
Difficulty seeing	Seeing	8.08% (49)	1.48% (9)	
Difficulty hearing	Hearing	3.79% (23)	1.32% (8)	0.33% (2)
Difficulty walking or climbing steps	Walking	3.63% (22)	1.65% (10)	0.17% (1)
Difficulty raising objects to eye level	Physical (upper body)	1.32% (8)	0.50% (3)	
Difficulty using hands and fingers		1.48% (9)	1.00% (6)	
Difficulty with self-care	Cognitive	1.65% (10)	0.33% (2)	
Difficulty with communication		3.46% (21)	2.31% (14)	
Difficulty remembering or concentrating		10.39% (63)	6.60% (40)	
Anxiety (feeling anxious)	Psycho-social	15.18% (92)	21.45% (130)	
Depression		14.02% (85)	17.16% (104)	

Annex 3. Disability adaptation guide

This disability adaptation guide was developed by the EE as part of the inception phase. The purpose of this guide was to 1) train the enumerators to administer qualitative and quantitative data collection using appropriate modifications and accommodations for each learner with disabilities; and 2) enable appropriate interactions between enumerators and learners in a gender-sensitive, inclusive manner.

General Guidance	
General *Ensure you follow these guidelines every time.*	**Identifying the learners needs:** The Evaluation team has a preidentified sample of girls with disabilities (around 8% of overall sample) for the survey. The team has also received the list of impairments/disabilities for the sampled GWDs. Hence, we know the specific needs that each pre-identified GWD has. The survey team will share the field plan with the district and hub teams in advance and will coordinate with the SAGE district staff to ensure all necessary arrangements are in place for the GWD learners to feel comfortable and safe during the interview. **Providing extra support:** The team will also work with the local SAGE staff to ensure that a member of their team is on standby in case the enumerators need any support during the interviews. Care givers for each GWD learner will be expected to remain in close proximity at all times so as to provide any of form of support that the learners might need. **Enumerators:** The survey team has access to enumerators who are experienced in ZSL to conduct interviews with girls with hearing impairment. **Personal Management** **Clothing:** Wear clothes that are not distracting for the learners: plain colours, no jewellery, minimal make up. **Phone Use:** Turn off mobile phones before survey/interview (off, not just on silent), as phones can interfere with hearing aids. **Learner Contact and Interaction** **Physical Contact:** There should be no physical contact of any sort between enumerators and learners. However, in cases where a learner might need assistance, hence necessitating physical touch, permission must be sought first. Always inform a learner of your movements before you do them. Additionally, it is important that care givers of learners with disability should be in sight at all times to ensure that they too can respond to the learners if and when the learners need assistance. **Assistive Devices:** Do not touch any of the learners' assistive devices without asking, as the assistive device is part of their personal space, like their hearing aid. **Helping a Learner:** If you see a learner struggling physically or emotionally, please ask whether they would like assistance. If they say/sign "yes" then approach and ask how they would like to be helped. Offer your help only if the learner asks or allows you to do so. **Fatigue:** If you notice any sign of tiredness or fatigue, ask the learner if they want to take a break. This can be in the middle of survey/interview. **Patience:** Be patient and allow the learner time to think about each question/request. Sometimes a learner may be silent or fix you with a blank stare. This does not necessarily mean that they have not understood or will not respond – they may be processing information. **Survey/Interview Administration** **Simple Instructions:** Break instructions into short parts to allow processing. Repeat as instructed in the guidelines. Ask questions to check understanding. **Section Transitions:** Give notice to the learner of all 'transitions' – such as between sections or when type of answer options/response expected changes.

	Staying on Task: If a learner asks a question not related to the task (unrelated to what is going on) redirect the learner to the task and explain again what the learner should be doing (as they may have forgotten).
Environment *Ensure the environment is appropriate for the data collection.*	**Survey/Interview Space** **Interview Space:** Be sensitive about the setting for the survey/interview – consider accessibility, lighting, noise, desk/table space and positioning, airflow, and spacing between you and the learner. **Interview Space:** Ensure walkways are clear of obstruction between assessor stations. **Interview Space:** Ensure the room has appropriate lighting and is not too noisy. Pay attention to the wider environment of the survey/interview, for example, people moving around or loud noises, as this can also disturb the learners. **Interview Space:** Enumerators should never be alone with a learner in a room. The first preference is to have all enumerators and learners in the same space with a bit of space between them. If it is the case that enumerators need to conduct an interview away from other people, the field supervisor should ensure that a third person, for example household member accompanying learner, the field supervisor, or a different member of the SAGE programme, is present. To ensure privacy and the authenticity of the responses given to sensitive questions, caution should be paid to ensure that the third person is able to see what is going on with the learner and the enumerator but not too close to hear all the response given by the participant. **Enumerator Positioning** **Enumerator Positioning:** Find what position is suitable for the learner before the survey/interview begins. Ensure you are facing them directly so that they can see your face and upper body (for signing), and that you are close enough so that they can hear you (for spoken communication). **Enumerator Positioning:** Sit at the same level of the learner – if this is not possible, make sure that you will still be able to easily make eye contact with them and that they can clearly see your face, lips, hands, and upper body. **Learner Positioning** **Learner Positioning:** Make sure the learner is comfortable and can clearly see you.
Communication *Ensure that you effectively and appropriately communicate.*	**Enumerator Communication** **Behaviour:** Be polite and welcoming; Check in with the learner and make sure they are OK throughout the survey/interview. **Delivery:** Be direct and clear in your communication. Use short sentences and speak slowly. Ask each learner at the beginning of the survey if they would find it beneficial for you to pause between sentences and phrases. Additionally, depending on the learners needs – especially if the learner has hearing or intellectual impairments, when speaking shape your mouth clearly and enunciate your words. Please note that this will not be necessary for all learner and may only pertain for learners who for example have hearing or intellectual impairments or those that ask you to speak slowly. **Delivery:** Use the learners name before beginning a conversation to help focus the learner's attention. **Signing:** Use appropriate hand, mouth and body movements, and hand placement when signing. **Survey/Interview Administration** **Instructions:** Give instructions at a reasonable pace for the learner. Repeat instructions as indicated on the survey/interview form. **Explanations:** Be prepared to explain things in different ways to help learners understand what you are saying/asking. Use hand gestures and point as you speak.

Learner Communication

Interpretation: If you have not understood a learner's request, please ask them to repeat it. If you still don't understand, ask them to write it down (if possible). Ask the community educator or the learner's chaperone/caregiver to help you understand their request.

Distraction: If you notice any sign of distraction (e.g., learner starts to look around), make eye contact and ask/sign if there is anything you can do.

Additional Administration Guidance by Disability Type

Prior to the survey and interviews, check please confirm with community educators what the specific needs of each CWD are. This will help to determine the adaptations and modifications to give during the data collection. Remember, for some girls their hearing and communication abilities may not immediately be obvious. Always discuss with your supervisor if you are unsure.

Blind and Low Vision	**Before Administration** **Environment:** Take extra care to make sure the place where the data collection takes place is accessible and well lit. Make sure it is not dusty or windy in the room or outside in case the data collection is taking place outside. **Environment:** Take a moment to describe the physical environment to the learner to ensure they have a sense of where they are at. **Light:** Good indoor lighting is important. Very bright light (like the light outdoors) is not appropriate. Do not conduct the survey/interview in direct sunlight. **During Administration** **Instructions:** Verbalise instructions as many times as needed, according to the survey/interview tool. Allow time to think and respond. **Speaking and Location:** Read all text clearly and audibly. The distance between the enumerator and learner should not be too wide.
Hearing Impairment (full or partial)	**Before Administration** **Environment:** Make sure you are sitting in a quiet space. Be aware of the weather for the interview/survey: for some girls rainy, windy, or extremely hot weather can affect their hearing perception. Ask the girls if the chosen environment/venue for the survey/interview is comfortable. **Assistive Devices:** Observe if the girl is using a hearing aid. If so, is it working/switched on? If not, ask them whether they would like their care giver to assist them in turning the device on. Proceed with the interview once the learner indicates that their hearing aid has been appropriately adjusted and that it is okay to proceed. **Voice Volume:** Before you start the survey/interview, ask a question at different volumes to work out how loud you need to speak during the interview for girls who have partial hearing impairment, e.g. *What is your name? How are you feeling today? What do you do?* Make sure you maintain this volume throughout the whole interview. Tune with the girls' level while speaking to Hard of Hearing girls (low/high). **Position:** Sit facing the girls at the level of their eyes and ears. The reading posture should be considered: sitting upright, facing the girl. The enumerator must find what position is suitable for the girls before the survey/interview begins. Make sure they can see your mouth (as they may also lip read) and upper body (for signing). Please try not to cover your mouth or turn away when speaking. **During Administration** **Checking Understanding:** Ensure the girl has heard and understood instructions (ask questions to check understanding). Say what do you want the girls to do. **Body Language:** Be aware of your facial expressions when talking. Make sure you are sending the same message with your body too.

	Signing: Use appropriate sign techniques across the five domains of phonology: hand shape, location, palm orientation, facial expression, and movement.
	Presenting: Clearly articulate words, sounds and signs in the instructions. Ensure the proper shaping of the mouth when speaking. Maintain continuous prompting.
	Position: The distance between the enumerator and learner should not be too wide. Maintain eye contact with the girls so they are focused on you and the interview.
Intellectual (Learning Disabilities)	**Before Administration**
	Environment: Make sure you are sitting in a quiet space, inside, with good lighting and minimal distractions. Ask the girl if the chosen environment/venue for the data collection is comfortable.
	Position: Sit facing the girls at the level of their eyes and ears. The reading posture should be considered: sitting upright, facing the girl. The enumerator must find what position is suitable for the girl before the survey/interview begins.
	Initial Engagement: Smile to girl and see if they return your smile. This could be an indication of their level of engagement and responsiveness during the interview.
	Body Language: Be aware of your facial expressions when talking. Make sure you are sending the same message with your body too.
	During Administration
	Checking Understanding: Ensure the girls have heard and understood instructions (ask questions to check understanding). Say and show what do you want them to do. Break instructions into chunks to allow processing.
	Questioning: Clearly articulate words and sounds in the instructions. Ensure you speak slowly and clearly. Maintain continuous prompting.
	Position: The distance between the enumerator and learner should not be too wide. Maintain eye contact with them so they are focused on you and the interview. Slow down your speech.
	Engagement: If the girl losses attention, reengage them by asking a question unrelated to the SAGE programme to get their attention. Then, bring the girls back to the question at hand. Keep the girls engaged, and frequently prompt them by using their name before you speak.
Physical and Functional	**Before Administration**
	Environment: Make sure you are sitting in an accessible space, with correct seating and space for the girls and their assistive devices so they are comfortable and facing the desk or table. Ask the girls if the chosen environment/venue for the interview is comfortable.
	Assessor Position: Sit facing the girl at the level of their eyes and ears. Make sure you are in a position where they can comfortably look at you. The posture should be considered: sitting upright, facing the girl. The enumerator must find what position is suitable for the girl before the interview begins.
	Body Language: Be aware of your facial expressions when talking. Make sure you are sending the same message with your body too.
	Learner Position: If you notice the girl has difficulty moving, they may need help to get into a comfortable position for the interview. *Before touching them ask: Can I help you? Stay in your position until the girl answers. If they consent get closer, then ask: How can I help you? Do you want to hold onto me? Can I get something to help you?*
	During Administration
	Fatigue: Be alert to signs of fatigue (e.g., head on desk), and ask whether they would like a break. Bring them back on the questions, when possible, to complete the survey/interview.

Guidance for Redirecting Learner Behaviours

Learner Behaviour	Enumerator Response
The learner engages you in small talk unrelated to the data collection	Ask/sign questions about what the girl is saying to you, and then redirect them to the survey/interview. e.g. *Girl says: My mum likes cakes.* *Enumerator: What kind of cakes does your mum like? And what is your favourite?* *Girl replies then assessor says. Ok, Maria let's move on and go back to answering questions.*
The respondent is fatigued	Allow a break. Make sure when you continue the interview/survey you continue giving enough break time between the sections.
Girl cries or is close to crying	This indicates a high level of fear/stress. Reassure the girls by asking them *"if they would want to talk to you, their care giver, or someone else about why they are crying?"* Assure them it is a safe environment and that you are happy to listen if they would want you to. Try to identity the emotion you perceive the girl is displaying. Give it a name and say that even you sometimes feel that way. Ask the girls whether they want to continue the survey/interview. If not take a break and then ask again. If the girl does not wish to continue the interview, thank them, and discontinue. If nothing seems to work to calm the girl down, seek help from someone who knows the girl well, like their community educator or CoGE facilitator. Request that they come to the girl.
Girl yells/screams	This indicates a high level of frustration/stress. Reassure the girl by asking them *"if they would like to talk about why they are yelling/screaming with you?"* Try to identify the emotion you perceive the girl is displaying. Give it a name and say that even you sometimes feel that way. Ask the girls whether they want to continue the survey/interview. If not take a break and then ask again. If the girl does not wish to continue the interview, thank them, and discontinue. If nothing seems to work to calm the girl down, seek help from someone who knows the girl well, like their community educator or CoGE facilitator. Request that they come to the girl.
Girl doesn't want to finish the survey/interview	Ask why. Ask if there's anything that you can do and try to solve the problem, so they continue. Ask them whether they want to continue the interview. If not, take a break and then ask again. If the girl does not wish to continue the interview, then thank them and discontinue.
Girl is distracted	Call girl's name.
Girl communicates something you don't understand	If you find yourself in a situation in which the girl cannot give any response, please seek for a known person to the girl, their chaperone, community educator/CoGE facilitator for example. They will help explain to you what the girl is communicating. Ask the girl whether they want to continue the interview. If not, take a break and then ask again. If the girl does not wish to continue the interview, then thank them and discontinue.

Annex 4. Learning outcome data tables

A-4-1. Literacy Results

The results presented in all tables of this Annex cover girls belonging to all SAGE Cohorts (Cohorts 1-7).

Table 4.1: Literacy score averages (aggregate) across baseline and midline/endline

	Literacy aggregate score (average)			p-value[81]	Statistically significant difference (Y/N)
	Baseline (N=6,701)	Midline[82] (N=6,829)	Endline (N=5,716)		
Overall (N = 11,395)	41.42	68.80	81.12	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Cohorts 1&2 combined (N=5,615)	43.16	68.91	81.43	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Cohort 1 (N = 3,612)	N/A	69.22	80.70	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Cohort 2 (N = 2,003)	43.16	68.10	83.48	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Cohort 3 (N = 849)	40.87	70.98	81.66	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Cohort 4 (N =1,262)	43.12	68.12	78.58	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Cohort 5 (N = 1,168)	37.94	68.18	81.92	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Cohort 6 (N = 1,333)	40.13	68.50	80.82	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Cohort 7 (N = 1,169)	42.14	68.04	80.19	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y

Table 4.2: Literacy score subtask averages across Baseline, Midline and Endline

	Literacy subtask score			p-value (ANOVA; 95% CI)	Statistically significant difference
	Baseline (N=6,701)	Midline (N=6,829)	Endline (N=5,716)		
Speaking and listening (out of 7)	3.95	4.79	5.81	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Letter/sound knowledge (out of 8)	3.97	5.05	6.30	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Word reading (out of 30)	9.82	19.07	22.76	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Picture reading (Cohort 1 - out of 3; Cohorts 2-7 - out of 2)	1.61	2.18	2.37	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Short passage (Cohort 1 - out of 23; Cohorts 2-7 - out of 18)	7.40	15.07	16.51	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Comprehension (out of 5)	2.27	3.20	3.87	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Writing (out of 11)	4.52	6.36	8.09	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Speaking and listening (out of 7)	3.95	4.79	5.81	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y

Table 4.3: Literacy zero scores (by subtask) across baseline, midline and endline

	% zero scores (achievement in white colour band)			p-value (ANOVA; 95% CI)	Statistically significant difference
	Baseline (N=6,701)	Midline (N=6,829)	Endline (N=5,716)		
Speaking and listening	2.64%	2.65%	0.82%	p = 8.17e-15 ***	Y
Letter/sound knowledge	10.37%	4.42%	2.08%	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Word reading	12.94%	4.31%	1.29%	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Picture reading	11.94%	14.34%	0.94%	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Short passage	22.49%	8.21%	2.20%	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Comprehension	12.31%	4.25%	1.31%	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Writing	22.00%	10.78%	2.75%	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Speaking and listening	2.64%	2.65%	0.82%	p = 8.17e-15 ***	Y

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[81] For Cohort 1 a paired t-test is performed to determine statistical significance given that only two assessment time points are being compared. For Cohorts 2-7 an ANOVA test is performed to determine statistical significance given that three assessment time points are being compared.
[82] For Cohort 1, the MPA data is being used as the baseline since this is the first available dataset for Cohort 1. For Cohorts 2-7, IPA data forms the baseline measure.

A-4-2. Numeracy Results

Table 4.4: Numeracy score averages (aggregate) across baseline and midline/endline

	Numeracy aggregate score (average)			p-value[83]	Statistically significant difference (Y/N)
	Baseline (N=6,701)	**Midline[84] (N=6,829)**	**Endline (N=5,716)**		
Overall (N = 11,395)	47.10	63.29	79.73	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Cohorts 1&2 combined (N=5,615)	48.54	62.00	79.21	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Cohort 1 (N = 3,612)	N/A	61.56	78.93	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Cohort 2 (N = 2,003)	48.54	63.15	80.01	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Cohort 3 (N = 849)	47.15	66.36	77.22	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Cohort 4 (N =1,262)	45.86	64.47	80.58	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Cohort 5 (N = 1,168)	43.41	71.23	83.04	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Cohort 6 (N = 1,333)	48.38	67.16	81.67	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Cohort 7 (N = 1,169)	47.87	58.09	82.10	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y

Table 4.5: Numeracy score averages (by subtask) across baseline and midline/endline

	Literacy subtask score			p-value (ANOVA; 95% CI)	Statistically significant difference
	Baseline (N=6,701)	**Midline (N=6,829)**	**Endline (N=5,716)**		
Number Sense: Counting to 10 (out of 3)	2.50	2.53	2.89	p < 2e-16 ***	Y
Number Sense: Number recognition (out of 9)	4.56	5.77	7.13	p < 2e-16 ***	Y
Number Sense: Missing numbers (out of 9)	4.16	5.51	6.86	p < 2e-16 ***	Y
Number Sense: Comparing and ordering numbers (out of 4)	2.12	2.89	3.34	p < 2e-16 ***	Y
Number Sense: Place value (out of 3)	1.48	1.87	2.52	p < 2e-16 ***	Y
Number Operations: Addition (out of 6)	3.27	4.09	5.06	p < 2e-16 ***	Y
Number Operations: Subtraction (out of 6)	2.92	3.88	4.92	p < 2e-16 ***	Y
Number Operations: Multiplication (out of 6)	1.86	3.36	4.48	p < 2e-16 ***	Y
Number Operations: Division (out of 6)	1.63	3.02	4.25	p < 2e-16 ***	Y

Table 4.6: Numeracy zero scores (by subtask) across baseline and midline/endline

	% zero scores (achievement in white colour band)			p-value (ANOVA; 95% CI)	Statistically significant difference
	Baseline (N=6,701)	**Midline (N=6,829)**	**Endline (N=5,716)**		
Number Sense: Counting to 10	12.76%	13.24%	2.19%	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Number Sense: Number recognition	7.88%	5.61%	1.57%	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Number Sense: Missing numbers	10.22%	7.22%	1.96%	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Number Sense: Comparing and ordering numbers	24.34%	11.60%	3.25%	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Number Sense: Place value	21.06%	20.09%	4.01%	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Number Operations: Addition	10.37%	9.59%	1.82%	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y

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[83] For Cohort 1 a paired t-test is performed to determine statistical significance given that only two assessment time points are being compared. For Cohorts 2-7 an ANOVA test is performed to determine statistical significance given that three assessment time points are being compared.

[84] For Cohort 1, the MPA data is being used as the baseline since this is the first available dataset for Cohort 1. For Cohorts 2-7, IPA data forms the baseline measure.

Number Operations: Subtraction	14.82%	11.51%	2.26%	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Number Operations: Multiplication	41.84%	17.02%	3.32%	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y
Number Operations: Division	49.98%	23.96%	5.11%	p < 2.2e-16 ***	Y

Table 4.7: Learning outcome score averages (by disability status, subgroup, barrier, and school status) across baseline, midline and endline

	Literacy aggregate score (average)			P-value (ANOVA; 95% CI)[85]	Numeracy aggregate score (average)			P-value (ANOVA; 95% CI)[86]
	Baseline (IPA) (N=6,701)	Midline (MPA) (N=6,829)	Endline (EPA) (N=5,716)		Baseline (IPA) (N=6,701)	Midline (MPA) (N=6,829)	Endline (EPA) (N=5,716)	
Disability status								
Girls with at least one disability (N=625)	37.27	63.10	74.91	p<2e-16***	43.05	57.10	75.72	p < 2e-16***
Visual impairment (incl. Albinism) (N=241)	41.47	71.75	80.83	p<2e-16***	50.98	64.28	82.56	p < 2e-16***
Hearing impairment (N=64)	35.39	66.47	69.74	p=5.89e-5***	36.15	61.71	73.08	p < 2e-16***
Physical disability (N=125)	35.33	54.93	68.18	p=1.98e-8***	40.93	47.70	68.65	p=1.52e-7***[87]
Learning disability (N=145)	38.09	56.05	72.07	p=2.67e-11***	40.89	53.90	68.63	p=1.35e-8***
Intellectual disability (N=132)	35.75	47.82	64.55	p=1.79e-6***[88]	40.20	44.18	63.31	p=3.22e-5***[89]
Speech impairment (N=24)	29.14	50.31	62.88	NA	43.46	48.80	65.00	NA
Motor disability (Cerebral palsy) (N=3)	0	NA	93.83	NA	0	NA	78.85	NA
Neurological disability (Epilepsy) (N=9)	35.80	70.06	70.22	NA	34.62	54.81	67.31	NA
Developmental disability (autism spectrum disorder) (N=3)	30.86	45.68	77.78	NA	59.62	47.44	77.56	NA
Subgroup								
Girls with disabilities (N=625)	37.27	63.10	74.91	p < 2e-16 ***	43.05	57.10	75.72	p < 2e-16 ***
Young mothers (N=4,473)	41.04	72.11	83.10	p < 2e-16 ***	47.67	63.89	82.23	p < 2e-16 ***
Married girls (N=3,934)	39.72	72.28	83.06	p < 2e-16 ***	46.77	63.60	83.07	p < 2e-16 ***
Apostolic girls (N=6,966)	40.51	68.73	80.69	p < 2e-16 ***	46.90	63.17	79.84	p < 2e-16 ***
Girls who are ethnic minorities (N=592)	39.42	70.66	79.70	p < 2e-16 ***	46.02	66.87	75.12	p < 2e-16 ***
Girls never been to school (N=507)	39.99	53.32	76.66	p < 2e-16 ***	45.84	54.17	73.30	p < 2e-16 ***
Girls engaged in labour (N=11,061)	41.40	68.85	81.14	p < 2e-16 ***	47.10	63.25	79.84	p < 2e-16 ***
Schooling status at baseline								
Girls never been to school (N=507)	39.99	53.32	76.66	p < 2e-16 ***	45.84	54.17	73.30	p < 2e-16 ***

[85] Where 'NA' is written, sample sizes are too small to perform significance tests.
[86] Where 'NA' is written, sample sizes are too small to perform significance tests.
[87] Differences are only statistically significant between MPA and EPA, and IPA and EPA.
[88] Differences are only statistically significant between MPA and EPA, and IPA and EPA.
[89] Differences are only statistically significant between MPA and EPA, and IPA and EPA.

	Literacy aggregate score (average)			P-value (ANOVA; 95% CI)[85]	Numeracy aggregate score (average)			P-value (ANOVA; 95% CI)[86]
	Baseline (IPA) (N=6,701)	Midline (MPA) (N=6,829)	Endline (EPA) (N=5,716)		Baseline (IPA) (N=6,701)	Midline (MPA) (N=6,829)	Endline (EPA) (N=5,716)	
Dropped out: completed ECD (N=2,261)	41.54	68.76	80.63	p < 2e-16 ***	46.66	63.20	78.50	p < 2e-16 ***
Dropped out: completed Grade 1 (N=3,491)	42.43	70.56	80.84	p < 2e-16 ***	49.01	63.32	79.43	p < 2e-16 ***
Dropped out: completed Grade 2 (N=2,175)	39.91	69.74	82.43	p < 2e-16 ***	45.79	64.44	81.67	p < 2e-16 ***
Dropped out: completed Grade 3 (N=2,656)	41.96	68.47	81.29	p < 2e-16 ***	47.12	63.58	80.42	p < 2e-16 ***
Dropped out: completed Grade 4 (N=1,944)	41.13	69.57	82.24	p < 2e-16 ***	46.45	64.23	81.21	p < 2e-16 ***
Dropped out: completed Grade 5 (N=313)	42.75	65.64	77.63	p < 2e-16 ***	48.98	65.10	74.49	p < 2e-16 ***

Annex 5. Additional learning analysis

A-5-1. Understanding differences in learning progression: Linear mixed-effects models

a. Literacy

The following two subsections present the results of a linear mixed-effects model[90] run on the literacy and numeracy score longitudinal data. These models aim to understand whether the progression in learning scores across the three time-points differs for girls who belong to subgroups compared to girls who do not. Thus, the analysis is run on the sample of 1,227 girls with literacy and numeracy score observations at all three timepoints to determine whether there is a difference in learning progression by subgroup status.

Table 5.1: Linear mixed-effects model for literacy

Coefficient	Linear mixed-effects model with interactions	
	Estimates	**Confidence Interval (95%)**
Intercept	44.42***	42.15 – 46.68
Mid-Term Progress Assessment	24.00***	20.94 – 27.07
End-Term Progress Assessment	35.59***	32.52 – 38.65
Girls with disabilities	-3.36	-8.29 – 1.57
Married Girls	-3.26*	-6.37 – -0.16
Young Mothers	2.29	-0.68 – 5.25
Apostolic Girls	-2.22	-4.60 – 0.17
Girls from ethnic minorities	-3.47	-7.08 – 0.14
Girls never been to school	6.35*	0.02 – 12.68
Mid-Term Progress Assessment X Girls with disabilities	-1.38	-8.05 – 5.30
End-Term Progress Assessment X Girls with disabilities	-6.70*	-13.37 – -0.02
Mid-Term Progress Assessment X Married Girls	3.94	-0.27 – 8.14
End-Term Progress Assessment X Married Girls	4.61*	0.41 – 8.82
Mid-Term Progress Assessment X Young Mothers	0.82	-3.19 – 4.84
End-Term Progress Assessment X Young Mothers	0.72	-3.29 – 4.74
Mid-Term Progress Assessment X Apostolic Girls	0.64	-2.59 – 3.87
End-Term Progress Assessment X Apostolic Girls	2.55	-0.68 – 5.78
Mid-Term Progress Assessment X Girls from ethnic minorities	5.94*	1.06 – 10.83
End-Term Progress Assessment X Girls from ethnic minorities	3.33	-1.55 – 8.22
Mid-Term Progress Assessment X Girls never been to school	-9.76*	-18.33 – -1.19
End-Term Progress Assessment X Girls never been to school	-2.93	-11.50 – 5.64
Random Effects		
σ^2	358.78	
τ_{00} LearnerId	32.86	
ICC	0.08	
N LearnerId	1,227	
Observations	3,681	
Marginal R^2 / Conditional R^2	0.410/0.459	

Statistical significance is indicated using asterisks: * p-value < 0.1, ** p-value < 0.05, *** p-value < 0.01, where the p-value measures how likely the results are due to chance.

Statistically significant estimates are observed for the interaction between assessment time points and girls with disabilities, married girls, girls from ethnic minorities and girls who have never been to school. At EPA, being a girl with a disability is associated with achieving a literacy score that is 10.06 points lower than not being a girl with a disability, indicating that girls with disabilities face some barriers to learning achievement by EPA compared to girls without disabilities. Being a married girl at EPA is associated with achieving a literacy

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[90] A linear mixed-effects model is a regression model but has an added component that accounts for variation across individuals. It is used when repeated measures are taken (in this instance, learning scores at IPA, MPA and EPA) to account for multiple learning score observations getting nested within each learner.

score of 1.35 points higher than unmarried girls, indicating that married girls benefited in learning progression relatively more than unmarried girls. At MPA, being a girl from an ethnic minority is associated with achieving a literacy score of 2.47 points higher than girls not from an ethnic minority. However, there is no statistically significant difference between the groups at EPA. Finally, at MPA, being a girl who has never been to school is associated with a literacy score of 3.41 points lower than a girl who has been to school. Still, again, there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups at EPA.

The marginal R-squared for this model is 0.41, which indicates that roughly 41% of the variance in literacy score is explained by the variables included in the model. When considering both variables included in the model (fixed effects) and random factors specific to each learner (random effects), the model explains 46% of the variance in literacy score. It is thus essential to note that just over half of the variance in literacy score remains unexplained by the variables included in the model (fixed effects) and factors specific to each learner (random effects), and the model is limited as a result.

b. Numeracy

Similarly, for numeracy, the results of the means analysis presented in Section 3.1.3.2. were used to determine subgroups that would be relevant to include in a linear mixed-effects model of mean numeracy achievement to better understand whether the changes in numeracy score from IPA to MPA and IPA to EPA differ for girls who belong to subgroups compared to girls who do not. Subgroups not included based on the means analysis are Apostolic girls and girls engaged in labour, given that there are no clear trends of statistically significant differences in numeracy scores for these subgroups.

Table 5.2: Linear mixed-effects model for numeracy

Coefficient	Linear mixed-effects model with interactions	
	Estimates	Confidence Interval (95%)
Intercept	51.14***	49.40 – 52.87
Mid-Term Progress Assessment	9.65***	7.26 – 12.03
End-Term Progress Assessment	27.91***	25.53 – 30.29
Girls with disabilities	-5.47*	-10.71 – 0.23
Married Girls	-4.50**	-7.80 – -1.19
Young Mothers	0.26	-2.89 – 3.42
Girls from ethnic minorities	-2.32**	-6.15 – 1.52
Girls never been to school	-1.10	-7.83 – 5.64
Mid-Term Progress Assessment X Girls with disabilities	-0.24	-7.46 – 6.97
End-Term Progress Assessment X Girls with disabilities	-3.42	-10.64 – 3.79
Mid-Term Progress Assessment X Married Girls	6.94**	2.40 – 11.49
End-Term Progress Assessment X Married Girls	9.08***	4.54 – 13.63
Mid-Term Progress Assessment X Young Mothers	2.49	-1.85 – 6.83
End-Term Progress Assessment X Young Mothers	-0.14	-4.48 – 4.20
Mid-Term Progress Assessment X Girls from ethnic minorities	9.34***	4.06 – 14.61
End-Term Progress Assessment X Girls from ethnic minorities	2.24	-3.03 – 7.52
Mid-Term Progress Assessment X Girls never been to school	0.28	-8.99 – 9.54
End-Term Progress Assessment X Girls never been to school	-2.22	-11.48 – 7.05
Random Effects		
σ^2	419.37	
τ_{00} LearnerId	23.71	
ICC	0.05	
N LearnerId	1,227	
Observations	3,681	
Marginal R^2 / Conditional R^2	0.276 / 0.315	

Statistical significance is indicated using asterisks: * p-value < 0.1, ** p-value < 0.05, *** p-value < 0.01, where the p-value measures how likely the results are due to chance.

There are statistically significant effects of the interactions between assessment time points, being married, and being from an ethnic minority. At MPA, being a married girl is associated with achieving a mean numeracy score of 2.44 points higher than unmarried girls. Similarly, at EPA, being a married girl is associated with achieving a mean numeracy score of 4.58 points higher than unmarried girls. This indicates that married girls benefitted from the programme regarding numeracy progression compared to unmarried girls. Being a girl

from an ethnic minority at MPA is associated with achieving a mean numeracy score that is 7.02 points higher than for girls not from ethnic minorities.

The marginal R-squared for this model is 0.27, which indicates that 27% of the variance in numeracy score is explained by the variables included in the model. When considering both the variables included in the model (fixed effects) and random factors specific to each learner (random effects), the model explains 31% of the variance in numeracy score. Thus, roughly 70% of the variance in the numeracy score remains unexplained by the variables included in the model (fixed effects) and factors specific to each learner (random effects). The model is thus limited as a result.

A-5-2. District level analysis

a. Mean learning scores for literacy and numeracy per district.

This section compares the literacy and numeracy results for girls by the district. The disaggregated data shows that all districts with sample sizes above 20 see statistically significant improvements in literacy and numeracy scores from baseline (MPA for Cohort 1 and IPA for Cohorts 2-7) to EPA.

Table 5.3: Learning scores by district

District	N	Mean Literacy Score			p-value[91]	Mean Numeracy Score			p-value[92]
Cohort 1		MPA	EPA	Difference		MPA	EPA	Difference	
Bulilima	593	70.50	82.71	12.21***	p<2.2e-16	66.77	76.75	9.98***	p=3.51e-13
Chimanimani	581	74.70	81.06	6.36***	p=5.42e-8	68.81	79.46	10.65***	p=1.15e-13
Epworth	290	60.32	77.08	16.76***	p=2.34e-8	60.42	76.43	16.01***	p=6.81e-10
Harare South	8	60.49	85.43	24.94	NA	59.13	75.77	16.64	NA
Hatcliffe	4	67.49	51.44	-16.05	NA	51.92	51.92	0	NA
Imbizo	122	69.43	78.93	9.50*	p=0.06	68.11	80.18	12.07**	p=0.01
Khami	9	77.78	91.36	13.58	NA	58.97	82.69	23.72	NA
Mutare Rural	613	65.73	82.82	17.09***	p<2.2e-16	48.10	79.76	31.66***	p<2.2e-16
Mutasa	923	74.50	82.25	7.75***	p=5.84e-15	58.31	83.36	25.05***	p<2.2e-16
Mutoko	469	59.21	70.70	11.49***	p=8.52e-9	64.20	70.07	5.87**	p=0.002
Reigate	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Cohorts 2-7		IPA	EPA	Difference		IPA	EPA	Difference	
Bulilima	548	38.96	79.02	40.06***	p<2.2e-16	47.87	77.22	29.35***	p<2.2e-16
Chimanimani	1,643	40.77	81.88	41.11***	p<2.2e-16	46.14	83.51	37.37***	p<2.2e-16
Epworth	646	42.95	81.54	38.59***	p<2.2e-16	46.76	83.82	37.06***	p<2.2e-16
Harare South	770	43.76	83.20	39.44***	p<2.2e-16	44.29	77.10	32.81***	p<2.2e-16
Hatcliffe	415	39.67	65.23	25.56***	p<2.2e-16	46.57	63.75	17.18***	p=2.19e-8
Imbizo	120	48.74	86.57	37.83***	p<2.2e-16	54.20	85.54	31.34***	p=9.78e-11
Khami	189	40.89	85.46	44.57***	p<2.2e-16	47.79	81.41	33.62***	p=1.80e-10
Mutare Rural	1,185	39.94	83.88	43.94***	p<2.2e-16	46.40	83.60	47.20***	P<2.2e-16
Mutasa	1,586	39.70	85.08	46.10***	p<2.2e-16	46.75	81.75	35.00***	p<2.2e-16
Mutoko	545	46.94	73.38	26.44***	p<2.2e-16	55.13	72.64	17.51***	p=1.27e-12
Reigate	137	46.15	78.60	32.45***	p=0.0001	47.18	80.34	33.16***	p=3.12e-07

Statistical significance is indicated using asterisks: * p-value < 0.05, ** p-value < 0.01, *** p-value < 0.001, where the p-value measures how likely the results are due to chance.

Of the districts with sample sizes greater than 20, the district that sees the greatest improvement in both mean literacy and numeracy scores from baseline to endline for Cohort 1 is Mutare Rural. The smallest gain in mean literacy score for Cohort 1 is observed for Chimanimani and for the mean numeracy score, Mutoko. For Cohorts 2-7, the district that sees the greatest gains in literacy is Mutasa, and for numeracy, Mutare Rural.

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[91] Paired t-tests were not performed in instances where the sample size is less than 20.
[92] Paired t-tests were not performed in instances where the sample size is less than 20.

b. Zero scores by district

This section presents the percentage of learners achieving zero scores (i.e., scoring within the white colour band) for each district at IPA and EPA. Zero scores are presented by subtask for literacy and numeracy.

Figure 5.1: Zero scores by literacy subtask – Bulilima
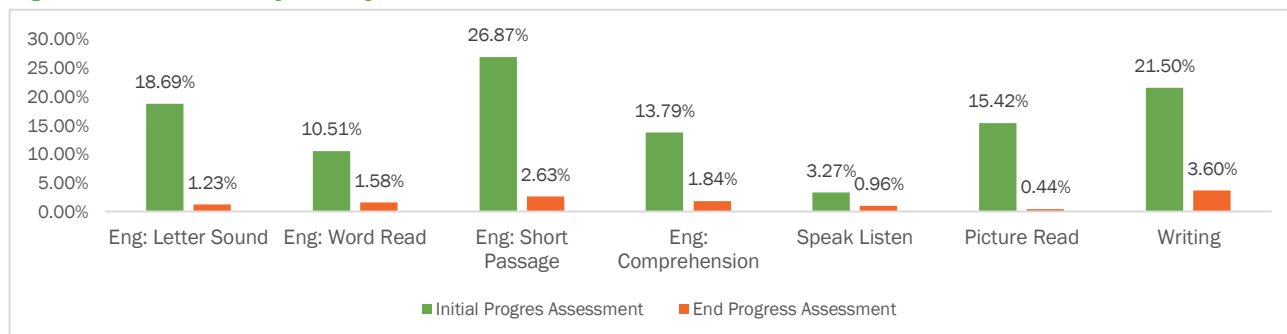
Figure 5.2: Zero scores by numeracy subtask – Bulilima
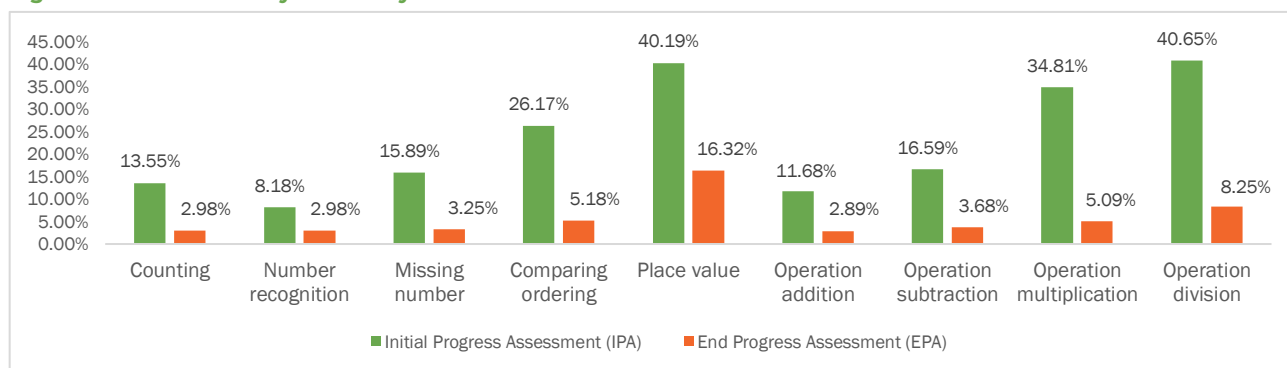
Figure 5.3: Zero scores by literacy subtask – Chimanimani
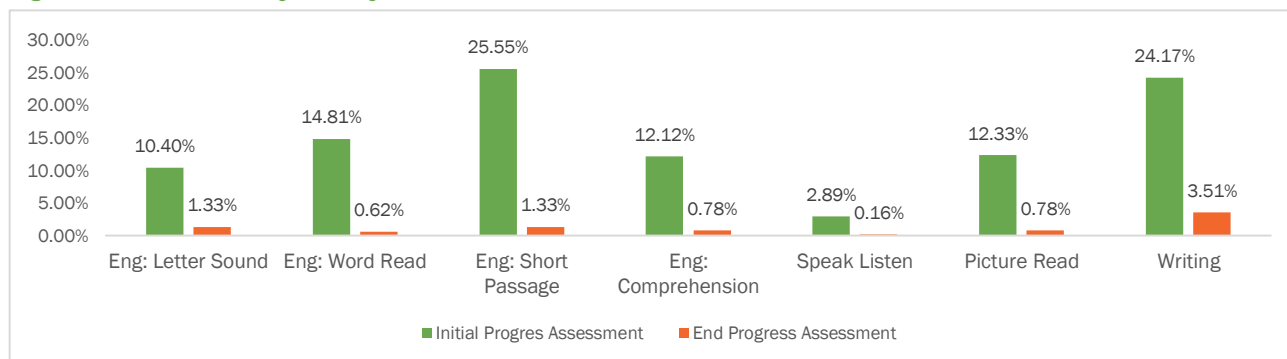
Figure 5.4: Zero scores by numeracy subtask – Chimanimani
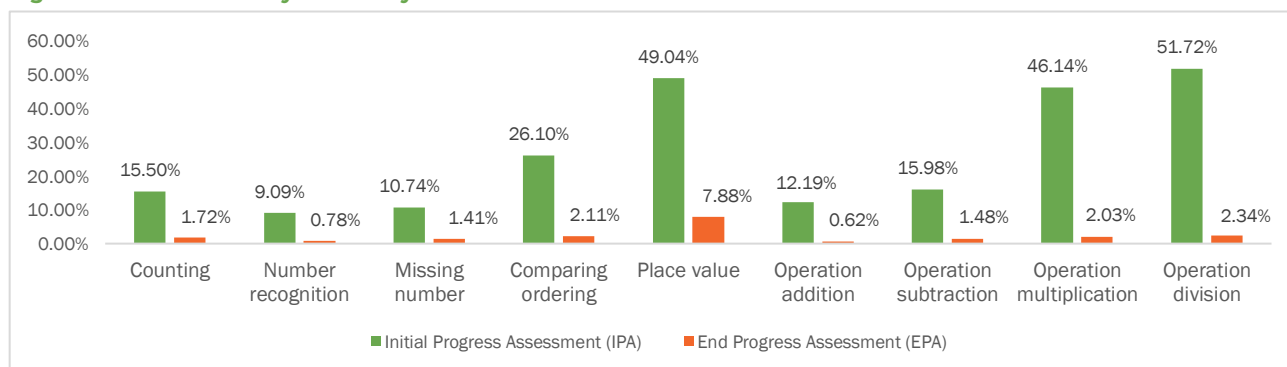
Figure 5.5: Zero scores by literacy subtask – Epworth
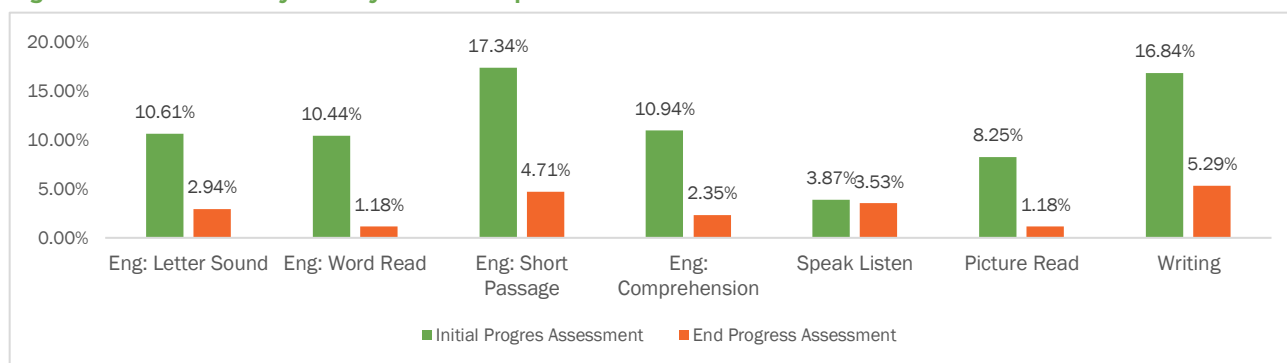
Figure 5.6: Zero scores by numeracy subtask – Epworth
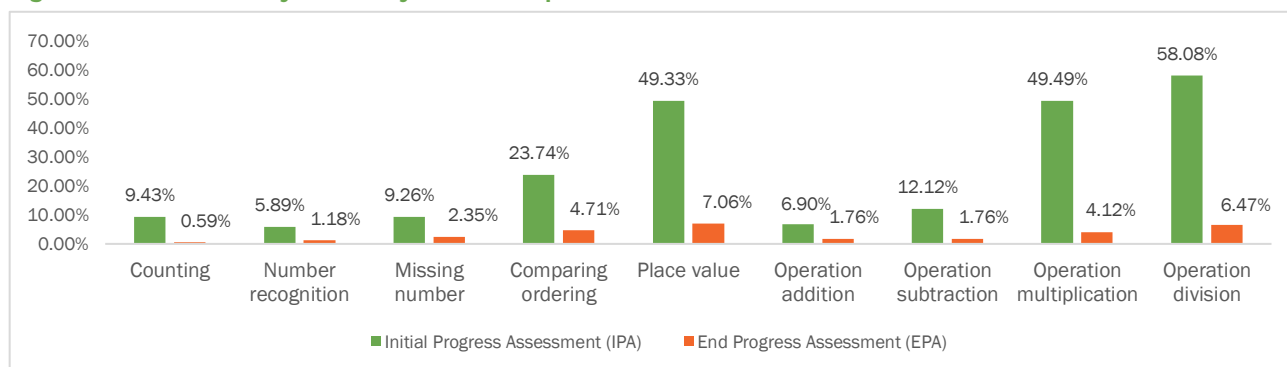
Figure 5.7: Zero scores by literacy subtask – Harare South
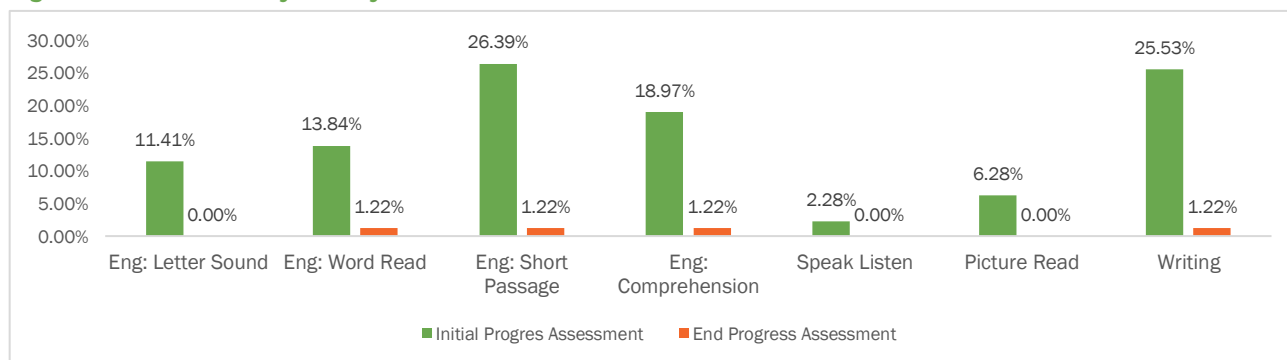
Figure 5.8: Zero scores by numeracy subtask – Harare South

Figure 5.9: Zero scores by literacy subtask – Hatcliffe

	Eng: Letter Sound	Eng: Word Read	Eng: Short Passage	Eng: Comprehension	Speak Listen	Picture Read	Writing
Initial Progres Assessment	19.44%	18.06%	26.94%	23.06%	4.17%	8.61%	27.22%
End Progress Assessment	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Figure 5.10: Zero scores by numeracy subtask – Hatcliffe

	Counting	Number recognition	Missing number	Comparing ordering	Place value	Operation addition	Operation subtraction	Operation multiplication	Operation division
Initial Progress Assessment (IPA)	13.89%	13.33%	13.89%	28.61%	53.33%	20.83%	23.61%	43.78%	49.72%
End Progress Assessment (EPA)	4.35%	4.35%	4.35%	8.70%	39.13%	4.35%	4.35%	5.80%	11.59%

Figure 5.11: Zero scores by literacy subtask – Imbizo

	Eng: Letter Sound	Eng: Word Read	Eng: Short Passage	Eng: Comprehension	Speak Listen	Picture Read	Writing
Initial Progres Assessment	10.58%	9.62%	20.19%	11.54%	2.88%	17.31%	20.19%
End Progress Assessment	6.38%	5.32%	6.38%	6.38%	2.13%	1.06%	4.26%

Figure 5.12: Zero scores by numeracy subtask – Imbizo

	Counting	Number recognition	Missing number	Comparing ordering	Place value	Operation addition	Operation subtraction	Operation multiplication	Operation division
Initial Progress Assessment (IPA)	12.50%	14.42%	19.23%	19.23%	36.54%	10.58%	17.31%	34.62%	35.58%
End Progress Assessment (EPA)	5.32%	6.38%	7.45%	9.57%	10.64%	7.45%	7.45%	9.57%	10.64%
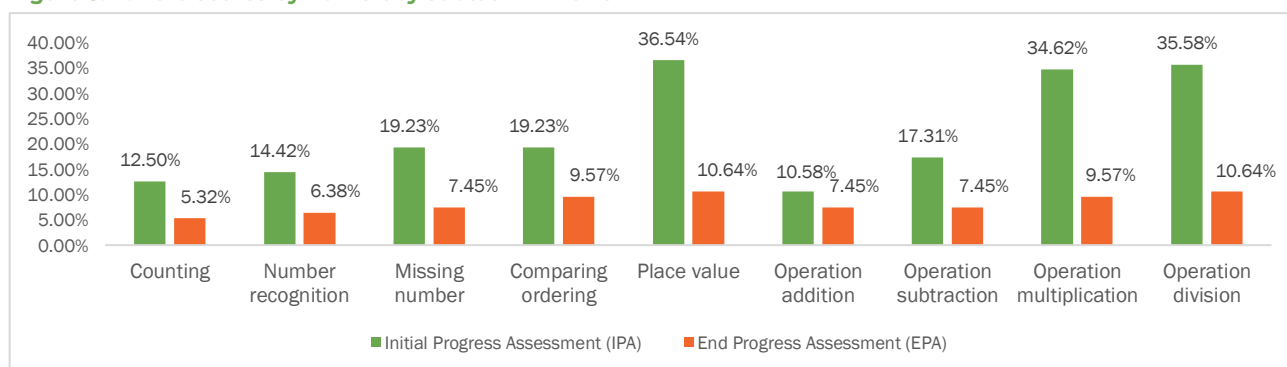
Figure 5.13: Zero scores by literacy subtask – Khami

Initial Progres Assessment | End Progress Assessment

Subtask	Initial Progres Assessment	End Progress Assessment
Eng: Letter Sound	12.36%	0.00%
Eng: Word Read	15.17%	0.00%
Eng: Short Passage	30.34%	0.00%
Eng: Comprehension	16.29%	0.00%
Speak Listen	3.37%	0.00%
Picture Read	9.55%	0.00%
Writing	25.28%	0.00%

Figure 5.14: Zero scores by numeracy subtask – Khami

Initial Progress Assessment (IPA) | End Progress Assessment (EPA)

Subtask	Initial Progress Assessment (IPA)	End Progress Assessment (EPA)
Counting	11.24%	0.00%
Number recognition	11.80%	0.00%
Missing number	15.73%	5.26%
Comparing ordering	28.65%	0.00%
Place value	55.62%	10.53%
Operation addition	11.80%	0.00%
Operation subtraction	14.61%	5.26%
Operation multiplication	39.33%	10.53%
Operation division	50.56%	0.00%

Figure 5.15: Zero scores by literacy subtask – Mutare Rural

Initial Progres Assessment | End Progress Assessment

Subtask	Initial Progres Assessment	End Progress Assessment
Eng: Letter Sound	4.62%	1.40%
Eng: Word Read	11.91%	1.15%
Eng: Short Passage	18.93%	2.54%
Eng: Comprehension	10.80%	1.27%
Speak Listen	1.48%	1.02%
Picture Read	17.08%	0.89%
Writing	21.14%	2.29%

Figure 5.16: Zero scores by numeracy subtask – Mutare Rural

Initial Progress Assessment (IPA) | End Progress Assessment (EPA)

Subtask	Initial Progress Assessment (IPA)	End Progress Assessment (EPA)
Counting	10.34%	1.15%
Number recognition	3.05%	1.15%
Missing number	5.26%	1.02%
Comparing ordering	24.38%	2.04%
Place value	40.72%	11.45%
Operation addition	7.29%	1.40%
Operation subtraction	13.02%	1.40%
Operation multiplication	40.63%	1.65%
Operation division	48.20%	4.33%

Figure 5.17: Zero scores by literacy subtask – Mutasa

Figure 5.18: Zero scores by numeracy subtask – Mutasa

Figure 5.19: Zero scores by literacy subtask – Mutoko
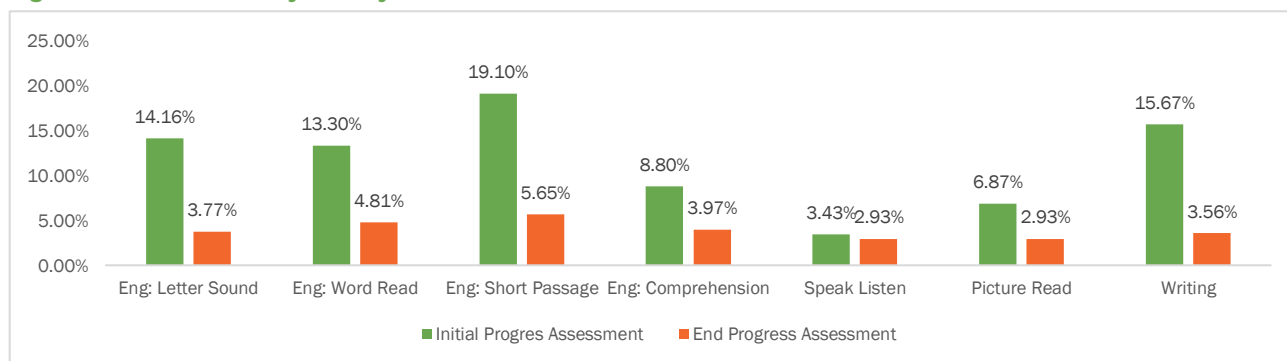
Figure 5.20: Zero scores by numeracy subtask – Mutoko

Figure 5.21: Zero scores by literacy subtask – Reigate

Figure 5.21: Zero scores by literacy subtask – Reigate

Subtask	Initial Progres Assessment	End Progress Assessment
Eng: Letter Sound	13.39%	0.00%
Eng: Word Read	21.43%	11.11%
Eng: Short Passage	26.79%	11.11%
Eng: Comprehension	23.21%	11.11%
Speak Listen	3.57%	5.56%
Picture Read	13.39%	0.00%
Writing	24.11%	0.00%
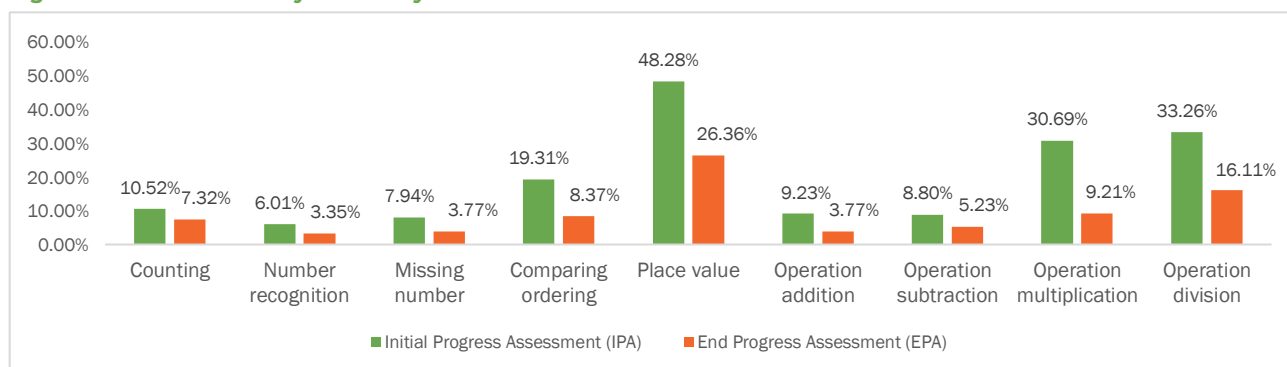
Figure 5.22: Zero scores by numeracy subtask – Reigate

Figure 5.22: Zero scores by numeracy subtask – Reigate

Subtask	Initial Progress Assessment (IPA)	End Progress Assessment (EPA)
Counting	9.82%	0.00%
Number recognition	17.86%	0.00%
Missing number	21.43%	0.00%
Comparing ordering	25.00%	0.00%
Place value	58.04%	16.67%
Operation addition	16.96%	0.00%
Operation subtraction	25.00%	0.00%
Operation multiplication	42.86%	11.11%
Operation division	50.00%	11.11%
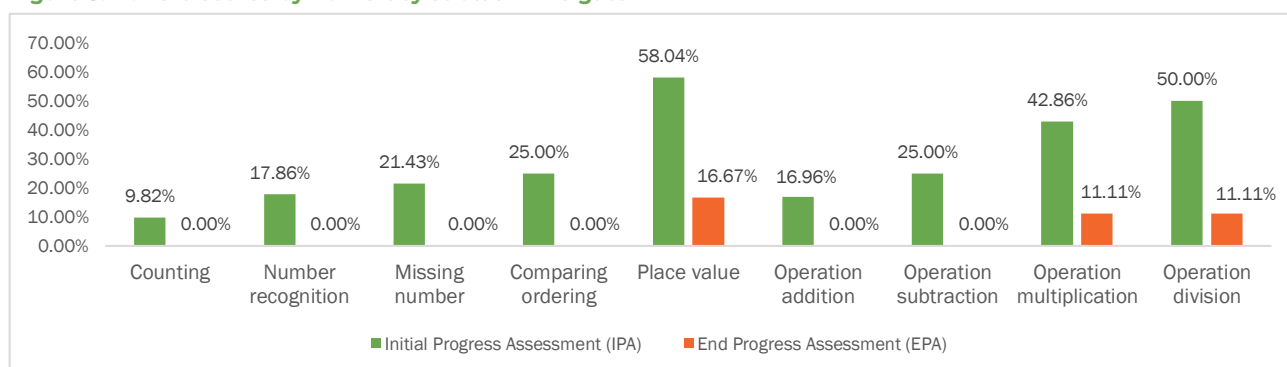
Across all districts, substantial decreases in the percentage of learners in the zero-score band are seen from IPA to EPA for all literacy and numeracy subtasks. Only one exception to these decreases exists for Reigate, where there is an increase in zero scores for the 'Speak Listen' subtask. This is likely due to the relatively smaller sample size of learners in this district.
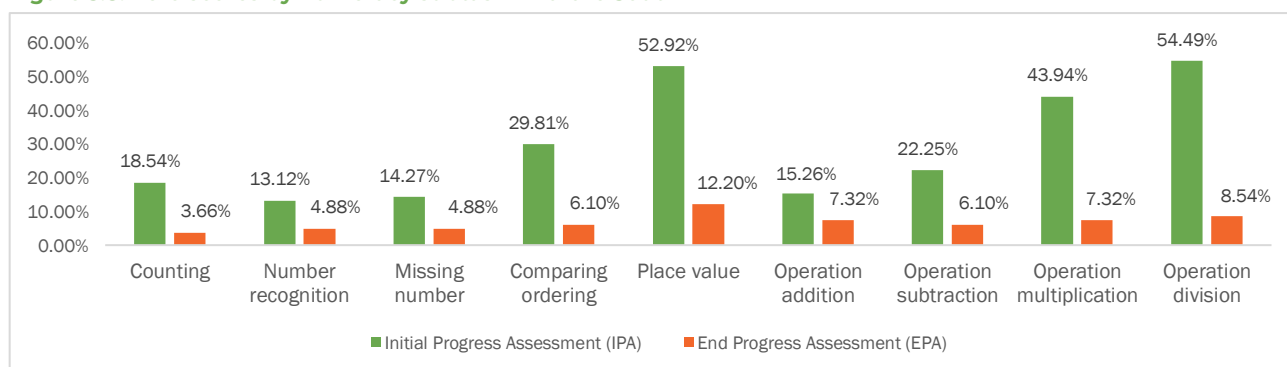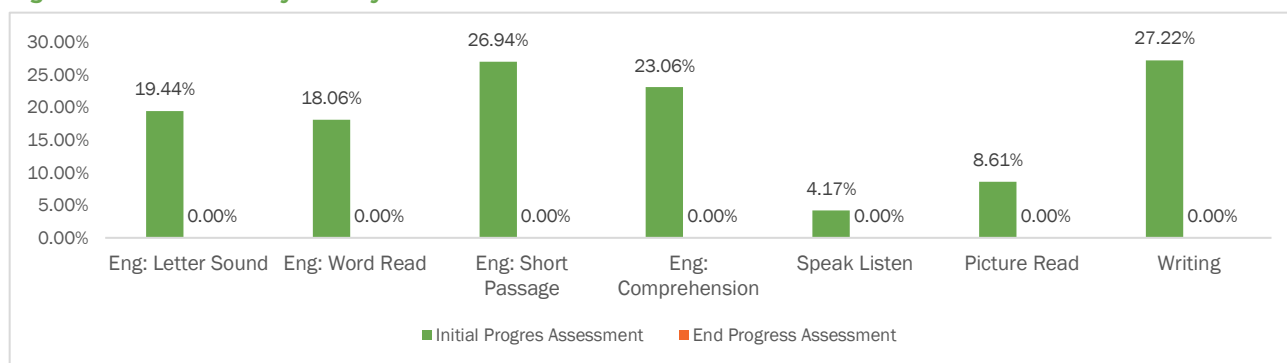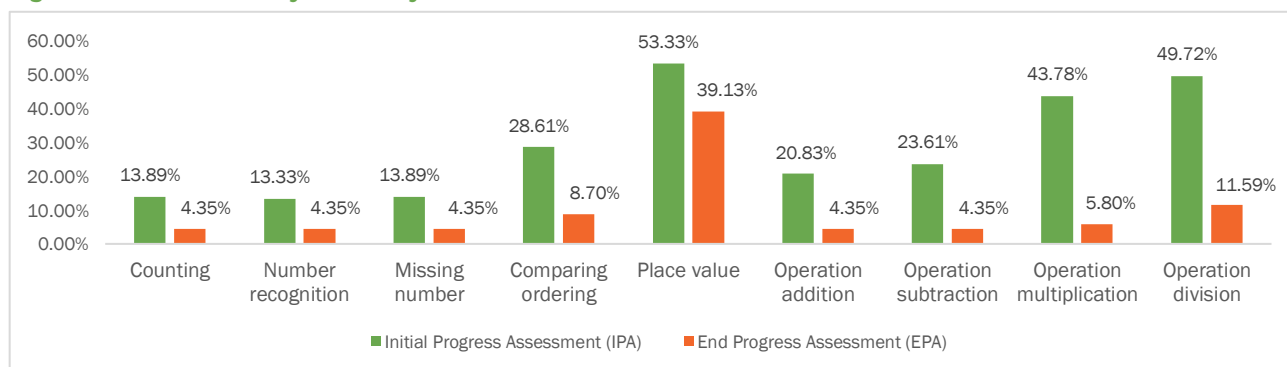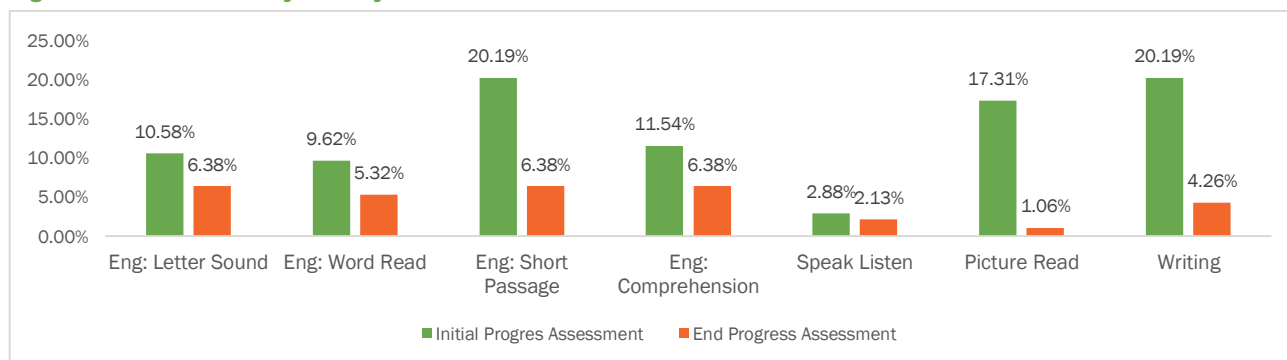
c. Mean learning scores for literacy and numeracy for selected subgroups and districts

This section presents mean learning scores for literacy and numeracy for selected subgroups and districts. Subgroups included are young mothers, married girls, girls with disabilities, Apostolic girls and girls who have never been to school. The following districts have enough learning score observations to conduct analysis at the subgroup level: Bulilima, Chimanimani, Epworth, Mutare Rural, Mutasa and Mutoko.

Table 5.4: Subgroup learning scores for Bulilima:

Subgroup	N	Mean Literacy Score			p-value	Mean Numeracy Score			p-value
Cohort 1		MPA	EPA	Difference		MPA	EPA	Difference	
Married girls	3	67.49	77.37	9.88	NA	63.46	76.92	13.46	NA
Young Mothers	137	77.45	81.61	4.16	p = 0.11	70.28	75.25	4.97	p = 0.09
Apostolic girls	183	70.94	79.98	9.04***	p = 9.5e-5	66.87	74.88	8.01**	p = 0.002
Girls with disabilities	37	60.13	80.08	19.95**	p = 0.004	57.95	77.39	19.44**	p = 0.006
Girls never been to school	19	28.33	79.27	50.94	NA	37.15	70.85	33.70	NA
Cohorts 2-7		IPA	EPA	Difference		IPA	EPA	Difference	
Married girls	2	46.91	52.47	5.56	NA	61.54	50.96	-10.58	NA
Young Mothers	74	42.58	80.11	37.53***	p < 2.2e-16	52.69	76.53	23.84***	p = 1.57e-8
Apostolic girls	369	37.28	78.18	40.90***	p < 2.2e-16	47.01	76.26	29.25***	p < 2.2e-16
Girls with disabilities	18	42.18	77.43	35.25	NA	43.27	71.58	28.31	NA
Girls never been to school	14	40.40	83.07	42.67	NA	38.46	72.53	34.07	NA

Statistical significance is indicated using asterisks: * p-value < 0.05, ** p-value < 0.01, *** p-value < 0.001, where the p-value measures how likely the results are due to chance.

In Bulilima, the largest gains in learning are seen for girls who have never been to school, however due to the small sample sizes statistical significance of these increases cannot be determined. Large, statistically significant increases are also observed for literacy and numeracy for young mothers and Apostolic girls.

Table 5.5: Subgroup learning scores for Chimanimani:

Subgroup	N	Mean Literacy Score			p-value	Mean Numeracy Score			p-value
Cohort 1		MPA	EPA	Difference		MPA	EPA	Difference	
Married girls	238	76.09	79.78	3.69*	p = 0.04	71.01	78.90	7.89***	p = 0.0003
Young Mothers	275	76.11	79.79	3.68*	p = 0.03	70.34	78.50	8.16***	p = 9.31e-5
Apostolic girls	344	76.09	80.91	4.82***	p = 0.0008	70.59	80.74	10.15***	p = 1.43e-8
Girls with disabilities	93	70.13	77.58	7.45*	p = 0.02	66.19	79.55	13.36***	p = 0.0001
Girls never been to school	4	42.28	74.90	32.62	NA	46.15	69.23	23.08	NA
Cohorts 2-7		IPA	EPA	Difference		IPA	EPA	Difference	
Married girls	751	39.41	83.04	43.63***	p < 2.2e-16	45.78	86.00	40.22***	p < 2.2e-16
Young Mothers	762	40.06	83.26	43.20***	p < 2.2e-16	45.86	86.00	40.14***	p < 2.2e-16
Apostolic girls	1,039	39.69	82.78	43.09***	p < 2.2e-16	45.25	84.27	39.02***	p < 2.2e-16
Girls with disabilities	64	44.31	75.82	31.51***	p = 6.66e-11	48.46	78.31	29.85***	p = 1.07e-9
Girls never been to school	6	41.56	65.43	23.87	NA	37.18	61.54	24.36	NA

Statistical significance is indicated using asterisks: * p-value < 0.05, ** p-value < 0.01, *** p-value < 0.001, where the p-value measures how likely the results are due to chance.

In Chimanimani, the largest gains in learning from IPA to EPA for both literacy and numeracy are observed for married girls and young mothers, also noting that Cohort 1 girls who have never been to school see larger improvements between MPA and EPA compared to other subgroups. Learning improvements for all subgroups are statistically significant, apart from girls who have never been to school where the sample size for this subgroup is too small to determine statistically significance.

Table 5.6: Subgroup learning scores for Epworth:

Subgroup	N	Mean Literacy Score			p-value	Mean Numeracy Score			p-value
Cohort 1		MPA	EPA	Difference		MPA	EPA	Difference	
Married girls	3	46.09	NA	NA	NA	64.10	NA	NA	NA
Young Mothers	4	48.15	NA	NA	NA	62.98	NA	NA	NA
Apostolic girls	102	64.15	81.78	17.63***	p = 5.13e-5	61.56	76.92	15.36***	p = 0.0003
Girls with disabilities	7	46.71	67.49	20.78	NA	44.23	61.54	17.31	NA
Girls never been to school	43	52.23	72.15	19.92	p = 0.11	53.71	71.79	18.08	p = 0.12
Cohorts 2-7		IPA	EPA	Difference		IPA	EPA	Difference	
Married girls	14	34.57	78.60	44.03	NA	48.52	91.03	42.51	NA
Young Mothers	27	41.51	81.48	39.97**	p = 0.002	54.25	88.14	33.89***	p = 1.29e-5
Apostolic girls	416	42.94	81.65	38.71***	p < 2.2e-16	46.27	83.33	37.06***	p < 2.2e-16
Girls with disabilities	11	42.10	54.73	12.63	NA	53.65	58.97	5.32	NA
Girls never been to school	66	46.47	73.77	27.30**	p = 0.006	49.79	82.21	32.42***	p = 0.0003

Statistical significance is indicated using asterisks: * p-value < 0.05, ** p-value < 0.01, *** p-value < 0.001, where the p-value measures how likely the results are due to chance.

In Epworth, only Apostolic girls and girls who have never been to school are subgroups that have substantial sample sizes to determine improvements in learning and the statistical significance of these improvements. Both groups see substantial and statistically significant improvements from IPA/MPA to EPA. Despite the small sample sizes for the remaining subgroups, large learning gains are observed for young mothers and married girls. Girls with disabilities see smaller learning gains from IPA/MPA to EPA.

Table 5.7: Subgroup learning scores for Mutare Rural:

Subgroup	N	Mean Literacy Score			p-value	Mean Numeracy Score			p-value
Cohort 1		MPA	EPA	Difference		MPA	EPA	Difference	
Married girls	391	66.26	84.15	17.89***	p < 2.2e-16	49.01	82.06	33.05***	p < 2.2e-16
Young Mothers	420	66.60	83.91	17.31***	p < 2.2e-16	48.60	81.74	33.14***	p < 2.2e-16

Subgroup	N	Mean Literacy Score			p-value	Mean Numeracy Score			p-value
Apostolic girls	478	65.98	82.40	16.42***	p < 2.2e-16	49.11	80.33	31.22***	p < 2.2e-16
Girls with disabilities	62	63.38	74.20	10.82*	p = 0.01	46.15	74.87	28.72***	p = 3.7e-11
Girls never been to school	17	60.60	71.68	11.08	NA	45.03	64.66	19.63	NA
Cohorts 2-7		IPA	EPA	Difference		IPA	EPA	Difference	
Married girls	634	37.30	84.14	46.84***	p < 2.2e-16	44.98	84.73	39.75***	p < 2.2e-16
Young Mothers	594	38.53	84.66	46.13***	p < 2.2e-16	46.31	83.94	37.63***	p < 2.2e-16
Apostolic girls	976	38.98	84.59	45.61***	p < 2.2e-16	46.33	84.51	38.18***	p < 2.2e-16
Girls with disabilities	25	39.99	68.40	28.41**	p = 0.002	45.23	78.85	33.62***	p = 9.59e-5
Girls never been to school	73	39.22	80.09	40.87***	p = 1.84e-7	46.18	77.40	31.22***	p = 7.04e-6

Statistical significance is indicated using asterisks: * p-value < 0.05, ** p-value < 0.01, *** p-value < 0.001, where the p-value measures how likely the results are due to chance.

Large statistically significant gains in learning are seen across subgroups for literacy and numeracy in Mutare Rural. In this district, married girls and young mothers see the greatest improvements in literacy and numeracy from IPA/MPA to EPA. Girls with disabilities and girls who have never been to school see slightly lower improvements in literacy and numeracy from baseline to endline.

Table 5.8: Subgroup learning scores for Mutasa:

Subgroup	N	Mean Literacy Score			p-value	Mean Numeracy Score			p-value
Cohort 1		MPA	EPA	Difference		MPA	EPA	Difference	
Married girls	513	78.78	82.84	4.06***	p = 0.0003	61.20	85.83	24.63***	p < 2.2e-16
Young Mothers	643	76.85	82.85	6.00***	p = 1.75e-8	61.54	85.18	23.64***	p < 2.2e-16
Apostolic girls	478	73.80	81.88	8.08***	p = 4.34e-9	62.56	84.58	22.02***	p < 2.2e-16
Girls with disabilities	103	62.99	79.40	16.41***	p = 0.0003	55.12	81.71	26.59***	p = 1.34e-8
Girls never been to school	38	43.00	76.94	33.94***	p = 1.75e-5	40.22	82.33	42.11***	p = 9.13e-8
Cohorts 2-7		IPA	EPA	Difference		IPA	EPA	Difference	
Married girls	1,047	40.09	84.88	44.79***	p < 2.2e-16	47.02	81.47	34.45***	p < 2.2e-16
Young Mothers	1,076	40.72	85.32	44.60***	p < 2.2e-16	47.14	81.33	34.19***	p < 2.2e-16
Apostolic girls	1,009	39.81	84.85	45.04***	p < 2.2e-16	46.94	80.64	33.70***	p < 2.2e-16
Girls with disabilities	64	40.35	83.47	43.12***	p < 2.2e-16	50.65	85.15	34.50***	p = 4.55e-14
Girls never been to school	68	41.04	88.49	47.45***	p < 2.2e-16	45.05	77.79	32.74***	p = 3.18e-13

Statistical significance is indicated using asterisks: * p-value < 0.05, ** p-value < 0.01, *** p-value < 0.001, where the p-value measures how likely the results are due to chance.

Substantial and statistically significant improvements have been seen across all subgroups for literacy and numeracy scores in Mutasa. Girls who have never been to school in particular have a notable improvement from baseline to endline, but improvements are generally large across all subgroups.

Table 5.9: Subgroup learning scores for Mutoko:

Subgroup	N	Mean Literacy Score			p-value	Mean Numeracy Score			p-value
Cohort 1		MPA	EPA	Difference		MPA	EPA	Difference	
Married girls	127	68.22	77.79	9.57**	p = 0.004	67.24	76.83	9.59**	p = 0.008
Young Mothers	145	65.44	79.64	14.20***	p = 1.88e-5	67.35	77.29	9.94**	p = 0.002
Apostolic girls	341	58.55	69.57	11.02***	p = 2.20e-6	62.89	69.82	6.93**	p = 0.001
Girls with disabilities	28	30.54	53.19	22.65*	p = 0.04	29.45	47.52	18.07	p = 0.06
Girls never been to school	22	17.42	42.59	25.17*	p = 0.02	37.82	42.95	5.13	p = 0.56
Cohorts 2-7		IPA	EPA	Difference		IPA	EPA	Difference	
Married girls	145	47.38	80.53	33.15***	p = 1.10e-13	50.09	82.60	32.5***	p < 2.2e-16

Subgroup	N	Mean Literacy Score			p-value	Mean Numeracy Score			p-value
Young Mothers	188	49.70	79.20	29.50***	p = 2.83e-13	57.40	79.35	21.95***	p = 7.08e-10
Apostolic girls	325	47.16	72.90	25.74***	p = 6.91e-15	56.69	72.51	15.82***	p = 5.13e-8
Girls with disabilities	25	42.16	68.06	25.90*	p = 0.03	55.38	69.95	14.57	p = 0.10
Girls never been to school	5	50.12	NA	NA	NA	52.69	NA	NA	NA

Statistical significance is indicated using asterisks: * p-value < 0.05, ** p-value < 0.01, *** p-value < 0.001, where the p-value measures how likely the results are due to chance.

In Mutoko, the largest learning gains from IPA/MPA to EPA for literacy and numeracy are seen for married girls and young mothers. Apostolic girls also see substantial and statistically significant improvements in literacy and numeracy scores.

d. Mean learning scores for literacy and numeracy by subtask and districts.

This section presents mean learning scores for each of the literacy and numeracy subtasks for each district. Some districts are not included where sample sizes are particularly small (e.g. Reigate, Harare South, Hatcliffe).

Table 5.10: Learning results by sub-task - Bulilima

Sub Tasks	Cohort 1			Cohorts 2-7		
	MPA (N = 592)	EPA (N = 593)	Difference (EPA-MPA)	IPA (N = 428)	EPA (N = 547)	Difference (EPA-IPA)
Literacy						
English Letter/ Sound Knowledge	4.97	6.22	1.25***	3.34	6.16	2.82***
English Word Reading	20.00	23.21	3.21***	9.12	21.85	12.73***
English Short Passage Reading	15.32	17.03	1.71***	7.14	16.44	9.30***
English Comprehension	3.40	3.77	0.37***	2.18	3.76	1.58***
Speaking & listening	4.94	5.52	0.58***	3.82	5.53	1.71***
Picture Reading	2.15	2.64	0.49***	1.53	2.50	0.97***
Writing	6.33	8.60	2.27***	4.43	7.76	3.33***
Numeracy						
Number Sense: Counting (3)	2.51	2.88	0.37***	2.45	2.88	0.43***
Number Sense: Missing Number (9)	5.91	6.53	0.62***	4.00	6.71	2.71***
Number Sense: Number Recognition (9)	6.01	6.98	0.97***	4.27	7.09	2.82***
Number Sense: Comparing Ordering (4)	3.08	3.30	0.22***	2.13	3.25	1.12***
Number Sense: Place Value (3)	1.95	2.46	0.51***	1.60	2.38	0.78***
Number operations: Addition (6)	4.34	4.88	0.54***	3.25	4.89	1.64***
Number operations: Subtraction (6)	4.14	4.70	0.56***	2.96	4.75	1.79***
Number operations: Multiplication (6)	3.55	4.22	0.67***	2.31	4.24	1.93***
Number operations: Division (6)	3.22	3.96	0.74***	1.92	3.97	2.05***

Statistical significance is indicated using asterisks: * p-value < 0.05, ** p-value < 0.01, *** p-value < 0.001, where the p-value measures how likely the results are due to chance.

Statistically significant improvements in learning across all literacy and numeracy subtasks are seen for the Bulilima district. Particularly large improvements are seen for the Word Reading subtask for literacy, and the Number Recognition and Division subtasks for numeracy.

Table 5.11: Learning results by sub-task - Chimanimani

Sub Tasks	Cohort 1			Cohorts 2-7		
	MPA (N = 581)	EPA (N = 485)	Difference (EPA-MPA)	IPA (N = 1,452)	EPA (N = 796)	Difference (EPA-IPA)
Literacy						
English Letter/ Sound Knowledge	5.74	6.38	0.64***	3.95	6.57	2.62***
English Word Reading	20.60	23.72	3.12***	9.60	23.28	13.68***
English Short Passage Reading	16.38	16.24	-0.14	7.25	16.15	8.90***
English Comprehension	3.40	3.89	0.49***	2.27	3.92	1.65***

Sub Tasks	Cohort 1			Cohorts 2-7		
	MPA (N = 581)	EPA (N = 485)	Difference (EPA-MPA)	IPA (N = 1,452)	EPA (N = 796)	Difference (EPA-IPA)
Speaking & listening	5.15	5.62	0.47***	3.89	6.05	2.16***
Picture Reading	2.45	2.33	-0.12*	1.55	2.17	0.62***
Writing	6.78	7.48	0.70***	4.52	8.18	3.66***
Numeracy						
Number Sense: Counting (3)	2.71	2.85	0.14***	2.43	2.92	0.49***
Number Sense: Missing Number (9)	6.23	6.94	0.71***	4.09	7.24	3.15***
Number Sense: Number Recognition (9)	6.55	6.98	0.43**	4.40	7.36	2.96***
Number Sense: Comparing Ordering (4)	2.96	3.46	0.50***	2.08	3.42	1.34***
Number Sense: Place Value (3)	2.00	2.57	0.57***	1.47	2.63	1.16***
Number operations: Addition (6)	4.30	5.05	0.75***	3.24	5.31	2.07***
Number operations: Subtraction (6)	4.14	4.87	0.73***	2.90	5.15	2.25***
Number operations: Multiplication (6)	3.63	4.38	0.75***	1.78	4.80	3.02***
Number operations: Division (6)	3.25	4.23	0.98***	1.59	4.59	3.00***

Statistical significance is indicated using asterisks: * p-value < 0.05, ** p-value < 0.01, *** p-value < 0.001, where the p-value measures how likely the results are due to chance.

Most subtasks across literacy and numeracy see statistically significant improvements for the Chimanimani district. Two literacy subtasks (Short Passage and Picture Reading) see decreases from MPA to EPA for Cohort 1, however. These same subtasks see statistically significant increases from IPA to EPA for Cohorts 2-7, and so the decreases for Cohort 1 are likely influenced by MPA being used as the 'baseline' measure.

Table 5.12: Learning results by sub-task - Epworth

Sub Tasks	Cohort 1			Cohorts 2-7		
	MPA (N = 283)	EPA (N = 78)	Difference (EPA-MPA)	IPA (N = 594)	EPA (N = 92)	Difference (EPA-IPA)
Literacy						
English Letter/ Sound Knowledge	4.75	5.73	0.98***	4.13	6.28	2.15***
English Word Reading	15.10	20.92	5.82***	10.49	21.22	10.73***
English Short Passage Reading	13.44	16.64	3.20***	7.58	18.24	10.66***
English Comprehension	2.98	3.88	0.90***	2.22	3.84	1.62***
Speaking & listening	4.30	5.10	0.80***	3.85	5.89	2.04***
Picture Reading	2.28	2.67	0.39***	1.75	2.90	1.15***
Writing	6.00	7.49	1.49***	4.77	7.67	2.90***
Numeracy						
Number Sense: Counting (3)	2.60	2.83	0.23***	2.53	2.89	0.36***
Number Sense: Missing Number (9)	5.40	6.78	1.38***	4.30	7.58	3.28***
Number Sense: Number Recognition (9)	5.65	7.00	1.35***	4.83	8.05	3.22***
Number Sense: Comparing Ordering (4)	2.73	3.23	0.50***	2.04	3.42	1.38***
Number Sense: Place Value (3)	1.80	2.53	0.73***	1.44	2.64	1.20***
Number operations: Addition (6)	3.96	4.92	0.96***	3.34	5.40	2.06***
Number operations: Subtraction (6)	3.69	4.65	0.96***	2.91	5.20	2.29***
Number operations: Multiplication (6)	2.96	4.08	1.12***	1.57	4.36	2.79***
Number operations: Division (6)	2.63	3.72	1.09***	1.35	4.04	2.69***

Statistical significance is indicated using asterisks: * p-value < 0.05, ** p-value < 0.01, *** p-value < 0.001, where the p-value measures how likely the results are due to chance.

Statistically significant improvements in learning across all literacy and numeracy subtasks are seen for the Epworth district. Particularly large improvements are seen for the Word Reading and Short Passage Reading subtasks for literacy, and the Number Sense and Number Recognition subtasks for numeracy.

Table 5.13: Learning results by sub-task – Imbizo

Sub Tasks	Cohort 1			Cohorts 2-7		
	MPA (N = 122)	EPA (N = 46)	Difference (EPA-MPA)	IPA (N = 104)	EPA (N = 48)	Difference (EPA-IPA)
Literacy						
English Letter/ Sound Knowledge	5.06	5.56	0.50	3.82	5.98	2.16***
English Word Reading	18.35	22.61	4.26**	13.44	24.94	11.50***
English Short Passage Reading	15.10	16.63	1.53	9.22	18.00	8.78***
English Comprehension	3.30	3.74	0.44	2.39	3.98	1.59***
Speaking & listening	5.43	5.20	-0.23	4.14	5.56	1.42***
Picture Reading	2.43	2.30	-0.13	1.55	2.48	0.93***
Writing	6.57	7.89	1.32**	4.91	9.19	4.28***
Numeracy						
Number Sense: Counting (3)	2.82	2.74	-0.08	2.60	2.85	0.25*
Number Sense: Missing Number (9)	6.11	7.57	1.46**	4.53	7.77	3.24***
Number Sense: Number Recognition (9)	6.48	7.50	1.02*	4.57	7.54	2.97***
Number Sense: Comparing Ordering (4)	2.80	3.26	0.46*	2.45	3.54	1.09***
Number Sense: Place Value (3)	1.64	2.61	0.97***	1.77	2.67	0.90***
Number operations: Addition (6)	4.64	4.98	0.34	3.66	5.15	1.49***
Number operations: Subtraction (6)	4.30	4.72	0.42	3.38	5.15	1.77***
Number operations: Multiplication (6)	3.47	4.33	0.86	2.63	5.13	2.50***
Number operations: Division (6)	3.16	4.00	0.84	2.60	4.69	2.09***

Statistical significance is indicated using asterisks: * p-value < 0.05, ** p-value < 0.01, *** p-value < 0.001, where the p-value measures how likely the results are due to chance.

In Imbizo, statistically significant improvements in subtasks for literacy and numeracy are primarily seen for Cohorts 2-7; Cohort 1 mostly sees improvements, but these are often not statistically significant. This may be due to the smaller sample size for this district, and hence the smaller improvements from MPA to EPA not achieving statistical significance while the larger improvements in learning seen from IPA to EPA for Cohorts 2-7 being able to achieve statistical significance.

Table 5.14: Learning results by sub-task – Mutare Rural

Sub Tasks	Cohort 1			Cohorts 2-7		
	MPA (N = 476)	EPA (N = 565)	Difference (EPA-MPA)	IPA (N = 1,083)	EPA (N = 221)	Difference (EPA-IPA)
Literacy						
English Letter/ Sound Knowledge	4.66	6.50	1.84***	4.18	6.46	2.28***
English Word Reading	19.93	23.80	3.87***	9.26	23.69	14.43***
English Short Passage Reading	14.54	16.61	2.07***	7.13	16.95	9.82***
English Comprehension	3.25	3.89	0.64***	2.28	4.01	1.73***
Speaking & listening	4.74	5.80	1.06***	3.79	5.87	2.08***
Picture Reading	1.62	2.35	0.73***	1.51	2.34	0.83***
Writing	4.50	8.13	3.63***	4.19	8.62	4.43***
Numeracy						
Number Sense: Counting (3)	1.75	2.90	1.15***	2.50	2.95	0.45***
Number Sense: Missing Number (9)	3.30	6.90	3.60***	4.08	7.39	3.31***
Number Sense: Number Recognition (9)	3.67	7.17	3.50***	4.50	7.41	2.91***
Number Sense: Comparing Ordering (4)	2.85	3.36	0.51***	2.05	3.52	1.47***
Number Sense: Place Value (3)	1.60	2.51	0.91***	1.63	2.55	0.92***
Number operations: Addition (6)	3.09	4.89	1.80***	3.24	5.17	1.93***
Number operations: Subtraction (6)	3.08	4.88	1.80***	2.81	5.12	2.31***
Number operations: Multiplication (6)	2.93	4.53	1.60***	1.75	4.81	3.06***
Number operations: Division (6)	2.73	4.32	1.59***	1.57	4.56	2.99***

Statistical significance is indicated using asterisks: * p-value < 0.05, ** p-value < 0.01, *** p-value < 0.001, where the p-value measures how likely the results are due to chance.

Statistically significant improvements in learning across all literacy and numeracy subtasks are seen for the Mutare Rural district. Particularly large improvements are seen in Word Reading and Short Passage Reading for literacy, and in Missing Number, Number Recognition and the Subtraction, Multiplication and Division operations for numeracy.

Table 5.15: Learning results by sub-task – Mutasa

Sub Tasks	Cohort 1			Cohorts 2-7		
	MPA (N = 681)	EPA (N = 883)	Difference (EPA-MPA)	IPA (N = 1,223)	EPA (N = 696)	Difference (EPA-IPA)
Literacy						
English Letter/ Sound Knowledge	5.03	6.45	1.42***	3.87	6.58	2.71***
English Word Reading	20.45	23.02	2.57***	8.91	24.24	15.33***
English Short Passage Reading	17.22	16.51	-0.71**	7.23	17.05	9.82***
English Comprehension	3.17	4.05	0.88***	2.37	4.15	1.78***
Speaking & listening	4.73	6.28	1.55***	3.86	6.14	2.28***
Picture Reading	2.00	2.17	0.17**	1.64	2.22	0.58***
Writing	7.74	8.14	0.40**	4.28	8.52	4.24***
Numeracy						
Number Sense: Counting (3)	2.57	2.95	0.38***	2.57	2.91	0.34***
Number Sense: Missing Number (9)	5.19	7.01	1.82***	4.00	6.80	2.80***
Number Sense: Number Recognition (9)	5.83	7.29	1.46***	4.52	7.15	2.63***
Number Sense: Comparing Ordering (4)	2.62	3.35	0.73***	2.22	3.41	1.19***
Number Sense: Place Value (3)	1.89	2.68	0.79***	1.47	2.67	1.20***
Number operations: Addition (6)	3.57	5.37	1.80***	3.35	5.17	1.82***
Number operations: Subtraction (6)	3.41	5.21	1.80***	2.91	5.07	2.16***
Number operations: Multiplication (6)	3.01	4.83	1.82***	1.77	4.77	3.00***
Number operations: Division (6)	2.23	4.64	2.41***	1.50	4.56	3.06***

Statistical significance is indicated using asterisks: * p-value < 0.05, ** p-value < 0.01, *** p-value < 0.001, where the p-value measures how likely the results are due to chance.

Statistically significant improvements in learning across nearly all literacy and numeracy subtasks are seen for the Mutasa district. Only for Short Passage Reading for Cohort 1 is a decrease observed from MPA to EPA. The most substantial improvements are observed for Word Reading for literacy, and for Multiplication and Division for numeracy.

Table 5.16: Learning results by sub-task – Mutoko

Sub Tasks	Cohort 1			Cohorts 2-7		
	MPA (N = 342)	EPA (N = 351)	Difference (EPA-MPA)	IPA (N = 466)	EPA (N = 127)	Difference (EPA-IPA)
Literacy						
English Letter/ Sound Knowledge	4.68	5.25	0.57***	4.23	5.35	1.12***
English Word Reading	15.38	18.52	3.14***	4.01	5.58	1.57***
English Short Passage Reading	12.66	15.15	2.49***	11.54	18.90	7.36***
English Comprehension	2.81	3.16	0.35***	1.72	2.70	0.98***
Speaking & listening	4.25	5.20	0.95***	8.42	16.10	7.68***
Picture Reading	2.20	2.62	0.42***	2.57	3.48	0.91***
Writing	5.98	7.37	1.39***	5.53	7.32	1.79***
Numeracy						
Number Sense: Counting (3)	2.40	2.74	0.34***	2.61	2.74	0.13
Number Sense: Missing Number (9)	5.60	6.12	0.52**	4.96	6.59	1.63***
Number Sense: Number Recognition (9)	6.26	6.74	0.48*	5.34	6.84	1.50***
Number Sense: Comparing Ordering (4)	2.81	3.09	0.28**	2.40	3.09	0.69***
Number Sense: Place Value (3)	1.75	2.06	0.31***	1.52	2.27	0.75***
Number operations: Addition (6)	4.36	4.62	0.26*	3.65	4.57	0.92***
Number operations: Subtraction (6)	4.11	4.29	0.18	3.48	4.42	0.94***

Sub Tasks	Cohort 1			Cohorts 2-7		
	MPA (N = 342)	EPA (N = 351)	Difference (EPA-MPA)	IPA (N = 466)	EPA (N = 127)	Difference (EPA-IPA)
Number operations: Multiplication (6)	3.17	3.52	0.35**	2.44	3.76	1.32***
Number operations: Division (6)	2.93	3.26	0.33*	2.26	3.49	1.23***

Statistical significance is indicated using asterisks: * p-value < 0.05, ** p-value < 0.01, *** p-value < 0.001, where the p-value measures how likely the results are due to chance.

Statistically significant improvements in learning across nearly all literacy and numeracy subtasks are seen for the Mutoko district. The greatest improvements for literacy are observed for the Word Reading and the Short Passage Reading subtasks, and the Missing Number and Number Recognition subtasks for numeracy.

Sub Tasks	Cohort 1			Cohorts 2-7		
	MPA (N = 342)	EPA (N = 351)	Difference (EPA-MPA)	IPA (N = 466)	EPA (N = 127)	Difference (EPA-IPA)

Annex 6. District level Intermediate Outcomes

The table below presents the intermediate outcome indicators and the mean scores and percentage of girls with high scores for each district.

Table 6.1: Intermediate outcome indicators by district

District	IO2.1 Self-efficacy			IO2.2a Gender knowledge, attitudes, and practices			IO2.2b SRHR knowledge, attitudes, and practices			IO3.1 Empowerment			IO4.1 Parent/ caregivers' gender attitudes			IO4.2 Girls' Perceived safety			IO4.3 Support for education		
	N	Mean score	% of girls with high score	N	Mean score	% of girls with high score	N	Mean score	% of girls with high score	N	Mean score	% of girls with high score	N	Mean score	% of girls with high score	N	Mean score	% of girls with high score	N	Mean score	% of girls with high score
All districts	603	2.43	65.8%	606	1.43	46.2%	426	17.7	5.2%	601	16.5	50.4%	605	9.22	72.1%	591	4.31	83.4%	596	9.30	92.8%
Bulilima	53	2.09	41.5%	53	1.37	35.8%	37	17.1	0%	51	14.6	33.3%	53	8.81	66%	51	4.12	80.4%	52	9.12	92.3%
Chimanimani	93	2.43	67.7%	94	1.45	45.7%	89	18.4	5.6%	93	17.7	63.4%	94	9.48	79.8%	91	4.42	87.9%	91	9.68	96.7%
Epworth	51	2.37	68.6%	53	1.33	24.5%	23	15.3	0%	53	15.3	28.3%	53	9.41	83%	52	3.96	71.2%	52	9.02	92.3%
Harare South	58	1.92	31%	58	1.27	20.7%	9	15.1	0%	58	12.4	15.5%	58	8.90	63.8%	58	3.78	58.6%	58	8.62	86.2%
Mutare Rural	136	2.49	69.9%	136	1.43	50.7%	120	18	10%	135	16.7	50.4%	135	8.10	47.4%	131	4.65	92.4%	134	9.78	97.8%
Mutasa	136	2.88	93.4%	136	1.54	66.2%	104	18.1	4.8%	135	19.4	78.5%	136	10.3	89%	134	4.37	86.6%	134	9.08	90.3%
Mutoko	76	2.19	48.7%	76	1.46	44.7%	44	16.8	0%	76	14.4	38.2%	76	9.42	78.9%	74	4.24	86.5%	75	9.20	89.3%

Annex 7. Characteristics and barriers

Table 7.1: Girls' Characteristics

Beneficiary type	Baseline	Endline	Source
Orphans (%) Single orphans: Double orphans:	Single orphans: 18% Double orphans: No data	Single orphans: 26.28% Double orphans: 16.86%	Household survey, HH_Q_22 & HH_Q_24
Living without both parents (%)	No data	51.49%	Girls' survey, Q3
Living in female headed household (%)	No data	30.53%	Household survey, HH_Q_13 & "HH GENDER"
Girls with disabilities (%)	30.00%	11.72%	Girls survey, "DISABILITY"
Married Girls (%)	23%	53.14%	Girls' survey, "MARRIED"
Young Mothers (%) Under 18 Under 16	Total: 29%	Total: Under 18: 9.08% Under 16: 3.96%	Girls' survey, "MOTHER" and "AGE"
Apostolic Girls (%)	52%	64.03%	Girls survey, "APOSTOLIC"
Ethnic minorities (%)	4%	17.66%	Girls survey, "MINORITY"
Girls never been to school (%)	No data	5.28%	Girls survey, "EVER SCHOOLED"
Girls engaged in labour	20%	17.99%	Girls survey, "WORKING"
Poor households (%) Difficult to afford for girl to go to school. Household doesn't own land for themselves. Household unable to meet basic needs. Gone to sleep hungry for many days in past year.	Parent cannot afford fees: 79%	Difficult to afford for girl to go to school: 89.40% Household doesn't own land for themselves: 29.59% Household unable to meet basic needs: 63.70% Gone to sleep hungry for many days in past year: 37.81%	Difficult to afford for girl to go to school: Household survey, HH_Q_36_1 Household doesn't own land for themselves: Household survey, HH_Q_20 Household unable to meet basic needs: Household survey, HH_Q_18 Gone to sleep hungry for many days in past year: Household survey, HH_Q_19_1
Language difficulties: LoI different from mother tongue (%) Girl doesn't speak LoI (%)	No data	Don't have required data	Don't have required data
Parental education Parent/caregiver has no education (%)	No data	Parent/caregiver has no education: 2.81%	Parent/caregiver has no education: Household survey, HH_Q_11

Table 7.2: Barriers to learning and transition.

Beneficiary type	Endline	Source
Safety		
Fairly or very unsafe travel to schools in the area (%)	7.60%	Household survey, HH_Q_43
Doesn't feel safe travelling to/from school (%)	5.37%	Girls' survey, Q35
Household Support		

Sufficient time to study: High chore burden	55.07%		Household survey, HH_Q_75
Doesn't get support to stay in school and do well (%)	7.21%		Caregiver support index (sum of 10 items from Girls' survey: Q28, Q31, Q32, Q33, Q37, Q94, Q95, Q96, Q97, Q99)
Attendance			
Attends school more than half the time (%)	71.39%		SAGE Attendance Records (Q15-18)
Attends school less than half the time (%)	28.60%		SAGE Attendance Records (Q15-18)
Doesn't feel safe at school (%)	0.50%		Girls' survey, Q37
Learning Environment			
No seats for all students (%)	27.16%		Girls' survey, Q55
Doesn't use toilet at school (%)	1.85%		Girls' survey, Q33
Disagrees – teachers make them feel welcome	0%		Girls' survey, Q69_1
Agrees – treat boys and girls differently in the classroom	16.50%		Girls' survey, Q69_2
Agrees – teachers are often absent from class	18.67%		Girls' survey, Q69_3

Table 7.3: Evaluation sample breakdown by barrier

Barrier	Baseline	Endline	Endline Source
Long distance to CBLH	70.53%	1.65%	Girls' survey: Q25 Variable name: "far_distance" Definition: Girls who reported travelling more than 30 minutes to CBLH
Lack of safety net for GBV	36.71%	15.51%	Girls' survey: Q135, Q136, Q137 Variable name: "GBV_barrier" Definition: Girls who report at least two of the three items
Lack of right to education	4.79%	0.17%	Girls' survey: Q89, Q90, Q91, Q92, Q93 Variable name: "Right_educ_barrier" Definition: Girls who report at least 2 of the 5 items
Lack of an enabling environment for quality education	11.03%	0.50%	Girls' survey: Q28, Q31, Q33, Q69_1, Q69_2, Q69_3 Variable name: "Educ_qual_barrier_scaled". Definition: Girls who report at least 3 of the 6 items
Menstruation	55.89%	29.54%	Girls' survey: Q158_6, Q159, Q167_7 Variable name: "Period_barrier_yes" Definition: Girls who report at least 1 of 3 items

Table 7.4: Evaluation sample intersectionality between subgroups and barriers at endline

	Long distance to CBLH (N = 10)	Lack of safety net for GBV (N = 94)	Lack of right to education (N = 1)	Lack of quality education opportunities (N = 3)	Menstruation (N = 181)
Girls with disabilities (N=71)	0.83% (5)	0%	0%	0%	2.81% (17)
Young mothers (N=379)	0.99% (6)	0%	0%	0%	2.64% (16)
Married girls (N=322)	0.83% (5)	0%	0%	0%	2.31% (14)
Apostolic girls (N=388)	1.49% (9)	0%	0%	0%	10.40% (63)
Ethnic minorities (N=107)	0.50% (3)	0%	0%	0%	3.14% (19)
Girls never been to school (N=32)	0.17% (1)	0%	0%	0%	1.16% (7)
Girls engaged in labour (N=109)	0.66% (4)	0%	0%	0%	1.49% (9)

Table 7.5: Literacy and numeracy scores by barrier

Barriers	Literacy			Numeracy		
	IPA	EPA	Learning Improvement	IPA	EPA	Learning Improvement
Long distance to CBLH (N = 10)	42.25	80.62	**38.37**	48.93	78.85	**29.92**

Lack of safety net for GBV (N = 94)	45.76	75.16	**29.40**	48.21	74.02	**25.81**
Lack of right to education (N = 1)	NA	NA	**NA**	NA	NA	**NA**
Lack of an enabling environment for quality education (N = 3)	NA	65.43	**NA**	NA	53.85	**NA**
Menstruation (N = 179)	38.65	79.10	**40.45**	44.97	77.63	**32.66**

Annex 8. Logframe

The programme logframe has been included as an attachment with this report. See "290523_EL_O_Annex8_SAGE_Logframe.xlsx".

Annex 9. Outcomes spreadsheet

Not Applicable.

Annex 10. Beneficiaries' tables

The SAGE programme aims to reach the most educationally marginalised girls who have been unable to attend or sustain their attendance in formal schools to successfully acquire foundational literacy and numeracy skills at the proficiency level of Grade 5. The programme includes seven cohorts of girls who have joined the programme on a rolling basis. With this staggered enrolment approach, the first cohort (Cohort 1) was enrolled in seven districts and the second cohort (Cohort 2) in a further four districts, starting in June 2019 and January 2020 respectively. Since November 2020, an additional five cohorts have joined across all 11 districts as the challenge of enrolling marginalised girls necessitated the shift towards a rolling enrolment approach instead of defined enrolment periods.

SAGE identified seven sub-groups to specifically target support for and tailored its interventions in line with their needs. These sub-groups were identified based on key axes of vulnerability and characteristics that intersect to compound the educational marginalisation of girls in Zimbabwe: gender, age, marital status, school experience, disability, religion, ethnicity, and level of poverty/socio-economic status.

Population numbers for targeted beneficiaries of the project are currently 13,460 based on project monitoring data. The number of indirect beneficiaries is estimated at a total of 77,319 and is made up of boy learning beneficiaries, broader boy student beneficiaries, broader girl student beneficiaries, teacher beneficiaries and broader community beneficiaries.

The following tables present the breakdown of the beneficiaries across the project.

Table 10.1: Direct beneficiaries

Beneficiary type	Total project number	Total number of girls targeted between midline and endline	Comment
Direct learning beneficiaries (girls)	Total number of direct beneficiaries worked with over the lifetime of the project.	This may equal the total project number or may be less if girls 'graduated out' after a certain grade.	If the total project number has changed since baseline or midline provide an explanation of why (e.g., didn't reach all girls planned, larger class sizes then previously accounted for etc)
Total Learners: 13,460 Girls with Disabilities: 693	13460	Current Enrolment: 6,188 Graduated: 7,272	

Table 10.2: Indirect beneficiaries

Beneficiary type	Number	Comment
Learning beneficiaries (boys) – as above, but specifically counting boys who will get the same exposure and therefore be expected to achieve learning gains, if applicable.	4,342	
Broader student beneficiaries (boys) – boys who will benefit from the interventions in a less direct way, and therefore may benefit from aspects such as attitudinal change, etc. but not necessarily achieve improvements in learning outcomes.	8,964	
Broader student beneficiaries (girls) – girls who will benefit from the interventions in a less direct way, and therefore may benefit from aspects such as attitudinal change, etc. but not necessarily achieve improvements in learning outcomes.	27,158	
Teacher beneficiaries – number of teachers who benefit from training or related interventions. If possible /applicable, please disaggregate by gender and type of training, with the comments box used to describe the type of training provided.	697	
Broader community beneficiaries (adults) – adults who benefit from broader interventions, such as community messaging /dialogues, community advocacy, economic empowerment interventions, etc.	36,158	

Table 10.3: Target Group – by school

School Age	Project definition of target group (Tick where appropriate)	Number targeted through project interventions	Sample size of target group at endline
Lower primary	✓	13,460	606
Upper primary			
Lower secondary			

Upper secondary			
Total		13,460	606

Table 10.4: Target Group – by age

Age Group	Project definition of target group (Tick where appropriate)	Number targeted through project interventions	Sample size of target group at endline
Aged 6-8 (% aged 6-8)			
Aged 9-11 (% aged 9-11)	✓	28 (0.2 %)	9 (1.5%)
Aged 12-13 (% aged 12-13)	✓	1,180 (8.8%)	47 (7.75%)
Aged 14-15 (% aged 14-15)	✓	4,292 (31.9%)	70 (11.55%)
Aged 16-17 (%aged 16-17)	✓	3,216 (23.9%)	80 (13.20%)
Aged 18-19 (%aged 18-19)	✓	2,216 (16.5%)	139 (22.93%)
Aged 20+ (% aged 20 and over)	✓	2,528 (18.7%)	261 (43.06%)
Total		13,460	606

Table 10.5: Target Group – by sub-group

Social Group	Project definition of target group (Tick where appropriate)	Number targeted through project interventions	Sample size of target group at endline
Disabled girls	✓	693 (5.14%)	71 (11.72%)
Orphaned girls			
Pastoralist girls			
Girls engaged in labour	✓	13,118 (97.45%)	109 (17.98%)
Poor girls			
Other (Young mothers/expectant)	✓	5,216 (38.75%)	379 (62.54%)
Other (Girls who have never been to school)	✓	617 (4.58%)	32 (5.28%)
Other (Girls from ethnic minorities)	✓	597 (4.43%)	107 (17.65%)
Other (Married girls)	✓	4,637 (34.45%)	322 (53.13%)
Other (Girls from the Apostolic community)	✓	8,281 (61.52%)	388 (64.02%)
Total		13,460	606

Table 10.6: Target Group – by school status

Social Group	Project definition of target group (Tick where appropriate)	Number targeted through project interventions	Sample size of target group at endline
Out-of-school girls: have never attended school	✓	617 (4.58%)	32 (5.28%)
Out-of-school girls: have attended school, but dropped out	✓	12,843 (95.41%)	574 (94.71%)
Total		13,460	606

As part of the hybrid approach to the evaluation, the evaluation team undertook a process of validation of the quantitative data received from the SAGE programme – including that for LPA, transition, attendance, SAGE led quarterly girls' and community surveys and budgetary data. Wherever issues, duplications or inconsistencies were found, it was communicated to Plan International MEL Specialist and the Programme Manager for clarifications and verifying the data. In order to validate the LPA data, the evaluation team also conducted observation visits in December 2022 to 10 CBLHs where LPA data was being collected. The team found that the LPA data was being collected following the set of guidance and guidelines issued to the CEs, and that the data was being recorded properly, clearly, and accurately. The EE is confident in the accuracy of the beneficiaries' data presented above.

Annex 11. External Evaluator's inception report

The inception report has been included as an attachment with this report. See "290523_EL_O_Annex11_SAGE_InceptionReport.pdf".

Annex 12. Quantitative and qualitative data collection tools used for midline/endline.

There are two quantitative surveys and twelve qualitative interview types used for this evaluation. These were developed with input from the project as well as the local data collection team. The instruments used to collect this data are attached with the following names:

- Girls' survey: "290523_EL_O_Annex12_SAGE_GirlSurvey.pdf"
- Parent/Caregiver survey: "290523_EL_O_Annex12_SAGE_HouseholdSurvey.pdf"
- Qualitative instruments: "290523_EL_O_Annex12_SAGE_QualitativeTools.zip"

Annex 13. Qualitative transcripts

Three qualitative transcripts have been included as an attachment with this report. See "290523_EL_O_Annex13_SAGE_QualitativeTranscripts.zip".

Annex 14. Quantitative datasets, codebooks, and programs

Three datasets have been included as an attachment with this report. These include:

1. Endline Survey Data (includes both Girls' Survey and Parent/Caregiver Survey)
2. Learning Progress Assessment Data
3. Merged Endline Survey and LPA Data

Separate codebooks for each of these datasets have also been attached. See "290523_EL_O_Annex14_SAGE_QuantitativeDatasets.zip".

Annex 15. LPA quality assurance

Drawing on technical leadership provided by The Open University (OU), and to help Community Educators (CEs) understand the learning needs of the girls in their hubs, the SAGE programme developed a learning progress assessment model which combines both 'assessment for learning' (ongoing) and 'assessment of learning'. Assessment of learning occurs at three points in the SAGE programme – the Initial Progress Assessment (on entry into the programme), the Mid Progress Assessment (after one year of learning) and the End Progress Assessment (at the end of two years of learning).

While the hybrid approach used by the SAGE programme offers a distinctive model specifically designed to meet the learning and developmental needs of the girls, the LPA quality assurance procedure was deemed necessary to examine the extent to which the assessments are implemented effectively and to better understand the cycle by which community educators provide continuous and learning to their learners. This quality procedure was implemented by the field team from Research Methods International. The LPA observations primarily entailed monitoring and documenting contextual findings during the implementation of End Progress Assessments (EPA) with a sample of girls in Cohort 2. The enumerators visited a sample of 10 out of a total of 35 SAGE hubs from the 9th of December 2022 to the 12th of December 2022. The ten selected hubs included Manicaland Province (Chimanimani District); Mashonaland East Province (Mutoko); Harare Metropolitan Province (Hatcliffe and Epworth Districts); and Matabeleland North Province (Bulilima).

Logistics

Observations of the End Progress Assessment and interviewing of the Community Educators (CEs) were carried out by two field teams, each consisting of two enumerators and a supervisor. Prior to deployment, the four enumerators and two supervisors received training on research ethics, safeguarding and child protection facilitated by Genesis Analytics and Plan International on 6th December 2022 and 7th December 2022, respectively.

End Progress Assessment Quality Assurance Coverage

The targets for the quality assurance activity were 3 EPA observations and 1 interview with a community educator per hub. The observations and interviews were across the 10 hubs across the five districts - Chimanimani, Mutoko, Bulilima, Hatcliffe and Epworth. The process was made easier through coordinated effort from national, provincial and district staff who also helped with engagement of stakeholders. A total of 24 End Progress Assessments were observed and 10 interviews conducted with CEs across the ten hubs. One team conducted 13 out of 15 observations and 5 interviews with CEs while the other team conducted 11 out of 15 observations and 5 interviews.

LPA Guidance Notes

The LPA guidance notes consist of five steps; 1) Undertaking the assessment; 2) Scoring the assessment; 3) Finalising learner scores 4) Interpreting the scores and setting targets; and 5) Reflecting on the progress assessment data and understanding the progress of individual learners and the learning progress of learner as a group. The community educators have been trained to implement the guidelines in sequential order and are expected to implement them during assessment cycles.

Quality Assurance Observation Checklist

The comprehensive observation checklist below was developed and used in assessing how well community educators adhere to instructions in the LPA Guidance notes. Each indicator is expected to be carried out before, during or after the implementation of the End Progress assessment. The checklist also attempts to capture learner behaviour and reactions during administration of the End Progress Assessment.

Table 14.1: LPA Quality Assurance Observation Checklist

Prior to Administration	Yes	No	Not Applicable	Remark
The Community Educator selects a quiet and safe space with few distractions and good lighting.				
In the event that the learner with disability has a parent/caregiver present: Community Educator suggests the parent/caregiver to remain nearby to observe the assessment.				
Community Educator asks the learner if the chosen space for the assessment is comfortable				
Community Educator explains the purpose of the end progress assessment and clarifies that it is not an examination but an opportunity to find out more about the girl's learning progress.				

Community Educator places paper, pencils, the Module 2c Learner's Self-Study Workbook, the scoring guide, and the LEARNER copy of each assessment in clear sight and close proximity				
In the event that a learner with disability is about to be assessed: Community Educator makes necessary adaptations (Ex. giving more time, dividing assessments into smaller tasks)				

During Administration	Yes	No	Not Applicable	Remark
Community Educator asks questions in home language where the learner does not understand English				
Community Educator encourages the learner to attempt the questions				
Community Educator gives the learner thinking time to respond to their question				
During speaking and listening tasks, the Community Educator clearly points to objects related to questions asked.				
During speaking and listening tasks, the Community Educator encourages the learner to respond with full sentences				
During speaking and listening tasks, the Community Educator encourages the learner to provide a detailed response to questions related to her goals.				
During reading tasks, the Community Educator ensures they point to the relevant sound or word				
During the word reading sub-tasks, the Community Educator gives the learner time to read the sentences to herself.				
During the word reading sub-tasks, the Community Educator stops and moves on to the next task when the learner reads five words wrong.				
During comprehension sub-tasks, the Community Educator encourages the learner to respond to all questions in English.				
During numeracy tasks, the Community Educator stops the assessment if the learner does not provide correct answers to the practice activity (counting) and the first sub-task (number recognition).				
During numeracy tasks, the Community Educator uses a piece of paper to 'hide' the upcoming questions				
During numeracy sub-tasks, the Community Educator stops when the learner gets 3 answers wrong.				
During number recognition sub-tasks, the Community Educator points to the numbers.				
During number recognition and place value sub-tasks, the Community Educator reads out the numbers[93].				
During number operations sub-tasks, the Community Educator informs the learner that she can use resources available including bead strings, counters, and number lines.				
During numeracy tasks, the Community Educator allows the learner to use paper and pen to work out problems.				
Community Educator records the learner's responses as they move through the sub-tasks				
Community Educator thanks the learner for completing the first assessment and tells her if/when she will be moving on to the next assessment.				

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[93] The CE is not expected to read out the numbers.

	Yes	No	Not Applicable	Remark
Community Educator thanks the learner and congratulates her on completing the assessments.				
Community Educator asks the learner if she has any questions.				
Community Educator completes the assessment before colour banding the learner scores.				

Throughout Administration	Yes	No	Not Applicable	Remark
Community Educator records the learner's responses promptly and accurately				
Community Educator speaks clearly and articulates instructions at a reasonable pace for the learner				
Learner responds to instructions from Community Educator				
Community Educator encourages the learner to attempt questions that seem difficult.				
Learner demonstrates persistence by attempting questions that seem difficult.				
Community Educator avoids unnecessary comment/feedback to learner responses.				
Community Educator redirects the learner to the task if/when she asks a question unrelated to the assessment				
Community Educator records learner scores achieved for each activity in the End Progress Assessment Form using the Progress Assessment Scoring Guide.				
Community Educator reviews scoring, sub-totals and final score the End Progress Assessment Form before moving on to the next learner.				

Findings of the LPA Quality Assurance

There were 2 CEs per hub who jointly conducted the assessments. Depending on their complementary skills, the CEs at times shared assessment roles with one CE focusing on literacy and the other on numeracy. Again, due to cues on safeguarding it was difficult to conduct interviews with both CEs.

- **Expressed knowledge of LPA Guidelines:** The observation notes and the field report show that the community educators were familiar with the guidelines and made efforts to implement the instructions highlighted in learning progress assessment guidance notes.

- **Adherence to LPA Guidelines:** The observation notes and field report suggests that the delivery of the End Progress Assessment was fair and unbiased. The findings show that while all community educators generally followed the guidance notes, few instructions were overlooked.

- **Delivery of EPA Assessment:** All learners, including girls with disabilities, were spoken to in a polite and respective manner. The community educators used local languages to explain tasks to learners during the assessment though English was the Language of Instruction (LOI). Since language was a selection criterion during enumeration recruitment, our field staff did not face any challenge communicating with community educators in English and local languages. Interactions with learners during the EPA were mostly in Shona and this was observed to boost the confidence of learners.

  From the observations made and debrief conducted with all the data collection teams, there were no major trends in implementation of the assessment across hubs in the different provinces. To a greater extent, the CEs followed subject-specific guidelines during the assessments most of the time and where they had not understood the guidelines well, they appeared to be comfortable with seeking clarity from peers.

  Subject-specific instructions that some community educators struggled with included not stopping when a learner surpassed the maximum number of attempts on a practice activity, not pointing to the numbers in the number recognition sub-task and not providing learners with resources like counters.

  The observation notes indicate that almost 20% of the participating community educators did not provide resources like counters, bead strings and number lines for numeracy tasks to learners during the assessment. It was also noted that a community educator did not provide the learner with the learner's copy of the assessment on one occasion.

Overall, the community educators were enthusiastic and to the extent possible were more than ready to share missing documents like Progress Books.

- **Student Behaviour:** All learners appeared comfortable and satisfied with the physical space where the assessment was implemented. The community educators also ensured that safeguarding issues were not overlooked throughout the observation period of the end progress assessment.

- **EPA Scoring:** Majority of the community educators (87.5%) reviewed, recorded and colour banded the correct final scores in the End Progress Assessment form as expected. On the other hand, there were incidents where a community educator did not calculate subtotals while moving through the subtasks but calculated and recorded final scores after the assessment. Another community educator was spotted colour banding the learner scores before calculating the final score on paper.

Annex 16. Sampling framework

The Quantitative Sample has been included as an attachment with this report. See "290523_EL_O_Annex16_SAGE_SamplingFramework.xlsx".

Annex 17. External evaluator declaration

Name of Project: Endline Evaluation of the Supporting Adolescent Girls' Education (SAGE) Programme in Zimbabwe

Name of External Evaluator: Genesis Analytics Limited

Contact Information for External Evaluator: Genesis Analytics, 4th Floor, West Park Suites, Ojjijo Road, Nairobi, Kenya. Email: catherine@genesis-analytics.com

Names of all members of the evaluation team: Victoria Brown (Education Specialist), Aditya Khurana (Evaluation Specialist), Catherine Namwezi (Project Manager and Qualitative Researcher), Sarah Melville (Quantitative Researcher), Chika Ehirim (Qualitative Researcher)

Genesis Analytics Limited certify that the independent evaluation has been conducted in line with the Terms of Reference and other requirements received.

The following conditions apply to the data collection and analysis presented in the midline/endline report:

- All qualitative and quantitative data collected at endline was collected independently by the EE and Learning Progress Assessment data, Transition data, attendance data, and quantitative monitoring datasets were provided by the project for analysis (Initials: AK)

- The data analysis conducted independently by the EE and provides a fair and consistent representation of findings (Initials: AK)

- Data quality assurance and verification mechanisms agreed in the terms of reference with the project have been soundly followed (Initials: AK)

- The recipient has not fundamentally altered or misrepresented the nature of the analysis originally provided by Genesis Analytics and Research Methods International (Initials: AK)

- All child protection protocols, and guidance have been followed (Initials: AK)

- Data has been anonymised, treated confidentially, and stored safely, in line with the GEC data protection and ethics protocols (Initials: AK)

Aditya Khurana, Principal – Evaluation for Development

Genesis Analytics Limited

24th April 2023

Annex 18. Project management response

Reflections on high level results

The SAGE programme welcomes the External Evaluator's (EE) findings and believe that they not only demonstrate the strengths of our approach, but also highlight key areas for improvement that can be considered for future programming. Of the numerous findings presented, we are particularly delighted to see that the EE's independent evaluation suggests SAGE is a 'gender transformative programme that successfully addresses barriers to girls' learning through girl-focused and community-focused interventions'. Despite a five-year period during which Zimbabwe has endured multiple crises, the EE notes that SAGE programme 'effectively integrated the adaptive management principles into the programme design and management processes and procedures'. The outcome of our perseverance is evident in our results, of which we are particularly proud of how SAGE's holistic approach has led to continued learning progression, increased perceptions of safety, a positive shift in community support to girls' education and a motivating community-based skills training component.

This section provides management comment on key findings mainly focusing on outcome level, that is, learning, transition and sustainability, although we do include our reflections on a handful of intermediate outcomes such as attendance and empowerment where results did not meet anticipated targets.

Learning outcome

We are pleased that the evaluation independently corroborates what our internal monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) system already shows – SAGE girls are achieving strong levels of learning by the end of their two-year journey. Although the EE utilises SAGE's own learning data, their independent verification of the learning progress assessment data through (a) a procedural quality assurance process (b) an independent recalculation of learning results and (c) triangulation against independently collected qualitative data provides confidence to the project and to external actors on the strength of our learning results. The evaluation findings showed that SAGE learners surpassed learning targets set for the Endline phase – we see this as a testament to the effectiveness of SAGE's Teaching and Learning (T&L) approaches which are grounded in ensuring that learning support is responsive to meet the specific needs of each learner aided by multiple learning modalities. The SAGE model for T&L also emphasised putting more effort on supporting struggling learners (non-learners) – this proved effective as shown by the significant learning gains recorded for non-learners who had the weakest scores at the IPA.

That said, we understand that not all aspects of our T&L approach worked well and recognise the less optimistic feedback received on phone-based learning. We understand that the EE's findings show that the phone-based modality was less effective in enhancing learning and unpopular with girls. At the same time, we believe it played an important role in learning, nonetheless. Phone-based learning was introduced in response to the pandemic and prioritised as the only safe way to reach learners when lockdown measures were in place. Its initial purpose was to keep SAGE girls safe and engaged in SAGE, support a continuation of their learning journey and provide a way of monitoring their wellbeing and learning needs. It was maintained as part of a four-learning pathway model to target specific learners for whom in-person sessions were less viable namely pregnant young women and those who had migrated from SAGE communities but as such, it was never intended to be a long-term replacement to in-person learning for all learners. This shift in our focus should be borne in mind when interpreting girls' feedback around phone-based learning.

In line with our expectations, endline results demonstrate that our dedicated focus on the most marginalised works and needs to continue. Our model focused on seven educationally marginalised sub-groups and the endline found 'all 7 SAGE sub-groups to show statistically significant improvements in literacy and numeracy scores' over their two-year journey. According to the EE, married girls and young mothers were the biggest beneficiaries, while three sub-groups of girls reported marginally lower scores at EPA stage as compared to their peers - girls with disabilities, girls from ethnic minorities and never been to schoolgirls. These sub-groups nonetheless made great strides in their learning progression over time, and particularly for GWDs we were pleased to see concomitant improvements in proficiency of CEs to support them and wider community acceptance. We would encourage future programmes to continue to pay close attention to supporting learning amongst girls and young women from these sub-groups, and to expand programming and monitoring so that non-academic skills and wider social and emotional learning results such as increased resilience, independence or inter-personal relationships can be consistently supported and evidenced.

Transition outcome

The findings on our transition outcome are not surprising - they corroborate an important finding from our Baseline phase around the preference for transitioning into pathways that support immediate economic empowerment rather than those that further formal learning. The economic crisis of Zimbabwe

which has over-shadowed the entirety of SAGE's project duration has resulted in the overwhelming interest expressed by learners (96%) to transition into pathways which directly support their livelihood activities (such as vocational skills training, fairly paid employment and employment) resulting in only 4.91% of learners transitioning to formal education. Transition results at subgroup level also shows that the preference for a particular transition pathway was aligned to learners specific and urgent needs. The programme registered some notable success in supporting learners who have never been to school to transition into formal education, with this group almost twice as likely to transition into education compared to any other sub-group. Additionally, married girls and young mothers constituted a high percent (more than 90%) of learners who transitioned into pathways linked to vocational skills and employment. This likely reflects their increased responsibilities and demand for them to contribute income at household level.

The project recognises that the ISOP component probably has room for improvement but believes that a much greater focus on economic empowerment would not have been ideal. For girls who transitioned into vocational skills training in ISOP, we can see from the endline that they required (a) longer and intensive individualised support throughout and (b) better linking into market-access opportunities. Both are areas where we would support improvement in future programming. At the same time, the endline also provided challenge to our overall ISOP approach suggesting that providing for start-up capital, business incubation etc, would have made the programming stronger. On one hand, we appreciate the rationale for this challenge – in fact, the original SAGE design had incorporated other economic empowerment elements such as group saving activities based on similar thinking. On the other hand, it is important to keep in mind that the SAGE programme was not designed as an equally weighted education and economic empowerment programme. This is evident in the lowered budget of Output 4 covering ISOP being compared to budget for Outputs 1 and 2 (as presented in the Value for Money section). As a result, while we fully acknowledge that further post-transition research is valuable to understand the effectiveness of transition pathways (see below our reflections on the logframe), we also believe that significant redesign may have been beyond the scope of a GEC-funded programme and that such needs may be better met by partnerships with government or private sector actors than directly by CSO actors.

We appreciate the EE's additional analysis that found a strong correlation between the likelihood of transition with self-efficacy and empowerment index scores and think focusing on this link may help support transition further. The link itself supports our belief that a holistic and multi-component model is vital to meet marginalised adolescent learners needs. Because of this, SAGE's work under the CoGE component to build girls' agency and their ability/likelihood of voicing their opinions in our view was vital to transition. Although the programme was successful in supporting learners to transition into various pathways in line with our set targets, we acknowledge that more can be done. In particular, the lower than anticipated results under intermediate 3.1 which assumed that transition outcomes would be strengthened by girls feeling empowered to make informed and relevant choices on their transition pathways showed only 63.53% of girls surveyed at the endline having a high score on the empowerment index. Promisingly, 77.17% of girls proceeded into a transition pathway indicating either a disconnect between girls' beliefs and their actions or it could be the wider support structure of volunteers, peers and community members that support girls to overcome this gap.

Sustainability

We are pleased that the EE findings have demonstrated promising elements of SAGE's Sustainability Outcome. The EE reported that 'Overall, the SAGE programme has achieved some good progress in embedding sustainability at the systems level', with key informants including government colleagues aiding this finding. The consortium attribute this result to anchoring its sustainability actions to the "Whole of Government Approach" which was utilised throughout the project life in co-designing approaches, collaboration in activity delivery and pushing for commitments to be made by different stakeholders (at multiple-levels) to continue supporting the learning hubs post project-closure. The principles of collaboration and ownership which were effective at system-level were also instrumental at community-level, where SAGE's focus on investing in community-based structures have shown results in post-transition support and child protection.

However, the project also acknowledges the findings that 'several risks to sustainability remain' and that sustainability measures would have been better integrated into the project design from earlier in the programme. It is important to be cognisant that interventions in Zimbabwe are massively impacted by a long-term and complex socio-economic context which was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and which has not only affected programme participants but also diminished the overall project budget. Adaptations to SAGE's sustainability approach were made in July 2021 which accelerated a shift towards community ownership in the last six months of the project but are not aligned to the government's financial capacity or resourcing plans for their NFE policy. The programme is nonetheless still working hard to ensure the effectiveness of sustainability-focused measures and in the final months of the project and post-closure, SAGE partners are following up on the commitments and action plans held with community structures and government actors to support the low resource SAGE model which has been packaged up to aid them in their leadership. Furthermore, programme monitoring efforts continue to focus on following up on the effectiveness

of the Sustainable Volunteer Incentive Scheme and hub-level community ownership to further course correct in our final close-out period and mitigate concerns around sustainability.

Intermediate outcomes

Interestingly, while the project has demonstrated and met its targets at outcome level, this was not the case for intermediate outcomes where some mixed results were registered. This is an interesting finding as it challenges the project's understanding of the linear relationship between its intermediate outcomes and outcomes in some areas, while forcing us to also reconsider technical measurement issues and challenges in others. We focus on our comments on relationships in this section, and measurement in the final section of this response.

For IO.1.1 on attendance, we have found it a long-term challenge to reach targets and as the evaluation has noted 'Programme strategies were only partially successful in improving attendance'. The programme has proactively tracked attendance rates and introduced multiple approaches to improve attendance ranging from community-based follow-up by volunteers and community members, flexible timetables and maintained a multi-pathway model. However, the COVID-19 outbreak and continued economic challenges hindered regular attendance, which could have increased learning results even further. The programme has always striven to ensure no girl is left behind and is concerned that attendance remains lowest for girls from ethnic minorities and girls who had never been to school. The programme recognises that future programming would benefit from reinforcing of attendance requirement for ISOP eligibility, promoting of vocational training college opportunities, more consistent use of flexible timetables across all hubs in line with seasonal calendars, further normative change interventions to challenge the burden of household chore demands on learners and more focus on volunteer attendance rates.

Evaluation findings do provide pockets of results requiring further examination which could guide future interventions related to self-efficacy. For IO 2.1, results on self-efficacy have been particularly intriguing for the programme. For example, girls with disabilities were reported to show the lowest mean self-efficacy score and the lowest proportion of girls that score highly on the self-efficacy index, in which a drop of 91.70% of girls scoring high self-efficiacy scores dropped to 50.70. We agree with the EE's suggestions that this could be caused by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the challenging economic context in Zimbabwe and the fact that it is more challenging for GWD's to access disability-inclusive settings within formal education, employment and skills training as well as overcoming long-term stigma and discrimination. These results are also based on a very small sample of 12 GWDs which did not match with the qualitative responses of the GWDs. In the event of future funding, we would look to explore this issue further and are interested to see whether peer-led approaches in CoGE could also be more effective for girls with disabilities by providing opportunities for leadership and more inclusion by their peer leaders versus adult facilitators.

The project was surprised by results for IO 2.2 related to SRHR knowledge, in which targets were not met and which at baseline presented 10.84% of girls to have a high SRHR index score yet at the endline phase, this proportion has dropped down to 5.16%, with married girls (-8%) and young mothers (-6%) showing a slight decrease in the SRHR KAP scores. Based on session observations and volunteer feedback, the project believes gaps may persist still at delivery-level in terms of volunteer capacity and content accessibility. For future programming, we would recommend reviewing the CoGE manual versus endline results and adjusting SRHR modules to be more concise and accessible and would look for external facilitator support for adult facilitators and peer leaders, by the Community Health Workers and school-based Guidance and Counselling teachers. We also think that the diminished access to external SRHR services through the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis could also taint girls' confidence or understanding of SRHR practices and would want to investigate these findings further.

Theory of Change (ToC)

The EE's analysis around our ToC provides us with some food for thought for designing similar programmes in the future. Generally, the assumptions made on the ToC and the determined logical path for creating change hold true according to our endline. However, when considering future programme of similar nature, there are some project components to consider:

- Firstly, under the Transition Outcome, the ISOP component which supports learners' transition pathway to vocational skills and employment would be strengthened by including activities such as formal enrolment into TVET colleges so that more girls can enrol for non-female traditional skills, more deliberate content on building learners' financial literacy skills and enhanced support for learners to have access to external financial support to transform their trades into their own businesses.

- Secondly, under the Learning Outcome and Intermediate outcome asserting that self-efficacy aids learning, it was assumed that activities for girls to learn and discuss SRHR and life skills would sufficiently increase self-efficacy. However, we believe that it is the interaction of a wider scope of activities that enacts this change and that there are substantial linkages to the ISOP component as well as numeracy and literacy learning. This is demonstrated by the endline's findings of ISOP participation improving a girls'

standing in the community as a businesswoman as well as wider OU research highlighting the impact of self-perception as a 'learner' to inspire girls' self-efficacy. The programme would suggest realigning the ToC to show that self-efficacy can be increased by multiple and inter-dependent aspects of the programme.

- Finally, we would recommend reflecting on how activities are delivered and how they can be adapted to aid an improvement in girls' self-efficacy. For example, the CoGE component delivered by adult facilitators was envisaged to the main driver for increased self-efficacy scores, However, to aid sustainability outcomes, the project has recently been piloting a new peer-led delivery approach which enables some learners to lead the delivery of sessions. Initial feedback on girls' experience from the pilot exercise has been positive in terms of girls also appreciating leadership opportunities which the project believes in a longer-term setting could benefit girls' self-efficacy. This is supplemented by knowledge of two other peer-led models in Zimbabwe led by CARE and CAMFED which also promote this approach.

Reflections on recommendations

We concur with the recommendations presented by the EE both for scaling up in Zimbabwe and for future programming considerations. However, with the limited time remaining before project closure, there is not much, if any, that can be progressed by SAGE itself. Plan International is pursuing future funding opportunities to continue the SAGE model in Zimbabwe and which would be leveraged upon to advance some of the identified recommendations. At the same time, we also want to encourage the government, other implementing partners, donors and stakeholders to consider the EE's recommendations when designing and implementing education programmes in Zimbabwe and other similar contexts.

In terms of how the SAGE team would envisage responding to recommendations in future funding or for wider stakeholders understanding when designing their programmes, we have the following suggestions:

Recommendation Area	Recommendation	Project Response
Overall	1. Expand community-based delivery of learning and skill development programming	The project would greatly welcome the scaling up of community-based approaches in Zimbabwe to ensure out-of-school (OOS) girls across the country can benefit from similar investments.
Overall	2. Ensure ongoing community engagement and continually incorporate beneficiary feedback to adapt programme design, operations and inputs that encourage deeper buy-in and ownership throughout the project and beyond	The programme strongly agrees that future programme involving community-driven development should build similar systems, processes, and structures for the community to effectively engage with and provide feedback and learnings to the programme leadership and managers.
Learning	3. Link community-based learning hubs to local primary schools for ownership and sustainability.	Since the project's inception, a linkage has been established between hubs and nearby schools, with it a requirement of MoPSE for all SAGE learning hubs to be aligned to a formal school. Gaps identified in the implementation of the project has been at i) school-level and ii) policy level. This has been evidenced by lack of consistent headteacher engagement and at the national-level in gaps of understanding of how to implement CBE. In the remainder of the SAGE project, this will be addressed through a final event which will share SAGE learning to aim to influence or at least start the process to have Community Based Education (CBE) fully recognised as part of NFE policy delivery, with clearly defined roles for school heads and community leadership. Post-SAGE, Plan International Zimbabwe will continue to bring in SAGE learning to ministerial representatives as they review curriculum and implementation frameworks for CBE.
Learning	4. Integrate learner-centred, active, inclusive and gender-sensitive teaching approaches into NFE programmes with regular refresher training for educators supporting and implementing these approaches.	SAGE partners welcome this wider and national-level use of its T&L materials and approaches.
Learning	5. Integrate relevant and appropriate technologies for teachers' continuous professional development and delivery of NFE programmes	SAGE partners agree that the Government of Zimbabwe should further integrate SAGE's phone based CPD approach into their teacher professional development plans.

Transition	6. Conduct research on post-ISOP transition pathways for girls and the effectiveness of sustainability measures.	Since December 2022, the SAGE programme has undertaken internal monitoring by gathering case studies of girls, six months after graduation. This has been fruitful in understanding girls transition journeys and associated barriers.
		On research, there is learning in the wider GEC portfolio from projects which have conducted tracer studies and post evaluation research studies, which Plan International would like to explore further in the event of further funding being obtained.
		Research on post-ISOP transition pathways is a costly and time-intensive exercise requiring substantial budget as SAGE learners are very transient, as shown in the high replacement rate in the endline sample and programme experience in girls' high migration rates from rural to urban areas.
		As the project closes in July 2023, it is also unable to commit to research on sustainability measures due to financial constraints.
		However, both areas would be included in research plans if future funding was secured for continued implementation of the SAGE model.
Transition	7. Ensure skills training provides intensive and relevant practical and work-based learning experiences alongside effective financing for securing entry into employment or self-employment following certification.	The project recommends that future projects utilising the SAGE model also include the opportunity for girls to access vocational skills training at formal TVET colleges which would open opportunities for learner to enter employment through industrial attachments.
		The current project design moved away from the residential-based approach in the early stages of the project given the safeguarding concerns and community feedback that marginalised adolescent girls would struggle to leave household duties to be supported in residential settings. Therefore, future projects would need increased funding to cover project staff/chaperones to support small groups of learners at specific periods, which results in a costly and intensive approach.
		The project appreciates the need for financing to establish or grow small businesses but does not advocate for this to be the role of SAGE partners, given its unsustainable and dependency-growing consequences. This is a challenging gap considering the wider macro-economic challenges in Zimbabwe which prevented SAGE from introducing group financial saving initiatives,
		More in-depth exploration of external financing/investment providers are needed in the Zimbabwean context, as well as how government initiatives can support learners so these partnerships could be built into a project from the start.
Transition	8. Integrate financial inclusion component into programming focused on OOS girls.	Plan International appreciates the benefit of increased financial inclusion activities in a model such as SAGE and believes future programming would benefit with ISOP being split into two larger components of i) theory of financial inclusion and ii) skills acquisition.
		However, as stated above, it does not advocate for CSO's to be relied upon to provide start-up capital and would welcome collaboration or partnership with existing government, private sector or micro-financing initiatives that would provide this support. It is not clear on the business incubation model but would be keen to learn more.
Life Skills	9. Expand life skills for girls to advance their self-efficacy and empowerment and to better support overall learning and transition outcomes	A Global Partnerships for Education (GPE) grant has been awarded to CAMFED which has a component on developing a Life Skills book for use in schools in Zimbabwe. Plan International Zimbabwe has already started the engagement process with CAMFED to share our experiences in engaging MoPSE on the need for having Life Skills resource materials in schools and to raise awareness to them that the project already has

		some resources materials that can be adapted. The engagement process will continue post-SAGE project led by the Plan International Zimbabwe Education Lead.
Gender and Social Norms	10. Intensify efforts to address negative gender-related social norms and attitudes.	SAGE partners support the need to continue and scale-up good practice as demonstrated in the SAGE programme.
Gender and Social Norms	11. Continue addressing the specific needs of marginalised populations to enhance programming efficiency and promote better equity and equality between men and women.	We agree that future programmes must be intentional in adopting localised, contextualised, acceptable approaches to generating change, including incorporating differentiated and appropriate modalities and inputs to generating change.
Sustainability	12. Build demand, ownership, and accountability for community-based initiatives to ensure success and sustainability.	We agree that it is important for future programmes to initiate thinking, establishment, and ownership of these (or similar) measures from inception, allowing the duration of the programme for ensuring their effective operation, monitoring, and management.
Sustainability	13. Community-based approaches should be complemented by strong government engagement and technical assistance from local authorities and civil society to strengthen delivery, management, and monitoring capacities	In the remainder of the project and post-project, Plan International Zimbabwe is committed to working with MoPSE to shape their NFE policy delivery particularly in Community Based Education (CBE) based on SAGE's experiences. Specific learning has been previously shared with other GEC partners and focused on the need for clearly defined roles for school heads and community leadership.

Reflections on the logframe

We do not anticipate any changes to the SAGE logframe as the programme is nearing its closure date. However, for any future programming, we have three key reflections.

1) To support girls and young women most effectively, programmes such as ours that include vocational training must rethink how they measure transition. Although our logframe indicators for transition were aligned to Fund Manager requirements and guidance, we acknowledge that our approach had its shortcomings. As pointed out by the EE, we considered it to be "successful" transition if girls moved from our ATL programme into our ISOP programme. As a result, beyond Stories of Change, we hold limited data on what happened to girls *after* they undertook ISOP. For any future programming, we believe that including tracer studies that systematically track outcomes for a sample of girls over a longer period after they undertake ISOP will help us better understand if that training does in fact enhance life outcomes for beneficiaries in the form of for instance higher income, better employment, or successfully setting up of own businesses.

2) Considering the rapidly changing context, both target setting and regular revisions to targets are more important than ever. As the endline results show, empowerment-related targets under IO2.1 for self-efficacy and IO 3.1 for empowerment to make informed choices for transition were not reached, with the EE concluding that one reason SAGE may have missed its target is due to the benchmark being set too high.

- On one hand, we stand by our original target – although we understand that social norms and cultural practices that drive self-efficacy take a long time to change, our consortium's aim was always to be ambitious in our approach. That, combined with rather high scores at baseline, meant that our initial target setting was probably appropriate in our view.

- On the other hand, we also recognize that persistent economic and political challenges in Zimbabwe combined with the pandemic posed a particularly challenging context in which to expect that 90% of girls would continue to demonstrate high levels of self-efficacy. Across the globe, we are seeing research that not only shows the adverse effects the pandemic has had on the mental health of school-going children, but also demonstrates that these effects have disproportionately been felt by women and girls. In addition, the EE rightly pointed out the shift in our beneficiary group over the life of the project towards the Apostolic community may also have dampened results.

In such a context, we concede that some of our targets may have needed to be revised. The above highlights how important a focus on target setting and revisions is at this time and taking a long-term and context-relevant approach.

3) If more funding were to be available in the future, improvements in the measurement of self-efficacy and norm change would take priority. We do appreciate that if future funding was secured that there are improvements that could be made to SAGE's MEL framework to enhance the measuring of self-efficacy and social norm change at the girl and community level between evaluation points and the integration of

monitoring results into adaptive management approaches. For example, utilising new monitoring tools, strengthening staff expertise on analysis of behaviour change, consistent sub-group analysis and longitudinal approaches. The project also accepts that its project design and hence evaluation framework have been limited in terms of systematically monitoring and hence responding to girls' mental health and psychosocial support needs, so it is difficult to understand whether self-efficacy has also been diminished or impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak which has negatively influenced learners mental-health globally and across all ages.

Annex 19. Learning beneficiaries

Table 19.1: Four ways to evidence progress in place of PbR required DID design.

Evidence line	Description	Comments	Calculating # girls	Calculating project progress for AR	Using this evidence line? (Yes/ No)
1	Improvement in mean score over prior timepoint	Comparison group is an additional reporting level that projects can include if they can establish an appropriate comparison group	All girls in intervention group counted if difference over prior timepoint is statistically significant. No girls in intervention group counted if not stat. sig	Project meets target if mean score comparison over prior timepoint is stat. sig.	Y
2	Fewer non-learners	Can use mean score, subtasks of focus. Non-learner status must be meaningfully defined (1 word read isn't reading!)	Tracked sample: # girls who meet criteria vs. prior timepoint; non-tracked sample: extrapolated from % reduction across samples	Project meets target if reduction is stat. sig.	N
3	More girls meeting a benchmark	Benchmark must represent a meaningful level of attainment for the girls	Same as evidence line #2	Same as evidence line #2	N
4	Girls mastering a skill	Based on project intervention focus, girls achieving a meaningful score on a skill or task of focus	Same as evidence line #2	Same as evidence line #2	N

Table 19.2: Learning Outcome Reporting

Indicator(s)	Achieved at endline	Calculation for # girls learning	# girls learning - target	# girls learning - actual
Improvement in mean score over prior timepoint – literacy	Average standardised score improvement in literacy is statistically significant	As per FM guideline, all girls in intervention group counted if difference over prior timepoint is statistically significant.	Target for AR reporting for FCDO is all girls learning	13,460
Improvement in mean score over prior timepoint – numeracy	Average standardised score improvement in numeracy is statistically significant	As per FM guideline, all girls in intervention group counted if difference over prior timepoint is statistically significant.	Target for AR reporting for FCDO is all girls learning	13,460
Total			**13,460**	**13,460**

Please note that transition beneficiaries for AR reporting to FCDO will be calculated using final monitoring report submitted by the project.