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**Réussite et Épanouissement via l'Apprentissage et L'Insertion au Système Éducatif (REALISE) – GEC-T DRC**

**Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning (MEL) Framework**

**Implementing agencies:**

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## Introduction

Roughly 80 million people live in the DRC; they are spread across an area the size of Western Europe. The population is forecast to double in the next 25 years following demographic trends throughout the continent. The population pyramid is also heavily weighted to the under-25s[[1]](#footnote-1). The DRC ranks 177 out of 188 on the Human Development Index which is indicative of high poverty levels, poor access to healthcare and low access to quality education. Conflict and political strife have seen GNI per capita fall by about 46% between 1990 and 2015.[[2]](#footnote-2)

A PESTLE analysis has been conducted and is included in Annex 5. This outlines the multivariate barriers to education for girls’ in the DRC and highlights that the country is a Fragile and Conflict Affected State (FCAS), is ranked 144 out 148 in the global Gender Equality Index (GEI) and that investment in education have been cut by 30-40% due to the unstable socio-political environment. The Annex also includes an FCAS assessment by region and additional contextual considerations regarding gender inequality.

If girls are to learn the skills they need to succeed in life, they must participate in sustained, quality education. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), a girls’ first steps towards school are often undermined by families and communities who do not recognise the value of educating them; by high costs and low household incomes; and by an array of threats to their wellbeing, from child marriage to gender-based violence (GBV). Building on our experience of implementing Vas-y-fille (VyF), we will support girls to realise their right to education through a suite of interrelated interventions that are evidence based and proven to work.

Girls in DRC experience multiple barriers to education including:

* **Families do not always value girls’ education**

Families often require girls to generate an income, to support with household chores, and to fulfil societal norms (like early marriage). The VyF endline found that most children work between 2 and 3 hours a day.

* **Household income is too low to send girls to school**

In DRC over 63% of the population is considered to be below the national set poverty line. This percentage is even greater in rural areas that are often difficult to access, where many VYF schools are located. In addition, school fees can include a range of different items with up to 20 individual fees to be paid. Parent’s are often not aware of what an appropriate fee is and their rights and responsibilities to pay. If the fees are unaffordable, sending boys to school tends to take priority.

* **Conflict disrupts schooling**

Conflict has a devastating impact on girls and their education. These range from affecting school structures and the school calendar to psychosocial trauma, loss of family member and displacement. Girls in particular drop out of school and are exposed to exploitative labour and recruitment by armed groups.

* **Low level of teacher experience or exposure to effective teaching pedagogies**

The VyF endline noted serious gaps in teachers’ knowledge and skills - with some teachers barely able to read and write. Competency gaps were a particular difficulty when teaching children whose mother tongue differed from the language of instruction. The endline noted the success of teacher training, and recommended an increased focus on this.

**Theory of Change:** To address these barriers to girls’ education, the project’s Theory of Change (TOC) will allow girls to access formal or accelerated education at Grade 4 level and transition through school to further education or secondary school at Grade 7 level.

To address the issue of high school costs and low family income we will provide financial support to Accelerated Education Programme (AEP) centres, facilitating savings groups, and providing bursaries to girls. Hidden costs of schooling will be addressed through provision of supplies to primary schools and covering some AEP centre costs.

To enhance teacher experience, we will invest in TPD approaches, Literacy and Numeracy teaching methodologies, and Accelerated Learning methodologies.

To overcome the restraining factor of families and communities not prioritising girls’ education we will implement our world class approaches including Choices and Promises and CVA to help raise awareness and understanding of the value of girls’ education.

To support child protection and child wellbeing we will be implementing a child protection and child safeguarding package of activities and implementing Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH).

To mitigate conflict as a potential disrupter to schooling we will be implementing activities focused on conflict sensitive education.

The Theory of Change proposes that by addresses these key barriers through the interrelated interventions above, marginalised girls can access their right to education.

REALISE will help girls to access primary and secondary school through a suite of interrelated interventions. These are evidence-based (many of them were present in Vas-y-fille), but that evidence was not necessarily developed in the provinces we are supporting here. A lack of quality data constrains our ability to base interventions on context-specific evidence. We will therefore use monitoring data from the project and focussed primary research to build a better evidence base to allow us to constantly improve these interventions through the life of the project. This will include research into targeted drop-out interventions and attendance tracking.

Through Promises and Citizen Voice and Action, families will learn how their girls will benefit from education and are given the advocacy tools to that will see institutions supporting them. Extrinsic motivators - such as bursaries - are replaced through Promises with intrinsic motivators (belief that education will lead to increased wellbeing for girls and their families). Families’ behaviours change with their attitudes: they push schools to decrease fees and Provincial government to provide more financial support. At the same time, savings groups and bursaries increase families’ financial capacity to provide for their girls’ education.

The majority of girls we support will be young enough to access primary school; older girls will be able to follow an Accelerated Education route. In both cases, the costs of education remain a restraining factor: classrooms may have few textbooks and lessons may be taken by under-trained and demotivated teachers. Girls’ time spent in school and their wellbeing whilst at school could likely be cut short by social challenges including the widespread conflict that affects the country. We will help resource the classrooms we are working in; we will build teachers’ competencies and motivation through quality professional development; and we will help schools protect girls by preparing for conflict, helping with education at times of displacement, and providing psychosocial support to learners and teachers dealing with the after-effects. Through this resilient, better-resourced foundation, specific literacy and numeracy interventions will help girls to develop the fundamental competencies at the heart of the GEC project. From here, girls will be in a strong position to pass their primary school-lever exams.

Girls are most at risk of dropping out of education as they transition from primary or Accelerated Education to secondary education. The restraining factors identified above repeat and compound at this stage as girls are expected to marry and are more at risk of SGBV and recruitment by armed groups. All our enabling interventions will come into play to help girls overcome these challenges, to help them transition to secondary education; receive financial support to stay in school; and benefit from better-quality education. We are theorising that, by particularly concentrating interventions between Grade 4 and 9, we will build girls’ resilience to the factors threatening their education and reduce the sharp rates of drop-out. We will continue to support the cohort of girls through their secondary education by working with their teachers to undertake professional development and by improving the quality of literacy and numeracy resources at these levels.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Direct beneficiaries** | **Primary education** | **AEP centres** | **Secondary education** |
|  | **# girls** | **# girls & boys** | **# girls** |
| Kasai Oriental | To be confirmed post initial assessment | To be confirmed post initial assessment | To be confirmed post initial assessment |
| Ituri | To be confirmed post initial assessment | To be confirmed post initial assessment | To be confirmed post initial assessment |
| Lomami | To be confirmed post initial assessment | To be confirmed post initial assessment | To be confirmed post initial assessment |
| Haut Katanga | To be confirmed post initial assessment | To be confirmed post initial assessment | To be confirmed post initial assessment |
| Tanganyika | To be confirmed post initial assessment | To be confirmed post initial assessment | To be confirmed post initial assessment |
| Lualaba | To be confirmed post initial assessment | To be confirmed post initial assessment | To be confirmed post initial assessment |
| **Total** |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Beneficiaries** | |
| **Interventions** | **Recipients (who?)** | **Direct reach #** |
| Literacy & Numeracy Boost (Supplementary classes) | Girls and boys in 267 schools and communities in need of additional numeracy and literacy support | TBD |
| Teacher professional development | TOT training with inspectors from the ministry of 6 provinces at primary and secondary levels. | 1000 teachers and 12 inspectors |
| Accelerated education methodologies | Educators implementing accelerated education. | 20 educators |
| Conflict sensitive education | Teachers will be trained in psychological first aid and working with children who have been traumatised by violence and war. | 1000 teachers |
| Improved quality learning environment | All children benefiting from additional resources. | 75000 girls |
| Bursaries | All girls in selected grade levels in target schools and AEP students | TBD |
| Citizen Voice and Action | Groups of parents constituted to conduct advocacy within each of the 267 communities | TBD |
| Financial support to AEP | Girls and boys that are out of school and over 12 not eligible for reintegration into formal system. (50% girls quota to be respected) | 4000 Children |
| Savings and loans group | Groups of parents per primary school in a full cohort. (60% female participants) | 300 groups TBD |

This MEL framework aims to give comprehensive yet practical guidelines to the M&E and learning approach of REALISE to the project staff and to the fund manager (FM). In order to integrate it in the project management strategy and ensure progress throughout the life of the project, the MEL framework sets out to follow several key and overarching principles regarding how to conduct and manage monitoring activities, evaluations, and learning:

* The M&E process is an integrated part of project management, and is being valued as a key approach to inform programming, improve and ensure quality of interventions, and generate useful evidence of project’s results and challenges
* Monitoring information should be collected both on process and product/service, and monitoring activities should be aligned as much as possible and practical with project activities
* Simple and clear indicators and targets are set for the project, with a focus on achieving results at intermediate outcome and outcome level
* The learning agenda defined for the project is well-structured and planned out, with an increased emphasis on dissemination and sharing of lessons learned, as well as project’s findings with a range of stakeholders.

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## Learning from GEC 1

The key lessons learned from GEC 1 were:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Lessons learned from GEC1** | **Mitigating actions in GEC-T** |
| 1 | Acceptability within control schools to collect data: throughout the project control school were expected to collect attendance data and allow VYF to conduct comparative tests with children however they did not receive any interventions. Being in the same geographic cluster as the intervention school this caused acceptability issues within the community and in some control schools access and data was difficult to obtain. | To facilitate access and buy-in from control schools, the REALISE team will be providing a minimal package to control schools / communities, which would include a “class kit” and a solar lamp (Little Sun solar lamp). These two elements aren’t considered as intensive activities, nor expected to heavily affect the girls’ learning and transition outcomes in the control schools and communities’ setting. |
| 2 | Data in the evaluation was evaluated on the national level, but little tailored specific information from provinces was shared or analysed contextually, making it difficult to draw pertinent lessons that could be used, as only the top-line efficacy of activities was truly measured. | The project will require the contracted external evaluators (EE) to disaggregate all data and analysis by location (among other disaggregation criteria) and draw results to explain findings from a local context perspective, as well as a top-line (e.g. national) perspective. |
| 3 | A very strong focus on quantitative data make that the qualitative data within the evaluation was not as strong. This was also more significant in not contextualizing the findings per province. | An emphasis on a mixed-method evaluation design is a must in GEC-T. The project will ensure that the EE team and areas of competence will fulfil the need of using both quantitative and qualitative research to complete the evaluations. |
| 4 | Lack of disaggregation of data into subgroups to establish which girls benefitted most from which interventions, made it difficult to establish which activities impacted which girls most significantly. | Similar to the above, the project will ensure that the EE meets the requirement of disaggregating all data by subgroups, sex, geography, and disability type. |
| 5 | Obtaining conclusive evidence of impact of certain community level activities was difficult as much of the analyses was focused on the EGRA and EGMA components to establish learning outcomes improvements in schools. It is essential to capture more extensive data to assess community change in behaviours, | The emphasis of a mixed-method evaluation will address this shortcoming and gather more data and insights into community behaviour change and attitudes. |
| 6 | The previous evaluations were conflict blind meaning that certain elements such as influx of IDPs into an intervention school would not be captured meaning that skewed results from that school would not be consistent with other schools and may not be excluded. | From the very beginning, the project has emphasized to the Fund Manager (FM), the donor (DFID) and all its partners that the next phase of the project will operate in conflict-affected provinces, whether it’s acute or ongoing. Therefore, all interventions and evaluations need to be designed and implemented that are at least conflict-sensitive, if not conflict-responsive. |

## Monitoring

*Table 1: Outputs for measurement*

| **Output** | **Level at which measurement will take place** | **Tool and mode of data collection** | **Rationale, *i.e. why is this the most appropriate approach for this output*** | **Frequency of data collection** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Output 1.1  Proportion of teachers who demonstrate the use of multiple methods for teaching literacy and numeracy in the classroom | Schools | Classroom observation tools, in person by field officers and EPSP (education inspectors)  Will include monitoring of different experiences of girls and boys (e.g. how often girls vs boys are asked questions, how the teacher moves around the room) | This method will allow EPSP and field staff to directly observe how teachers give their lesson in the classroom and assess their teaching methods.  The data collected will be analysed by the project staff and used during project meetings to show trends, discuss remedial measures if necessary to enable adaptive management throughout the life of the project. | Quarterly |
| Output 1.2  Number of children actively participating in Literacy & Numeracy boost community activities | Reading camps in community | Community LB volunteers.  Literacy and Numeracy boosts attendance sheet  Disaggregated by sex. | Each participant will be recorded in the attendance sheet, which will then be used by the community volunteers to keep track of participants | Quarterly from Q4 2018 |
| Output 2.1  Proportion of teachers per annum who have completed four or more cycles of professional development (to include functional literacy & numeracy, and gender-sensitive teaching) | Teacher training centres | Teacher Competency Profile, signed off by coach after each cycle. Coaches’ records of the cycles that each of their teachers have completed. Photos of records sent by coaches to SC staff.  Disaggregated by sex. | Coaching is the last stage in the TPD cycle, so the appropriate point at which to confirm the cycle is adequately completed.  The data collected will be analysed by the project staff and used during project meetings to show trends, discuss remedial measures if necessary to enable adaptive management throughout the life of the project. | Bi-annually |
| Output 2.2  Proportion of school leaders and/or coaches who provide one observation feedback on the performance of teachers per cycle | School | TPD coaches' lesson observation feedback report - photos.  Disaggregated by sex, of coach and teacher. | These are the actual forms coaches use to provide feedback to teachers. We can use them to determine that feedback was given (the teacher signs to say it was received).    The photos themselves will serve as evidence.  The data collected will be analysed by the project staff and used during project meetings to show trends, discuss remedial measures if necessary to enable adaptive management throughout the life of the project. | Photos submitted after each cycle (once every six weeks) |
| Output 2.3  # of children completing standardized end of year AEP exams | AEP centres | Record of children who take the exams and scores of these children.  Collected in person.  Disaggregated by sex. | This will allow for cross check, and let the project know children who didn’t complete the exams for follow up. | Annually |
| Output 3.1  # of teachers trained in psychosocial support to detect cases of abuse or trauma among their students and provide support | TPD training centres | Training record of number of teachers attending and completing an exam.  Disaggregated by sex  Collected in person | This will allow the project to know who are the teachers who were trained and who successfully completed the exam on that subject | Bi-annually |
| Output 3.2  # of girls better resourced for school | Household, schools | List of bursary beneficiaries, and of schools receiving learning materials.  Collected in person. | Girls witness they are better equipped in materials to learn at school.  This data will be used as secondary data by the EE to determine the effect of bursaries and learning materials on girls’ learning. | Quarterly |
| Output 4.1  Teachers and mentors promoting good practice in SRH more often and with more confidence | School | KAP study  Classroom observations by field officers and EPSP (school inspectors)  Disaggregated by sex | A KAP study will be able to determine changes in attitudes and practices of teachers and mentors in their classroom.  The data collected will be analysed by the project staff and used during project meetings to show trends, discuss remedial measures if necessary to enable adaptive management throughout the life of the project. | Quarterly from Q2 2018 |
| Output 4.2  Proportion of Child Protection cases reported in the last term being responded to within the timeframe set by hotline guidelines |  | Record of Child Protection (CP) case management  Collected in person by CP focal point.  Disaggregated by sex. | All Child Protection cases data will be handled and managed confidentially by the project CP advisor and focal point. | Quarterly |
| Output 4.3  % of boys and girls in school clubs who report better knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviours around puberty and SRH | School clubs | KAP study  Collected in person  Disaggregated by sex. | Best way to capture a change in KAP and ensure children are benefitting from the school clubs.  The data collected will be analysed by the project staff and used during project meetings to show trends, discuss remedial measures if necessary to enable adaptive management throughout the life of the project. | Bi-annually |
| Output 5.1  # of girls receiving bursaries attending school regularly (80% of days) | Schools | Copies of bank receipt / transfer; attendance record of girls in school.  Collected in person | To allow for cross-checking | Quarterly |
| Output 5.2  Number of community-based initiatives that support girls education | Communities | Record kept by community groups  Collected in person | Monitoring visits will also ensure that community groups are active and implementing initiatives. | Quarterly |
| Output 5.3  % of VSLA members reporting increased financial assets to afford girls' education | VSLA | Records from VSLA groups and questionnaires to members.  Collected in person.  Disaggregated by sex. | Members are best placed to know and evaluate whether their financial assets have increased to support girls’ education. | Quarterly |

In addition to this, sample demographics on girls and teachers will be collected. This will include, for example, disability data from with the Washington Group questions. This will allow us to disaggregate the monitoring data to explore sub-population features such as marginalisation of a sub-group. This will only be done with a sample of girls initially and built up over time. This is because of the large size of the cohort and the difficulties of tracking at an individual level (as discussed in the Vas-y-fille baseline and endline).

## Key evaluation questions

The evaluations will focus on assessing results at Intermediate Outcomes and Outcomes level, which is why the evaluation questions are defined to look for causal links at a higher level. However, the project activities and outputs remain important in terms of consistency and how these relate to the Intermediate Outcomes, and then to the Outcomes. The project’s theory of change is to be tested at each evaluation point and validated or adapted if needed depending on findings. The project evaluation questions are designed by following the OECD DAC criteria to generate evidence, and demonstrate achievements on effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, sustainability and impact. The detailed evaluation design, methods, respondents and tools will be developed and submitted for review during the baseline, midline and end line, but a summary is presented in section 5 - Evaluation design of this document.

**Relevance**

1. To what extent is the project’s theory of change still valid?
2. Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the Intermediate Outcomes and Outcomes?
3. Are the Intermediate Outcomes of the project consistent with the overall objectives of improving marginalized girls’ learning and transition through education stages, and overall sustainability outcome?

**Effectiveness**

1. To what extent are the objectives likely to be achieved (Baseline and Midline evaluations) / were the objectives achieved (Endline evaluation)?
2. What works to facilitate transition of marginalized girls through education stages and increase their learning?
3. To what extent has the project reached and made a difference to marginalized sub-groups of girls (i.e. living in remote areas; girls married under 18; girls with disability; extremely poor; engaged in child labour; and young mothers under 18) in terms of learning and transition?
4. To what extent have the project’s interventions addressed the major barriers and challenges to marginalized girls’ transition through key education stages and their learning?

**Efficiency**

1. Was REALISE successfully designed and implemented?[[3]](#footnote-3)\*
2. Was REALISE good Value for Money in utilization of resources and achievement of project results?[[4]](#footnote-4)\*
3. Were objectives of the project achieved on a timely basis?

**Impact**

1. What impact did the GEC Funding have on the transition of marginalized girls through education stages and their learning?[[5]](#footnote-5)\*
2. How many girls (and boys if relevant) have been positively affected by the project interventions?
3. What are the main results achieved by the project? And what are the key factors (and challenges if any) behind these achievements?
4. What effect has had the project’s work on social and gender norms (including CHOICES and Growing Great approaches) at the community level among different categories of stakeholders (e.g. parents, community leaders, religious leaders, etc.)?

**Sustainability**

1. How sustainable were the activities funded by the GEC, and was the program successful in leveraging additional interest and investment?[[6]](#footnote-6)\*
2. Which interventions have the highest potential and likelihood of continuation after the project ends, and for scale-up?
3. What are the key factors/aspects, which require more attention from the project to increase prospects of sustainability at intermediate outcomes and outcomes level?

Some of the evaluations questions related to Relevance (a), Effectiveness (c, d), Efficiency (c, e), Impact (c), and Sustainability (b, c) were designed with the aim of generating evidence that would feed into the project learning agenda. The findings resulting from these questions will indeed open doors to more learning and more adaptation to improve programming and sharpening the focus of the project’s interventions throughout the life of the project. By endline, the evaluation findings will lead to further evidence-based approaches and interventions, available for (future) similar projects to learn from, to be shared widely among education actors and government bodies, and finally, potentially for scale-up.

## Evaluation design

### 5.1 Research design

The project will apply a rigorous evaluation approach to measure the impacts of its interventions in the six provinces where they are implemented. It is expected that the external evaluators will conduct a gender-sensitive evaluation that is also inclusive of persons with disability as best practice. The evaluation for REALISE will adopt a mixed-method quasi-experimental research design, as a randomized controlled trial would require the project to randomly select girls to be part of a treatment group and a control group, which is not the appropriate approach for GEC-T as the project works with the same beneficiaries as GEC 1. To enable comparison of the outcomes achieved by the project’s target group with the outcomes achieved by a group who are as similar as possible to the target group but didn’t receive any interventions, the evaluation will seek to use a comparison group to evaluate the results of the project and determine a causal effect of our interventions where possible.

However, there are three caveats / conditions that the project team would like to specify regarding the quasi-experimental design of the evaluations:

* During the previous phase of the project, the team of evaluators ran into a major challenge when collecting data in the field, as control schools refused to provide the information needed to the EE, and even refused to talk to them as they were very unhappy about not benefitting from any interventions from the project. To address this ethical issue, the REALISE team will be providing a minimal package to control schools/communities, which would include a “class kit” and a solar lamp (Little Sun solar lamp). These two elements aren’t considered as intensive activities, nor expected to heavily affect the girls’ learning and transition outcomes in the control schools and communities’ setting.
* In addition, the DRC, and especially the provinces where REALISE is being implemented, is categorized as an FCAS, where violence and internal displacement have increased quickly in the past year. This situation is unlikely to improve during the project life due to on-going political instability and insecurity. As such, the project is required to define a contingency plan for its programming, which means potentially transforming its current and “normal” package of interventions into an emergency package of education interventions (in line with the Education in Emergencies programming). What this means practically is that when and if an area where our treatment and control schools/communities experience a state of emergency due to conflict, REALISE will replace the current package of interventions with its education in emergency interventions. When and if this happens, both treatment and control schools in emergency areas will all receive the education in emergency package, which means they might not be comparable anymore, and can no longer be used for the DiD analysis. For both security and ethical reasons, when the project cannot continue with its “normal” package of interventions during a state of emergency in one or several affected areas, both the affected intervention and control schools will need to be excluded from the regular evaluation process. Flexibility in regard to conflict affected schools by the EE and the project will be required in order to ensure that results from evaluations are not biased. A larger initial sample will be collected in order to compensate for this higher attrition rate.
* Throughout the project, if the team notices that a high number of project areas have become areas under the emergency status, and that a quasi-experimental design seems highly compromised, the project team will seek to conduct a cross-sectional pre-post study instead, using the initial data.

As part of the quasi-experimental study, the external evaluators will be required to select a new sample of cohort of girls in order to track their learning and transition outcomes over time (longitudinal cohort tracking). The project has decided to have **one joint learning and transition cohort** as it is more rigorous yet easier to manage and allows for better linkages between learning outcomes and impact on transition. The project Vas-y-fille (GEC 1) has encountered a high attrition rate in tracking and evaluating the same cohort of girls over time, which is why it is best to start fresh with a new sample of girls, although these girls are still the same beneficiaries as GEC1. Only a subsample of the schools and AEP centres that REALISE works with will be included in the evaluation – please refer to the section 6.4 below on ‘Power Calculations and sample sizes” for more information on the sampling approach.

At outcome level, the evaluation will be using a control group to allow for robust comparison with the treatment group, therefore understanding the direct influence and net effect of the project’s interventions. At intermediate outcome level, the evaluation is not required to use a control group, and therefore will assess changes and results over time and compared to the baseline findings. The data collection approach at both levels will include a mixture of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Where appropriate, **intermediate outcomes and outcomes indicators will be disaggregated by age, gender, geography, disability (type and severity) and other relevant subgroups**. These subgroups include:

* Girls living in areas affected by conflict chronically or acutely
* Girls under 18 who are married and/or have children
* Girls who do not understand the language of instruction (LOI) – French
* Girls who belong to indigenous population
* Girls attending AEP centres

The project will ensure that the EE take the different sub-groups and the other disaggregation criteria into consideration when planning the study, therefore collecting data including these categories of beneficiaries (if possible) and analysing the data around them as well. It is difficult for the project to know in advance the proportion of each subgroup and disability level within its target group. Therefore, the project team can only assume that the EE, given enough data collected, will be able to conduct some analysis and comparison at intermediate outcome and outcome level between the different sub-groups, the different disability levels, the geography, the age range, and then relatively compare between and with the rest of the cohort.

Regarding the qualitative study, the EE will conduct qualitative enquiry with boys and parents / caregivers exploring their experiences of education, gender norms around education and impacts of girl-only focused project (in addition to qualitative enquiry with girls).

The project is anticipating that all qualitative analysis will follow the use of “thematic analysis”, which is the most common form of analysis used in qualitative research. Thematic analysis will involve three steps in particular:

1. Generating theme codes based on (a) REALISE’s Theory of Change, (b) the relevant literature and (c) an initial examination of data
2. Labelling transcribed qualitative data with generated thematic codes
3. Analysing, compiling, triangulating with quantitative data where relevant, and writing up analysis based on generated themes

Formal sequencing of quantitative and qualitative data collection is NOT planned due to time constraints. The project expects that, in field sites, quantitative data collection will commence before the collection of qualitative data. Daily debriefing meetings between enumerators and qualitative researchers will serve to help qualitative researchers stay informed of patterns in the data that must be explained or explored more specifically during qualitative work.

### 5. 2 Measuring outcomes

The External Evaluator, identified through a competitive bidding process, will lead the process of measuring the three (3) project outcomes in Learning, Transition and Sustainability and 4 intermediate outcomes on attendance, quality of teaching, life-skills and economic empowerment. All outcome and intermediate outcome indicators will be measured at baseline, midline and endline phases of the project using a mixed-methods approach and using a quasi-experimental study design. A cohort of treatment girls will be tracked over time for the matched treatment and control schools to measure the outcome and intermediate indicators.

### 5.3 Learning and transition

**Learning:** The project has 2 learning indicators, one for literacy and another for numeracy. Progression in literacy will be measured using the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) tool for lower grades and extended version Secondary Grade Reading Assessment for upper grades. Numeracy will be measured using the Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA) tool for lower grades and Secondary Grade Mathematics Assessment (SeGMA) tool for upper grades. Calibration and piloting of learning instruments will be done by External Evaluators in collaboration with the Fund Manager. The calibration process will follow the GEC guidance and provide evidence of ceiling effects, floor effects or lack thereof. Targets for learning have been set at 0.25 standard deviations per year of implementation and will be analysed using the difference-in-difference approach.

The project will continue the Vas-y-fille approach to test language. EGRA/EGMA instructions will be translated in local languages to ensure proper comprehension of what is expected. For EGMA, answers can be provided in French or in local languages, while for EGRA, reading is expected to be carried out in French. We are not currently planning additional modifications of the tests for children with disabilities; we will be capturing Washington Group short set questions as part of the tests.

**Transition:** The project will measure transition using the ‘cohort survival’ approach, as they move within a level (progress from one grade to the next) or move across levels (e.g. from primary to secondary, AEP, or vocational training).

Boys won’t be measured for learning and transition outcomes by the evaluations.

*Table 2: Outcomes for measurement*

| **Outcome** | **Level at which measurement will take place** | **Tool and mode of data collection, *e.g. HH survey, school based survey, focus group discussions etc*** | **Rationale, *i.e. why is this the most appropriate approach for this outcome*** | **Frequency of data collection,**  ***i.e. per evaluation point, annually, per term*** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Outcome 1 - Learning**  **Literacy:** Number of marginalised girls supported by GEC with improved learning outcomes in literacy | *School*  Household | EGRA / SeGRA  (disaggregated by age, geography, disability, and sub-groups) | The EGRA and SeGRA are standard tools for measuring learning for GEC projects literacy. | Baseline,  Midline and  Endline |
| **Numeracy:** Number of marginalised girls supported by GEC with improved learning outcomes in numeracy | *School*  Household | EGMA / SeGMA  (disaggregated by age, geography, disability, and sub-groups) | The EGMA and SeGMA are standard tools for measuring learning for GEC projects numeracy. | Baseline,  Midline and  Endline |
| **Outcome 2 - Transition:** Number of marginalised girls who have transitioned through key stages of education, training or employment (primary to lower secondary) | Household | Household survey  (disaggregated by age, geography, disability, and sub-groups) | This approach uses enrolments rates over time and also assesses successive progression in grades, and movement from one level of education to another as well as to employment. | Baseline,  Midline and  Endline |
| **Intermediate outcome 1: attendance**  1.1 Percentage improvement in marginalised girls' attendance rate in intervention schools | School | School Register  Spot checks  (disaggregated by age, geography, disability, and sub-groups) | School attendance is recorded on a daily basis using school attendance registers. Triangulation will be done though spot checks and household level information. | Baseline,  Midline and  Endline |
| **1.2** Average attendance rate in project AEP centres | AEP Centre | AEP Centre Register  (disaggregated by age, geography, disability, and sub-groups) | AEP centres will also mark attendance for girls every day and the registers will be the primary source of information. | Baseline,  Midline and  Endline |
| **1.3** Girls' views on the strength of barriers that may prevent girls' ability to attend school regularly | Community | Girls’ survey  (disaggregated by age, geography, disability, and sub-groups) | Focus Group Discussions with girls are the best approach to solicit for views and perceptions about school attendance and barriers. | Baseline,  Midline and  Endline |
| **Intermediate outcome 2: Quality of teaching**  2.1 Proportion of teachers who demonstrate improvement against four or more competencies within the national teacher competency framework. | School | Validation of Teacher Competency Profile through teacher interview, coach interview, student interview and teacher observation  (disaggregated by sex) | We will ask the EE to validate the assessment of coaches and teachers themselves (the ‘Teacher Competency Profile’) using interviews to triangulate a snapshot lesson observation and student interview.  Lesson observations alone are often poor measures of teacher competence - observations in English schools were found to be accurate only about 60% of the time[[7]](#footnote-7). | Baseline,  Midline and  Endline |
| 2.2 # of teachers demonstrating skills in teaching children with specific needs | School | As above | As above. The Teacher Competency Profile will include competencies relating to different special needs. | Baseline,  Midline and  Endline |
| 2.3 Girls' perception towards their teacher's teaching methods and ability | School | Student interview (as part of the battery described above)  (disaggregated by age, geography, disability, and sub-groups) | This indicator will provide information on whether girls are enjoying learning and like methods applied by teachers to improve learning. | Baseline,  Midline and  Endline |
| **Intermediate outcome 3: Life skills**  3.1 # children actively participating in SRH clubs | School | School Monitoring - SRH Club Registers  (disaggregated by sex, age, geography, disability, and sub-groups) | Participation in SRH clubs will seek to improve life skills which are critical to young people's ability to positively adapt to and deal with the demands and challenges of life. | Baseline,  Midline and  Endline |
| 3.2 Level of comfort girls feel expressing themselves at school, in the community and at home. | Community | Focus Group Discussions  (disaggregated by age, geography, disability, and sub-groups) | Life skills should equip the girls with skills and confidence to make decisions and express themselves. This indicator will check if participation in clubs is giving positive results or not. | Baseline,  Midline and  Endline |
| **Intermediate outcome 4 -Economic Empowerment**  4.1 Change in attendance rates of targeted girls | School | Teacher Survey (School attendance rates)  (disaggregated by age, geography, disability, and sub-groups) | Economic empowerment activities are expected to increase parents’ ability to pay for school fees for their children thereby improving attendance rates. | Baseline,  Midline and  Endline |
| 4.2 Girls’ views on how financial support received impacted on their ability to further their education | Community | Focus Group Discussions  (disaggregated by age, geography, disability, and sub-groups) | Increasing household income is expected to have wider benefits for household members including increased investment in adolescent girls (e.g. improved food security, increased access to education, health and social needs for girls) | Baseline,  Midline and  Endline |
| 4.3 Parents’ views on how access to financial support impacted on family income level and use (e.g. spend on education costs, investment in daughter overall, saving for further education, etc.) | Community | Focus Group Discussions  (disaggregated by sex and geography) | Increasing household income is expected to have wider benefits for household members including increased investment in adolescent girls (e.g. improved food security, increased access to education, health and social needs for girls) | Baseline,  Midline and  Endline |

* + 1. Sustainability

The External Evaluators will measure sustainability through tracking key changes that the project would like to sustain in future using the GEC Guidance on Sustainability. Measurement will be done at three community, school and system levels. Information gathered through a mix of qualitative and quantitative tools will be analysed against the GEC Sustainability Score Card.

• Community – At school level focus will be include changes in parents’ attitudes on gender equity as well as drivers on community participation especially focusing on VSLA/CVA groups how they ‘keep growing’ in size and number.

• School – Adoption of improved teaching methods, conflict sensitive and inclusive approaches by schools and teachers will be measured over time through the use of learning observations, focus group discussions with pupils, and key informant interviews.

• System – At the system level, measurements will include adoption of monitoring tools by the ministry and qualitative data will seek to understand the benefits and perceived value add by the users. Information gathered will provide indications of continued use even after the project closure.

*Table 3: Sustainability outcome for measurement*

| **Sustainability Level** | **Where will measurement take place?** | **What source of measurement/ verification will you use?** | **Rationale – clarify how you will use your qualitative analysis to support your chosen indicators.** | **Frequency of data collection** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Community:**  3.1 Proportion of parents who have changed their attitude positively towards gender equity changed their attitude positively towards gender equity | Household | Household Survey  (disaggregated by geography and sex) | Attitudinal changes in parents will be monitored to further understand how ‘change happened’ what adjustments, actions and compromises were made to improve gender equity. | Baseline,  Midline and  Endline |
| 3.2 # VSLA continuing after their cycle or spontaneously generated groups | Community | Community Monitoring  (disaggregated by geography) | Understand what keeps VSLA groups functional as well as well as those that ‘fold-up’ what are the factors. Findings will be used to adapt the nature of support and coaching provided to these groups. | Baseline,  Midline and  Endline |
| **School**  3.3 % of schools implementing Teacher Professional Development program / curriculum | School | School Monitoring Tool  (disaggregated by geography) | Qualitative analysis will be used to explore challenges and benefits of the processes involved in implementing TPD. Common issues and divergent issues will be explored to understand and share positive dynamics and aspects of the approach. | Baseline,  Midline and  Endline |
| 3.4 Change in learning environment to become conflict sensitive and inclusive | School | School Monitoring Tool – Focus Group Discussion | Improvements in learning will be further analysed to understand unique factors related to drivers of conflict as well as aspects of inclusiveness. | Baseline,  Midline and  Endline |
| **System**  3.5. % of CVA groups in target areas with increased engagement towards school fees transparency | Community | Community Monitoring Tool  (disaggregated by geography) | Qualitative analysis will be done to understand level of engagement regarding school fees transparency in target schools. | Baseline,  Midline and  Endline |
| 3.6 Adoption and use of quality education monitoring tools by ministries | District | District Monitoring – Key Informant Interviews | Qualitative analysis will be used to further provide evidence of perceptions and views on use monitoring tools by Ministries. What added value is perceived from the use of these tools. | Baseline,  Midline and  Endline |

### 5.4 Ethical protocols

a) Child protection

Save the Children International (SCI) is committed to ensuring that all children with whom the organization works with, or even has contact with, are safeguarded to the maximum possible extent from child abuse and sexual exploitation. This commitment is implemented through the organization's Child Safeguarding Policy. It applies equally to all children irrespective of their gender, disability, ethnicity, sexuality, marital status, or religion.

The project will use the internal Save the Children child safeguarding protocol at all stages to ensure that all research activities (including evaluations and the operational research) are safely conducted in regard to children. The Child Safeguarding protocol is made of a set of external and internal policies, procedures, and practices that we employ to ensure that Save the Children itself is a child-safe organization. It aims at preventing and responding to cases of child abuse and exploitation associated with SCI staff and partner’s behaviours/attitudes and SCI activities.

**Safe recruitment**

Save the children will select and recruit the external evaluators and any sub-contractors who can comply to Save the Children’s commitment to child safeguarding by implementing checks and procedures to screen through any organization or individual who is considered not suitable to work with children due to past or current convictions, or harmful practices. Successful candidates will be made aware of the binding nature of these policies, procedures, and codes of conduct, and that they are applied equally to their personal and professional life. The agreement contract to be signed with the external evaluators will specifically include a separate agreement document on Child Safeguarding Policy, and it is expected that all evaluation protocols and tools will be child-friendly and gender sensitive.

Potential key risks that could emerge during the monitoring and evaluation activities are when personnel visit a child’s home and community, when there is one to one contact, or when the staff has been outsourced by the consultants and strict measures about child safeguarding have not been put in place. If checks and vetting are not carefully carried out, there is a risk of hiring personnel or sub-contractors who can be harmful to children, and damaging the relationship, trust and reputation that the organization has built over the years.

**Education and training**

As part of the training for enumerators, Save the Children will ensure that a specific module on child safeguarding and related risks management is included. This module is designed to ensure that all contracted staff, especially enumerators and field supervisors, are aware and knowledgeable about child-friendly and safe programming and data collection procedures, safety prevention, reporting and response mechanisms that are in place during the research implementation.

**Code of conduct**

The external enumerator will have a written, comprehensive Child Protection Policy that includes a Code of Conduct that all staff, including temporary staff like enumerators, must review, sign and adhere to.

**Responding to child protection concerns / Reporting process**

Any child protection or child safeguarding concerns brought to the attention of Save the Children or World Vision during the EE’s work will be dealt with in line with the respective organisations’ policies (shared previously).

**Data protection and security**

Electronic data collection tools will be password-protected, and data transfers will be to password-protected data storage services. Data analysis will be on password-protected and encrypted machines. Normal good practice regarding anonymization of data will be followed. Any audio, photos or video will be stored in line with the policy set out in the Child Protection self-audit. All data must be handled in line with Save the Children’s data protection policy; the policy details the laws we must comply to. For more information, see sections 8.3 and 9.

* + 1. Ethics

Save the Children follows strict research ethics, ensuring that we operate through the use of agreed standards, and uphold principles of fairness and respect. We acknowledge the balancing act that research must navigate: ensuring high quality research, whilst protecting and respecting key principles of ethics. Drawing on the Save the Children ethics procedure, the Belmont Report, reviewing the ethical considerations that similar studies have faced, we have considered the practices outlined below. The research design and plan for the project will also be potentially subject to review and approval from Save the Children UK’s own research ethics advisory group. Céline Sieu, as a M&E, Accountability and Learning advisor with Save the Children UK, acts as the ethics lead for the project.

The project is committed to taking great care when involving vulnerable individuals, especially children, in the research activities in a manner that is consistent with ethical principles that are widely accepted in the sector. This is to ensure that we are able to protect participants from exploitation and abuse, while building capacity and promote wellbeing. Special attention will be given to the fact that marginalized and most marginalized children participate in the study. All field staff will be sensitized to, and must commit to adhering to Save the Children’s Child Safeguarding Policy and ethical principles, which include the following:

**Free and informed consent** – all members of the treatment and control group must provide informed consent. Not only from parents but also from children, from an early an age as possible.

**Confidentiality and anonymity** – Save the Children will work with our research partners to ensure that all data is held securely, is confidential and is anonymized. Enumerators will be made aware of the importance of confidentiality and anonymity. Participants will be briefed that we will protect anonymity in all instances unless we feel that the child is in danger or at risk and then we will implement our safeguarding policy. If the safeguarding policy is initiated, then it may be necessary to waive the participant’s concerned right to anonymity in order to protect the child in question.

**Transparency in research** - Understanding that research is ‘two-way’[[8]](#footnote-8). Communities should know what their collective data is. This helps the community to feel a sense of ownership and involvement over the data collection process, and it has been shown that greater two-way feedback processes result in lower attrition rates from programmes. Communities should also have the opportunity to input back to Save the Children through our accountability mechanisms, which enable us to hear concerns and react appropriately to them.

**Safeguarding children through awareness, prevention, reporting and responding**[[9]](#footnote-9) - All enumerators will be trained in the Child Safeguarding policy of Save the Children and provided with the necessary contact details to call if this policy needs to be initiated. In addition, researchers in contact with children will be trained in how to work with children, how to behave respectfully, how to put the child at ease, and how to identify signs of children at risk.

**Working with local researchers** – We work with local data collectors who speak the local language and avoid using translators which can build suspicion, can lead to translation errors and misunderstanding, and can complicate power dynamics.

c) Reliability and Validity

In order for the research data to be of value and of use, they must be both reliable and valid. Reliability refers to the repeatability of findings: any significant results must be more than a one-off finding and be inherently repeatable. Validity refers to the credibility or believability of the research, and there are two aspects of validity: a) Internal validity - the instruments or procedures used in the research measured what they were supposed to measure; b) External validity - the results can be generalized beyond the immediate study, and also be applied to people beyond the sample in the study. To achieve both reliability and validity of the evaluation findings, the EE will be recommended to follow these activities:

* be fully transparent and have a systematic approach to data collection from various sources.
* maintain an audit trail, documenting clearly the flow and processing of the data.
* peer checking to ensure the approach is reliable – asking additional team members to draw the data using the prescribed approach to verify the findings

demonstrate validity by potentially hold a focus group with members of the project team, who can reach a consensus on whether the research data represents what it is supposed to.

## Sampling framework

* 1. Target groups

We will be disaggregating our beneficiaries into the following groups. Exact data does not exist. We have used estimations based on the proportions (of girls) of types of populations. The baseline will further detail these percentages.

• living in conflict-affected setting (*data being collecting in February data collection exercise*)

• girls married or with children under 18 (25%)

• remote or rural locations (80%)

• extremely poor (66%)

• engaged in child labour worst forms (17%)

• disabled (no data)

• don’t speak language of instruction (at entry to school) (92%)

As a continuation of Vas-y-fille, REALISE works with the same beneficiaries from the previous project, who have already been identified as marginalized, and even most marginalized for some of the girls As the girls have grown over the years of Vas-y-fille, the youngest of Vas-y-fille beneficiaries are in Grade 4, which is why REALISE is mainly working with girls between Grade 4 and Grade 9 in this new Transition window, with an emphasis in Grade 5-7, as students take a national exams in grade 6 to test their skills before they are allowed to move to secondary school.

To select a sample from the treatment group, the project will select a representative sample size (see section d. below for power calculations and sample size) of girls who are in Grade 4 up until Grade 9 who have been going to a treatment school. As mentioned above, REALISE works with the same beneficiaries as Vas-y-fille, therefore, the sampling will be done specifically among these beneficiaries who go to our treatment schools. As a quasi-experimental design, the randomization will mainly be done at school level, which means the evaluation will most likely follow a clustered sampling approach, with schools being selected as a starting point, before moving to the communities by following the sampled girls from the sampled schools. Once a control group has been selected (by the external evaluators), a similar sampling approach will be applied to the control group to ensure that the comparison girls will display similar characteristics as the treatment girls, apart from receiving interventions from the project. All the schools included in the list of schools for sampling will receive a similar range of interventions, therefore they will be representative of the range of project interventions.

* 1. Control groups / Counterfactual scenario

As mentioned above, the project will use a quasi-experimental design in its evaluation, where external evaluators will compare outcomes of a treatment group to a control group. To be rigorous, control group will be matched to the greatest extent possible on observable characteristics that were used for project selection criteria of treatment. Selection of control groups will be randomly chosen among areas where Save the Children had an equal intent to work in. The project team will assist the future external evaluators by giving them the information needed for the evaluators to be able to define and create a list of control groups that they will use in their evaluation.

Appropriate comparison schools will be chosen on the basis of three characteristics:

1. Geography: same province, largely rural profile

Comparison communities will be chosen from the same province as the treatment communities to ensure that the counterfactual holds. To ensure that there is geographic comparability, comparison sites will all be chosen to have a rural profile, which is consistent with the nature of treatment areas.

1. Community size: proportionate mix of small, medium and large.

Comparison communities will be chosen by ensuring an appropriate mix of community size, calculated on the basis of number of households. When selecting the comparison sites, a mix of small, medium, and large communities will be selected to be proportionate to the mix found in treatment communities

1. School size: while geography and community size will form the basis of comparison site selection, the size of the school – calculated using number of students – will also be considered to select the final comparison sites.

The control schools and communities are located in the same provinces as treatment schools, but they are classified as ‘control’ because the project doesn’t intervene in those locations and schools. The issue of spill over is valid and hard to regulate. In the previous project, there has been instances where spillover of some of the interventions had contaminated control schools. It has been recommended by the endline findings to choose control groups who are geographically as distant as possible from treatment groups. The contamination issue will be discussed in detail with the external evaluators in order to find the best mitigation approach to be used for REALISE.

In addition, the project has decided to start fresh with a new sample of girls’ beneficiaries as well as a new sample of control to feature in the evaluations, thus applying a rigorous selection of criteria to a new cohort of girls in treatment and control to track and measure throughout the life of the project.

When evaluating the project’s outcomes, including transition and learning, the evaluation is required to use a control group to measure additionality to demonstrate causality between the project’s interventions and the effects on the treatment groups’ learning and transition outcomes. The Difference-in-Difference (DiD) approach will be used to deliver an unbiased estimate of the causal impact of the project under the following assumptions:

• Assumption 1. The outcome trajectories of the intervention and comparison groups would be parallel in the absence of the intervention.

• Assumption 2. All individuals in the target groups are reached by the same intervention or interventions at the same time and no individual of the comparison group receives any of the interventions.

Assumption 2 cannot be tested before implementation, but it can be verified ex-post through detailed exposure data. Both assumptions will be rigorously tested by the external evaluators with the appropriate evidence using secondary data as well as primary data at baseline, midline and endline.

Prior to implementation, two steps will be taken to minimize the chances of contamination:

1. Save the Children field staff will review the full comparison school frames in detail in order to remove any sites in which they are aware of ongoing programming by other projects. This removal will be based entirely on local knowledge, and thus can be done on a best efforts basis only

2. Once the evaluator has selected the shortlist of comparison school sites, Save the Children field staff will visit at least 25% of the field sites to informally check with local government officials and prominent members of the local community if other NGOs are active in the area. Field sites where other projects are being implemented will be replaced by other suitable sites from the comparison school frame.

* 1. Cohort tracking

1. Learning cohort

The learning cohorts (for both treatment and control) will be made of girls who are in Grade 4 to Grade 6 of primary schools, and Level 1 to Level 2 of AEP centres. The project didn’t implement learning activities in secondary school previously, therefore we don’t have any beneficiaries at that education level in year 1. However, if our Theory of Change holds true, the girls will transition to the next grade level at the end of each school year, therefore REALISE will also be working in secondary schools from year 2 of the project.

Based on the sampling calculations (see section below), each treatment grade at primary and AEP level will have a representative sample size that constitutes the learning cohort for each grade, who will be tracked over time to measure their learning outcomes. In control groups, a similar approach will be used to establish learning cohorts across grades.

Each girl who will be selected to be part of the learning cohort will be assigned a unique I.D number, along with characteristics about the girl and her household will also be collected at the same time. This allows for the evaluators to find the same girl at the subsequent evaluation points, and if not, to be able to use the characteristics collected to find a replacement girl (see section below on replacement strategy). The household characteristics and girl’s characteristics will be used for data analysis as well, which will provide the project with more background information about potential factors hindering or enabling girls’ learning of literacy and numeracy skills.

As recommended by the FM, the learning tests will be administered at school and AEP level, where the cohort of girls will be assessed for numeracy and literacy skills at their grade level. Given the fact that some girls will leave primary or AEP to join a secondary school, the evaluators will need to find the same girls thanks to their unique ID number in the secondary school after transitioning from primary and AEP. There are potentially 235 secondary schools in the project’s intervention areas, but the project hasn’t selected its treatment secondary schools yet (year 1) as it would depend on which secondary schools our beneficiaries choose to transition to. In year 2, the project will specifically select secondary schools where our beneficiaries are (grade 7), by implementing **interventions for the whole targeted grade level**. Thus, girls in grade 7 who weren’t necessarily coming from a treatment primary school will also receive treatment, as it would be impossible to only have activities with some girls in one grade and not the others in that same grade. However, the evaluators will still be **tracking and assessing the same cohort of girls who receive treatment from the very beginning of the project**, from baseline to midline to endline. If the evaluators find that a treatment girl has moved out of our intervention areas to attend a secondary school where the project doesn’t work at all, then the evaluators will seek to replace this girl.

The evaluators will be required to administer the learning tests to the girls at school and AEP centres, before going to their respective families and collect further information at the household level. Based on previous experience, the project is aware of a high attrition rate in re-contacting the same girls over the years. This is accounted for when calculating the power and the sample size in the section below (d).

The following table summarises our proposed learning assessment tasks by grade. To summarize, grades 4 and 5 will take the whole EGRA and EGMA, as well as the SeGRA and SeGMA subtask 1. While subtask 1 targets grades 4 and 5, students in grade 6 will sit the SeGRA/SeGMA sub-tasks 1 and 2 only. AEP level 1 is equivalent to grades 1 and 2 of primary education and will sit the whole EGRA and EGMA, while AEP level 2 equals to grades 3 and 4 of primary education and will sit EGRA and EGMa as well as subtask 1 of SeGRA and SeGMA. These tasks may be adjusted and re-calibrated based on the results of our piloting exercise.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Country** | **School grade at baseline** | **Tools and subtasks to administer – Baseline  (2018)** | **Tools and subtasks to administer – Midline (2019)** | **Tools and subtasks to administer – Endline**  **(2021)** |
| D.R. Congo | Primary grade 4 | All EGRA+EGMA subtasks  SeGRA 1 + SeGMA 1 | All EGRA+EGMA subtasks  SeGRA 1 + SeGMA 1 | SeGRA 1 & 2 + SeGMA 1 & 2 |
| Primary grade 5 | All EGRA EGMA subtasks  + SeGRA 1 + SeGMA 1 | SeGRA 1&2 + SeGMA 1&2 | SeGRA 1&2 + SeGMA 1&2 |
| Primary grade 6 | SeGRA 1, 2 + SeGMA 1, 2 | SeGRA 1,2 + SeGMA 1,2 | SeGRA 1,2 + SeGMA 1,2 |
| AEP level 1 | All EGRA+EGMA subtasks | All EGRA+EGMA subtasks  + SeGRA 1 + SeGMA 1 | SeGRA 1,2 + SeGMA 1,2 |
| AEP level 2 | All EGRA+EGMA subtasks  + SeGRA 1 + SeGMA 1 | SeGRA 1,2 + SeGMA 1,2 | SeGRA 1,2 + SeGMA 1,2 |

1. Transition cohort

The project will have a joint cohort, where sampled girls will be tracked and measured for both learning and transition outcomes. Based on the FM recommendation to measure the transition rate of beneficiaries at household level, the project will track the same learning cohort of girls from their school / AEP centre to their house at baseline in order to collect data about their school / AEP enrolment and attendance from one year to another. While the evaluators will administer the learning tests to the learning cohort at school and AEP centre, they will gather enough information about where their families live in the community in order to plan a visit to administer the household survey as well.

Similar to the girls’ unique ID number, the household will be assigned a unique ID number, which will enable for an easier link and tracking between the girl and her family in the community. The main risk and challenge with this approach is a poor methodology used to create the unique ID number for the girl and for the household, or a lack of organization in doing so, which could lead to the impossibility of tracking back the girls after baseline and lose the cohort to a certain extent. To ensure the tracking and unique ID number assignment can be done successfully, the evaluators will need to submit the list of girls and household with their unique ID numbers to the project team, who will be responsible to quality assure the list by cross-checking and double-checking each ID number. Another risk that the project has identified is that some treatment girls could drop out of school or AEP, or transition to a school that is outside of the project’s intervention areas. In the first instance, if the girl remains in our intervention community, she will still benefit from the project’s activities, but at the community level, and potentially attends school or AEP again as a result. If the girl does change school that is outside of the project’s intervention zone, the evaluators will have to replace this beneficiary with a beneficiary displaying similar characteristics.

As REALISE will progressively move to focus on older students, it is understood that risks for drop-out and attrition will also get higher. This is especially true for children who live in conflict-affected areas, and when children move from primary schools to secondary schools or when they finish AEP level 3, as it is unlikely that all girls from sampled primary schools and AEP centres will enrol in sampled secondary schools. Therefore, the evaluators are expected to consider a conservative attrition rate and develop a robust replacement strategy before the research is conducted at each evaluation point to account for the potential drop in sample sizes over the life of the project and evaluations.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Expected transition progress of each cohort through the years of the project** | | | |
| **2017 – 2018** | **2018 – 2019** | **2019 – 2020** | **2020 - 2021** |
| Grade 4 (primary) | Grade 5 (primary) | Grade 6 (primary) | Grade 7 (secondary) |
| Grade 5 (primary) | Grade 6 (primary) | Grade 7 (secondary) | Grade 8 (secondary) |
| Grade 6 (primary) | Grade 7 (secondary) | Grade 8 (secondary) | Grade 9 (secondary) |
| AEP level 1 | AEP level 2 | AEP level 3 | Grade 7 (secondary) |
| AEP level 2 | AEP level 3 | Grade 7 (secondary) | Grade 8 (secondary) |

The project defines successful transition pathways as:

* Formal transition between primary school to secondary school (Grade 6 to Grade 7)
* AEP to secondary school (AEP level 3 to Grade 7)

1. Replacement strategy

The replacement strategy aims to replace a girl with another in-school or AEP girl who closely matches the demographics of the lost girl, as well as mirroring her level of exposure to the project intervention. If a girl has been lost from the sample but had been enrolled in the intervention for two years for example, then she should be replaced by an in-school / AEP girl, preferably in the same class, who also had been enrolled in the intervention for two years. In this scenario, the replaced girls should match the lost girls in terms of demographics, marginalization status, subgroups, disability level (if known), and level of exposure to the intervention.

The project would have to have a one-for-one replacement strategy to substitute for girls who have dropped out of the study. After drawing an initial list of suitable replacements, the replacement girl will be selected at random, by using the Kish Grid method for instance. The replacement process is designed to be followed at subsequent evaluation points after baseline, which means that the EE will seek to re-contact girls at midline and endline, but if they failed to find them for various reasons, they will action the replacement protocol. In case a beneficiary girl cannot be found at school or AEP centre, the EE will contact their family. If the girl is found there and is enrolled, the learning assessment should be administered at HH level (or at school / AEP centre when she is there). If she is no longer enrolled, the HH survey should still be administered and transition recorded as well as reasons for drop out.

There is no replacement strategy proposed for the transition sample. This is because the 30% attrition allowance should be sufficient to ensure that statistical power remains at midline and endline. We propose to reconsider this approach during fieldwork for midline. If attrition of the transition sample appears to be exceeding the 30% assumption, we will discuss the options for a replacement strategy for the transition sample with the FM.

* 1. Power calculations and sample sizes

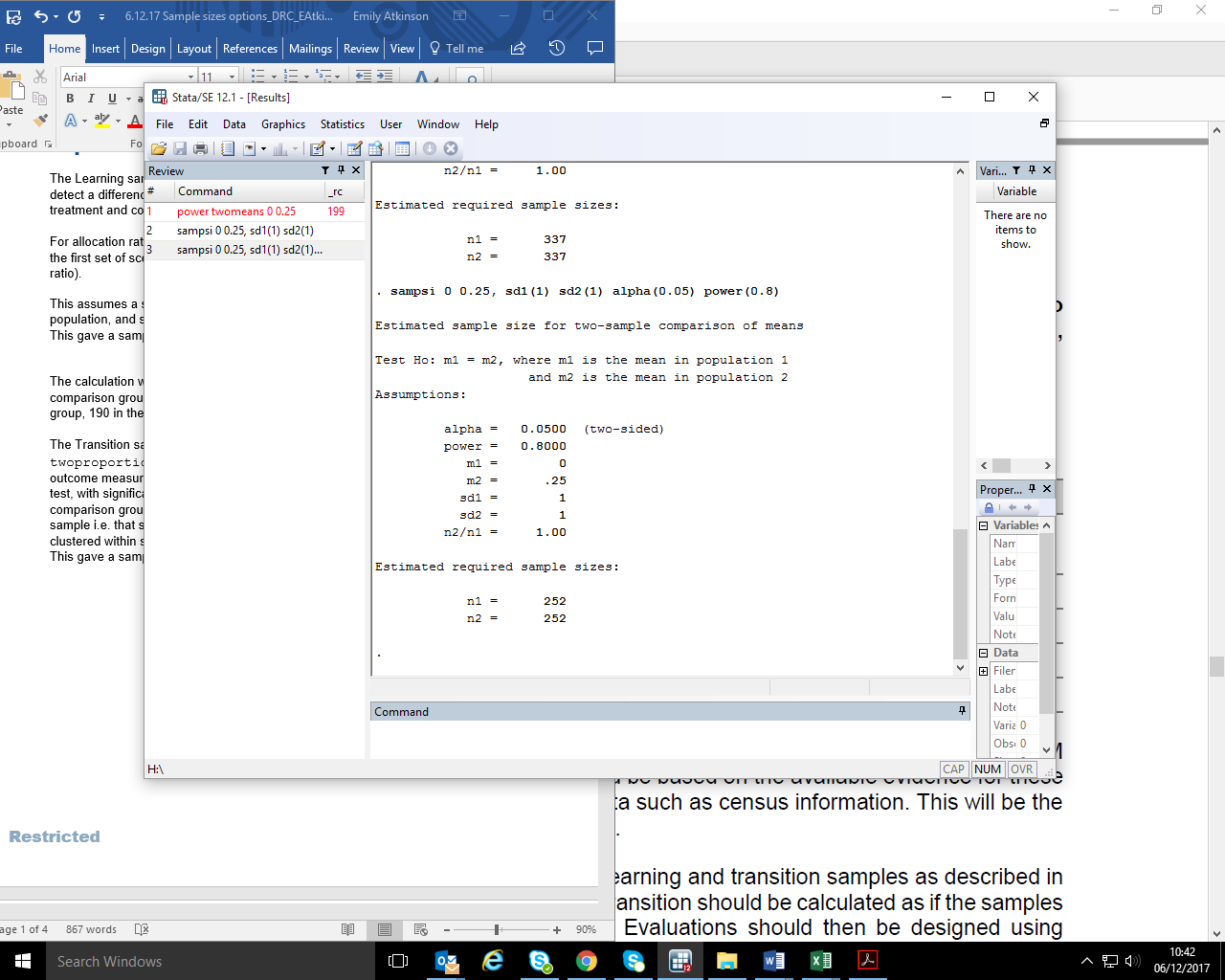
**Simple Random Sampling**

The Learning sample size was calculated in Stata using sampsi, to detect a difference of 0.25 SDs in the (continuous) outcome measure between treatment and comparison groups with significance level 5% and power 80%.

For allocation ratios, two assumptions were used to generate multiple scenarios. In the first set of scenarios, treatment and comparison groups are the same size (1:1 ratio).

This assumes a simple random sample i.e. that students are sampled from the population, and students are not clustered within sampled schools/AEP.

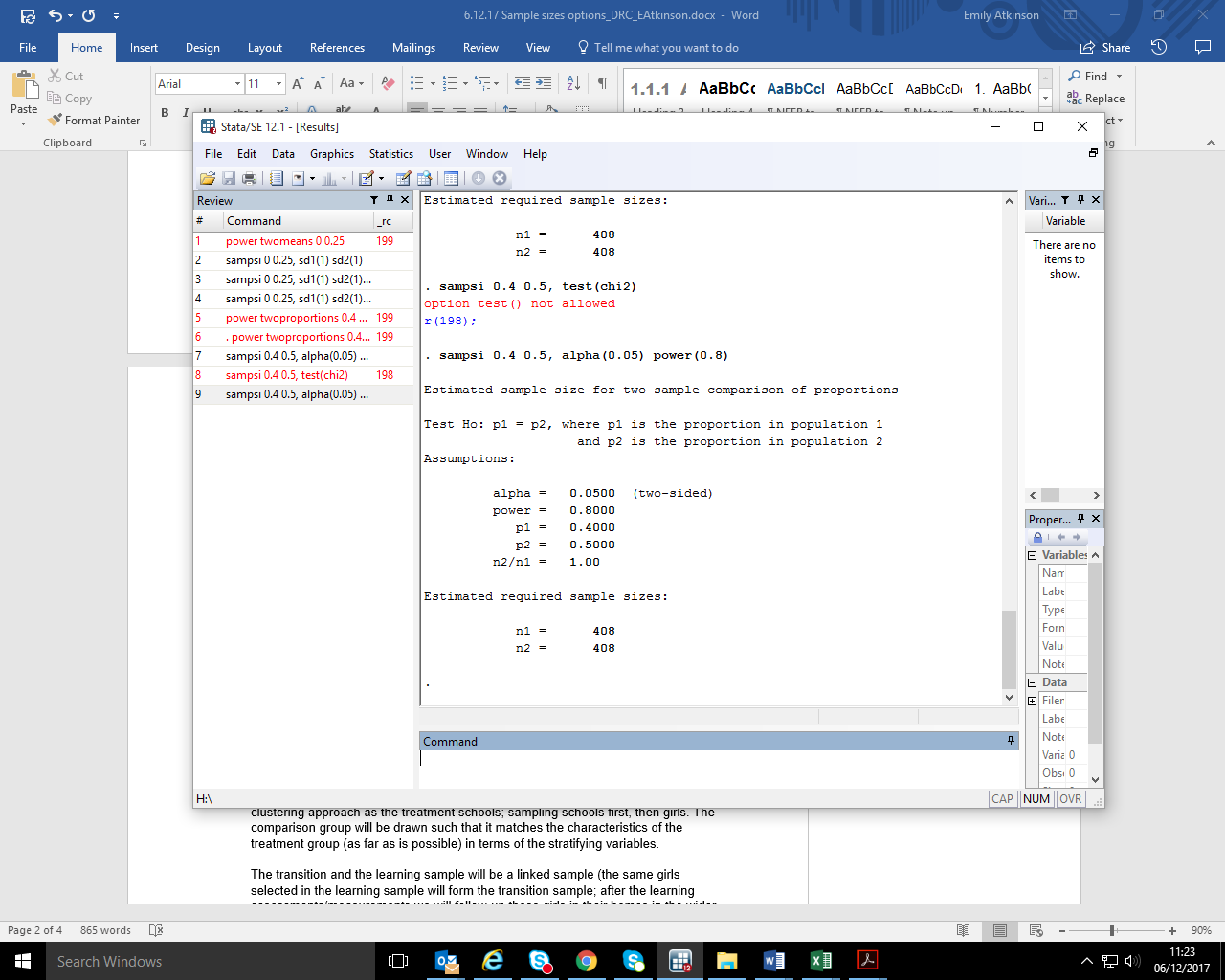
This gave a sample size of 504 overall; 252 in each group.



The calculation was repeated using a 2:1 ratio between the treatment and comparison group. This gave a sample size of 567 students; 378 in the treatment group, 189 in the comparison group.

The Transition sample size was also calculated in Stata using sampsi, to detect a 10 percentage point difference in the (binary) outcome measure between treatment and comparison groups using a two-sided test, with significance level 5% and power 80% and again with treatment and comparison groups being the same size (1:1 ratio). This assumes a simple random sample i.e. that students are sampled from the population, and students are not clustered within sampled schools/AEP.

This gave a sample size of 816 overall; 408 in each group.



This too was repeated with a 2:1 ratio between treatment and comparison groups, and resulted in a sample size of 918; 612 in the treatment group and 306 in the comparison group.

Since the study will use a linked sample (following the same girls for both the learning and the transition study) it is necessary to use the sample size from the transition study (as this is larger than the equivalent learning study sample).

**Attrition**

The attrition rate is assumed to be 30% in all scenarios.

**Clustering**

The sample will be selected using a clustered sampling approach. In the treatment group we will sample schools/AEPs. The schools/AEPs will be sampled using a stratified random sampling approach such that they are representative of the treatment group in terms of province and community size; the stratifying variables. From selected schools/AEPs girls will be sampled such that the proportion of girls in each grade matches that in Table 1 of section 6d. The comparison group of school/AEP will be selected using the same clustering approach as the treatment schools/AEPs; sampling schools/AEPs first, then girls. The comparison group will be drawn such that it matches the characteristics of the treatment group (as far as is possible) in terms of the stratifying variables.

The transition and the learning sample will be a linked sample (the same girls selected in the learning sample will form the transition sample; after the learning assessments/measurements we will follow-up these girls in their homes in the wider community).

Since the unit of sampling will be schools/AEPs, the sample size needs to be adjusted for clustering (as girls in each school/AEP are likely to be more like other girls in their school than they are like girls in other schools and so are not a simple random sample). This is achieved by multiplying the sample size by the design effect (DEFF).

where *ρ* is the intraclass correlation, and *n* is the typical cluster size.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| N treatment | N comparison | Total N | cluster size | Attrition | N per school at baseline | intraclass correlation | design effect |
| (N per school - at end point) | (assumed to be 30%) |
| 408 | 408 | 816 | 15 | 0.3 | 22 | 0.1 | 3.1 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| N treatment | N comparison | Total N |
|
| 1265 | 1265 | **2530** |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No. schools to be sampled (total) | No. schools to be sampled (treatment) | No. schools to be sampled (comparison) |
|
| 115 | 58 | 58 |

* 1. Benchmarking

Benchmark data will be collected in treatment schools and AEP centres for learning scores and transition rates from older grades that learning and transition beneficiaries are expected to move into. Based on the standard deviations of the collected results, targets will be calculated and set for the learning and transition indicators for midline and endline evaluation points.

From a sampling perspective, this means that the baseline learning and transition sample includes not only beneficiaries expected to be tracked over the course of the project, but also a set of ‘one-off’ sampled individuals where results from their learning tests and transition rates are taken solely for the purposes of establishing a benchmark. This benchmark sample should be identified and sampled using the same clusters as for the individuals the project and evaluator decide to track longitudinally. Suitable demographic information should be collected to check that any bias in the sampling technique has been minimized.

Benchmark girls from Grade 5 to Grade 9 and AEP levels 2 and 3 will be surveyed and tested at baseline as the project works with girls from Grade 4 to Grade 6 in the first year and AEP Levels 1 and 2 (cf. expected progress table of cohorts in above sections on ‘learning and transition cohort’). The benchmark girls will be surveyed for their transition rate for each grade in treatment communities, while they will be surveyed for their literacy and numeracy skills in treatment schools and AEP centres. The sample sizes for higher grades that must be benchmarked for subsequent evaluation points will be finalized by the external evaluators during the inception phase at baseline. The evaluators will identify the necessary sample size needed for treatment and comparison areas, then decide and finalize from this total how many individuals will be sampled from each grade.

Learning benchmarks will be collected at the same time and in the same location as the general learning baseline is carried out, i.e. in the school; and the transition benchmarks will be collected at household level when the evaluators collect information on the general levels of transition for girls in the beneficiary communities. It is not expected that the transition benchmark focuses on finding girls who would benefit from the interventions, as the aim of the transition benchmark is mainly to define the existing picture of transition for the entire beneficiary population in order to set realistic targets. The evaluators will need to think about geographical bias and not benchmark only girls from communities located very close to secondary schools but include other areas where secondary schools are scarce or non-existent.

**Benchmark sampling for learning** will be done only in treatment schools and AEP centres, in line with the FM’s guidance. Because REALISE beneficiaries are currently in grades 4 to 6, and AEP levels 1 and 2, the baseline for grades 5 to 6 and AEP levels 1 and 2 will serve as the benchmark for these grades. Additional sampling will be done to generate benchmarks for grades 7 to 9, and AEP level 3. **The sample size for each grade will be updated at the next draft of this MEL Framework.**

**The benchmark sampling for transition** will be done only in treatment communities, in line with the FM’s guidance. Because REALISE beneficiaries are currently aged 9 to 13 years old, we will attempt to build a benchmark sample of this age bracket. **The total sample size for transition will be updated at the next draft of this MEL Framework.**

## Baseline study

**This section will be updated at the next MEL Framework draft.**

## Evaluation governance

* 1. Evaluation steering group

An Evaluation Steering Committee (ESC) will be created for REALISE to oversee and manage matters related to the evaluations (baseline, midline and endline). The ESC includes the REALISE Chief of Party, the REALISE Deputy Chiefs of Party (2), the MEAL specialist, the SCUK MEAL Advisor or the SCUK GECs Portfolio Manager, and the project’s Education Technical Advisor. This list might change slightly by the end of February 2018, but the core members (project’s key staff) of the evaluation steering group will remain the same. The evaluation committee will be responsible for developing and reviewing the EE TOR and recruiting the EE. They will provide technical support to the MEAL manager of quality issues including gender, disability and girl’s education. The evaluation committee will provide review of all the EE reports and give joint feedback to ensure that all dimensions of the evaluation as stipulated in the TOR are included in the reports.

Although the ESC is set up to have an oversight of the evaluations, the REALISE Chief of Party will be the main focal point for the evaluators, with the MEAL Specialist as the main technical contact as well. The Chief of Party, along with the MEAL Specialist, are responsible to supervise and manage the external evaluators on a daily basis, from day 1 of hiring the evaluators until the sign-off of the evaluation report by the FM. It is expected that the Education Advisor, the SCUK MEAL Advisor, the SCUK Education advisor, the SCUK VfM Advisor and the SCUK Gender Advisor will provide technical inputs doing the implementation of the evaluations, and review draft reports of the evaluations in order to contribute to a robust and technically sound document before submission to the FM.

The first point of contact for the evaluators is the Chief of Party, who also chairs the ESC. The Chief of Party will involve the relevant technical advisors when deemed necessary, and according to each person’s expertise and relevance to the evaluations work. However, the project’s MEAL Specialist is also expected to play a significant role in managing the evaluation process, acting as a second point of contact for the evaluators, and being able to provide more technical support when necessary.

* 1. External evaluator

The independent external evaluator will be procured via a rigorous competitive international tender, using the guidance and profile as required under the MEL Guidance provided by the FM. Save the Children has used the ToR template provided by the FM in the MEL Guidance and adapted some sections specifically to the project. The ToR has been reviewed by several team members, and the final version has been submitted to Save the Children DRC Procurement and HR teams for advertisement.

Following the advertisement of the evaluations ToR, the ESC is expected to receive Expression of Interests (EoI) from interested applicants. The team will assess each applicant based on their EoI and invite promising applicants to send over their full proposals. Once the proposals have been submitted and received by the ESC, each member will read through and score each applicant strictly according to an assessment grid, which is used by all members, in order to be as objective, fair and appropriate as possible. The key criteria against which the applicants will be assessed include:

* Team structure, skills and competence (incl. **education, gender, inclusion**, statistics/econometrics and project management expertise)
* Experience in the DRC (including French ability) and in conducting large-scale, complex, similar evaluations (experimental or quasi-experimental mixed-methods approach)
* Definition of a detailed and robust methodology and research questions that are appropriate to the project
* A sound workplan and timeline clearly listing key activities during the evaluation process, and roles
* Knowledge and experience in conducting VfM assessment
* A rigorous child safeguarding policy and ethical protocols around research, which are aligned with international standards, Save the Children standards, and the GEC policies and standards
* A budget plan that is realistic, value for money and relevant to the expected work

Based on the outcome of these assessments and score grid, the top three applicants will be shortlisted, notified and invited to take an in-depth interview with the ESC. This interview will enable the ESC and the potential consultants to dive into their approach and get a more detailed understand and practicality of the evaluation strategy they have chosen. The ESC will select the right applicant based on their ability to demonstrate technical skills and understanding of the approach to implement the evaluation, as well as value for money, and appropriate team structure to respond to the technical and operational needs of the evaluation in country.

An evaluation consultant/organisation will be hired from the beginning of the project and engage from the baseline evaluation until the endline evaluation if the evaluators can demonstrate high standards and high quality work. In case of satisfactory performance, the project aims to continue working with the same consultants for midline and endline to ensure the consistency in approach and efficiency of purpose.

* 1. Data validation

To ensure that the evaluation will be undertaken in an independent and impartial way, the project has decided to hire an external independent evaluator through a strict international tender process. Once the evaluators are hired, they will run the whole evaluation process independently and autonomously, with their own staff and enumerators. The project team will only get involved to ensure that relevant documents are being shared with the evaluators, to support in answering questions the evaluators might have, and review data collection tools and reports. None of the project staff will at any moment be helping the external evaluators collect data or analyse data, or even recruit local enumerators or staff.

The Terms of Reference for the independent evaluators has specifically asked applicants to detail their plan for data validation and quality in their proposals. As mentioned above, the data collection for the evaluation will be run entirely by the external evaluators, with no involvement from the project team and staff. The external evaluators, with the help of enumerators and field supervisors, will be responsible to collect data needed for the baseline, midline and endline in an autonomous way. To validate the veracity of the data collected, the project will request the external evaluators to share the raw dataset. This might be able to be triangulated and cross-checked with some of the data that the project will have collected through its monitoring system. Any suspicious or unlikely data will be investigated further at the request of the project management team to the external evaluators, and they are expected to provide reasons and causes behind data that seem to be outliers or unlikely. If the problem is related to data collection procedures, the project team will expect the EE to take corrective measures in due course. In order to reduce any errors that are due to procedural activities, a thorough training will be provided to the enumerators or any sub-contractors by the EE, with possibly the support of the project MEAL specialist.

## Data quality assurance

* 1. Training

The project will use the inception phase at each evaluation point to ensure that the hired evaluators have a full understanding of the project, its objectives and its interventions, the tools being used to collect data, and are aware of expectations regarding data quality. The project team and evaluators will go through each tool to make sure that everyone is on the same page and understands each question in the same way. There is a need to keep the questionnaire as essential as possible, i.e. not over burdening the participants with questions that might not be absolutely useful or relevant for the project’s research questions. As such, there won’t be any training provided to the evaluators per se, but a close collaboration during inception phase to ensure common understanding and clarity of all tools and data to be collected.

Regarding the training for the enumerators and field supervisors, it will be the remit of the external evaluators, once hired, to provide a detailed and comprehensive training. This training will not only consist of presenting and how to use the tools and questions, but also about research ethics, child safeguarding, disability and gender sensitivity when carrying out the evaluation. The project will ensure that the EE and any subcontractors adhere to the GEC policies on these areas by integrating the policies in the contract signed between the project and the EE, and between the EE and the subcontractors. One or two project staff will also seek to participate in the preparation of and be present in the training to ensure a full understanding of the project and its context, as well as providing support more broadly to the trainers, and potentially be co-facilitators for the exercise to be delivered well. It is necessary to take time to plan for this training and allow for enough time to ensure that everything will be covered thoroughly (e.g. 5 days instead of 3 days) or if there is a need for further clarifications.

* 1. Piloting

Following immediately from the training to the field supervisors and enumerators, there will be 1 or 2 days of testing and piloting the data collection tools and approaches in a nearby community. The project team will facilitate the selection of the pilot community based on their accessibility, and similar characteristics as the project target areas, e.g. girls within the same age range, facing similar barriers and challenges to education, and whose first language isn’t the language of instruction. The evaluators, with potentially one or two key staff from the project, will accompany the field supervisors and enumerators to the site to trial the tools and approaches as if they were in the real communities. During this piloting time, the field supervisors and enumerators will be able to ask all the questions they might have or seek solutions if they encounter any challenges when administering the questionnaire.

At the end of each day, there will be an after-action review (AAR) where the evaluators supervisors will gather feedback from the enumerators and the field supervisors regarding the tools themselves and the data collection approaches. The evaluators and a couple of project staff will also be there to answer any question the data collection team might have and facilitate the process. The project suggests that the external evaluators allow for some time after the piloting stage (e.g. 1-3 days) to use the feedback and suggestions to feed back into the design, and make adjustments and improvements where needed to the data collection tools and approaches.

* 1. Data cleaning and editing

As part of the main deliverables, the external evaluators are required to provide a clean master dataset of raw data to the project team. Ideally, there will be enough time for the SCUK team to have one of their Economists to go over the dataset and run some analysis to ensure that the results found match the results from the evaluators. Any data that is deemed very sensitive and need to remain anonymous will be sanitized. This way, the children’ personal information or sensitive data related to GBV for instance will not necessarily be accessible or linked to a specific child. Any dataset required by the FM will first be cleaned by the external evaluators, then checked by the project team, before submitting it to the FM. To ensure the anonymity of participants, the main data set will not include personal information attached to survey or learning responses. Instead, the project will employ a reference system based on unique IDs to connect participant results to personal information in separate, password-protected, and secured file.

## Risks and risk management

*Table 4: Risks and mitigations*

| **Potential risks** | **Probability of risk occurring over the course of the project** | **Potential impact on project’s success** | **Proposed actions to mitigate risks that have both significant probability and impact/importance** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Slow release of funds to implementing partners due to slow financial procedures or long process | Medium | Medium | Define efficient ways of working between different departments and share common workplan with all departments to allow for effective planning and synergy between teams. |
| Bad quality data when collecting from another structure (e.g. school attendance register) | Medium | Medium | For attendance data, the project will add as a monitoring requirement to collect attendance data on a regular basis to improve accuracy.  Put in place cross-checking process to triangulate data collected from a different structure and data collected from the project or evaluators.  Use existing secondary data to double-check. |
| Control groups could be contaminated from project’s interventions as control areas might be geographically close to treatment areas and other projects are active in the control areas | High | Medium | When choosing control groups, purposively select control schools and communities far (if possible) from treatment schools and communities.  Being aware of this risk, the project and evaluators can control this factor when analysing the data. Also correct for interventions by other projects such as ACCELERE |
| Interventions from other projects which benefit schools we are also supporting make identifying our contribution more difficult | Medium | Low | We ask all schools if other projects are supporting them, and will share that data with the External Evaluator so they can factor this in to their analysis of our contribution |
| Staff turnover | High | High | Working with HR to set up an efficient handover period and/or documents.  Each new starter will have a tailored induction phase, including trainings if necessary. Other staff can also benefit from a refresher and encouraging peer support. |
| Attrition rate could turn out higher than expected | High | Medium | A larger sample will be constituted to make up for attrition coming from security situation and displacement of the population. And maximal attrition numbers will be used when selecting cohort size. |
| Extreme weather conditions (flood, drought etc.) | Medium | Low | Carefully log all aspects of extreme weather that will affect data collection. Data collection during the rainy season will be avoided to ensure maximal accessibility. |
| Monitoring data is of poor quality | Low | High | MEAL training with all project staff will be hold by the MEAL specialist at the beginning of the project, with a focus on monitoring activities and monitoring data collection.  Follow-up trainings, although not as extensive, will be provided; ideally, having a capacity development plan for project staff. |
| Difficulty to find external evaluators with the required standards, skillsets and competencies. | Medium | High | Thorough and strict procurement process and recruitment will help in screening the consultants with the right requirements and those who don’t. Planning well ahead of time for recruitment and seek advice with the FM if needed. |
| Hired external evaluators cannot deliver or deliver low standard work. | Medium | High | If time allows, terminate the current evaluators’ contract, and reach out to the second-best applicants and see whether they are able to fill in the role.  Re-start the recruitment process at the next evaluation point to hire a new evaluator. |
| The accountability system in place is not appropriate for the community. | Low | Medium | It is required from Save the Children staff to hold community participation sessions to enable community members to choose the right accountability approach and tool that they would like to use.  Replace the tools and accountability approach as soon as they are found inappropriate to the community’s use. |
| The accountability system in place is not secured enough and might put beneficiaries in danger. | Low | High | Save the Children puts their beneficiaries’ safety as a very high priority and follows strictly the Do No Harm policy. During the setup of the accountability system, the team will ensure that all safety measures and access to sensitive data are strictly in place. |
| The learning agenda is seen as ad hoc and not well embedded in project’s activities. | Medium | Medium | As part of the MEAL training mentioned above, all project staff will learn about the importance of learning and how best to disseminate and use learning in their daily tasks.  The learning strategy and plan for the project will be presented to all staff and ensure to get buy-in. People will be assign roles to take on, which will ensure their involvement and engagement. |
| Lack of use of evidence and learning to feed back into program implementation and delivery. | Medium | High | A learning plan will include practical actions to take to ensure that evidence and learning are truly used for improvements of program. These cases will need to be documented and tracked. |
| State of emergency/political violence | High | Medium | An extended sample size will be used in order to compensate for school that may need to be excluded due to these situations and in most cases, violence is localized in certain areas of the country. In some cases we may consider remote control strategies if certain areas are no longer accessible. There may also be readjustments to the timelines of evaluations to ensure that there is a lesser risk of political violence. |
| High number of secondary schools for transition | Medium | Medium | The targeted secondary schools will be selected at the start of the project and will not be added on a rolling basis throughout the years. If during the assessment that is ongoing a large number of high schools are identified than there a selection process based on the highest coverage, distance, and availability will be undertaken. After the first year REALISE bursary recipients will be instructed about which high schools will be targeted. |
| Delayed activities | Medium | Medium | We knew that undertaking REALISE would be a challenging undertaking. It is for that reason that many of the interventions do not start until September 2018, to allow us time to set up, assess the situation and implement properly from then. Key activities are being undertaken earlier (for child protection, or where activities are quicker to implement, e.g. supporting AE centres).  The project starting after the school term meant we couldn’t pay bursaries to G6/7 this academic year. We are undertaking a data collection exercise now to understand what impact that has had on our cohort. |

## Learning

* 1. Learning strategy

The REALISE “learning agenda” will be used as an organizational learning tool to identifies lessons for programme quality improvement and decision making before during and after project implementation. The proposed learning agenda is aimed at enabling the REALISE project in particular and SCI to be more effectively, efficiently, be flexible and adaptable to the veer changing project implementation context and environment. The agenda will rely heavily on skills and information from M&E, knowledge management, and community building.

The REALISE learning agenda will include a set of common steps and activities: The activities will include but not limited to:

* Convening stakeholders and partners to identify learning information needs
* Identifying, prioritizing and adopt learning questions;
* Reviewing the literature for what is already known about the topic;
* Developing a plan for answering those questions
* Implementing learning activities
* Disseminating the evidence usually through learning products in order to allow the audience to use and apply the findings in their work.
* Working with IDS on thematic research and publications
* Work with Bien Grandir research within SCI about gender norms and sexual and reproductive health

As part of the project’s Theory of Change, the team recognizes that the impact of improving girls’ life chances through education (learning and transition) cannot be achieved through a linear implementation of interventions; it needs to be approached in a holistic way, where different environments and core components are influencing and reinforcing each other. Therefore, teaching quality, positively changing gender and social norms in community, and active and collaborative engagement of the government and local authority are key to the project’s success.

The REALISE learning agenda will be supported by a collaborative approach; which is based on the model that knowledge can be created within a population where members actively interact by sharing experiences. The learning themes will be aligned to SCI learning focus and will include: (1) Teaching, learning & assessment – Literacy and numeracy; and (2) Gender Equality & Inclusive Education (includes boys, girls with disabilities etc.)

The REALISE team will use different approaches and tools to draw on evidence from a variety of sources. This will imply collaborating intentionally with stakeholders for the production and transmission of knowledge—both explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge, conducting participatory action research (PAR), which is a significant methodology for intervention, development and change within groups and communities.

The REALISE team will also seek to engage stakeholders through the Appreciative inquiry (AI) model to collect analyze and disseminate key project lessons as well as academic research supported by IDS.  The processes will ensure that the stakeholders respond to asking questions qualitatively while sharing challenges, experience and success stories.  The objective is to elucidate the assets and identify problems that concern people enough to want to change in order to help people to generate new ways to address old problems and the will to act on them so that they will be able to build a new future on the present potential.

Collaborative learning activities can include face-to-face conversations, meetings, (online forums, etc.). Collaborative writing, group projects, joint problem solving, debates, and methods for examining collaborative learning processes include conversation analysis and statistical discourse analysis.

The REALISE team is committed to use an adaptive management approach, which involves the integration of project design, management, and monitoring to systematically test assumptions in order to adapt and learn. Therefore, the evidence/findings will be used amongst others to:

* Test assumptions;
* Review and reflect on implementation;
* Strategically inform decisions to amend/ adapt programmatic and management components of the project;
* To explicitly document planning and implementation processes and its successes and failures in order to avoid a repetition of errors; and
* To improve strategic thinking and dialog process as well as strategic operations planning

To disseminate the results the project will organize workshops at different levels and print materials

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| TARGET GROUP | RATIONALE | EXAMPLES OF TARGETED INSTITUTION |
| REALISE Project Staff | To learn from implementation and improve quality | Consortium management team, Provincial teams |
| GEC Donor and Fund Manager | Core group | DFID and PWC |
| SCI STAFF | Education, social protection, gender and sexual and reproductive health, child participation and protection core group | International and national SCI staff |
| Education and Social Action Institutions | Responsible for Education, Gender and Social Protection policy and national program | Education Ministry at National, and provincial, Ministry of Social Affaires, Ministry of Gender Family and Children, Notional Program on Adolescent health. |
| International Organizations | Work groups, steering committees at national level | Education Cluster, Education thematic group |
| Universities | Leading of educations and social science program | IDS |
| International and national NGOs | Development as core of their activities | Members of Network and coalitions of Education For All, Girls not Bride, UN women |

Throughout the life of the project, the project team will undertake the exercise of stakeholders analysis every year to validate and see whether each key stakeholder’s position still holds true. Based on the results, the team will re-assess their interventions and reach strategy to ensure that the key stakeholders move towards the ‘ideal scenario’ of where the project believes they can best contribute and act to promote girls’ education and girls’ rights. Some stakeholders such as teachers, head teachers, club leaders, girls, coaches of TPD, and parents will be best placed to contribute to learning about change that is happening or not happening in the field, either through observations or informal interviews of project staff in the field, or through specific evaluation points and monitoring activities.

The project will also set up an accountability strategy through a feedback and complaint response mechanism (CRM), which will allow beneficiaries, partners and other stakeholders to not only share their complaints about the project with the project team, but also share feedback on interventions. This feedback could include recommendations and suggestions on improving or adapting specific activities. The project team is required to acknowledge all feedback and complaints received through the CRM, and address and give a response to the complaints on a timely basis. To set up the CRM in the community and at school level, the project staff will involve the stakeholders and decide collaboratively with them which CRM tools to put in place that are the most appropriate for them. This will not only ensure buy-in and usage, but also strengthen relationships. More informally, the project expects the provincial managers and other field staff, including the MEAL officers, to engage with the stakeholders at the field level to gather insights during monitoring visits, and write an observational report once back in the office to share with the core project team in Kinshasa.

In addition to generating operational learning from the project, the team will also join 2 core learning clusters, which are GEC-wide thematic groups while continuing to learn and share from all cluster:

* Teaching, learning & assessment – Numeracy
* Social norms around education
  1. Stakeholder engagement, dissemination and influencing

Key information, learning and evidence produced will be presented in a variety of formats appropriate to different audiences. Research will be shared with decision-makers in MINEPSP, MINGFE, MINAS and PNSA and knowledge sharing events will be organized to disseminate findings of the research work as well. The research results will also be used to create presentations to share findings and learning with the objective of influencing future research and policy by government, NGOs, international organizations such as UNICEF, and other relevant stakeholders such as Accelere.

Monitoring of the ownership and engagement of government and other stakeholders will be carried out through detailed records following all stakeholder meetings, and careful tracking of the development of government plans, including the level of leadership taken in producing those plans. Evidence of government commitment and advocacy outcomes will be documented.

At national level, the project team will define a dissemination plan in order to involve and share learning with beneficiaries, their families, the wider community and the government. Internally, the project and its partners will disseminate learning across teams and projects. At international level, the learning agenda will be designed to share learning across three GEC-T projects implemented by Save the Children in three different countries, as they have done in the past during GEC 1. As part of the learning clusters, REALISE will also contribute in sharing knowledge and learning between all participants of the clusters, as well as across the whole GEC portfolio globally. Both in-country DFID and PwC offices will also be receiving information and participate in learning events, as well as DFID and PwC headquarters in the UK.

## Evaluation workplan

* 1. Timetable

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Activities** | **Timeline / deadline** |
| School term in the D.R.Congo: September until June (school closes June until August) | |
| Project appoints and forms an Evaluation Steering Committee | December 2017 |
| Recruitment of external evaluators | end-March 2018 |
| Inception meeting and workplan review | end-March 2018 |
| Definition of primary research instruments and development | April 2018 |
| Finalize and submit evaluation quantitative and qualitative tools to FM | end-April 2018 |
| Final inception report and workplan submitted to SC | end-April 2018 |
| Develop and carry out training workshop for enumerators and field supervisors | Early May 2018 |
| Testing and piloting data collection tools | Early May 2018 |
| Collect benchmarking data and baseline data | Mid-May - early June 2018 |
| First draft of baseline report and clean datasets | Early July 2018 |
| Presentation to Evaluation Steering Group | Early July 2018 |
| Final Baseline Study Report + clean datasets submitted to SC and the FM | End July 2018 |
|  |  |
| Inception phase of midline evaluation | January - February 2019 |
| Fieldwork of midline evaluation | March - April 2019 |
| Final Midline Study Report submitted to the FM | End June 2019 |
| Inception phase of endline evaluation | January - February 2021 |
| Fieldwork of endline evaluation | March - April 2021 |
| Final Endline Study Report submitted to the FM | End June 2021 |

* 1. Responsibilities

Responsibility for supervising and leading on monitoring activities of REALISE, including reporting, tracking and updating the MEAL plan and MEAL workplan, lies with the REALISE REALM Manager. They fulfil research, evaluation, accountability, learning and monitoring functions. The REALISE Chief of Party is responsible for having oversight of the whole project, especially regarding interventions implementation and award management and reporting, but also oversees MEAL work and intervenes to help solve any high-level issues related to MEAL.

Regional MEAL officers will oversee routine data collection from field officers and share that with the REALM specialist and their database assistant.

The REALM Manager will use the data collected in each province to collate and centralize a database in order to conduct data analysis for project’s use, improvement and management. SCI DRC has a portfolio-wide MEAL Manager. They will provide guidance and support to the REALM specialist.

The SCUK MEAL Advisor is based in London, offering bespoke technical support and advice when the project needs. She is also responsible in reviewing reporting documents and various reports and is also part of the Evaluation Steering Committee. She would be one of the main contacts between the FM M&E Specialist and REALISE staff. The SCUK MEAL Advisor is also responsible for providing trainings in the country office when the capacity cannot be found nationally, as well as providing supervision and guidance in managing the External Evaluators.

The External Evaluators (EE) are responsible to implement successfully a baseline assessment, a midline study, and an endline study to evaluate the project and provide findings on the project’s results towards girls’ learning and transition outcomes. Not only the EE will verify the relevance of the project’s Theory of Change during the project’s life, they will also try to establish a causal link between the project’s interventions and the project’s results and give explanations about how and why they happened. Therefore, the project expects the EE to provide insights on the intended and unintended effects of the project, and why they happened. In addition, the EE will give recommendations to the project staff at each evaluation point on how to improve the project and the future evaluation studies, and in return, the project will provide a management response accordingly and take further actions to implement the recommendations as much as they can.

## Annexes

* Logframe
* Draft evaluation tools (if already available)
* Completed ToR for evaluators
* Draft Sampling Framework

1. UN, via PopulationPyramid.net [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. UNDP (2015) [*HDI Country Notes*](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/COD.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. \* As defined in PwC MEL Guidance Part 2 – Evaluation questions section. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. \* As defined in PwC MEL Guidance Part 2 – Evaluation questions section. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. \* As defined in PwC MEL Guidance Part 2 – Evaluation questions section. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. \* As defined in PwC MEL Guidance Part 2 – Evaluation questions section. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/What-Makes-Great-Teaching-REPORT.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\_data/file/428382/Beneficiary-Feedback-Feb15a.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/safeguarding-children.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-9)