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Executive summary

The Girls’ Education Project Phase 3 (GEP3) is an eight-year project (2012–20), with a total budget of £88 million, seeking to improve school access, retention, and learning outcomes for girls in five northern Nigerian states. It is managed by the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID). Between 2014 and 2017 the project piloted a series of interventions in primary schools and integrated Qur’anic schools (IQSs). The project consists of multiple interventions, among others, an early learning intervention implemented in Katsina and Zamfara, and the provision of teaching- and school-support to IQSs in Bauchi, Niger and Sokoto; both of which are the specific focus of this evaluation.

This report presents the findings of the multi-year evaluation of GEP3 undertaken by Education Data, Research and Evaluation in Nigeria (EDOREN). The findings are based on extensive school- and state-level quantitative and qualitative data collection during the second half of 2017 (first term of the 2017–2018 school year); as well as the baseline data collection in the same period in 2015. This Synthesis Report is accompanied by a Technical Report, which describes the methodology for the evaluation and the findings of different methods used, in detail.

The evaluation covers three separate components addressing different evaluation questions, each with its own methodological features:

1. an assessment of GEP3’s overall relevance and sustainability based on an examination of GEP3’s theory of change (ToC);
2. an impact evaluation of GEP3’s early learning intervention (the Reading and Numeracy Activity, RANA); and
3. a performance evaluation of GEP3’s IQS support (IQSS).

The objective of this midline evaluation is to address the evaluation questions set out in the GEP3 Evaluation Framework (EDOREN, 2015). The purpose is to support decision making about intervention scale-up and funding, and to inform improvement and learning about specific GEP3 interventions.

The evaluation has followed a theory-based, mixed-methods approach. The ToC of the project and individual interventions was used as a guiding methodological framework. We used different evaluation approaches and a mix of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to address a range of evaluation questions, adapt data collection to the context, and integrate multiple perspectives into the evaluation.

Relevance and sustainability assessment

Methodology

Evaluation questions related to the relevance and sustainability of GEP3 as a whole are addressed by assessing the project’s ToC; examining its interventions, outcomes and assumptions. This assessment is based on key informant interviews (KIs) conducted largely with GEP3 state-level stakeholders in September 2017. Key informants were purposively selected, with support from GEP3 state teams, based on engagement in GEP3. A broad range of stakeholders were interviewed to incorporate multiple perspectives in the evaluation process.
Key findings

**GEP3’s overall ToC is plausible, particularly when taking a long-term perspective to change.** Within GEP3’s project timeframe, however, flawed assumptions are likely to affect outcomes. The plausibility of GEP3’s ToC is supported by stakeholders’ common understanding of its objectives. There is consensus that the project’s redesign in 2015 brought greater focus in this respect. There is almost unanimous agreement that a continuing focus on girls is necessary, owing to their greater disadvantage in relation to accessing schooling. Furthermore, stakeholders see considerable change, especially in enrolment, but are realistic about the long-term nature of change, particularly to improve learning. ToC assumptions that the state can provide enough teachers and schools to meet demand and release sufficient funding to education are yet to be met. Improving the quality of education in IQSs is particularly hindered by institutional weaknesses and underfunding.

**GEP3’s implementation strategy, involving implementation through government, is appropriate, supported by sufficient, but varying and constrained human capacity (as perceived by stakeholders).** Major GEP3 interventions support activities are already institutionalised in government. All stakeholders believe that there is sufficient human capacity to implement GEP3 through the state and local government, with the participation of School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs), community-based organisations, and civil society organisation (CSO) actors. However, the ability of government staff to implement effectively is highly constrained by the paucity of financial resources, and capacity is not necessarily distributed evenly between responsible departments and across levels of government.

**Overall, GEP3 addresses important demand- and supply-side barriers to basic education for girls within its sphere of influence.** Through the Enrolment Drive Campaign (EDC), SBMCs, and the cash transfer programme GEP3 targets out-of-school girls and pockets of parental resistance to girls’ education. Teacher capacity development (TCD) targets the well-recognised supply-side barrier of the low quality of many of the teachers. However, deeply entrenched attitudes about the role of girls and women in northern Nigerian society are hard to change and require consideration in a project gender strategy, which until recently the GEP3 did not have. Also, very significant supply-side barriers related to infrastructure, teacher recruitment, and politicisation of appointments are not part of GEP3’s sphere of influence but are likely to influence outcomes. Institutional barriers are significant, such as the dominant role of the SUBEBs and the relative institutional weakness of the SAMEs.

**Capacity to sustain GEP3 interventions critically depends on financial commitment.** Stakeholders in all states believe they have the human capacity to sustain GEP3 interventions without GEP3 support. However, the main challenge to sustainability is the availability and release of sufficient financial resources. Political commitment is highly variable across states and over time. Political change deeply affects commitment, with no intervention relying on state funds guaranteed to be sustained.

**There is variable commitment to different interventions.** Support is strongest for EDC, the Annual Schools Census (ASC), and SBMCs across all states, and these interventions are embedded in government systems. RANA is very strongly supported in the two pilot states. However, RANA and IQSS are less well embedded as their sustainability cannot be guaranteed at this stage. EDC, the ASC, SBMCs, and IQSS are resilient to political change. TCD is more vulnerable, owing to the vast resources needed to make a real difference. RANA is currently resilient to change but, if it cannot be scaled up at the same level of quality, it may not be prioritised over time.
Overall Summary

Relevance - sustainability

Our assessment finds that the Theory of Change is a plausible long-term vision of how the project’s objectives can be achieved but there are considerable constraints that still need to be overcome to enable the theory of change to materialise within the project’s timeframe. These include the presence of appropriate school infrastructure, recruitment of sufficient teachers and schools, and the release of financial resources. The capacity to sustain GEP3 interventions critically depends on the availability and release of funding and political commitment. The landscape of implementation is not homogenous and different challenges will need to be overcome in different states.

Impact of GEP3’s early learning intervention

GEP3’s early learning intervention, RANA, aims to improve the early learning skills of children in primary grades 1 to 3 (P1–P3) in their mother tongue, with an emphasis on reading, while also preparing children to learn with English as a language of instruction by the time they transition to Grade 4. A key measure of the intervention’s success is improved literacy skills. The intervention is being implemented over a three-year period (2016–2018) in six Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Zamfara and Katsina. The intervention has three key components at school and community level: the provision of a package of Hausa-medium teaching and learning materials to schools; early grade professional development for teachers and head teachers; and a set of community awareness and engagement activities to support early grade literacy.

Methodology

The impact evaluation of GEP3’s early learning intervention is designed as an experimental clustered randomised control trial (RCT), stratified by LGAs and type of school (primary public school vs. IQS). As discussed in the baseline report, the randomisation succeeded in creating equivalent treatment (schools that received the RANA intervention) and control (schools that did not receive the RANA intervention) groups. Hence, any differences observed in outcome variables between treatment and control groups can be attributed to the RANA early learning intervention. The measurement of these differences in outcomes, which represents the estimation of the programme impact, is based on two separate approaches:

- panel difference-in-differences for pupil-level outcomes; and
- post-test analysis of treatment and control groups at midline for teacher-level outcomes.

As schools and pupil were sampled through a panel approach, no new sample design was required at midline. The same sample of schools as at baseline was selected for data collection at midline and pupils were selected from the list of interviewed pupils at baseline.

Teachers were not panelled between baseline and midline. The sampling approach for teachers at midline was guided by the need to study teachers with maximum possible exposure to the early learning intervention.

From a measurement perspective, the panel survey approach enables us to estimate the impact of the early learning intervention on improving learning outcomes between the start of Grade 2 and the end of Grade 3 for the cohort of pupils, but we cannot measure the impact of a pupil being exposed to the entire cycle of RANA, from Grade 1 to Grade 3.
In addition to the impact analyses mentioned above, we also present a descriptive investigation of trends in some indicators of interest. This trend analysis is restricted to treatment (i.e. RANA) schools only and focuses on changes between baseline and midline across these schools.

Key findings

Overall, there are no substantial improvements in pupil Hausa literacy within RANA schools and only minor progress is directly attributable to RANA. Pupils in general continue to demonstrate very low levels of Hausa literacy. At midline, 90% of pupils are yet to acquire the minimum set of skills expected.\(^1\) This means that all progress occurs from a very low base level. For example, we observe an increase in the average Hausa score of pupils performing within the lowest proficiency band, yet no major changes between the proficiency bands is observable over the evaluation period. RANA does not seem to have had an effect that is strong enough to shift pupils, either girls or boys, toward higher proficiency bands.

The standard of English literacy skills among pupils in RANA schools has shown substantial improvements, although once again the impact on English that is attributable to RANA is only weakly significant. Within RANA schools, the proportion of pupils demonstrating English literacy skills at the highest range increased by 22% over the evaluation period (see Figure 4). Though the lack of a marked difference between treatment and control schools suggests that the improvements in English within RANA schools are at least partially due to a general trend rather than the intervention. The focus of RANA materials on phonics, an approach strategy which may be more suited to English than Hausa (see Section 4.5.1 and GEP3 Midline Technical Report Section 7.1), may help explain some of the observed impact.

In terms of girls’ educational performance, there is no consistent, significant gap in learning observed between girls and boys at midline in public schools, although a gap persists in IQSs. For both Hausa and English literacy, boys are found to perform significantly better than girls in the RANA IQSs while in RANA public schools, there is no significant gender difference in English and only a minor difference in Hausa literacy. As at baseline, these gender differences at midline are most pronounced among older rather than younger pupils, as the gender gap is shown to be widening with age. The impact on learning attributable to RANA is also similar between boys and girls. Although there are subtle differences in impact between boys and girls depending on school type, there is no clear evidence of a gender-specific impact of the intervention.

In RANA schools, the great majority of teachers are still unable to display sufficient competence and comprehension skills in Hausa. However, RANA teachers score significantly higher at midline compared to baseline on other knowledge and skill measures. Over 80% of RANA teachers at midline are unable to display competence in Grade 1 and Grade 2 level Hausa and only around 3% are competent in Hausa reading comprehension. Additionally, teachers’ subject knowledge has not improved significantly and curriculum knowledge levels have deteriorated significantly. By contrast, levels of pedagogical knowledge have improved significantly.

There is limited impact attributable to RANA on increasing the Hausa knowledge of trained teachers. While RANA has had some impact on teacher Hausa knowledge in IQSs, we observe no impact at all on their Hausa knowledge in public schools and no impact on Hausa comprehension skills in public schools or IQSs. Teachers in treatment IQSs are about 19 percentage points less

\(^1\) This is the learning level at which we would expect pupils to perform on the basis of the literacy tests administered and primary grade attended.
likely to show no evidence of this skill and 12 percentage points more likely to be competent in this skill than teachers in control IQSs. No such impact is observed in public schools.

RANA has had a significant impact on teachers’ skills in ‘interpreting English words and phrases’ and on teachers’ English comprehension skills. Teachers in RANA schools are about 12 percentage points less likely to show no evidence of this skill and six percentage points more likely to be competent in this skill compared to teachers in control schools. They are also about 15 percentage points less likely to show no evidence of English comprehension skill than teachers in control schools. Also in this case, RANA materials could have played an important role. Even if in a different language, access to and use of materials like storybooks and other reading resources based on a phonics approach would have improved teachers’ general comprehension skills.

In terms of pedagogical practices, RANA seems to have had a greater impact in IQSs than public schools. However, no significant differences are observed in the way that teachers engage girls and boys in either type of school. We observe a shift toward pupil-centred activities and an improvement in teacher’s skills in Hausa-based instructions, but only in IQSs and not in public schools. As discussed above, there is evidence that RANA has had a significant impact on Hausa knowledge in IQSs, which translates also into a significant impact on Hausa-based teaching for IQSs. While we see an increase attributable to RANA in pupil-centred teacher actions, when it comes to teacher talk there is no evidence of a reduction in rote-based approaches.

Hausa teaching and learning materials are more frequently available and are now being used significantly more in RANA schools. There is also strong evidence that RANA has had a large and significant impact on the availability of materials, and on their use during lessons. This impact is observed in both public and IQSs. At midline, 86% of treatment teachers are observed using Hausa materials, compared to only 11% of control teachers. Close to 80% of treatment teachers agree that they always have Hausa materials available, compared to 20% of control teachers.

Teacher motivation has increased between baseline and midline among teachers within RANA schools. Specifically, only 30% of the teachers at baseline had the level of motivation that the average teacher has at midline. The increase in the overall motivation comes primarily from a large increase in the self-efficacy scale. Examining the different sub-scales that make up the motivation index used in the analysis, there are increases also in interest and enjoyment, pressure and tension, and effort and importance. We also find that teachers in RANA schools are more motivated than teachers in control schools at midline.

Overall Summary (RANA)

Although improvements in one of the main indicators of RANA programme success, improved learning outcomes in Hausa literacy have not been observed, there has been progress in other areas. The combination of more pupil-centred activities, more frequent use of learning materials, improved teacher English skills, and increased teacher motivation points to the RANA programme having some impact at the teacher level. Though the impact is not yet observed to flow through to pupil Hausa literacy skills in a substantial way at this stage, the improvement in pupil English skills is a promising sign (see section 4.5.1 for further explanation). Significant change in learning outcomes requires a consistent focus over a number of years and the two years elapsed from baseline to midline would be the absolute minimum required to observe significant progress (see stakeholders’ perspectives on the timeline of education quality reform in Section 3.2.1.3).
Effectiveness of GEP3’s IQSS

GEP3’s IQSS seeks to improve education outcomes at IQSs, with the aim of providing meaningful and relevant quality basic education for integrated Qur’anic education (IQE) learners. The intervention seeks to raise learning outcomes in basic literacy and numeracy for pupils at IQSs (especially girls), improve retention among girls, and (to a lesser extent) increase girls’ enrolment. The project targets registered Islamiyya, Qur’anic Tsangaya Education Centres that offer an integrated curriculum. These IQSs largely operate as community-based initiatives, but are willing to build links with government for the purposes of monitoring and technical support. IQSS involves the training and mentoring of IQS teachers—referred to as facilitators—sensitisation of the IQS proprietors, the distribution of classroom teaching and learning materials, capacity building for Centre-Based Management Committees (CBMCs), and the provision of school grants.

Methodology

The evaluation approach draws on the principles of contribution analysis and relies on a strong mix of quantitative and qualitative methods. It does not make use of a control group to make causal inferences but rather seeks to make credible causal claims about the intervention’s contribution to education outcomes by verifying the chain of expected results and assumptions as per a credible ToC, as well as assessing alternative explanations for the outcomes observed. This midline evaluation assesses two contribution claims:

- GEP3’s IQSS contributes to more effective teaching of formal subjects in IQSs; and,
- GEP3’s IQSS contributes to an improved, girl-friendly environment within the schools.

The quantitative component of the evaluation consists of representative sample surveys among GEP3 IQSs in the 12 GEP3 LGAs in Bauchi and Niger. Baseline and midline surveys took place in a sample of 60 IQSs, stratified by LGA. The qualitative research took place in six IQSs that were purposively sampled using typical and extreme case sampling and that were also included in the quantitative survey. The same set of IQSs were visited at baseline and midline.

Key findings

Contribution Claim 1: GEP3’s IQSS contributes to more effective teaching of formal subjects in IQSs

Overall teaching of formal subjects in GEP3-supported IQSs has not become more effective. Facilitators’ use of pupil-centred activities has not changed overall since baseline and classroom teaching still mainly relies on rote-based activities. No significant changes were observed in teachers linking lessons to previous learning and learning objectives, and time on task has even reduced slightly.

Facilitators’ pedagogical knowledge has improved slightly and we observe some improvement in pedagogical practices in the classroom. However, pedagogical competency levels remain very low. Compared to baseline, slightly more facilitators display rudimentary skills in evidencing judgements and diagnosing pupils’ work and are competent in identifying low performers based on a teacher assessment; and, during lesson observations we observe an some improvement in the use of pupil-centred teacher talk (among Bauchi facilitators), pupil engagement and use of lesson plans. Nonetheless, approximately 80% of facilitators demonstrate no pedagogical knowledge on the teacher assessment.
Facilitators’ subject knowledge in Hausa has not improved significantly and remains low. Only 40% of facilitators display competence in Grade 2-level Hausa. While this represents an improvement since baseline it is not statistically significantly. Hausa reading comprehension is extremely limited—80% demonstrate no competency—, which is likely to influence facilitators’ ability to raise pupils’ learning levels in this area.

Hausa as a language of instruction has become more widely used, although, encouragingly, not at the expense of other local Nigerian languages of the immediate environment. Significantly more facilitators use Hausa, while the use of English decreased during the observed lesson at midline compared to baseline. This increased use of Hausa is mainly observed in Niger, as in Bauchi all facilitators were already using it at baseline. This increase in the use of Hausa does not occur in IQSs located in Nupe-speaking communities, where facilitators are more likely to use Nupe.

Facilitators’ motivation has improved since baseline. In particular, there has been an improvement in facilitators’ perceived self-efficacy. However, there is little evidence of improved motivation translating into more effective teaching.

While the use of teaching and learning materials during classroom instruction has increased, their use remains sporadic. The percentage of classrooms with access to and use of any teaching and learning has significantly increased since baseline. However, specific materials such text books, Hausa materials or locally made materials are still only observed in a small minority of classes. Also, the teaching and learning materials distributed by GEP3 in 2016 were rarely used and are frequently not available anymore. Effective use of these materials has likely been affected by lack of instruction and guidance on how to use the materials and the absence of their integration in the IQS facilitator training.

It is very unlikely that gender-sensitive class practices have improved. On the surface, while gendered differences in facilitators’ pupil engagement appear limited, girls are still marginalised in the quality of classroom interaction and engagements. The qualitative research indicates that facilitators do not demonstrate any new gender-sensitive practices in class beyond those observed at baseline. While facilitators generally verbally express positive attitudes toward girls’ education, gender biases among facilitators prevail when probed more deeply.

Overall, GEP3’s contribution to more effective teaching in supported IQSs is likely to have been limited, although GEP3-promoted teaching practices and teaching and learning materials are observed in some schools. Overall, we find no significant statistical associations between facilitators’ training participation and improvements in effective teaching practice or in the different knowledge domains assessed. Nonetheless, new pedagogical skills promoted by GEP3 are observed in some case study schools and facilitators interviewed in those schools attribute their use to GEP3 training. GEP3 has made some difference in promoting the use of locally sourced materials and lesson plans, but, overall, the project’s contribution to a greater and more effective use of teaching and learning materials is limited. Quantitative and qualitative data indicate that GEP3 has likely contributed to an improvement in facilitator motivation. Since the IQSS design and implementation lack clear actions regarding how gender-sensitive class practices are to be achieved and improved, any contribution to change is highly unlikely. The overall limited influence of the facilitator training is likely related to the very low subject and pedagogical knowledge levels of the facilitators, language barriers, the challenging class environment in IQSs, and disruptions, delays and partial implementation of the facilitator training process by the time of the survey.
Contribution Claim 2: GEP3’s IQSS contributes to an improved, girl-friendly school environment in IQSs

All IQSs have established CBMCs, and membership and attendance have increased. GEP3 seeks to improve the school environment in IQSs by strengthening the CBMC’s capacity in terms of school management, resource mobilisation and facilitating community involvement. While at baseline not all IQSs had a CBMC established, this is no longer the case at midline. The number of CBMC members and the attendance rate has significantly increased. Proprietors and head teachers are now more involved in the CBMCs, taking up a key role as chairs, mostly in Bauchi. However, female and child participation in the CBMC and school management activities remains limited. It is therefore very unlikely that CBMCs provide a forum for girls’ voices and needs to be heard, or for girls, or women, to have much influence on decision making related to school management or improvement.

CBMC capacity building has likely contributed to improvements in school management practices and increased resource mobilisation, although its contribution is moderated by other factors. CBMCs have improved school management in terms of school planning and financial management practices. Record-keeping has strongly improved. Resource mobilisation capabilities of CBMCs have improved, but effective resource mobilisation remains a struggle. Factors related to CBMC membership, the influence of the proprietor and the community’s economic context in general moderate school management practices and resource mobilisation. We observe relatively more significant improvement in Niger compared to Bauchi.

The grant application and disbursement process has not been effective and has not strictly followed the guidelines. By the time of the survey, all CBMCs in Bauchi had yet to receive a grant. When the grant has been received, the CBMCs have applied good financial practices and utilised the grant, although only a minority reported submitting a grant utilisation report as per guideline, followed the guideline to not invest in infrastructure construction or renovation, and used the grant for girl-friendly investment.

While improvements in the school environment have taken place, they are, overall, modest and are unlikely to raise the majority of GEP3-supported IQSs to conditions that provide a school environment sufficiently supportive of learning, particularly for girls. Overall, schools have not improved noticeably between baseline and midline in terms of infrastructure. Nonetheless, we observe modest improvements in water access, functioning toilets, and classroom infrastructure. Infrastructure remains largely deficient and there is weak evidence that pupil–teacher ratios are worsening in Bauchi, while they are improving in Niger. We find no evidence that school improvements have, overall, been targeted at enhancing enrolment, retention, or learning for girls specifically, and such made the school environment more girl-friendly; rather, they have been targeted at making the school more child-friendly in general, which may also benefit girls.
Midline Evaluation of the Girls’ Education Project Phase 3

Overall Summary

Effectiveness of IQSS

Overall, teaching has not become more effective in GEP3-supported IQSs although some of the supporting mechanisms have shown signs of progress, including some minor progress in facilitators’ pedagogical knowledge and skills, more use of Hausa, increased facilitator motivation and more frequent use of teaching materials. The classroom practice of teachers is notoriously difficult to shift, which will be particularly challenging in the IQS context given the facilitators low teacher competency levels and poor school environment.

While CBMCs’ school management practices and resource mobilisation capacity show progress, and community engagement levels have risen, improvements in the school environment are modest and are unlikely to raise the majority of GEP3-supported IQSs to conditions that provide a school environment that is sufficiently supportive of learning, particularly for girls.

Recommendations

GEP3’s overall relevance and sustainability

Take stock of capacity development successes and limitations in order to clarify the focus for the remainder of GEP3. This needs to consider the particular needs of the state, the level of political commitment to developing human capacity and providing the financial resources that enable existing capacities to be effective.

Continue support to embed girl-centred interventions within government systems while facilitating data dissemination on implementation and results to stakeholders. Interventions such as ECD, ASC and SBMC are well-embedded in government systems, while interventions such as RANA and IQSS require additional and different types of support to increase sustainability through policies, plans, resource allocations and structures. In order to support ongoing learning and accountability while working through government systems GEP3 can facilitate and promote monitoring and data collections on implementation and results.

Use the recent GEP3 gender strategy as an opportunity to deepen debate about a continued focus on girls. It is clear that progress has been made in consolidating support for girls’ education. At the same time, female participation in the education sector is acknowledged to remain low and entrenched gender-biases remain. GEP3 should therefore lead on the debate about next steps to take to address gender disparities, using the publication of its gender strategy as an opportunity to discuss it with government partners; and, at the same time, clarify concepts and ambitions about gender-sensitive teaching and making the school environment more girl-friendly. This is particularly relevant for IQSS for which it is currently unclear whether a girl-focused approach is preferred compared to a universal learner approach.

Engage in continuing dialogue with high-level government decisions makers about funding and key supply side constraints, in particular increased teacher assignments. Financial commitment to the project and presence of ‘trainable’ teachers are the two main challenges to achieving project outcomes but are not under GEP3’s control and not even in its direct sphere of influence. Nonetheless, in collaboration with other partners, such as DFID, UNICEF should continue engaging

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2 See, for example, Larry Cuban on the ‘dynamic conservatism’ of teachers in which teachers adopt some aspects of a reform but do so in a way that does not destabilise their routines and practices (Cuban, 2013).
high-level government decision-makers, in particular the state governors, to advocate for these challenges to be addressed and highlight agreed government commitments.

**GEP3’s early learning intervention**

The training administered as part of the RANA intervention should place more emphasis on brining all teachers up to minimum levels of subject knowledge. The training should therefore be further tailored to a critical mass of low performing teachers for whom minimum levels of subject knowledge are necessary before attempting to change pedagogical practices. Teachers’ poor literacy and comprehension skills continue to be one of the reasons behind poor learning outcomes. Acquiring adequate competency is a first step that teachers need to take before being able to change their pedagogical practices. This overall lack of adequate competency in teachers needs to be addressed.

Access to and use of teaching and learning materials need to be promoted further, including training teachers on how to use the materials properly, given the positive impact that materials seem to be having on both pupils and teachers. The latter are found to be more motivated if materials are available and improvements observed in pupil literacy could also be the result of more exposure to learning materials together with any improvement observed in teaching practices. Continuing to update, improve, and distribute materials to public schools and IQSs and provide instructions to teachers should therefore remain a priority.

**RANA has not had any impact on pupil retention within RANA schools.** In general, more effort is needed to understand the causes of pupils’ transfers and drop-outs, even though this is not within the scope of the RANA intervention. It would be beneficial, for instance, to systematically track pupils’ transfers across schools, so as to have a better sense of whether they drop out or rather transfer for other reasons. Transfers would be less detrimental than drop-outs for pupils, so it is important to distinguish between the two and understand their respective determinants.

Finally, resources specifically directed to early learning need to be sustained. The programme needs to be given time to reach maturity and any changes in learning outcomes are likely to require the remaining duration of the programme. Given that only two years have passed between our baseline and midline surveys, it is also reasonable to expect more marked improvements in teacher and pupil indicators over a longer period.

**GEP3’s IQSS**

The facilitator capacity building process and any distribution of teaching and learning materials need to be further adapted to the extremely low competency levels of the facilitators. Facilitators’ low Hausa literacy levels are particularly problematic as it constraints Hausa and Hausa-based instruction, the adaptive use of Hausa teaching and learning materials and understanding of the Hausa-based training. Distribution of teaching and learning materials should be integrated into the facilitator capacity building process and accompanied with instructions and demonstration about how they can best support teaching and learning practice in the diverse context of IQSs.

The project needs to address challenges related to Hausa not being the language of the immediate environment in all communities. The evaluation findings indicate that Hausa is not uniformly the language of the immediate environment and that facilitators from non-Hausa
communities have difficulties understanding the Hausa-based facilitator training and use the Hausa-based teaching and learning materials. Therefore, the IQSS activities need to make further allowances for IQSS activities adapted to the actual language of the community.

**Facilitator support needs to be consistent and continuous.** Given their low competency levels facilitators need ongoing support and feedback to build their understanding of child-centred teaching practices. Intervention roll-out needs to support continuity, avoiding delays that disrupt the process and erode trust in the project. The teaching approach promoted needs also to be consistent. While adaptation of the approach will be necessary given the diverse and complex context of IQSs, ongoing revisions of the teaching approach promoted at the training possibly creates confusion among facilitators that are already struggling to understand the training content. A stable intervention design and implementation approach is needed before scale-up.

**Improvements in CBMC functionality need to be further and reliably supported.** IQS stakeholders appreciate and value GEP3 support, which they equate with integration. CBMCs have improved their management practices, record-keeping, and resource mobilisation capability. However, CBMCs’ functionality is fragile and unmet expectations about project support leads to demotivation. Therefore, further support is needed, which should be reliable and well explained to CBMCs and other IQS stakeholders.

**In order for IQSs to be an effective model to expand access to quality education, project partners need to continue their support for the creation of an effective institutional enabling environment for IQSs.** At present, the support to IQS is hindered by poor coordination and alignment of IQS support and mandates across government agencies, and lack of sustained funding, particularly for SAME-supported IQSs. If this is not addressed – particularly reliable funding – coherent and effective approaches to integration cannot be sustainably delivered.
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<td>Annual Schools Census</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BASAME</td>
<td>Bauchi State Agency for Mass Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBMC</td>
<td>Centre-Based Management Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>CoE</td>
<td>College of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil society organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>DAC</td>
<td>Development Assistance Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department of International Development (UK)</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDC</td>
<td>Enrolment Drive Campaign</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDOREN</td>
<td>Education, Data, Research and Evaluation in Nigeria</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMIS</td>
<td>Education management information system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESSPIN</td>
<td>Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria</td>
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<td>FTTSS</td>
<td>Female Teacher Trainee Scholarship Scheme</td>
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<tr>
<td>GEP1, 2, 3</td>
<td>Girls’ Education Project Phase 1, 2, 3</td>
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<td>GEP3</td>
<td>Girl’s Education Project Phase 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>GESC</td>
<td>Girls’ Education Steering Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>HiLWA</td>
<td>High-Level Women’s Advocates</td>
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<tr>
<td>HWI</td>
<td>Household Wealth Index</td>
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<tr>
<td>IQE</td>
<td>Integrated Qur’anic Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>IQS</td>
<td>Integrated Qur’anic School</td>
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<tr>
<td>IQSS</td>
<td>Integrated Qur’anic School Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>KII</td>
<td>Key informant interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGA</td>
<td>Local Government Area</td>
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<td>LGEA</td>
<td>Local Government Education Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEI+</td>
<td>Northern Education Initiative Plus</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGN</td>
<td>Nigerian Naira</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>NIPEP</td>
<td>Nigeria Partnership for Education Project</td>
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<td>NMEC</td>
<td>National Mass Education Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>OOSC</td>
<td>Out-of-School Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>OPM</td>
<td>Oxford Policy Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>P1–3</td>
<td>Primary grade 1–3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RANA</td>
<td>Reading and Numeracy Activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>RCT</td>
<td>Randomised control trial</td>
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<td>RLP</td>
<td>RANA Literacy Package</td>
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<td>SAME</td>
<td>State Agency for Mass Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBMC</td>
<td>School-Based Management Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMoE</td>
<td>State Ministry of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSCE</td>
<td>Senior Secondary Certificate Examination</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSV</td>
<td>School support visit</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUBEB</td>
<td>State Universal Basic Education Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>TCD</td>
<td>Teacher capacity development</td>
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<tr>
<td>TDP</td>
<td>Teacher Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>TENS</td>
<td>Transforming Education in Niger State</td>
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<tr>
<td>ToC</td>
<td>Theory of change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPD</td>
<td>Teacher practice discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UBEC</td>
<td>Universal Basic Education Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Education Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>WCDP</td>
<td>Whole-Centre Development Plan</td>
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1 Introduction

This report has been prepared by EDOREN. EDOREN is contracted by DFID Nigeria to evaluate GEP3, in line with the GEP3 Evaluation Framework (EDOREN, 2015). GEP3 is an eight-year, £88m project (2012–20) that seeks to ensure more girls complete basic education and acquire skills for life and livelihoods in northern Nigeria. It is managed by UNICEF, implemented in partnership with state governments and funded by UK Aid DFID.

The report provides a synthesis of the midline findings of a multi-year evaluation of GEP3. The primary data collection for this midline evaluation took place at school and state level in the second half of 2017 (the first term of the 2017–2018 school year). The analysis also draws on baseline data that were collected in 2015 (during the first term of the 2015–2016 school year). The baseline findings are reported in a Baseline Synthesis Report and Baseline Technical Report. Similar to the baseline, this Synthesis Report is accompanied by a comprehensive Technical Report (Volume II), which includes detailed presentations of the evaluation methodology and findings of different evaluation methods used, in particular an extensive analysis of the school survey data. The objective of the Synthesis Report is to provide a summary of the key findings without entering into a discussion of the technical details.

The scope of EDOREN’s evaluation work is centred around a set of evaluation questions related to the relevance, effectiveness/impact and sustainability of the project, as set out in the GEP3 Evaluation Framework. The relevance and sustainability questions cover GEP3 as a whole, while the effectiveness/impact questions focus on specific GEP3 interventions: that is, the early learning intervention (Reading and Numeracy Activity - RANA) and GEP3’s IQS support (IQSS). Accordingly, the evaluation consists of three lines of inquiry:

- an assessment of GEP3’s relevance and sustainability based on an examination and explication of GEP3’s ToC;
- an impact evaluation of the RANA early learning intervention; and
- a performance evaluation of GEP3’s IQSS.

The objective of this midline evaluation is to address the evaluation questions set out in the GEP3 Evaluation Framework. The evaluation prioritises the assessment of improvements in the quality of education in the GEP3-supported schools – in particular, improvements in learning and teaching. Some evaluation questions will not be answered because they were foreseen to be addressed after endline data collection or because they have become irrelevant due to changes in the project design. DFID has indicated that due to resource constraints the endline data collection is unlikely to take place.

The purpose of the evaluation is to support decision making about intervention scale-up and funding, and to inform improvement and learning about GEP3 interventions. GEP3 scale-up decision making has already started. Therefore, the evaluation findings can further strengthen or attune the decision making process. The evaluation findings will further support DFID’s funding proposals in the education sector in Nigeria.

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3 Pellens et al. (2016).
4 IQSs are Qur’anic schools that have accepted the integration of basic education subjects, such as literacy, numeracy, and basic science into their school curriculum. We will refer to GEP3’s IQS support as IQSS in the remainder of the report.
The evaluation has sought to be responsive to the complexity of the project and its environment, and to collect quality data in the challenging context of northern Nigeria at multiple levels and among multiple actors. By including a project implementation and context review in the evaluation, persistent follow-up with implementing partners and maintaining key evaluation team members since evaluation design we invested in thorough understanding the complexity of the project and its context. The evaluation has followed a mixed-methods approach—using different quantitative and qualitative data collection methods at different levels—to adapt data collection to the context and to integrate multiple perspectives into the evaluation. We applied different approaches to understand the causal link between GEP3 and its outcomes, again depending on context and evaluation questions. We used a theory-based approach to be able to unpack the different components of GEP3 interventions, while keeping to the fore a comprehensive understanding of the whole. Through Oxford Policy Management’s (OPM’s) Nigeria office we invested heavily in quality data collection in challenging circumstances, particularly among little-researched IQSs in northern Nigeria. This complexity-responsiveness also required making choices and adaptations along the way, such as a change in the timing of the midline data collection, which we will discuss in the report.

In line with the scope of the evaluation questions, the report is structured as follows: Chapter 2 provides a summary of GEP3 and the evaluation background. Chapter 3 presents the main findings of the relevance and sustainability assessment. Chapter 4 starts with a brief presentation of the RANA early learning intervention and the impact evaluation methodology, followed by the main findings of impact evaluation. Chapter 5 summarises the findings of the performance evaluation of GEP3’s IQSS. Chapter 6 concludes and formulates some recommendations.
2 Project and evaluation background

2.1 Objectives, scope, and intervention strategy of GEP3

GEP3 is an eight-year project (2012–20) that seeks to ensure more girls complete basic education and acquire skills for life and livelihoods. It is managed by UNICEF, in partnership with federal and state governments, and funded by UK Aid DFID. It is core geographical focus is on five northern Nigerian states: Katsina, Sokoto, Bauchi, Niger, and Zamfara, although in 2016 some activities were expanded to Kebbi. The project aims to improve access, retention, and learning outcomes for girls, and to reduce the disparities between girls’ and boys’ education outcomes. Over the long term the project seeks to contribute to improved social and economic opportunities for girls in northern Nigeria.

In 2014 the project was redesigned and its ToC revised, resulting in a reduced number of interventions. GEP3 works on a pilot-to-scale-up approach. Over the period 2014–2017 interventions were planned to be piloted in 210 public primary schools and 200 IQSs in each state. During this pilot period, interventions are mainly funded by GEP3. By the end of this period GEP3 aims to secure state governments’ buy-in to invest their own resources to scale up piloted interventions that have had demonstrable results. Scale-up was envisioned to start from October 2017.

GEP3 supports interventions in three output areas:

- Output 1: increased access to and demand for girls’ education;
- Output 2: improved capacity of teachers to deliver effective learning for girls; and
- Output 3: improved governance to strengthen girls’ education.

Table 1 provides an overview of the GEP3 interventions that have been piloted in 2014–2017 in the different states. GEP3’s interventions are intended to be broadly delivered through government education structures at state and local government levels. Government bodies at these levels therefore constitute the programme’s primary stakeholders.

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5 In 2016, GEP3 expanded its geographical scope to 18 LGAs in Kebbi, Katsina, Zamfara, and Sokoto through a funding agreement with Educate A Child.
6 In Katsina and Zamfara, interventions take place in only 40 IQSs in the initial GEP3 LGAs, based on the list of 200 pilot schools. Following the agreement with Educate A Child the number of schools supported by GEP3 has expanded beyond the initial pilot schools in the five states.
7 UNICEF (2017a).
Table 1: Overview of GEP3 interventions during the 2014–2017 pilot period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>States</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Output 1</td>
<td>Cash transfer programme in public primary schools</td>
<td>Niger and Sokoto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EDC in catchment areas of public primary schools</td>
<td>All states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls for Girls groups in public primary schools and IQSs</td>
<td>Bauchi, Katsina, Zamfara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output 2</td>
<td>TCD in public primary schools and IQSs</td>
<td>Public primary schools: Bauchi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head teacher training in public primary schools and proprietor sensitisation in IQSs</td>
<td>IQSs: Bauchi, Niger, Sokoto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Early learning intervention (RANA) in public primary schools and IQSs</td>
<td>Katsina and Zamfara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output 3</td>
<td>Capacity building SBMCs/CBMCs in primary schools and IQSs (including school grants)</td>
<td>Public primary schools: all states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support to the ASC and IQS data collection</td>
<td>IQSs: Bauchi, Niger, Sokoto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enhanced political engagement for girls’ education through Girls’ Education Steering Committees (GESCs)</td>
<td>All states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support to High-Level Women Advocates (HiLWAs)</td>
<td>All states</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advocacy for Female Teacher Trainee Scholarship Scheme (FTTSS)</td>
<td>All states</td>
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2.2 Purpose, scope, and objectives of the GEP3 evaluation

The main purpose of the GEP3 evaluation is to support decision making about intervention scale-up and funding by providing a summative account of the effectiveness, continued relevance, and sustainability of GEP3 interventions. A second purpose of the GEP3 evaluation is formative: that is, to inform improvement and learning about GEP3 interventions.

DFID Nigeria and UNICEF are considered the primary users of GEP3 evaluation. The Government of Nigeria, particularly state governments, is a primary stakeholder and an important audience for the evaluation findings. The intended use of the evaluation has evolved. Due to adjustments in the timeline of the data collection (see below) it was not possible for the evaluation findings to be ready in 2017 for the scale-up planning. Instead, the evaluation findings can be used to course correct any scale-up decisions or further advocate for scale-up decisions, to inform DFID programming in the Nigerian education sector, and to strengthen the sparse evidence base about education, particularly learning outcomes and teacher competencies, in northern Nigeria.

The main objective of the GEP3 evaluation is to assess whether and how well the GEP3 interventions contribute to GEP3’s objectives. In line with GEP3’s emphasis on learning outcomes, the evaluation will prioritise measuring changes in learning over changes in access to education. The evaluation focuses on interventions that absorb a high share of the budget, have a relatively weak evidence base, are innovative in nature, and are of strategic interest to GEP3 management and to DFID – these are the early learning intervention, GEP3’s IQSS, and the cash transfer programme. The first two are subject to EDOREN-led evaluation and data collection, and are the subject of this report. At the end of 2016 UNICEF commissioned a separate evaluation project in respect of the cash transfer programme (not included in this report).
2.3 Evaluation design and methods

During 2014–2015, EDOREN, in collaboration with UNICEF and DFID Nigeria, developed an Evaluation Framework in parallel with GEP3’s redesign. The Evaluation Framework defined the objectives, scope, questions, design, and partner responsibilities of the evaluation. The evaluation focuses on the period 2014–2017. The rest of this section outlines the main elements of the Evaluation Framework. Subsequent chapters and the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report contain more information on the design of the different evaluation components led by EDOREN.

2.3.1 Evaluation questions

Evaluation questions were selected considering the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD’s) Development Assistance Committee’s (DAC) criteria for evaluating development assistance. Table 2 provides an overview of the key evaluation questions. The first three question and the last question are addressed through EDOREN-led evaluation; the question related to the cash transfer programme is meant to be addressed by the UNICEF-commissioned evaluation; and the efficiency question is addressed through the DFID-managed annual review process. This report focuses on the EDOREN-led evaluation.

Intervention-specific evaluation questions are presented in the following chapters and in Annex A. The evaluation questions related to GEP3’s IQSS have changed after a revision of the design of the IQSS package. The head teacher training was reshaped into a proprietor sensitisation as part of a revised IQS facilitator training approach. This revised design does not aim to improve pedagogical leadership in IQSs anymore, and therefore an evaluation question inquiring about GEP3’s contribution to IQS pedagogical leadership has been dropped.

Table 2: Priority evaluation questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAC criteria</th>
<th>Evaluation question</th>
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| Relevance          | • Is GEP3’s ToC appropriate to achieve its planned objectives within the context of the GEP3 states?  
|                    | • Do GEP3 interventions address the needs, priorities, and context of basic education for girls in northern Nigeria?  |
| Effectiveness/impact | • To what extent has the early learning intervention improved learning outcomes in the early grades of school, especially for girls?  
|                    | • How well has GEP3’s IQSS contributed to better learning outcomes, especially for girls, by improving teaching and school management?  
|                    | • How has the cash transfer programme changed attitudes and behaviour in regard to girls’ education among recipient caregivers?  |
| Efficiency         | • How well have project organisational processes facilitated the delivery of expected outputs? How could such processes be improved?  |
| Sustainability     | • To what extent are GEP3 interventions and results likely to continue without GEP3 support?  |

The GEP3 Evaluation Framework document presents a comprehensive overview of all evaluation questions identified (EDOREN 2015).
2.3.2 Evaluation design and methods

The evaluation questions are answered by applying various evaluation approaches using mixed-methods data collection that allows us to complement and triangulate data. The approaches have been selected in line with the context, available resources, and methodological constraints. The use of a theory-based approach is particularly appropriate for the evaluation of GEP3 as it helps unpick how GEP3 interventions are making a difference and what factors are influencing change to take place. This is useful for future programming as it helps us to understand under what conditions outputs and outcomes are achieved or not. Furthermore, it allows credible judgements to be made regarding the causal relationship between GEP3 interventions and their outcomes, even when a valid counterfactual cannot be constructed.

EDOREN has implemented three high-level lines of inquiry and activities to answer the evaluation questions that it seeks to answer:

- The first line of inquiry centred on addressing relevance and sustainability questions through a high-level examination of GEP3’s ToC based on state-level KIIs and document review.
- Second, we conducted an impact evaluation of the RANA early learning intervention based on a randomised counterfactual design using mainly quantitative school surveys.
- Third, the effectiveness of GEP3’s IQSS was evaluated through a performance evaluation, using a mixed-methods approach based on the principles of contribution analysis.

The different designs are summarised in the following chapters and discussed extensively in the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report.

The evaluation focuses on results – in particular, results in terms of learning outcomes and teacher effectiveness. While a process evaluation assessing the fidelity of project implementation was not part of the scope of the evaluation, we conducted an implementation review of the activities of the early intervention and IQSS because it is necessary to make sense of the results achieved. Furthermore, we harmonised some of the evaluation tools with those used in evaluations of other education programmes, such as the Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN) and the Teacher Development Programme (TDP).

The evaluation was conducted broadly in line with its original evaluation design, as presented in the GEP3 Evaluation Framework, although some methodological adjustments were made to adapt the evaluation design to changes in intervention implementation, lessons learnt from baseline data collection, and changing information needs of GEP3 stakeholders. These adjustments are discussed in the more detailed methodological sections in the following chapters. The main adjustments were as follows:

- We added a review of intervention implementation fidelity as an extra evaluation activity to understand to what extent the evaluated interventions had been implemented as planned and reached their target populations. Because no process evaluation of the GEP3 interventions was included as part of the Evaluation Framework, we do not have an in-depth understanding of how implementation variation and challenges have affected the delivery of intervention.

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9 This is in line with the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.
10 For example, we build on the pupil assessment, teacher motivation scales, and teacher competency framework used for the ESSPIN and TDP evaluations.
outputs, and as a consequence may have influenced outcomes. The implementation review has addressed this to some extent.\textsuperscript{11}

- We added difference-in-difference analysis to the impact estimation of the RANA early learning intervention on pupils’ learning outcomes to control for potential imbalances between the treatment and control groups due to attrition and changes in the school sample at midline.\textsuperscript{12}
- We modified the teacher sampling approach to prioritise the selection of teachers who had participated in the training interventions (or comparable control teachers).\textsuperscript{13}
- An IQS validation exercise was conducted before the midline school-level data collection to verify whether the baseline IQS school panel was still integrated and located in the same communities. We learnt from baseline that this could not be assumed.
- We updated the IQSS ToC, in collaboration with UNICEF and DFID, to take account of changes in the intervention design.

Limitations to the design are discussed in the methodological subsections of chapters 3, 4 and 5, where the methodology of each line of inquiry is presented.

### 2.3.3 Evaluation timing

This midline evaluation was carried out between May 2017 and March 2018, with primary data collection taking place in the period September–November 2017 (first term of the 2017–2018 school year).\textsuperscript{14} The midline evaluation builds and is methodologically closely aligned with the baseline data collection, which took place during August to November 2015 (school-level data collection took place during the first term of the 2015–2016 school year). Data comparability between baseline and midline was a key objective to allow for robust measurement of change in outcome variables.

The timing of the midline data collection was delayed by one school term (it was initially planned during the last term of the 2016–2017 school year, May–June 2017) in agreement with DFID, UNICEF and the implementing partner of the RANA early learning intervention. The primary reason for the delay was that the timing of Ramadan fell in the middle of the last school term of the 2016–2017 school year, which would not allow for efficient and quality school-level data collection due to school closures. Furthermore, the postponement by one school term exposed pupils and teachers to an additional term of intervention before outcome measurement, which better aligned with changes in the intervention timeline.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{11} The implementation review is not a comprehensive process evaluation that examines how different intervention activities have been implemented, how this may have varied across locations, to what degree targeted participants were reached and have experienced their participation, and any further strengths and weaknesses in the intervention implementation.

\textsuperscript{12} Other measures, such as the application of a fixed-effects model and attrition weights were introduced to further address potential biases in the impact measurement (see Section 4.3 and Section 2.2.1 in the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report).

\textsuperscript{13} Originally a panel sampling approach was envisaged—surveying the same teachers at baseline and midline. However, following changes in the intervention modalities it was not assured that the teachers sampled at baseline would be trained during the intervention. Therefore, at midline we needed to adjust the teacher sampling.

\textsuperscript{14} This timeline included methodological review based on baseline learnings, instrument design, instrument programming, instrument pretesting, data management set up, field team recruitment and training, data collection fieldwork, data clearing and processing, primary and secondary analysis, reporting, and quality assurance.

\textsuperscript{15} It would expose the panelled pupils to an additional term (last term of 2016–2017 school year) of RANA early learning activities in the public P3 class. Regarding IQSS, since a new IQS facilitator training approach was introduced at the beginning of 2017 it would expose IQS facilitators to a longer period of training.
2.3.4 Inclusion and ethics

The evaluation adheres to DFID’s principles of ethics in research and evaluation (DFID, 2011) and follows UNICEF’s guidelines on conducting research with children (Graham et al., 2013). Steps taken to ensure ethics and inclusion include: ethics review of the evaluation design; attention to age, mother tongue and disability during data collection with children; an avoidance of gender bias in measurement; an evaluation design that ensures disaggregation by gender with sufficient statistical power; avoiding treating pupils as a homogenous group by including variables such as age and wealth in the analysis; an inquiry into ownership and stakeholder involvement in the project; analysis of learning that focuses on pupils at the low end of the learning distribution; a transparent process of engaging key stakeholders about design decisions, threats to validity, data collection processes and dissemination; the consultation of multiple stakeholders at multiple levels to reflect diverse interests and perspectives in the findings; and intensive field researcher training to ensure appropriate and respectful data collection, with respondents’ consent.

2.4 Evaluation process and governance

The evaluation process continued after baseline data collection in 2015, with the monitoring of project implementation based on the review of project progress reports and communication with the implementing partners. Planning of the actual midline evaluation process started in early 2017, following a review of the baseline findings with key stakeholders in Nigeria. Implementation of the project was also reviewed. This led to some methodological adjustments and agreement with stakeholders on the timing of the school-level data collection taking into account the school calendar and the timing of Ramadan.

Between April and September 2017, the evaluation team further consulted with stakeholders on the implementation status of GEP3 interventions and prioritisation of information needs; and prepared the implementation of different data collection methods, including the drafting, piloting and programming of survey instruments, field validation of the IQS survey sample, and recruitment and extensive training of data collection teams. Quantitative and qualitative evaluation team members coordinated instrument design and planning of data collection. DFID, UNICEF, and the RANA implementing partner were engaged to coordinate fieldwork. As discussed above, data collection took place in October and November 2017, after which data were processed and analysed. Mixed-methods analysis, synthesis and reporting happened between January and March 2018. Evaluation reports were internally peer reviewed, and were reviewed by DFID’s Evaluation Quality Assurance and Learning Service.

The midline evaluation team mostly consisted of team members who had been part of the baseline data collection, which strengthened the consistency in data collection and analysis and baseline-midline comparison, taking into account the complexities of the project and its context. Also, field teams were recruited giving priority to enumerators and qualitative researchers who

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16 The evaluation design was approved by OPM’s Ethical Review Committee. In addition, data collection protocols were submitted to the National Health Research Ethics Committee of Nigeria, which provided an exemption.

17 A Rasch psychometric analysis of pupil test items was undertaken in order to identify whether test items would be interpreted differently by girls or boys. It was found that the items did not discriminate on the basis of gender.

18 In January 2017, meetings were organised with UNICEF and the RANA implementation team to review project implementation and discuss baseline findings. Baseline findings were also presented and discussed among government agencies in the GEP3 states and at national level in June 2017.

19 For example, additional Hausa comprehension items were included in the teacher assessment tool.
had been part of baseline. The evaluation team was able to work freely and without interference; it consulted with DFID about potential cases of conflict of interest of researchers.

The evaluation team discussed the midline evaluation methodology with the DFID Nigeria Evaluation Adviser. An evaluation steering committee has been set up, chaired by the DFID Evaluation Adviser and including UNICEF and national and state government partners as members, to enable stakeholders and end-users to provide feedback on the draft findings, recommendations and lessons; and to support the dissemination of the findings. Draft evaluation reports were shared with the steering committee members in April 2018.

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20 The Steering Committee provided feedback on evaluation dissemination in a meeting on 02 February 2018.
3 Relevance and sustainability assessment

3.1 Methodology

This chapter addresses evaluation questions related to the relevance and sustainability of GEP3 by examining its ToC: interventions, outcomes, assumptions and other influencing factors. Box 1 presents the evaluation questions to be addressed at midline. In consultation with DFID, the questions were slightly adjusted, compared to those included in the GEP3 Evaluation Framework, in order to reflect current evidence needs and coherent synthesis of the evidence. The sustainability questions address issues of government ownership, commitment and embeddedness, as highlighted in the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

Box 1: High-level relevance and sustainability questions at midline

Relevance
Is GEP3’s ToC appropriate to achieve its planned objectives within the context of the GEP3 states?
• How plausible is GEP3’s ToC in the context of the GEP3 states?
• How appropriate are GEP3 interventions in terms of the implementation strategy given the context of the GEP3 states?

Do GEP3 interventions address the needs, priorities and context of basic education for girls in northern Nigeria?
• Does GEP3 address the key barriers to basic education for girls in the different GEP3 states?

Sustainability
To what extent are GEP3 interventions and results likely to continue without GEP3 support?
• To what extent do school, government and other supporting stakeholders have the capacity to continue GEP3 interventions without GEP3 support?
• To what extent do state governments have the political and financial commitment to continue GEP3 interventions without GEP3 support?
• How well embedded are GEP3 interventions in state government structures? How well owned are they by government decision makers? Are they resilient to political change?

The analytical approach was centred on the evaluation questions, which were further detailed in terms of specific questions for midline and criteria for judgement; all of which were included in an evaluation matrix that was discussed with DFID at the start of the data collection. For data analysis, the evaluation team compiled headline findings by question after each state visit so that a comparison was available by the end. Midline findings were further compared with baseline findings.

The main data collection method used to address the questions was KIs with state-level actors and a small number of federal level officials, based on tailored, semi-structured interviews. This was complemented by the review of project documents, mainly covering the period 2016 to 2017, since the baseline. Key informants were purposively selected, with the support of GEP3 state teams, based on their engagement in GEP3. A broad range of stakeholders was interviewed to

21 The question ‘Are GEP3 interventions coherent with the broader policy environment at state and federal level in Nigeria?’ was dropped because other documents and reviews were available to evidence this question. The original question ‘Does GEP3 address needs and the key barriers of basic education for girls in the different GEP3 states’ was simplified and focused on the project addressing key barriers. The separate evaluation question on sustainability ‘Which external factors are likely to affect GEP3’s sustainability?’ was integrated into the other sustainability questions because influencing factors were more easily addressed when assessing different elements of sustainability.

22 The evaluation matrix is included in Annex of the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report.
incorporate multiple perspectives and reflect diverse interests in the evaluation process. Key
informants were mostly representatives of state-level agencies involved in GEP3 implementation,
GEP3 state teams, UNICEF staff, civil society representatives, and staff of specific
interventions/projects. Interviews were conducted in all five GEP3 states in October 2017.

There are three main limitations to the methodology used. First, limited time was available for
state interviews, which constrained interview time and availability of stakeholders. Second, time
availability and the large number of specific evaluation questions to cover limited the depth of the
information collected. Third, data collection among Local Government Authorities was not
feasible, which means that the findings do not directly include their perspective, although they are
at the forefront of programme delivery.

### 3.2 Relevance of GEP3

<table>
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<th>Summary answers to evaluation questions</th>
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<td><strong>How plausible is GEP3’s ToC in the context of the GEP3 states?</strong></td>
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| **How appropriate are GEP3’s interventions in terms of the implementation strategy, given the context of the GEP3 states?** | All stakeholders believe that there is sufficient human capacity to implement GEP3. They acknowledge that capacity at state level is greater than at local level and that capacity is not necessarily distributed evenly between responsible departments. There is no comprehensive capacity assessment to verify stakeholder assessment. |
|  | A full range of stakeholders are involved in implementation: SBMCs, CBMCs, community and religious leaders and associations, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). HiLWAs are viewed as very |

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23 A full list of key informants interviewed per state is included in the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report.
important in modelling potential professional roles for girls. The GESCs appear to be functioning and relevant in all states.

The paucity of financial resources is a major constraint to overall capacity. Without the resources necessary to deliver their mandate, human capacity is not fully tested. It is possible that human capacity is adequate for the level of financial resources available but would not be adequate if agencies were properly resourced.

Does GEP3 address the needs and key barriers to basic education for girls in the different GEP3 states?

GEP3 is helping to addressing those elements of supply and demand barriers that are within its sphere of influence: advocacy where there are out-of-school girls and where there is parental resistance, and some focused TCD.

Institutional barriers are significant, such as the dominant role of SUBEBs and the weakness of the SAMEs. These barriers have deep structural roots that are beyond the influence of GEP3 to address.

3.2.1 Plausibility of GEP3’s ToC

3.2.1.1 Understanding of objectives

Across all states, all government stakeholders understand the nature of the specific interventions under GEP3. They also understand that the results expected (outcomes) include completion of basic education and learning. This is a significant change from the baseline, when enrolment was mentioned by many as the main purpose.

How well government stakeholders understand the detail of GEP3’s operational design appears to depend on the degree of coordination across the state government agencies responsible for education as a whole. Where coordination across government agencies is effective, all officials are well informed. Where it is less effective, knowledge of the whole programme tends to depend on the individuals, such as how long they have been in position and whether they have previous engagement in GEP1 and GEP2. Most of the focal persons in SMoEs, SUBEBs, and SAMEs are well informed and able to demonstrate in-depth knowledge of activities from the state right down to community level. The GEP3 Steering Committees appear to function even where broader government coordination is weak, perhaps because they are important in terms of donor accountability. However, where there is instability in government, there tends to be frequent change of senior personnel so those Steering Committees also experience discontinuity and loss of institutional knowledge.

Stakeholders outside government also understand the purpose and interventions of GEP3, at least to the extent of their exposure to the whole. The two state SBMC Chairmen interviewed have both been involved in GEP since the first phase inception and have a deep understanding of the objectives relating to SBMC involvement, as well as knowledge of those interventions that are visible at a local level. Owing to their high levels of education, longstanding commitment, and personal credibility, they spend time and effort advocating to government on the issues that arise. Similarly, the CSOs involved in implementation are knowledgeable about enrolment, TCD, and ASC activities. The other non-governmental stakeholder are HiLWAs. Only one member in one state was interviewed but feedback from most stakeholders is positive, suggesting that their role as advocates and role models is not only well understood but taken up with enthusiasm and sincerity.
3.2.1.2 Views about girls’ education

Stakeholders were asked whether, after 12 years of GEP, it was still necessary to have a project focusing specifically on girls, as opposed to one that addressed all children equally. **Stakeholders are almost unanimous in strongly expressing the need to continue with an emphasis on girls.** Commonly mentioned reasons are the ongoing relative disadvantage faced by girls, the importance of girls’ education to the whole community not only the individual or family, the fact that there are still pockets in all states that are unreached by the campaigns, the greater likelihood of girls missing out due to early marriage, and the cultural and religious attitudes that make transition beyond primary level less likely. Many stakeholders also justify a continuing focus on girls in terms of the complexity of the challenge and the range of factors that are involved in retaining girls in school once they are enrolled.

A notable exception is a high-level government stakeholder in one state. He states that girls outnumber boys in many classrooms and believes this is because girls are being favoured at the expense of boys. He comments that in Lagos the government is starting special programmes for boys because they are doing less well in school than girls. This is an important point because it brings to the surface the question of equity. **Overcoming the clear disadvantage of girls is important but there is a question for all stakeholders about whether, and at what point, the emphasis should be on inclusive education for all children rather than girls’ education.** Other stakeholders also commonly point out that GEP3 may have a focus on girls but that activities such as TCD benefit all children, not only girls. And some stakeholders observe that much emphasis is placed by government on the education of Almajiris, who are all boys.

3.2.1.3 Views about change

Stakeholders were asked for their views and experience concerning the length of time needed to bring about the change envisaged under GEP3. For many, **GEP3 does not have its own identity but is viewed simply as GEP – one continuous programme, rather than three discrete stages of GEP1, 2, and 3.** This is especially true for enrolment, which has been an ongoing government activity preceding GEP. **In this longer timeframe stakeholders are able to see big changes,** often commenting on how different community attitudes are compared with ‘before’. In those areas that are regularly targeted by the annual EDC they comment that everyone knows about the importance of girls’ education and that parents do not have to be convinced to send girls to school. They draw a clear **distinction between the attitudinal change that has taken place as a result of more than a decade of sensitisation and parents’ actual decisions to educate their girl child.** Acknowledging that **many girls remain out of school or drop out before completion,** they cite a range of factors related to family poverty, location, and quality of the school environment, whether there are teachers in attendance, and whether there are visible results from schooling.

**In relation to IQSS,** one stakeholder eloquently conveyed his understanding of the ToC in the statement: ‘if we open the gate, then we go on the pathway to mainstream’. This acknowledges that the **first major change is the decision to integrate elements of basic education with Quranic education** – opening the gate. The next major change is going through the gate onto the pathway. **But getting children actually mainstreamed into Junior Secondary School is something rather more distant,** and is dependent on the quality of teaching and a host of factors relating to the context, such as parents’ and proprietors’ support.

A similar pathway of change can be expressed in relation to SBMCs. All stakeholders are proud of what the SBMCs have achieved as a result of years of training and support, and they observe that
SBMCs are increasingly understanding that the school belongs to them, not to government. At the same time, stakeholders closely involved with GEP3 comment that their activity is often prompted by UNICEF-driven interventions and the incentives they receive, rather than genuine ownership of the role of a CSO. Although some SBMCs have gone beyond the role prescribed for them by the state, most have not sought a wider role.

Also related to IQSs, all stakeholders are aware of the institutional weakness of the SAMEs. This is a structural issue, common across all states, owing to the chronic underfunding of non-formal education, especially in comparison with the high levels of funding for primary education in the SUBEBs. For that reason, one stakeholder sees the ToC as 'If we can improve the structure, then we can develop capacity'. Another said about SAME: 'if they have the money, then they can do it'.

While the lack of funding is a common refrain from all agencies (detailed in the sustainability section), the combination of lack of funds and structural weakness almost paralyses the SAMEs' ability to bring about meaningful change.

Quality is a word that was used very frequently by all stakeholders. It is most often expressed in relation to enrolment, in recognition of the fact that, while great strides have been made in getting girls into school, retaining them, and seeing them through to completion, is much more challenging. In particular, all stakeholders recognise the enormous challenge of developing teachers to such a level that they can properly promote learning and they are very conscious of the fact that improving teacher quality becomes even more difficult when success in enrolment results in classes become overcrowded. Overcrowding, in turn, highlights the inadequacy of infrastructure that can support a learning environment.

In addition to quality, many stakeholders mentioned the importance of role models for girls. It is one thing to get girls into school but a significant factor in retention and completion is whether they can see a future as educated woman beyond the home. To this end, the value of the role model effect of HiLWAs is emphasised in all states. Its membership includes women who have achieved high levels of public office or in private careers and many members have willingly embraced their role, during EDC and the recent International Day of the Girl Child. Although there is an element of politicisation of HiLWAs, stakeholders agree that access to the Governor and senior politicians is an essential part of their advocacy role. Stakeholders also mentioned the Girls for Girls programme in those states where it is being implemented.

Drawing on the combined views of stakeholders, a ToC based on their experience can be constructed:
The experience of stakeholders in GEP3 suggests reasons why the inputs (supply factors) need to be deep, long, and wide:

- **EDC** is perceived by all stakeholders to be very successful in changing attitudes to girls’ education – but overcoming cultural and religious norms and attitudes that are unfavourable to girls’ education only change over long periods of time. SBMCs play a much-valued role, along with traditional and religious leaders, but, as guardians of norms, their own positive attitudes are crucial if they are to exert an influence on their followers. The role of women in community engagement is increasing but the numbers, and their influence, are small relative to men.

- **HiLWAs** are perceived to be highly influential in providing role models that demonstrate a future that girls aspire to. This is especially important given the male dominance in government at all levels and the lack of visible role models. However, their ‘sensible noise’ (as described by one stakeholder) is a form of social engineering that cannot outpace steady social progress in a highly conservative and male dominated environment.

- **Infrastructure** is being improved in some states – but the scale of existing need, the increase in need as a result of increased enrolment, and the cost of improvements are perceived by stakeholders to be beyond the financial and logistical means of states.

- **Teachers** are too few in number, too low in capacity, and too unevenly distributed to significantly impact on the learning of the most disadvantaged children. FTTSS is no longer formally supported as an intervention by GEP3 but continues to be one of the main tools used by states to increase the numbers of female teachers for the rural areas, but the results have not so far kept pace with the intention.

Stakeholders are realistic about the challenges of long-term change but they are motivated when they achieve tangible and visible results: this serves to increase commitment to change and is a source of pride for those who have worked hard to achieve these results; it is most noticeable with RANA, SBMCs, and EDC. In RANA, witnessing children’s ability to read within a short space of time inspires enthusiasm and aspiration to scale up the effect. SBMCs are universally appreciated and supported by all stakeholders. The cumulative effect of EDC over the years has also led to strong perceptions of increases in enrolment, as well as changing attitudes to girls’ education.

### 3.2.1.4 Assumptions

The design of GEP3 identifies eight assumptions. Of these, five are hypotheses regarding the design: outputs or outcomes that are expected to happen as a result of project interventions. Three are real assumptions: conditions that need to be in place for the project to be a success, but which are outside the control of the project. The status of the eight assumptions is detailed in Annex B.

The three assumptions and their status are as follows:

- **Government can supply primary schools and teachers to meet increased community demand for education with the support of high-level political engagement.** This is an assumption unlikely to hold true within the timeframe of GEP3. Although there have been some efforts in some states to substantially increase the number of teachers, the scale of the challenge – particularly of increasing the number of qualified teachers – is perceived too great. High-level political engagement is necessary but not sufficient in the face of inadequate resources to meet need.
• **Improved educational governance (planning and budgeting, including release) will positively impact on girls’ enrolment and retention.** This is also unlikely to hold true. Although most states include GEP3 activities within their budget, release is a chronic problem in all states except Sokoto.

• **Enhanced participation of women in the education sector at all levels will positively impact on girls’ enrolment and retention.** This is an inappropriate assumption. Although GEP3 can claim some success, such as the promise of legislation in Zamfara as a result of UNICEF advocacy, the scale of activities related to women (in contrast to girls) is very small and their influence limited. Increasing participation of women at all levels, which is acknowledged to be very low, especially in the administration, requires system reform which is beyond the scope of GEP3.

### 3.2.2 Appropriateness of GEP3’s implementation strategy

In this section we examine how GEP3 is implemented and whether the project’s implementation strategy is perceived as appropriate in terms of implementation capacity and stakeholder involvement. In addition, we look at contextual factors influencing implementation.

#### 3.2.2.1 Implementation strategy

GEP3 is predominantly implemented by government through SMoEs, SUBEBs, and SAMEs. This is highly relevant as the major interventions—EDC, ASC and SBMCs—support activities that are already institutionalised in government. It is also relevant that some activities are supported by CSOs, bringing greater expertise through support to SBMCs, as well as greater transparency through monitoring and mentoring.

Although there are significant differences in context and need across the five states, **the way in which the elements of GEP3 that are common to all states are implemented is remarkably uniform.** This uniformity is compounded by the recruitment and organisation of consultants according to output. At the same time, some state teams are clearly trying to adapt their strategies to the prevailing realities of those states: in Bauchi they are trying to overcome the challenges of weak leadership and in Sokoto they are adapting to an ambitious and urgent government agenda.

There continues to be a strong emphasis on EDC. As the activities are now routine, well-practised, and deemed successful by all stakeholders, including UNICEF, it is not clear why technical assistance is still required. This may be influenced by the headline targets for enrolment of girls.

#### 3.2.2.2 Implementation capacity

Across all states there is **evidence of some strong capacity among individuals but not necessarily across the SMoE, SUBEB, and SAME as a whole.** The SAMEs are notably weaker than the other agencies in all states, except Bauchi, where there is a budget allocation of 1%, which is motivating for staff. **How well capacity is utilised depends very much on the level of political commitment.**

**All government stakeholders in all states believe that they have the human capacity to implement GEP3 in its current form.** For the most part this assessment is shared by UNICEF staff and GEP3 state teams, as well as by CSOs. Within this assessment, stakeholders recognise that capacity in the SAME, whether human or financial, is considerably weaker than in the SUBEB and SMoE, with the exception of Bauchi, which, as has been said, has an allocation of 1% of the state
budget for the Bauchi SAME (BASAME). However, in terms of implementation of GEP3 activities, the state SAMEs believe they are able to deliver against their responsibilities, with UNICEF support. **In terms of capacity at LGA levels, the picture is more nuanced, with a range of opinions from capacity being excellent to it being inadequate for the range of responsibilities.**

Whether the capacity really exists cannot be objectively verified through KIIs. The USAID-funded Northern Education Initiative Plus (NEI+) has recently undertaken an Institutional Capacity Assessment (not yet published) in Sokoto which shows weak capacity at all levels and very weak capacity in the SAME. This is mainly a reflection of the lack of financial resources to implement, rather than the human capacity, although human capacity is constrained by the absence of terms of reference and accountability mechanisms.

**A striking feature of GEP3 is that there is no formal capacity development strategy.** Clearly, capacity development is taking place through various forms of training, as well as on-the-job coaching, and most government stakeholders are grateful for the opportunities they have had. In particular, staff in Education Management Information System (EMIS) departments and working on the ASC state that their capacity has increased hugely, to the point that they can deliver a high-quality product which is reliable and used by decision makers. This capacity is confirmed by UNICEF and NEI+, both of which have run validation exercises in parallel to the ASC and found the margin of error to be very small. The decision to stop using external enumerators and to train head teachers to gather data has increased the reliability, as well as developing an additional skillset. The absence of a formal assessment of capacity strengths and weaknesses means that it is impossible to know what the specific objectives of ongoing capacity development are, when the job will be done, and what the exit strategy is. On the one hand, UNICEF state teams say that there is sufficient capacity, especially in EDC, and on the other hand they argue that capacity still needs to be developed. Given the long history of EDC, the intensity of support from UNICEF, and their repetition on an annual basis, the justification for additional capacity development activities needs to be considered.

In Bauchi, where there are other projects, one stakeholder observed that all projects aimed to support the system but they questioned whether they were, in fact, confusing the system in the absence of a government coordination mechanism capable of managing duplication or inconsistency in approaches. Another commented that donors are much more interested in impact than the government and said: *government is like a hungry lion – it will take anything it is offered by donors*. Although there are some attempts by donor-supported projects to coordinate among themselves, a strategy to approach the Governor as a group rather than as individuals has not yet materialised.

**Capacity can also be depleted where there are competing projects** as all projects are seeking to work with those individuals in government who demonstrate capacity and commitment. This is a point that has been raised in Sokoto by another project; this was confirmed by a government focal person, who observed that the SMoE relied heavily on those staff whose capacity has been built through GEP3. This has led to jealousy among other officials who have not had the same opportunities for capacity development and feel that they are further penalised by being passed over for general opportunities.

For **TCD**, most stakeholders believe that the training and mentoring of head teachers, teachers, and IQS facilitators has been a big success in terms of building capacity in the individual, at least to the extent that the individuals receiving training are capable and motivated enough to benefit from it. However, once trained, there are **questions about whether the institutional environment**
exists for those skills to be used to best effect. Stakeholders are under no illusions that the challenge of improving teaching quality is immense and they are aware that even a significant improvement in quality may not be enough to deliver meaningful learning for children.

The CoEs believe they have the capacity to train teachers and head teachers. In particular, the Niger State University of Education is demonstrating strong capacity to attract resources and support. In addition to utilising federal funds such as the Tertiary Education Trust Fund, they have partnerships with institutions abroad which are providing various types of resources. Using the learning from low rates of completion under the FTTSS, the CoE has introduced skills training, such as cooking and tailoring, so that female trainees can support themselves if, as in the majority of cases, they do not have support from their husbands. For those students with children they have introduced a nanny scheme. Such versatility is, they believe, the key to increasing the number of female teachers. As a result of drawing on a range of resources they have been able to bring more than half of teachers to the minimum standard, which was beyond their expectations.

Various stakeholders commented on the improvement in capacity development as a result of the redesign of GEP3. Whereas the predecessor had not taken absorption capacity into account and had been too ambitious and too thinly spread, the redesign has brought about a greater focus and supported tangible capacity development.

It is important to note that capacity development had been an objective not only of GEP1 and GEP2 but also of other projects, and of the state governments themselves. This means that claims of capacity development cannot be attributed solely to GEP3, although the strong contribution is not in doubt, according to the stakeholders interviewed.

Capacity for monitoring has improved considerably since the baseline. Monitoring capacity has improved, especially in the last year, as EMIS departments have been strengthened, but there is a recognition that it can be improved further. EMIS departments have been strengthened for the purpose of the ASC and there is general satisfaction among officials and in UNICEF with the quality being achieved. These capacities, and the system improvements that have accompanied human resource development, are being utilised beyond the ASC. UNICEF has increased its capacity for monitoring within the state teams. How important those team members are in terms of adding capacity to the EMIS departments, compared with developing capacity, could not be assessed. Turnover in EMIS departments is an ongoing problem, including recruitment of trained officials to UNICEF state teams.

3.2.2.3 Other stakeholder involvement

Across states all relevant stakeholders appear to be engaged in planning and implementation, alongside government, at the level appropriate to their role. At school level, SBMCs and CBMCs are perceived to be central, working closely with mothers’ associations, traditional and religious leaders, all of whom are acknowledged to be critical in reaching out to parents and community members to support EDC and all other activities aimed at enrolling girls in school and retaining them. Many stakeholders comment on the difference in attitudes today, which are mainly positive compared with the start of GEP in 2005.

Stakeholders and GEP3 state teams confirm that GESCs are functioning in all states. They have wide and high-level membership and therefore constitute what one stakeholder describes as the engine room for policy-related discussion on girls’ education. The process seems to be robust, with state GESCs said to be meeting quarterly for a full day according to GEP3 state teams and coming
together at national level three times since 2015. At state level, GESCs have succeeded in getting funding approval for the recruitment of FTTSS graduates in Bauchi, Sokoto, Katsina and Zamfara; an increase in budgetary provision in the Bauchi state budget; and approval of budgets to sustain cash transfer in Niger and Sokoto.

Lawmakers are also key stakeholders and various advocacy workshops have been held by UNICEF to advocate for girls’ education. In Niger, several members of the State House of Assembly attended together, meeting counterparts from other GEP3 states. This has resulted in movement of a bill which will have a supplementary budget to cover the counterpart funding necessary to scale activities.

3.2.2.4 Achieving equity

GEP3’s choice of LGA and selection of schools reflects an intention to advance equity. Of those stakeholders asked about equity, all agreed that the selection of districts and schools focused on the hard-to-reach areas. By default, therefore, these are considered to be the areas with the most OOSC and thus most vulnerability. However, stakeholders are under no illusion that the scale of the challenge means that many disadvantaged children are currently beyond the reach of the programme.

They also observe that, although GEP3 is oriented toward increasing the enrolment of girls, the EDC reaches all OOSC, irrespective of gender. TCD is cited as equally beneficial for both boys and girls, with some commenting that boys also benefit from the increase in numbers of female teachers, who they found to be kinder than male teachers.

Given the enormity of the challenge of achieving equity, GEP3 has made a contribution that is commensurate with the resources available.

3.2.2.5 Contextual factors

A critical feature of the context is the state of the economy. As one senior leader commented: 'We can’t talk about development without linking it to the economy'. Although there has been some recovery since the global financial crisis, all the states are in a precarious position and, even if they were willing, are unable to allocate enough resources to meet the huge need. Niger considers itself to be in a better position than other states in that, although its internally generated revenue is low, the proximity to Abuja means that it benefits from other non-financial support.

Insecurity has affected all the states due to spates of kidnappings and other criminal activities taking place on major and minor routes. One stakeholder in Niger talked about how insecurity affects the psyche of the people and how school attendance has been affected in areas where the military are using schools to sleep in while they conduct local operations. Niger and Katsina have also experienced insecurity from cattle rustling. These factors tend to affect the scheduling of

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24 Minutes of the March 2017 meeting contain action points for the Federal Ministry of Education, such as preparation of a strategic memorandum on recruitment; equitable deployment and adequate reward for teachers within the context of the National Teacher Education Policy; and accelerating the strengthening of institutional capacity of the quality assurance entities in the states and LGAs in order to support effective monitoring of education services delivery.

25 UNICEF (2017a)
inputs rather than their ultimate delivery although there have been some changes to targeted schools that are no longer accessible.

The presence of other projects is another contextual factor. Niger has been successful in attracting support from the Japan International Cooperation Agency, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, MTN, Emirates Foundation, Nigerian Lottery Commission, Chevron Science Laboratory, among others, as a result of sector plans developed under GEP2, which detailed where support was needed. Nigeria Partnership for Education Project (NIPEP) is in Sokoto and Katsina, providing additional funding for activities started under GEP. In Bauchi and Sokoto the presence of the NEI+ is important. The evaluation team did not have the resources to assess the effect but it is the view of stakeholders that these projects synergise rather than duplicate GEP3. At the same time, they acknowledge that the presence of several projects can place an administrative burden on the state that is difficult to manage, as mentioned in the section on capacity.

Perhaps the main contextual factor affecting GEP3 and other projects is the chronic challenge relating to improving teaching quality. Although all stakeholders perceive improvements, they acknowledge that there are vast numbers of teachers that are considered to be untrainable. In some cases, this is because they were recruited for political reasons and are not at all motivated. In other cases, it is because the level of the teachers' own education and ability is too far below the standard required to be able to increase it in a way that will make a difference to their capacity to teach effectively. All states are trying to deal with this challenge, with varying degrees of success. In Zamfara, one senior leader stated that most of the efforts to bring about change are not bringing about a critical improvement in learning outcomes and that efforts to remove the large number of unqualified teachers are meeting resistance. In the meantime, the ban on the recruitment of teachers in place since 2011 has meant that the 2,000 teachers who have left have not been replaced. Trained head teachers are routinely transferred to other schools and LGEAs across the states. The problem is particularly acute in the rural areas where schools are shut because there is no teacher.

The crisis in teaching quality is worsened by increased enrolment and compounded by the poor state of much school infrastructure. The State University of Education in Niger laments that its graduate teachers are well equipped when they graduate but ill-prepared for the conditions they face once deployed. As an unintended consequence of increased enrolment, parents frequently challenge the absence of teachers during EDC and it is possible that demand is negatively affected.

3.2.3 Addressing key barriers

3.2.3.1 Demand-side barriers

The key demand-side barriers are the remaining pockets of resistance to education for girls and the kind of deep poverty that means parents wholly rely on children to supplement the family income. Stakeholders claim there has been a significant positive change in attitudes to girls' education although there are pockets in all states where parents are indifferent about education for their children, often without differentiating between boys and girls; this is exacerbated where they do not see visible results among children who go to school. Such attitudes have been addressed over many years by EDC, along with a focus on early marriage by SBMCs and mothers' associations. At the same time, no stakeholders are under any illusion about the length of time it takes to change deeply entrenched attitudes about the role of girls and women in northern
Nigerian society. When they identify change they believe has occurred, they are generally referring to the whole period since GEP1 was launched in 2004, a period covering more than a decade. Over the same period there have been many changes in Nigeria which are likely to have had a greater influence in changing gender attitudes (or not) than an externally supported project. Until very recently UNICEF has not had a gender strategy for GEP3, even though the very purpose of GEP3 is to address gender disparity in access to education. A gender strategy would enable analysis of barriers to girls’ education and would operationalise GEP3’s approach to addressing such barriers with well-defined outcomes in mind.

**Poverty is cited as the main reason for OOSC** and this is something GEP3 cannot easily address, other than to a limited extent through the cash transfer programme, which was piloted in a limited number of schools in Niger (72 schools) and Sokoto (62 schools) during 2014-2016.\(^{26}\)

In some cases, GEP3 has sought to address a demand-side barrier but through an approach that is not successful. One example is the expansion of partnerships with NGOs. This was based on successful experience with established and experienced NGOs that had roots in the community that enabled them to advocate effectively. However, a lesson learnt is that new partners who do not have the roots, or the capacity to develop relationships of trust from the outset, are ineffective.

### 3.2.3.2 Supply-side barriers

There are **very significant supply-side barriers related to infrastructure, teachers, and the politicisation of appointments**. As at baseline, infrastructure across all states is very poor and respondents despair of the inadequate and often dilapidated school infrastructures. Although some states, such as Bauchi, Zamfara and Katsina, have engaged in major school building or renovation activities, the challenge of creating an environment that is conducive to learning is exacerbated by increased numbers of children enrolling, which further stretches already overstretched facilities. This presents a major risk to progress. It can also affect demand as parents who are already indifferent about education observe the poor state of schools and judge that their children will not learn in such conditions. In the design of GEP3, infrastructure was considered to be the responsibility of state governments and beyond the scope of the programme.

All states face challenges relating to an **inadequate number of teachers, especially female teachers, and relating to the low quality of many of the teachers they have**. The general opinion of stakeholders is that **teachers’ low levels of subject knowledge and skills continue to be the weakest link in improving learning outcomes**. Large numbers are acknowledged to be untrainable, as discussed above. The ban on recruitment in Zamfara since 2011 has led to a reduction in the number of teachers. What should be done with ineffective teachers is a system-wide public-sector reform issue, beyond the control of the education ministry alone. These issues are discussed at GESC meetings: for example, the inequitable distribution of qualified teachers across the states due to poor teacher recruitment and deployment management practices.\(^{27}\)

Thus, while GEP3 has a TCD component, this is a small contribution to major barriers.

**Politicisation of the appointment of education administrators is a supply-side problem, especially at the LGA level.** This was particularly mentioned by stakeholders in Sokoto, who

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\(^{27}\) Minutes of the GESC National-Level Meeting, March 2017.
indicated that appointments of people with inappropriate or no qualifications for the position affects the quality of leadership all the way through the LGAs.

### 3.2.3.3 Institutional barriers

The SMoEs, headed by the Commissioners, are technically responsible for the delivery of education in all states. However, the enabling laws establishing some agencies obstruct the primacy of the SMoEs and make such agencies either autonomous or accountable to the Governor\(^2\) of the state, rather than the Commissioner. However, SUBEBs enjoy the special privilege of being able to access federal funds (Universal Basic Education Intervention Funds (UBE-IFs)). This contrasts sharply with the state funds which other ministries, departments and agencies and their Chief Executives (including Commissioners) control.

In the event, rivalry sets in between these government agencies and can lead to deep institutional barriers, such as that reported in Bauchi between the SAME and SUBEB over universal basic education fund allocation/release and institutional mandate (who should be responsible for IQSs). Such distrust is also evident in the other GEP3 states, but to a lesser extent. In Katsina, there is limited engagement between the SUBEB and SMoE. These institutional challenges do not allow for a conducive working environment but, being chronic and affected by political economy factors, are beyond the influence of external projects such as GEP3.

In Sokoto, SMoE leadership has been able to resolve this inter-agency rivalry by holding regular meetings and formulating a common agenda for the education sector. Furthermore, the Commissioner, on the decision of the Governor, has also established a Joint Forum for the Development Partners, which meets quarterly and tracks development in the sector. Respondents in the SUBEB stated that: ‘the inter-agency relationship is very good. We have synergy, especially this time in the Forum…. there is commitment to girls... we have detailed reports every quarter and action is expected’. The SMoE confirmed that: ‘we work hand in hand with SUBEB’.

### 3.3 Sustainability of GEP3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary answers to evaluation questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent do school, government and other supporting stakeholders have the capacity to continue GEP3 interventions without GEP3 support?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholders in all states believe they have the human capacity to sustain GEP3 interventions. The main challenge to sustainability is the availability of sufficient financial resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDC is the most sustainable intervention because it is very popular with stakeholders, especially at the community level. The campaign approach is well-established and sustainability is likely, as long as finance from federal level continues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBMCs are also popular and perform well, with the motivation and funding provided under GEP3. Without this support, and because there is an ongoing need to develop capacity of new members, sustainability is uncertain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ASC is sustainable provided the capacity developed in EMIS departments can be retained or new members inducted effectively.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

\(^2\)SUBEBs all over the country (including in GEP3 states) are established under federal (Universal Basic Education Law 2004) and state universal basic education laws, which make them answerable to the Governors.
The sustainability of RANA is questionable. States are keen to expand and sustain it but are likely to be unable to deliver the quality or amount of funds achieved through the pilot.

IQSS is the least sustainable intervention, owing to the weakness of the SAMEs, the absence of meaningful resource allocation, and the variability of political commitment.

To what extent do state governments have the political and financial commitment to continue GEP3 interventions without GEP3 support?

Political commitment is highly variable across states. It is currently strongest in Sokoto and weakest in Bauchi and Zamfara.

There is variable commitment to the different interventions. EDC is strongly supported in all states and RANA in the two states it is being piloted in.

Political change deeply affects commitment, with no intervention relying on state funds being guaranteed to be sustained.

How well embedded are GEP3 interventions in state government structures? Are they resilient to political change?

EDC, SBMCs, and the ASC are fully embedded in state and local government structures.

IQSS and RANA are less well embedded as their sustainability cannot be guaranteed.

EDC, the ASC, SBMCs, and IQSS are resilient to political change. TCD is more vulnerable, owing to the vast resources needed to make a real difference.

### 3.3.1 Capacity to sustain key GEP3 interventions

As discussed in the relevance assessment (Section 3.2) all stakeholders believe they have the human capacity to sustain (continue to implement) the various interventions. It is the financial commitment which is in question and it is the lack of financial resources that all stakeholders emphasise in any discussion about capacity. They also talk interchangeably about financial sustainability and government commitment. For this reason, the discussion about individual interventions does not seek to separate factors that stakeholders see as wholly interconnected.

**Enrolment Drive Campaign**

EDC is one of the most popular interventions supported by GEP3, in which the efforts by GESCs, HiLWAs, SBMCs, and the traditional institutions combine effectively to ensure that the local communities are engaged in and take ownership of the EDC. Another factor in favour of its sustainability is the recent approval by the National Council on Education of the new National Framework on Enrolment Drive. This could translate into the states being able to source fund for EDC’s implementation from the UBE-IF.

The priority that all GEP3 state governments give to EDC will be a strong factor in its sustainability. It is a federal government initiative, with associated funding, and some states are in the position of being able to increase the financial resources. For example, the Katsina State Government has mainstreamed EDC into NIPEP, and is complementing that with scholarships for girls. The Niger State Government is also said to have made a written commitment to sustain the EDC intervention for three years. As part of its educational reform measures, the Sokoto State Consultative Committee on Education Development, headed by the revered Sultan of Sokoto, is charged with the responsibility for enhancing access, enrolment, retention, and transition of pupils.
(especially girls, OOSC, drop-outs, and itinerant and non-formal learners) from early childhood care and development, primary and secondary schools to tertiary. Significantly, the Governor has allocated and released funds which should ensure its sustainability.

**The biggest challenge in sustaining the increased enrolment and sustained effectiveness of EDC is the provision of adequate and competent teachers** once children are in the classroom. In terms of achieving quality for all children, the main issue is shortage of teachers, rather than overload of teachers. Unless there are good teachers, in sufficient numbers, to keep the girls in school interviewed stakeholders fear that their parents are likely to withdraw them. Some SBMCs are able to employ temporary teachers to solve the problem.

**School Based Management Committees**

All stakeholders believe that, as one stakeholder put it, *‘the SBMCs have come alive under GEP3 (1, 2, and 3)’*. With the establishment of state-specific SBMC policies (domesticated from the National School-Based Management Policy), the institutionalisation of SBMCs across the states is almost complete. SBMCs have mobilised communities, supported the enrolment drive, mobilised resources for school improvement, benefited from the school improvement grants, and, in Zamfara State, have established a database of their members.

One state SBMC Chair observed that, with the level of awareness that has been generated by SBMCs at the grassroots level, governments will find it very hard to drop these interventions. However, the performance and sustainability of SBMCs depends on two key factors: continuous capacity programmes for the membership; and grants and support given by government or donors. However, an interviewed NGO partner cautioned that there is a tendency for SBMCs to become dependent on external funding, without which some have little incentive to continue beyond the lifetime of grant funding. For this reason, there is a view that the grants given to SBMCs should be one-off catalysts, to incentivise them to raise funds themselves for school improvement, but should not be offered repeatedly to reduce the potential for dependency. Capacity development is especially important to strengthen the strategic role of leaders to lead their communities toward change.

**Centre Based Management Committees**

Unlike the SBMCs, CBMCs are private initiatives of the host communities in support of IQSs. There are no government policies establishing them nor are the SAMEs empowered to support them. According to BASAME, GEP3’s strategy is to use CBMCs for community mobilisation in the 200 centres in the six pilot LGAs. However, the Bauchi state government is encouraging the CBMCs to take ownership of the centres as government may not be in the position to provide grants for the sustainability of the CBMCs' enrolment campaigns. Similarly, in Sokoto State, the government regards the CBMCs as the responsibility of the proprietors of the Qur’anic centres. Meanwhile, the Bauchi GEP3 State Team is of the view that bringing in the idea of CBMCs may not work in all Qur’anic schools.

**Annual School Census**

Two key factors which are promoting the sustainability of the ASC are related: getting head teachers involved in the ASC process and, as a consequence, increasing the cost-effectiveness of the process. The engagement of the head teachers, instead of external enumerators, who were previously hired to undertake the ASC, has reduced the high cost of the census and has created...
the environment for the capacity development of head teachers in record-keeping. 

Furthermore, the case of Katsina demonstrates that head teacher involvement also improves data reliability, which has motivated other GEP3 states to adopt the same approach. The quality of ASC data is something of which all states, but especially in Sokoto and Zamfara, are proud. Fears that the head teachers might have a vested interest in falsifying data have not been realised and there is general satisfaction with the role they are playing, including among head teachers themselves.

The main risk to sustainability is that the capacity developed in the states’ EMIS teams may be lost if individuals leave and there is insufficient strength in the team, without GEP3 support, to bring new members up to speed. Furthermore, some stakeholders raised concerns as to whether the state governments can and will fund the ASC adequately without GEP3 funding beyond 2020, and, more importantly, whether there will be a timely release of such funds. This is particularly a concern in states that have low internally generated revenue and that are less able to cushion the effects of the dwindling monthly allocation of funds to states by the federal government.

Currently all the GEP3 states have updated their 2015/2016 ASC reports to the required standard and stakeholders in all states have said that they are committed to quality data and the use of those data. In Niger officials stated that the ASC process is sustainable and is getting 'full funding' from the government, which uses the data generated as enrolment statistics, for validation of available classrooms, and for school feeding statistics. Others who stakeholders say are using the ASC data include the Bureau of Statistics in Abuja, and graduate students at universities. In Zamfara, the data are being used in the education sector planning process and in Sokoto by the State Committee on State of Emergency in Education for priority planning purposes.

**Teacher Capacity Development**

GEP3 is supporting TCD in public schools participating in RANA (Zamfara and Katsina) and in Bauchi. Otherwise it is part of IQSS. In comparison with most GEP3 interventions, TCD is characterised by its long-term nature and the difficulty in demonstrating visible results. This is because of the intervention’s complex interdependence on several factors.

Factors relating to the teachers themselves include a large army of teachers that are considered untrainable for various reasons. This includes those past retirement age, those who are not motivated for different reasons, and those who were recruited or appointed despite lacking the basic entry requirement. This classification of ‘untrainable’ has come about as a result of providing teacher training programmes in the CoEs, from which teachers do not emerge as competent. While this may be related to the quality of teacher education, the main reason cited is that the teachers who fail to improve are too far from the basic competence standard to be able to attain it with only short training courses. To address low teacher competence states invest or plan for massive capacity development programmes for teachers and head teachers in public schools, as well as facilitators in the IQSs.

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29 Before the involvement of the head teachers, close to 70% of the budget was spent on the engagement of external enumerators for the data collection process.

30 Data quality has been validated by NEI+ in Sokoto and independently for UNICEF. Both found a variation of less than 5%.

31 As stated during stakeholder interviews, Niger State has used a window of opportunity in relation to the Tertiary Education Trust Fund, and by drawing in a number of other partners, to equip the State University of Education in Minna with the provision of functional laboratories for science and an e-library. Bauchi plans to develop the capacities of 6,000 teachers (trained over three years (2017–2020)), 2,640 head teachers in public primary schools, as well as 400 IQS facilitators. Katsina has its own plan to train 250 IQS facilitators in 15 LGAs and 1,000 primary school head teachers between 2017 and 2020.
Other important factors relate to the **enabling environment for teaching**. Teachers are **very poorly remunerated** and, after graduation from the CoEs, many of which have quality facilities, they are often exposed to a **very poor teaching and learning environment in the schools**, in which even the best teachers struggle to put their skills into practice. Their plight is exacerbated by the ineffectiveness of the regulatory agency of the teaching profession, the Teachers’ Registration Council of Nigeria.

**Cash transfer programme**

The provision of cash transfers as a GEP3 intervention was implemented in Niger and Sokoto, and **phased out in December 2016**.\(^{32}\) **Sokoto has continued to implement the intervention and have developed cash transfer sustainability and scale-up strategies and implementation plans under NIPEP.** Sokoto State has also established a State Technical Committee on cash transfer, for which it has commissioned technical support from the Economic Policy Research Institute. The intervention is also enabled through NIPEP resources. Currently, GEP3 continues to provide technical support to the state for sustainability and the scaling up of the current 12,911 beneficiaries.

**Female Teacher Training Scholarship Scheme**

The FTTSS was **phased out of GEP3 in 2015/2016**. The reasons given for this in relation to Sokoto and Katsina states were the very low graduation rates of candidates and very low absorption/deployment of graduate teachers by state authorities. However, **stakeholders are using FTTSS as one of the main hopes for increasing the number of female teachers in rural areas**. Niger State has continued to sponsor 125 FTTSS trainees using its own funds, mandating each LGA to sponsor five trainees each year. To date a total of 395 FTTSS trainees have been sponsored by their respective LGAs. In Katsina and Sokoto the states are using NIPEP funds to sustain the intervention and Katsina’s scale-up plan envisages 200 trainees every year. GEP3 continues to provide technical support to enable the tracking of FTTSS graduates.

**RANA**

The **RANA methodology is already being replicated outside the pilot schools**. The Katsina State Government is utilising NIPEP to scale up RANA to an additional 18 LGAs. Zamfara SUBEB has printed RANA materials for distribution to non-RANA-supported LGAs and is incorporating the cost as part of its Universal Basic Education-funded plan. The Zamfara State Government is also planning to pass the Zamfara Hausa Early Grade Reading Implementation Guide into law. The **RANA methodology is currently being strongly supported at community level**, where parents and communities are said to strongly identify with the benefits of using the mother tongue in early primary classes and are keen supporters of reading hubs and reading champions.

Within UNICEF and the RANA implementation team there are **concerns as to whether the intervention will be manageable with increased coverage. RANA is an intensive intervention, based on a high degree of monitoring, school-based support supervision activities, and follow-up cluster workshops**. Without adequate funding, some of the RANA packages and materials may be reduced, and the quality of teaching may also be compromised if the present teaching structure (Master Trainers–Lead Teacher–teacher) is not maintained across all schools using the

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\(^{32}\) The cash transfer programme design was meant to run for two years with GEP3 funds, and to be sustained/scaled up by the states afterwards.
RANA methodology. Within government there is a high degree of confidence, especially in the Zamfara SMoE, that quality will be maintained if RANA is scaled up. Whether there is a deep understanding of the level of support and supervision necessary to achieve the progress witnessed so far is unclear. However, state governments consider that their quality assurance officers, who are trained professionals who will still be in service in the next five to ten years, can be brought up to the required standard.

**IQSS**

**Of all the GEP3 interventions, the sustainability of IQSS is the most questionable.** Perhaps the greatest challenge facing the IQS system is the poor support it receives from government. Some of the reasons adduced by stakeholders for this include the following: lack of political will by state governments, resulting from the lack of understanding of the potency of the non-formal system of education; the enormity of the challenge of all forms of non-formal education in the absence of systemic support for SAMEs by most state governments; and lack of coherent support for IQSs from the National Mass Education Commission (NMEC).

Besides the lower capacity of the SAMEs, compared to other government agencies, **institutional arrangements are not favourable.** Federal funds from the flagship Almajiri Education Programme that is meant to integrate conventional disciplines into the Qur’anic system are channelled through the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and SUBEBs, not through the SAMEs. Furthermore, these funds are targeted toward Almajiri (itinerant Qur’anic school pupils) and not children in the other Qur’anic system (Makarantar Allo), which includes the schools under the GEP3 intervention. Therefore, except through the benevolence of UBEC and SUBEBs, there are no federal funds available for the running of the IQSs. Furthermore, the involvement of several agencies in IQS delivery in GEP3 states sometimes contributes to administrative bottlenecks and affects the effectiveness and efficiency of the IQS system. The government agencies have different official mandates and it is often difficult to know who is really in charge.

The lack of support for IQSs translates into **poor remuneration of the IQS teachers/learning facilitators.** This undermines the sustainability of the IQSS intervention, as it strongly depends on school stakeholders in some states working pro bono. The school-level findings of the IQSS evaluation confirm that only a minority of facilitators in Niger and Bauchi are remunerated (see Chapter 5).

**Scale-up plans**

The scale-up plans of the GEP3 states provide evidence of the desire to sustain the programme, most notably in relation to EDC. Examples from Zamfara, Sokoto, and Niger EDC plans are shown below:

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33 In Bauchi, State and Local Government Councils set aside 1% of funds from the Joint State and LGA Account to fund BASAME on a monthly basis.

34 In Sokoto, for instance, there is in additional body to the SAME (under the SMoE) and SUBEB: the Arabic and Islamic Education Board and the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

35 Developed at GEP3 scale-up meeting with states at Rock View Royale Hotel, Abuja, 24 April 2017.
3.3.2 State government commitment

The previous section has described each intervention and the factors that influence sustainability. For the most part, references to government refer to the implementing agencies. This section focuses on political commitment, not least the ability of states to make financial commitments when all have low internally generated revenue and depend heavily on the monthly allocations by the Federal Account Allocation Committee. Although there are many political stakeholders, it is clear that the role of the Governor is central and critical in all states.

The strongest current commitment, by far, is in Sokoto, where the highly motivated Governor has the skills, as well as deep knowledge and experience of federal level politics, to declare and deliver against a State of Emergency in Education. If there is a case of lower commitment it is in relation to IQSS, resulting from ideological and political questions about the extent to which the state should be involved in IQSs. The weakest commitment is in Bauchi, where a massive change of personnel in 2015 has created a confidence gap which continues to have far reaching effects. Commitment from the Governor in Zamfara is having a negative effect on sustainability, owing to his position as Chair of the Governors, which takes him out of the state for the majority of the time. In Niger, the shock of the threat of DFID and UNICEF withdrawal from the state as a result of failure to commit to counterpart funding has had the positive effect of funding being released. Whether this is a sustainable commitment has not yet been tested. The role of the CoE is particularly strong, with considerable support and external resources being generated. In Katsina the position is unclear. The Governor has stated that education is priority one, two, and three; yet this does not trickle through the system. Stakeholders were unable (or unwilling) to explain why, although it is clear that it relates to complex political economy factors which are opaque to all but close insiders.

3.3.3 GEP3 embeddedness

The extent to which the interventions are embedded is variable, depending on the nature of the intervention and the commitment of the state. The two interventions that stand out as wholly embedded are EDC and SBMCs. Although GEP3 supports these interventions, and may be responsible for the direction taken that has enabled success, they are so well embedded that they cannot really be described as GEP3 interventions. Rather, they are state interventions, enshrined

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36 Embeddedness refers to whether the interventions are planned and implemented through governments’ own processes and structures; decision making is driven by government; government demonstrates accountability; and states have institutionalised interventions in local policies.
in federal and state policy, and supported by GEP3. The same can be said of the ASC, although it is currently less sustainable without GEP3 support, owing to the financial resources required from the states, which are less assured of sustainability at this time.

**IQSS is only partially embedded.** It has strong support in the agencies and the activities are consistent with the role of the SAMEs. However, no state other than Bauchi has the funds to sustain the intervention in the absence of external funding.

Supporting evidence for this evaluation can be drawn from a perception survey of a range of government and non-government stakeholders undertaken across the five GEP3 states for the forthcoming political economy analysis. They were asked to rate the commitments of both government and other stakeholders to the key GEP3 interventions on a scale of one to 100. In this case, commitment acts as a proxy for embeddedness.

**Figure 1: Stakeholder commitment to key GEP3 interventions**

The people-centred activities (EDC, RANA, and SBMC) are the most strongly embedded. EDC and SBMC are highly embedded at the LGA level in all states. RANA is still new and is only implemented in two states, but it is embedded in terms of acceptability and desirability among all stakeholders.

The lower embeddedness of TCD and IQSS may be explained in terms of the overwhelming challenges associated with the training of teachers to acceptable levels of competence, as well as the challenges related to the non-systemic support for SAMEs by state governments to drive the IQS system.

EDC, SBMC, IQSS, and RANA are all activities which have generated enthusiasm among stakeholders at the local, community, and school levels. They involve whole communities, mothers’ associations, faith-based organisations (such as the Federation of Muslim Women’s Associations – FOMWAM), as well as high-profile women mobilised under the UNICEF-supported HiLWAs. In Sokoto, the Sultan and other traditional rulers are deeply engaged in the enrolment drives through the Committee of the Sokoto State Emergency on Education. The people-centred base of these interventions makes them somewhat more resilient to political change.

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37 The political economy analysis was not yet finalised at the time of the drafting of this report. It was conducted by Dr Sulleiman Adediran, who is a member of the evaluation team.
4 Impact of the early learning intervention

4.1 Description of GEP3’s early learning intervention (RANA)

GEP3’s early learning intervention aims to improve the early learning skills of children in the primary grades 1 to 3 (P1–P3) in the mother tongue, while also preparing children to learn with English as a language of instruction by the time they transition to Grade 4. The project’s primary focus is on improving reading outcomes for girls and boys in grades 1 to 3.

RANA is being implemented by a consortium of organisations over a three-year period in six LGAs that are among GEP3’s pilot LGAs in Zamfara and Katsina (three LGAs per state). The RANA LGAs have been purposefully selected among the GEP3 LGAs in view of their accessibility to the state capital. The intervention targets 120 public primary schools and 80 IQSs.

RANA has identified three intermediate results, each of which has two sub-components. See Box 2 below.

Box 2: RANA’s intermediate results and sub-components

1. Intermediate Result 1: Reading and numeracy instruction improved
   1.1. Relevant materials developed and distributed
   1.2. Teacher in-service professional development improved
2. Intermediate Result 2: Increased engagement of communities in reading activities
   2.1. Community awareness increased
   2.2. School communities engaged
3. Intermediate Result 3: Sustainable reading delivery systems improved
   3.1. Reading policy improved
   3.2. Interventions sustainably developed

The RANA project is built around four core activities:

1. **The provision of a package of teaching and learning materials** for P1, P2 and P3 in Hausa, called the RANA Literacy Package (RLP). The RLP consists of teacher guides with scripted lessons, pupil workbooks, and Numeracy Read Aloud Storybooks for each grade.

2. **Teacher in-service professional development**, which consists of teacher training for P1–P3 teachers, Lead Teachers, and head teachers in Hausa-based literacy instruction. Trained teachers are also supported with peer mentoring of the Lead Teachers and school support visits (SSVs).

3. **Community awareness and engagement activities** to sensitise communities and other local stakeholders on the importance of literacy and boost local support for early learning.

4. **State-level engagement and policy improvement activities** to encourage state ownership and the sustainability of the project while promoting policies that support early grade literacy.

The ToC for the early learning intervention, which is graphically represented in Figure 2 below, is built around the assumption that literacy improve in early grades if teaching practice improves.
through the use of improved teaching and learning materials and the presence of knowledgeable, skilled, and gender-sensitive teachers. The improvement of teachers' knowledge and skills through in-service teacher development is assumed to be central to more effective teaching in the early grades. Improved teaching and learning is also assumed to be facilitated by the distribution and usage of relevant teaching and learning materials in Hausa. While the central objective of the early learning intervention is to improve pupils’ literacy in their mother tongue and, to a lesser degree, numeracy skills, it is assumed that this will also facilitate the acquisition of English as a second language, and the transition to English in later grades. More details on this ToC are included in the GEP Midline Evaluation Technical Report, Chapter 3.

Figure 2: Diagram depicting ToC for the early learning intervention

4.2 Context of the intervention

It is important to take into account the political and economic context in which the early learning intervention is implemented. This section provides a summary of the main contextual factors that are worth considering, while a more detailed discussion is included in the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report, Chapter 3. Between the last quarter of 2015 and June 2017, which is approximately the period covering our evaluation, Katsina and Zamfara faced several political transitions and a tense security situation.

In difficult economic circumstances Katsina experienced a lack of political leadership, with LGAs being managed by unelected civil servants for extended periods of time. In 2016, the Katsina State Government launched a staff verification exercise in respect of local government staff and teachers, which led to some disruptions in learning, as teachers were focused on the exercise. On
top of the unstable political situation, Katsina experienced periods of economic hardship as well as armed banditry, cattle rustling and other security challenges, which affected GEP3 monitoring activities. Despite this challenging situation, the Katsina State Government has made frequent political statements on the importance of prioritising education and has clearly included educational investments in its 2016–2020 State Restoration Development Plan.

Numerous political transitions and a tense security situation also characterised Zamfara throughout the evaluation period from late 2015 to the summer of 2017. Frequent reports of cattle rustling, armed banditry and kidnapping required prolonged military intervention and intervention from the federal government. In early 2016, Zamfara State decided to declare a State of Emergency on Education, and allocated 32% of the state budget to the education sector. Despite this, securing the release of funding has proved particularly challenging and, by June 2017, approved funding had not yet been released.

An important contextual factor to investigate is the other interventions that took place in Katsina and Zamfara, in addition to the early learning intervention. The TDP, which provides teacher training to early grade teachers in English, mathematics and basic science, was implemented in some GEP3/RANA public schools, but affected a similar number of treatment (received the RANA intervention) and control (did not received RANA) schools in the evaluation sample. As such, we do not expect TDP to pose a risk of contamination in regard to analysis of the RANA impact. The Jolly Phonics project, which trains teachers in synthetic phonics methods for teaching English, has been implemented in Zamfara since 2013 and covers all the public schools included in the evaluation sample. As it covers both sampled treatment and control schools it does not affect impact measurement. Finally, the Global Partnership for Education/Nigerian Partnership for Education Project has been active in Katsina since early 2016. This project provides support at the state level and has been working in coordination with GEP3.

4.3 Methodology

4.3.1 RCT design

The impact evaluation of GEP3’ early learning intervention is designed as an experimental clustered RCT, stratified by LGAs and type of school (primary public school vs. IQS). The RCT design allows us to answer with confidence questions on whether observed changes in learning, teaching and teacher knowledge and skills are attributable to the early learning intervention. In other words, we can measure the impact of the RANA early learning intervention on both pupils and teachers.

Annex A summarises the evaluation questions that are addressed by the evaluation of the early learning intervention. Together with questions concerning impact, our midline analysis also covers questions regarding the changing context around the intervention. The below sections that present the evaluation findings start with a table presenting the different evaluation questions and summarising our answers to the questions.

As discussed at baseline (see Section 3.3 of the Baseline Report), the randomisation succeeded in creating equivalent treatment and control groups. Hence, any differences observed in outcome variables at midline can be attributed to the intervention. The measurement of these differences in outcomes, which represents the estimation of the programme impact, is based on two separate approaches:
The two estimation strategies are tailored to the characteristics of the two samples of pupils and teachers\(^{38}\). The technical rationale for, and practical implementation of, these two separate strategies was also discussed and agreed with DFID’s evaluation adviser in Nigeria, Ed Smithson. Importantly, these strategies ensure that the impact evaluation still revolves around our randomly identified treatment and control groups of RANA and non-RANA schools, respectively. This counterfactual-based design was agreed upon at the inception stage by all relevant stakeholders, including DFID, UNICEF, FHI360, and RANA. These strategies are illustrated in the sections below, together with a description of the trend and correlation analyses. Further details are included in the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report, Chapter 2.

As schools and pupils were sampled through a panel approach, no new sample design was required at midline. The same sample of schools as at baseline was selected for data collection at midline and pupils were selected from the list of interviewed pupils at baseline. In Zamfara and Katsina, the team surveyed 1,083 pupils (535 girls and 548 boys) from 119 public primary schools, and 888 pupils (381 girls and 507 boys) from 122 IQSs. The percentage of sampled pupils equals 78% in public schools and 65% in IQSs. We further discuss the issue of attrition between the baseline and midline surveys in section 4.3.5 below on Risks and Limitations.

Teachers were not panelled between baseline and midline as the sampling approach was guided by the need to study teachers with maximum possible exposure to the early learning intervention. The approach to the sampling of the teachers was probabilistic but not fully random and employed a priority classification of teachers based on their characteristics and exposure to the intervention. Further details are included in the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report, Section 2.2. In Zamfara and Katsina, 264 teachers were surveyed in public schools and 170 teachers were surveyed in IQSs (74% and 70%, respectively, of the targeted sample).

Finally, estimations of programme impact are presented in this report through the use of graphs. For pupil-level impact results, each graph shows point estimates for average treatment effects on outcome indicators and 95% confidence intervals for these effects. This means that the probability that the true treatment estimate will fall within this area is 95%. When confidence intervals of such estimates do not overlap with zero, depending on the graph, this is an indication that the treatment effect is truly different from zero. For teacher-level impact results, each graph presents mean estimates of treatment and control groups and 95% confidence intervals of these estimates. These two ways of presenting impact results reflect the two approaches used for pupil- and teacher-level impact estimates.

4.3.2 Panel difference-in-differences for measuring impact on pupil learning

The estimation of the impact of the early learning intervention on pupils’ learning outcomes is based on a panel approach. This approach takes advantage of the fact that the same pupils interviewed at baseline were then re-interviewed and re-assessed during the midline survey\(^{39}\). Therefore, this panel approach enables us to estimate the impact of the early learning

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\(^{38}\) Each of the two estimation strategies is accompanied by a robustness check strategy which allowed us to confirm the robustness of our findings across alternative approaches. These are discussed in the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report, Chapter 2. A total of 1,971 pupils form part of the panel of pupils interviewed at both baseline and midline, which are used in the analysis. Within panel schools surveyed at both baseline and midline, 723 pupils were not found, representing an attrition rate of 26.84%. Further details on attrition are included in the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report, Section 2.2.1.
intervention on improving learning outcomes between the start of P2 and the end of P3 for the cohort of pupils, but cannot measure the impact of a pupil being exposed to the entire cycle of RANA, from P1 to P3.

The panel approach is augmented by a difference-in-differences analysis, exploiting the fact that data from the same treatment and control schools and pupils were collected at two points in time, at baseline and at midline. The idea behind difference-in-differences is quite straightforward: it first compares data from treatment and control schools both at baseline and midline; then these baseline and midline comparisons are compared to each other. This double differencing removes any baseline imbalances from the estimation, which makes it possible to isolate the impact of the early leaning intervention. Since we are analysing the same observations over time (i.e. panelled pupils located within panelled schools), our panel difference-in-differences estimation approach also controls for pupil- and school-level characteristics that do not vary over time.

4.3.3 Post-test analysis for measuring impact on teachers

The estimation of the impact of the early learning intervention on teachers makes use of a different approach. Taking full advantage of the experimental nature of the RCT design, we apply a post-test-only estimation strategy. Teachers’ competency, skills and practices, are measured in treatment and control groups at midline. To estimate the impact of the RANA training activities on teachers we compare the ‘post-test’ outcome indicators between treatment and control teachers at midline.

Both school- and teacher-level balance checks at baseline indicate that the internal validity of the RCT design is strong and teachers belonging to treatment and control schools are comparable. It is reasonable to assume that teachers belonging to treatment and control schools at midline are therefore comparable, given that the two groups of schools are equivalent. Importantly, this entails that the analysis of impact on teachers focuses on schools that were surveyed both at baseline and midline.

4.3.4 Descriptive trend analysis for investigating changes in RANA schools

In addition to the impact analyses described above, we also present a descriptive investigation of trends in some indicators of interest. This trend analysis is restricted to treatment (i.e. RANA) schools only and focuses on observable changes between baseline and midline across these schools. This analysis looks at changes in the treatment group to track any improvement over time in RANA schools. The interpretation of this analysis cannot include claims of causality: it is of interest from a descriptive perspective only.

A further investigation focuses on correlations between our main learning outcome variables and their main influencing factors. This builds on the correlation analysis implemented at baseline, which allowed us to make more statistically robust claims regarding the relationship between relevant explanatory variables and outcome variables. This correlation analysis allows us to assess, for instance, the influencing effect on learning that may arise from the gender and age of the pupils, but also from pupils being exposed to teachers with different levels of competency or from pupils attending either IQSs or public schools. Again, also in this case, no causal inferences should be derived from this analysis, only correlations.
4.3.5 Risks and limitations

From a technical perspective, the main risk to the validity of the RCT is related to school-level attrition at midline. Losing observations from schools that were surveyed at baseline but not found at midline could undermine the validity of the RCT. These risks are typical of any panel study and can be dealt with effectively. As explained in more detail in the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report, Section 2.1.3, several schools were indeed lost due to attrition at midline, though the midline sample was replenished using additional schools surveyed at baseline and attrition weights were employed to address remaining selection bias issues.40

There was also an issue of treatment status identification that led to a revision of the sample structure at midline. Four schools that were identified as part of the treatment group at baseline were found at midline not to have received the intervention, while one school that was part of the control group at baseline was found to have received the RANA intervention package. The treatment status of these schools was thus swapped accordingly. This case of inverse randomisation did not create balance issues in the sample41.

Due to the issues mentioned above, which led to a reconfiguration of the sample, the baseline sample that matches the midline sample differs from the original sample used for the baseline analysis. Some schools are lost to attrition, some schools are added from the pool of additional baseline schools, and some schools are redefined as treatment or control, depending on the actual programme implementation pattern. As discussed, both in-field and analytical adjustments ensure that the impact analysis is still robust.

Finally, potential sample contamination issues due to other education interventions taking place in Katsina and Zamfara has been assessed as not posing a risk to the robustness of the evaluation. As discussed in the section on context, programmes like TDP, Jolly Phonics, and Global Partnership for Education/NIPEP do not undermine the RANA evaluation, given their random implementation patterns as well as different aims and targets.

4.4 Implementation review

A review of the RANA implementation in Katsina and Zamfara was undertaken. It was important to understand whether the RANA project followed the intervention’s stated roll-out and implementation goals so as to assess whether any change (or lack of change) measured in outcome variables could be due to variations in implementation.

This section briefly summarises some of the RANA activities that have been conducted up until July 2017 and reviews the fidelity of the intervention implementation to the intervention’s plan. A more detailed implementation review is presented in the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report, Section 3.1, which also includes data on attendance at the different training and support sessions, as well as the availability and use of RANA material.

40 In particular, nine additional IQSs surveyed at baseline were added to the sample (in the control group), which compensated for the loss of seven IQSs due to disintegration or relocation and one public school that was not surveyed as it was in a dilapidated condition.

41 The schools were RANA was actually implemented were located in the vicinity of the four schools that were erroneously identified as treatment at baseline. They were not purposefully replaced by different schools expected to perform better or in areas more easily accessible. Additional checks between treatment and control groups on the reshaped (i.e. with the correct status recorded) sample also confirm that balance was maintained, thus reinforcing the idea that the swap can be considered as random.
4.4.1 Fidelity of the intervention implementation

Overall, the available information suggests that the intervention has largely been implemented as intended. The distribution of the RLP, teacher training, and cluster-based meetings have been implemented with high fidelity, and uptake of the RLP by teachers in their lessons has been high. Peer mentoring by the Lead Teacher and SSVs have occurred regularly but at a lower frequency than planned, particularly in IQSs.

Roll-out

RANA implemented a phased roll-out plan for the intervention, which was adjusted to align the roll-out of the intervention with the evaluation of RANA. Phase 1 schools received approximately two months more of intervention in P1 and P2. The RLP and teacher in-service professional development was rolled out to grades P1 and P2 during the second and third terms of the 2015/2016 academic year. Teachers of 96 targeted schools were trained in February 2016 during a Phase 1 roll-out. The 104 schools that were part of the Phase 2 roll-out received their first training in April 2016. The roll-out of the P3 RLP began at the start of the 2016/2017 academic year and P3 teachers were initially trained on using the P2 RLP.

Provision of a package of teaching and learning materials

The RLP was then developed in consultation with various stakeholders and all RLP materials have been continuously reviewed based on feedback from training sessions and monitoring visits. RANA’s monitoring data suggest a relatively high level of fidelity in the implementation of the RLP. Teacher guides and pupil workbooks were distributed to schools in line with the roll-out of the teacher training. The GEP3 midline survey indicates that almost all teachers have a copy of a RANA teacher guide (96%) and pupil workbook (93%), and the majority of teachers are observed using these materials during their Hausa lessons. A review of the RLP materials is included in the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report, Section 7.1.

Teacher in-service professional development

All trainings have been delivered as scheduled, in line with the roll-out of the intervention. By June 2017, RANA had delivered 10 trainings for teachers on Hausa language reading and teacher professionalisation for P1–P3 teachers, head teachers and Lead Teachers at the cluster level. A first cohort of P1 and P2 teachers in 96 schools received their first training on the RLP in February 2016, while the second cohort of the remaining 104 schools received the first training in April 2016. After the initial training, the two cohorts were aligned and all subsequent trainings have targeted all RANA schools according to the intervention plan.

P1–P3 teachers, Lead Teachers, and head teachers42 are trained in Hausa-based literacy instruction using the RLP. These trainings focus on: 1) pedagogy, with a focus on active learning and gender sensitivity; 2) strategies for teaching Hausa literacy; and 3) strategies for linking literacy and numeracy instruction. Teachers and head teachers are also trained in teacher professionalisation, focusing on topics such as time on task, lesson planning, and effective preparation and utilisation of materials.

42 In IQSs all the teachers who teach non-religious subjects are invited to attend training. If the IQS does not have a specific head teacher position the proprietor will be trained (source: communication with FHI360).
All Lead Teachers have attended at least one of the three core RANA trainings, though attendance at the individual training sessions differs. While Lead Teachers in IQSs in Zamfara were the most likely to have attended the first training, they are the least likely to have attended the third training. Attendance at the training on the P2 curriculum for the P3 teachers is lowest and this may be due to the fact that it is the least important one for Lead Teachers to attend as it covers much of the same content as the first training.

Interestingly, while the majority of Lead Teachers appear to be actively engaging in the intervention and conducting meetings and lesson observations, few Lead Teachers conduct these activities to the extent that was initially envisaged. This may be because Lead Teachers find their activities time-consuming. Almost a quarter of Lead Teachers in the GEP3 midline survey felt that their duties take up too much time, while a further 38% of Lead Teachers felt that their duties take up a lot of time.

The RANA progress reports indicate that cluster meetings and SSVs have been implemented regularly since the start of the intervention. Information from the GEP3 midline survey suggests that cluster meetings have been implemented with high fidelity, although the uptake among head teachers has been somewhat lower than that among Lead Teachers. SSVs appear to be taking place regularly, but at a lower frequency than planned, particularly in IQSs.

Community awareness and engagement

RANA is collaborating with a range of community-based organisations CSOs. These include mothers’ associations, to mobilise for women’s involvement in community activities and increase mothers’ involvement with children’s school work. With the support of literacy champions selected by the local communities each cluster has established a community reading hub, a local forum for bringing teachers, parents, and pupils together to enhance reading in their communities.

State-level engagement and policy improvement activities

RANA hosts a Technical Working Group that brings together RANA state team leads and state-level education officials to discuss implementation challenges and identify areas to support RANA. As a result of this, Zamfara has begun training Master Trainers to deliver the scale-up of the RLP, while Katsina had not yet rolled out the RLP by July 2017. RANA has also been engaging high-level stakeholders in Katsina and Zamfara to support the states in developing Hausa Language Reading Implementation Guidelines. By June 2017, both states had adopted guidelines and were preparing financing strategies for implementing them.

4.5 Pupil learning outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation questions</th>
<th>Summary answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the early learning intervention improve Hausa literacy and English language learning outcomes among girls and boys in the</td>
<td>RANA has had a small significant impact on pupils’ average Hausa scale scores. This impact on the average score is not large enough to have resulted in a shift in the proportion of pupils falling into each performance band. While this small impact is observable for girls and boys equally in IQSs, in public schools there is no evidence of a significant impact of RANA on boys. The only significant impact is observed among girls there, but it is very small.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Achieving better pupil learning in Hausa represents the final and key outcome indicator targeted by the RANA early learning intervention. We also measure pupils’ English literacy in line with the GEP3 Theory of Change and Early Learning Strategy Paper which theorises that improvements in early literacy skills in Hausa will prepare children to learning in English by the time they transit to grade four.

To what extent does the early learning intervention reduce the gap between the learning outcomes of the lowest performing pupils and the expected learning outcomes, as expressed in the curriculum?

RANA has had a small significant impact on the average English score in public schools, but not in IQSs. These effects that are attributable to RANA in public schools are more accentuated for girls than boys. These improvements in either language do not seem to be sufficient to reduce the gap between observed and expected learning outcomes, with no or very little movement in the performance bands.

To what extent does the early learning intervention improve pupil retention, especially retention of girls?

There is no evidence that RANA has had any positive effect on improving pupil retention, either for boys or girls, with no statistical difference detected between retention rates in treatment and control schools. Public schools in treatment areas have retained on average 82% of girls and 77% of boys from baseline to midline. The retention rates in treatment IQSs are significantly lower, with IQSs having retained on average 66% of girls and 64% of boys.

The analysis of data on learning outcomes presented below uses estimates of pupil achievement based on Rasch modelling. As explained in detail in the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report, Section 2.2.5, this approach allows for valid comparisons to be drawn across learning assessments administered to different grades and over different years. Based on the scale scores, proficiency levels were computed for each pupil based on which proficiency band the pupil falls within: pre-literacy, emerging literacy, or basic literacy. This variable is used in our analysis to describe changes in the standard of learning over time. Table 3 below illustrates some of the knowledge and skills expected of pupils achieving within each proficiency band. For a more comprehensive description of these skills see the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report, Section 5.1.

Table 3: Hausa and English proficiency level description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proficiency range</th>
<th>Description of the knowledge and skills of pupils achieving within this range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hausa literacy</strong></td>
<td><strong>English literacy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-literacy</td>
<td>Pupils who achieved within the pre-literacy range were able to demonstrate some of the following skills: knowledge of print concepts, identify the initial letter in his/her name, and write the initial letter in his/her name.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Midline Evaluation of the Girls’ Education Project Phase 3

#### Emerging literacy

In addition to the skills above, pupils achieving within this range were able to demonstrate at least some of the knowledge and skills within the range expected by the P1 curriculum. Pupils achieving within this range were able to: sound out letter sounds, spell some high-frequency words, and read a short passage with limited accuracy.

#### Basic literacy

In addition to the skills above, pupils achieving within this range were able to demonstrate at least some of the knowledge and skills within the range expected by the P2 curriculum. Pupils achieving within this range were able to: identify similar sounds, read high-frequency words, spell high-frequency words with accuracy, copy a sentence, sound out letter sounds, and read a short passage.

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4.5.1 Change in pupils’ literacy

#### Hausa literacy learning outcomes

There is limited change in the distribution of pupils across Hausa proficiency bands. The proportion of pupils achieving within the emerging Hausa literacy range has increased from just over 1% at baseline to almost 6% at midline. Basic levels of proficiency in Hausa have also increased. However, the vast majority of pupils who demonstrated pre-literacy skills at the start of P2 at baseline have not progressed beyond this level two years later, by the start of P4 at midline.

As shown in Figure 3 below, 90% of pupils have not yet acquired the range of skills expected by the P1 curriculum. Within this large group of lower proficiency pupils though, there is a substantial and significant increase in the average score (by 74 points). This means that while there were no major changes in the standard of learning over the period, some noticeable progress has been made among pupils at the lower end of the ability spectrum. This progress cannot be considered as sufficient to close the gap between observed and expected levels of learning, as it is important to note that pupils scoring in the bottom proficiency band are not ready to learn more advanced knowledge and skills.
English literacy learning outcomes

We observe substantial improvements in the standard of learning English. A large share of pupils have moved up from the lowest proficiency band. The proportion of pupils demonstrating skills at the lowest range, pre-literacy, has decreased by 21% over the evaluation period.

As shown in Figure 4 below, the improvement is substantial. It is possible that older pupils would have a better understanding of the English language, thus at least partially explaining why midline pupils are found to perform so much better than baseline pupils. Although improvements in English are also an expected outcome of the early learning intervention, through indirect transmission channels of better learning and comprehension, it may seem surprising that these improvements over time appear to be greater than those in Hausa. As we will see in the discussion on impact below, the improvement actually attributable to RANA seems to be very much concentrated in public schools and not in IQSs.

To try to interpret these improvements, one element to consider is that phonics, which is a pedagogical aspect that RANA materials focus on, may be more suited to improving literacy skills in English than in Hausa. Despite the lack of actual English materials, this phonics approach could contribute to the observed spill-over of learning standard improvements in English. By contrast, a phonics literacy programme may be less suited to learning Hausa, given the absence of the intrinsic syllabic nature of the language. Potential Hausa-specific issues related to the phonics approach are also discussed as part of our assessment of the RANA teaching and learning materials in the GEP Midline Evaluation Technical Report, Section 7.1. As our pupil tests are also focused on phonics approach, in line with the intervention’s approach, it is possible that improvements in English are partially explained by this.

Some of the questions in the English pupil test are centred around reading skills (e.g. reading from left to right), which are not English-specific. More regular access to and use of RANA reading materials, regardless of the language, would improve the ability to answer these questions. The criteria in relation to basic English literacy reflect skills that could be learnt through regular access
to the Hausa read aloud storybooks provided as part of the RANA materials. The combination of a focus on phonetics and more access to reading materials could therefore help explain these indirect improvements in English.

**Figure 4:** Change in the distribution of English proficiency levels in treatment schools

When disaggregating Hausa and English results by gender and type of schools at midline (Figure 5), we find that the gender gap between boys and girls persists in RANA treatment schools, and that IQSs continue to outperform public schools on average. Girls are disproportionately represented in the lower end of the ability distribution in both English and Hausa, while boys have a higher representation within the middle and upper score bands. Boys achieve higher than girls in IQSs in both English and Hausa. In public schools there is a gender disparity for English, but there is preliminary evidence of a possible gender gap beginning to emerge in Hausa in public schools, with boys achieving at slightly higher levels than girls, on average.

**Figure 5:** Hausa and English literacy achievement at midline, by gender and school type

Age continues to be an important factor. Among the small proportion of pupils achieving within the basic literacy range of scores, the majority are aged 11 years or older. The expansion in
learning of English is also prevalent among teens. Interestingly, the data also show an increase in the proportion of pupils in middle childhood with basic proficiency levels of English. Taken together with the previous results, the findings point to notable improvements in the standard of learning across the cohort.

4.5.2 Impact of the early learning intervention on early grade pupil learning

Hausa literacy learning outcomes

The analysis provides robust evidence that the RANA early learning intervention has had a small but significant impact on average scores in Hausa literacy. However, there is no evidence to suggest that RANA has reduced the proportion of pupils in the bottom performance band or increased the proportion of pupils in the top performance band, compared to control schools. The RANA intervention has resulted in a 19-point increase in the average Hausa scale score. This impact that RANA has had on average Hausa literacy scale scores, which is small in terms of Hausa scale score magnitude, does not seem to be sufficient to push pupils out of the bottom performance band or into the top performance band.43

Figure 6 below shows the estimated treatment effect on the average Hausa literacy scale score and on the proportion of pupils in the top and bottom performance bands. As explained in more detail in Section 3.1 on methodology, this estimate is derived from the comparison of the change in performance in treatment schools with the change in control schools, between baseline and midline. As an example, the graph below should be read as showing a treatment effect of 19.193 points, which means that the average pupil in RANA schools is scoring 19.193 points more on Hausa literacy tests than the average pupil in control schools. This result is statistically significant as the confidence intervals of the treatment effect estimate do not overlap with zero. On the contrary, there is no impact on the proficiency bands estimates. The latter show the likelihood in percentage points of pupils in RANA schools being in either the bottom or top performance band compared to the counterfactual situation of no treatment.

43 The scores for all pupils were then transformed onto a scale with a mean of 500 and a standard deviation of 100.
We find an impact on pupil learning outcomes in both public schools and IQSs, although in different ways. In IQSs, we observe a significant impact of RANA on the average Hausa literacy scale score and there is no evidence of a gender disparity in the impact of RANA. In public schools, there is no evidence of a significant impact of RANA on average scale scores, but there is evidence that RANA has resulted in a small significant shift out of the bottom performance band. When disaggregating these results by gender, we only find a significant impact of RANA on the proportion of pupils in the bottom performance band among girl pupils. It is important to note that the observed impact is very small in absolute terms.

**English literacy learning outcomes**

While RANA has led to an average increase of about 10 points on the English literacy scale, this result is only weakly significant\(^{44}\) in our impact estimation. Similarly, no shift attributable to RANA is found in the proportion of pupils in either the top performance band or the bottom performance.

This is demonstrated in Figure 7 below, where all impact estimate’s confidence intervals overlap with zero, suggesting that this estimate of a treatment effect is not truly different from zero. Therefore, we find little evidence of an overall impact of RANA on pupils’ English literacy learning outcomes. The difference between IQSs and public schools helps explain the weak significance of the overall impact.

\(^{44}\) ‘Weakly significant’ refers to a 10% significance level (p-value<0.1) of the impact estimate, compared to higher significance levels of 5% (p-value<0.05) and 1% (p-value<0.01) which provide more confidence on the statistical significance of the impact estimate.
There is no evidence to suggest that RANA has had an impact on English literacy learning outcomes in IQSs, among girls or boys. However, there is robust and strong evidence that RANA has had an impact on average English literacy scale scores in public schools. The RANA intervention has resulted in a 15-point increase in the average scale score in public schools. When disaggregating further by gender, the magnitude of the improvement over time in the scale score is similar for girls and boys. The fact that a large proportion of IQSs have dropped English as a subject between baseline and midline may help explain why the impact is concentrated in public schools. Even when limiting the analysis to IQSs that still teach English, though, we find no impact. When looking at the results by gender across both school types combined, one further result is noteworthy: our impact estimation finds robust evidence that RANA has had a positive impact on reducing the proportion of boys, but not girls, in the bottom performance band.

### 4.5.3 Pupil retention

Retention rates, measured as the proportion of pupils sampled at baseline who are still learning non-religious subjects at the same school at midline, are significantly lower in IQSs than public schools. Public schools in treatment areas have retained on average 82% of girls and 77% of boys between baseline and midline. IQSs have retained on average 66% of girls and 64% of boys.

There is no impact of RANA on the retention of girls or boys between baseline and midline. Treatment schools that have received the RANA intervention have similar pupil retention rates compared to control schools. This is the case when looking separately at the retention of girls and boys and when comparing pupil retention levels in public schools and IQSs across treatment and control groups.

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The proportion of IQSs that taught English at baseline was 79%, whilst this proportion has decreased to 27% at midline.
It should, however, be noted that the measure of pupil retention used does not take into account what has happened to the pupils who are no longer learning non-religious subjects at the same school. It is possible that these pupils have not dropped out of school but have rather transferred to a different school. For IQSs, in particular, it is possible that pupils have transferred out of an IQS and into a public school.

### 4.6 Teacher knowledge and teaching practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation questions</th>
<th>Summary answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does teachers’ knowledge in literacy and language acquisition in early grades improve as a result of the intervention?</td>
<td>Overall, there appears to be a very limited impact of RANA on the knowledge of trained teachers. While RANA has had a significant impact on Hausa knowledge in IQSs, we observe no impact on Hausa knowledge in public schools or in Hausa comprehension skills in either type of school. Interestingly, RANA seems to have had an impact on teachers’ ability to interpret English words and phrases, and on their English comprehension skills. This also translates into a significant impact on the teacher subject knowledge index, which is driven by the impact on interpreting English words and phrases and English comprehension skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent do teachers’ skills in early grade, gender-sensitive instruction improve as a result of the intervention?</td>
<td>Small improvements in this area seem to be concentrated mainly in IQSs. RANA appears to have improved teachers’ skills in Hausa-based instructions in IQSs, but not in public schools. Similarly, some observed improvements in teachers’ instructional skills in active, early grade are larger in IQSs compared to public schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent and how do teachers adjust and change their classroom practices as a result of the intervention?</td>
<td>Our results suggest a mixed picture when it comes to improvements in classroom practices. There is an increase in the use of pupil-centred teacher actions, which is attributable to RANA. The intervention has also resulted in a shift toward pupil-centred pupil activities, but only in IQSs. When it comes to teacher talk though, there is no evidence that RANA has led to a reduction in rote-based types. There is also no evidence of any improvement or programme impact on gender-sensitive practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are more reading and learning materials in Hausa used in the classroom due to the intervention? Do they contribute to more effective teaching and learning?</td>
<td>We find strong and robust evidence that RANA has had a large significant impact on teachers’ use of Hausa teaching and learning materials, in both public schools and IQSs. Importantly, RANA has also had a large, significant impact on teachers’ perceptions that they have sufficient Hausa materials available. It is less clear whether materials contribute to more effective teaching and learning. However, there are indications that Hausa materials have played a role in the impact we observe on teachers’ use of pupil-centred activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this section we present changes between baseline and midline in teachers’ knowledge, skills, and practices, and we then discuss our estimates of the impact on these indicators, which is attributable to RANA. Teachers’ knowledge and skills are discussed first, followed by a discussion
of teachers’ pedagogical practices in the classroom. For each section we first discuss midline results as well as intertemporal trends based on a comparison between midline and baseline results for treatment teachers in RANA schools; lastly, we discuss the results of the impact analysis, which compares treatment and control schools.

4.6.1 Teachers’ knowledge of literacy and language acquisition in early grades

Figure 8 presents a summary of the midline findings across competency bands. As detailed in the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report, Section 2.2.5.2, we use seven sub-scales developed from the teacher assessment to calculate the proportion of teachers who demonstrate teaching knowledge in literacy and language.46 In turn, three composite indices are built from these sub-scales for three types of knowledge: subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and curriculum knowledge.

Over 80% of teachers are unable to display competence in Grade 1 and Grade 2-level Hausa and around 3% are competent in Hausa reading comprehension. Another notable finding is that no teacher in the early learning schools is competent in evidencing judgements and diagnosing pupils’ work. This is highly significant for an early learning intervention that focuses on teaching in Hausa. One of the assumptions in the ToC is that teachers are literate in Hausa. This implies that teachers who lack competence in early grade-level Hausa are unlikely to be able to teach this subject to pupils properly. Similarly, the inability of the vast majority of teachers in the sample to identify low performers, evidence teacher judgements concerning pupil performance, and diagnose the next steps of teaching (regardless of language) presents severe challenges to improving pupil learning in Katsina and Zamfara.

Figure 8: Percentage of teachers achieving within the lower, middle and upper bands of competence across the teachers’ knowledge and skills sub-scales at midline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-scales</th>
<th>Percentage of teachers in each proficiency band</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to identify low performers</td>
<td>Competent: 4.0, No evidence of skill: 83.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to evidence judgements and diagnose</td>
<td>No evidence of skill: 81.5, Rudimentary skill: 18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English writing skills</td>
<td>No evidence of skill: 81.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English comprehension skills</td>
<td>Competent: 4.5, No evidence of skill: 59.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2 Hausa Knowledge</td>
<td>Competent: 17.0, No evidence of skill: 59.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English comprehension skills</td>
<td>No evidence of skill: 21.0, Rudimentary skill: 14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting English words and phrases</td>
<td>No evidence of skill: 75.0, Rudimentary skill: 14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hausa comprehension skill</td>
<td>No evidence of skill: 86.0, Rudimentary skill: 11.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GEP3 Midline Survey 2017

46 The seven sub-scales are: ability to identify low performers, ability to evidence judgements and diagnose; English writing skills; Hausa knowledge; English comprehension skills; interpreting words and phrases (English); and Hausa comprehension skills.
Interestingly, 30% of teachers demonstrate competence in Grade-2 level English comprehension skills – performance on this sub-scale is better than all other skill areas assessed. However, the English writing skills of teachers are also an area that raises concerns regarding their ability to increase pupil learning outcomes at scale. While only 4% of teachers in early learning schools were found to be competent in writing, just over 14% display a rudimentary level of writing skills.

Despite the low levels of teacher knowledge and skills at midline, teachers, on average, perform better on several sub-scales at midline compared to baseline. Except Hausa knowledge and comprehension skills, teachers score significantly higher on all other knowledge and skill sub-scales. This translates into a more mixed picture when looking at improvements over time in the proportion of teachers scoring zero on each of the composite indices of teacher competency. Figure 9 below shows these trends over time.

**Figure 9:** Percentage of teachers scoring zero in pedagogical, curriculum, and subject knowledge at baseline and midline

![Figure 9: Percentage of teachers scoring zero in pedagogical, curriculum, and subject knowledge at baseline and midline](image)

Teachers’ subject knowledge has not improved significantly, curriculum knowledge levels have deteriorated significantly, but levels of pedagogical knowledge have improved significantly since baseline, although the majority (64%) of treatment teachers continue to score zero on the relevant composite index. There are some differences by state. While teachers’ subject knowledge in Katsina has not changed over time, it has deteriorated significantly among teachers in Zamfara. Curriculum knowledge has deteriorated significantly only in Zamfara, while in Katsina, levels have remained stable. Teachers in Katsina do better than those in Zamfara in terms of pedagogical knowledge.

**IMPACT**

When looking at the comparison between treatment and control schools, there is no evidence of a significant impact of RANA on teachers’ knowledge and skills on most sub-scales. However, RANA has had a significant impact on teachers’ skills in ‘interpreting English words and phrases’ and on teachers’ English comprehension skills. Teachers in RANA schools are about 12 percentage points less likely to show no evidence of this skill (bottom band) and six percentage points more likely to be competent in this skill (top band), compared to teachers in control schools. They are also about 15 percentage points less likely to show no evidence of English comprehension skill..
Improvements in English comprehension skills seem to be larger in public schools than in IQSs, while the effect of RANA on ‘interpreting English words and phrases’ seems to be larger in IQSs than in public schools.

Similarly to some of the findings on pupils above, these disproportionate improvements in English may seem surprising. However, also in this case RANA materials could have played an important role. Even if they are in a different language, access to and use of materials like storybooks and other reading resources would have improved teachers' comprehension skills. The focus on teaching by using a phonics approach could also have disproportionately improved their English. Finally, it is worth pointing out that the teacher test was the same between baseline and midline, so some of the teachers that were interviewed both at baseline and midline (42% of teachers were interviewed at both points in time) were more familiar with the texts.

While there is no overall impact on Hausa, we find some evidence that RANA has had an impact on Hausa knowledge in IQSs. Teachers in RANA IQSs are about 19 percentage points less likely to show no evidence of this skill (bottom band) and 12 percentage points more likely to be competent in this skill (top band) than teachers in control IQSs. No such impact is observed in public schools. There is no impact of RANA on Hausa comprehension skills in either public schools or IQSs. It is surprising that an intervention that primarily targets teaching skills for Hausa literacy is having an effect only on the English sub-scales but not on Hausa knowledge and Hausa comprehension skills. Figure 10 shows these impact results, with the estimate score results for each sub-scale in treatment and control groups reported next to each other.

As far as the related competency indices are concerned, there is no evidence of RANA having an impact on teachers’ pedagogical knowledge or curriculum knowledge, though RANA has had a significant impact on teachers’ subject knowledge. When looking at the two school types, also in this case the effect of RANA on teachers’ subject knowledge is larger and significant in IQSs, while it is smaller and statistically non-significant in public schools. IQS teachers seem to be more positively affected than public school ones.
4.6.2 Teachers’ classroom practices and language use

Teacher practice can be categorised into three based on this information: teacher talk, teacher action, and pupil action. In this section we present findings on each of these three themes, with a focus on whether the classroom activity is primarily rote-based or pupil-centred.

Teacher talk

Analysis of the midline classroom observation data on teacher talk indicates that treatment teachers make greater use of rote-based approaches than of pupil-centred approaches. Only small percentages of lesson time are used on pupil-centred approaches (‘teacher uses child’s name’, ‘asks open question’, ‘group discussion’), while the vast majority are used on rote-based approaches (‘instructs’, ‘pay attention’).

As shown in Figure 11, there is a significant decrease from baseline in lesson time spent on the rote-based teacher talk of instructing, presenting, or explaining to students, but also a small but significant decrease in the pupil-centred approach of asking open-ended questions. On all other teacher talk categories, we do not observe any statistically significant differences between the baseline and midline results.

Figure 11: Share of lesson time teachers spend on pupil-centred versus rote-based types of teacher talk at baseline and midline

Source: GEP3 Midline Survey 2017

IMPACT

Comparing treatment and control schools at midline shows how treatment teachers in RANA schools perform significantly better than control teachers on ‘assists group discussion’. However, teachers in control schools demonstrate significantly more use of pupil-centred approaches. No statistically significant differences are observed in rote-based approaches. Differences between treatment and control schools are similar in public schools and IQSs.
Teacher action

As shown in Figure 12, treatment teachers spend significantly less time on rote-based teacher actions in the classroom compared to baseline, thus indicating a general shift toward pupil-centred approaches. Pupil-centred teacher action includes the teacher moving among pupils, using printed or improvised materials to teach, or using the textbook, while rote-based teacher action consists of activities such as the teacher reading off or writing on the blackboard, demonstrating how to do something, or giving the pupils dictation. This trend is largely uniform across treatment teachers in both Katsina and Zamfara, and in both public schools and IQSs.

Figure 12: Share of lesson time teachers spend on pupil-centred and rote-based types of teacher action at baseline and midline

![Chart showing teacher action]

Source: GEP3 Midline Survey 2017

IMPACT

The impact estimation comparing treatment and control groups finds that RANA has had a significant impact on teachers’ use of all pupil-centred approaches. These include the share of lesson time spent moving among students, using a textbook, and using printed or improvised materials. Differences between treatment and control groups in public schools and IQSs generally follow a similar pattern, although in IQSs treatment teachers do not spend significantly more time on demonstrating how to do something.

Pupil action

There appears to be little systematic improvement between baseline and midline. This trend is largely uniform across treatment teachers in both Katsina and Zamfara, as well as in public schools and IQSs. Pupil-centred action includes: group discussion, group work or work in pairs, responding to an open question, asking the teacher a question, using a textbook, reading aloud, and doing individual work. This is in contrast to rota-based activities, such as chanting, listening, and responding to closed questions. Figure 13 illustrates the proportion of lesson time where pupils are engaged in each type of activity.
There is a significant decrease in rote-based activities such as pupils chanting. However, there is also a significant decrease in certain pupil-centred activities like group/pair work and asking the teacher questions. A significant improvement in pupil-centred activity is recorded for pupils engaging in individual work, with an increase of eight percentage points. Overall, there appears to be little systematic improvement and this trend is largely uniform across Katsina and Zamfara, as well as in public schools and IQSs.

**Figure 13:** Share of lesson time pupils spend on different activities

![Chart showing share of lesson time spent on different activities](chart.png)

**Source:** GFP3 Midline Survey 2017

**IMPACT**

The impact estimation shows no consistent evidence that RANA has had an impact on the use of pupil-centred activities. Pupils in treatment schools engage more in some pupil-centred activities but less in others, compared to pupils in control schools. Pupils in treatment schools spend a significantly larger share of the lesson on individual work, but pupils in control schools spend significantly more time responding to open questions and asking the teacher questions. In terms of rote-based pupil activities, pupils in treatment schools are significantly less likely to be responding to closed questions.

Interestingly, the impact result is not homogenous across the two school types. When focusing on public schools only, the lack of impact is confirmed, though in IQSs there is a clearer indication that RANA has had an impact on increased use of pupil-centred activities and less use of rote-based activities. Pupils in treatment IQSs spend significantly more time on individual work and on group or paired work, and significantly less time on answering closed questions, compared to pupils in control IQSs. There are no differences between treatment and control IQSs for the other pupil activities.
4.6.3 Teachers’ instructional skills in active, gender-sensitive early grade learning

Three different dimensions are examined in this section. First, we discuss changes in and impact on teachers’ instructional skills in active learning. This is measured through a teacher practice composite index that combines teachers’ use of pupil-centred activities, teachers linking their lessons to learning objectives, and the time that pupils spend on task. Next, we report on findings on teachers’ use of Hausa-based teaching, using a composite index that combines teachers’ Hausa knowledge skills with the share of lesson time that they spend speaking Hausa. Finally, we report on midline findings related to teachers’ gender perceptions and gender-sensitive teaching practices as these data were only collected at midline.

Instructional skills in active learning

Overall, treatment teachers’ performance on the teacher practice composite index has decreased slightly but significantly between baseline and midline. As we discuss in detail in the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report, Section 5.3.2, the practice composite index is based on the extent of pupil-centred learning, observations of the teacher linking the lesson to previous learning, and time on task in class. The drop in the overall teacher practice composite index is driven by a decrease in the share of lesson time spent on task. A similar decline is observed in both Katsina and Zamfara, and across both school types.

Teachers’ performance on the pupil-centred teaching index is also relatively poor, with most teachers scoring in the bottom half of the range of possible values. The pupil-centred teaching index is a composite index that summarises the use of some of the pupil-centred classroom practices described in the previous section. There is a shift toward the middle bands, suggesting that teachers who spent very little time on pupil-centred activities at baseline have increased their use of these activities, while the opposite shift is observed for teachers who spent larger amounts of time on pupil-centred activities at baseline.

IMPACT

There is some evidence that RANA has had a small impact on teachers’ instructional skills in active early grade learning, based on the teacher practice composite index, although this effect is only weakly significant. When looking at the activities that make up the composite index, there is robust evidence that RANA has had an impact on the teachers’ use of pupil-centred activities in the classroom. As discussed in the previous section, there has not been a significant increase in the use of pupil-centred activities among treatment teachers over time. However, the RANA intervention seems to have played a role in maintaining baseline levels of pupil-centred teaching in treatment schools. There is no evidence of any difference between treatment and control schools in teachers linking the current lesson to previous learning and learning objectives, and on pupils’ time on task. Figure 14 shows these impact results.
When looking at the difference between the two types of schools covered by our evaluation, we see that treatment teachers in IQSs are performing better than treatment teachers in public schools, when compared to their control school counterparts. The effect of RANA on the overall teacher practice composite index is larger and statistically significant only in IQSs. RANA has an impact on use of pupil-centred activities in both public schools and IQSs, but the impact is larger in IQSs.

Teachers’ skills in Hausa-based instruction

There has been a significant increase on the Hausa-based teaching composite index, which is explained in detail in the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report, Section 5.3.2, for treatment teachers between baseline and midline. This is driven by teachers spending a significantly larger share of the lesson speaking Hausa. This overall trend is mirrored in public schools. In IQSs, there is no significant increase on the Hausa-based teacher composite index or the share of time spent speaking Hausa. The already high levels at baseline (94% of time spent speaking Hausa) left little room for significant upward improvement in IQSs.

IMPACT

Although the trends are pointing in the desired direction, there is no robust evidence that RANA has had an impact on Hausa-based teaching. Treatment teachers do score on average 0.19 standard deviations higher on the Hausa-based teaching composite index than teachers in control schools. However, this difference is only weakly significant and not robust to robustness check estimations. There is also no evidence of any difference between treatment and control schools on Hausa knowledge.

A sub-group analysis by school type suggests that treatment teachers in IQSs are performing better than treatment teachers in public schools, when compared to their control school counterparts. As discussed in GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report, Section 5.3, there is evidence that RANA has had a significant impact on Hausa knowledge skills in IQSs. This translates...
into a significant impact on the Hausa-based teaching composite index for IQSs, with treatment teachers scoring on average 0.30 standard deviations higher on the index than control teachers.

Gender-sensitive teaching practices and gender perceptions

The measurement of gender sensitivity is extremely complex and often cannot satisfy reliability criteria. At baseline several items were included in the teacher interviews to measure attitudes toward girls. Across all items extreme compliance effects were observed, significantly calling into question the validity and reliability of the measure. A different approach was used at midline to measure gender-sensitive teaching practices: teacher and pupil actions in the classroom were disaggregated by gender to observe whether the teacher engaged boys and girls differently.

No significant differences are observed in the way that teachers engage girls and boys at midline. Figure 15 below shows the range of indicators on teachers’ engagement with boys and girls at midline.

**Figure 15: How treatment teachers engage girls and boys during their lessons**

![Graph showing engagement of girls and boys](image)

Source: GEP3 Midline Survey 2017

**IMPACT**

There are no significant differences in terms of the share of lesson time that treatment and control teachers spend engaging girls and boys during their lessons for the majority of activities. The exception is that teachers in treatment schools spend significantly more time moving among girl pupils than teachers in control schools. While teachers in control schools spend less time moving among girls than boys (43% of time moving among girls), teachers in treatment RANA schools move among girls and boys about equally (52% of time moving among girls). Figure 16 shows these impact results.
Interestingly, there is some evidence to suggest that RANA has had an impact on teachers’ perceptions that a woman should acquire her knowledge from a man. However, this finding should be interpreted with caution. It is an impact estimation based only on one item and should not be taken to mean that RANA has affected gender perceptions more broadly. Teachers were asked whether they agree that ‘a woman should acquire her knowledge from a man and a man must have more knowledge than a woman.’ In treatment schools, 46% of teachers agree with this statement, compared to 60% of teachers in control schools, which represents a statistically significant difference.

4.6.4 Use of Hausa teaching and learning materials

There is a large and significant increase in the use and availability of these materials among treatment teachers in RANA schools at midline when compared to baseline. Materials in Hausa were observed being used in 86% of the observed lessons of treatment teachers. This implies a large and statistically significant increase from 2% at baseline. There are also significant increases of additional Hausa materials being present in the classroom, and teachers’ perceptions of having Hausa materials available. The use of Hausa materials has increased to a similar extent in Katsina and Zamfara. The use of Hausa materials has increased to a greater extent in IQSs compared to public schools.

IMPACT

There is strong evidence that RANA has had a large and statistically significant impact on the availability of Hausa teaching and learning materials, and on their use during lessons. This impact is observed in both public and IQSs. Our classroom observations indicate that at midline 86% of treatment teachers were observed using Hausa materials, compared to only 11% of control teachers. RANA has also had a significant impact on the presence of additional Hausa-based materials in the classroom. In addition, close to 80% of treatment teachers agree that they always have Hausa materials available, compared to only 20% of control teachers. Figure 17 shows these estimates for the treatment and control groups.
Figure 17: Impact of RANA on use and availability of Hausa teaching and learning materials

Teachers who use Hausa materials during their lessons do not score significantly higher on the teacher practice composite index than teachers who do not use Hausa materials. However, teachers who use Hausa materials score significantly higher on the index measuring use of pupil-centred activities. As has been discussed in previous sections, the types of pupil-centred activities that RANA has had an impact on include the share of lesson time during which teachers use textbooks or printed or improvised materials, and the share of lesson time during which pupils are doing individual work and teachers are moving among students. These are all activities that are likely to be linked to the use of the RLP during lessons. While we cannot establish causation for this type of correlational analysis, it is plausible that the RLP has been contributing to teachers’ increased use of pupil-centred activities.

4.7 Teacher attendance and motivation

4.7.1 Teacher attendance

Teacher absenteeism seems to have declined in IQSs but not in public schools. It is important to point out that this measure is based on self-reported attendance. Among IQS teachers who have been absent for at least one day, the number of days of absence in the last three months has almost halved compared to baseline. In contrast, the proportion of teachers in public schools who have been absent during the last three months has increased significantly, with almost 80% of teachers having been absent.

The positive side of this story is that participating in a training is the reason most commonly given by teachers at midline for having been absent from school, together with a teacher’s own illness. In public schools, in particular, almost half the teachers give participation in training as a reason for their absence. As trainings take place during school time, it seems reasonable to assume that teachers are missing school to attend training. It is important to highlight that these trainings do not only include RANA trainings, they include other trainings too. Figure 18 below reports on the most common reasons for absence.
4.7.2 Teacher motivation

Motivation has increased between baseline and midline among teachers in RANA schools. Specifically, only 30% of the teachers at baseline had the level of motivation that the average teacher has at midline. Examining the different sub-scales that make up the motivation index used in the analysis, there have been increases in interest and enjoyment, pressure and tension, and effort and importance.

However, the increase in the overall motivation comes primarily from a large increase in the self-efficacy scale. Interestingly, self-efficacy may be the aspect of motivation that is most amenable to training, because teachers who have been trained are more likely to think they can do their job well. This could therefore be the result of midline teachers in our treatment group having attended RANA training. By contrast, teacher–teacher interaction – as perceived by the teachers themselves – appears to have worsened significantly between baseline and midline. This could reflect tensions caused by issues such as delays in teacher salaries, although it is unclear why these would affect interactions and not overall motivation.

When looking at the comparison between treatment and control groups, we find that teachers who have benefited from the RANA intervention are more motivated at midline. The estimated programme effect, which is around 0.7 standard deviations along the motivation scale, seems to be primarily in terms of self-efficacy and, to a lesser extent, interest and enjoyment; there are also smaller and non-significant differences in favour of treatment schools in the other motivation scales and in teacher–teacher interaction.

Figure 19 below reports the distribution of teacher motivation in control and treatment groups at midline and shows how the motivation composite index score is higher for the treatment group. Although motivation does not feature among our evaluation questions on impact, this

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47 This result is robust to excluding non-panel teachers, so it is not due to changes in sample composition.
finding is of interest to enrich the narrative on the improvements in motivation over time, which are thus attributable to RANA.

**Figure 19: Distribution of teacher motivation in control and treatment groups at midline**

Additional analysis of the factors affecting motivation indicates that teachers who think that they have the materials they need to do their jobs are more motivated on average. This is an important finding as it supports the link between the observed improvements in motivation and the impact of RANA. Increased access to and use of learning and teaching materials at midline compared to baseline is a positive achievement that is attributable to RANA. The fact that having these materials also improves teacher motivation adds further value to the intervention.

Teachers who have supportive head teachers are also found to be more motivated, which is again an aspect that can be linked back to RANA. As previously discussed, improvements in motivation appear to be driven by improvements in self-efficacy. Self-efficacy attempts to measure the extent to which teachers see themselves as able to have an impact, as opposed to being constrained by external factors that are outside of their control. It is perhaps not surprising that external factors such as head teacher support and access to materials appear to be strongly associated with the self-efficacy sub-scale.

On a less positive note, analysis also suggests that improved motivation does not substantially reduce absenteeism, nor does it lead to teachers using better teaching practices at midline. There is in fact little sign of any systematic relationship in the expected direction between motivation and more active, or overall better, teaching in the classroom. It may be that the self-efficacy index, which is leading (as discussed) the overall motivation improvements, is picking up on some undesirable traits, such as a failure to recognise that students’ learning is not improving. This may in turn relate to the observed low teacher competency, which is thus in contrast to teachers’ self-assessment regarding being able to have an impact.
4.8 Pupil and teacher characteristics

4.8.1 Pupil characteristics

Girls and boys continue to be equally represented at midline. The average pupil is just under 11 years old, with IQS pupils older on average than public school pupils. No pupils in public primary schools are reported to be over the age of 15, compared to some 14% of pupils in IQSs. It should be noted that 14% of pupils did not provide information on their age. While all pupils are found to speak Hausa at home, practically no child speaks English or any other local language at home.

When it comes to socioeconomic conditions, we find that most pupils in RANA schools are located in the middle range of the wealth distribution, which is investigated through the use of the same Household Wealth Index (HWI) that was developed at baseline. A marked difference is observed between the socioeconomic status of pupils attending the two different school types. Specifically, we find that pupils attending IQSs tend to be poorer than those attending public schools, which is driven by a larger proportion of pupils in the highest tertile and a smaller proportion in the lowest tertile in public schools (Figure 20). There are also differences by state, with pupils in Katsina being poorer on average than pupils in Zamfara. Finally, it is important to note that there are no significant differences in the distribution of the HWI tertiles between baseline and midline. This further strengthens the comparability of our other results across time.

Figure 20: HWI tertile categorisation by school type at midline

![Image of HWI tertile categorisation by school type at midline]

Source: GEP3 Midline Survey 2017

4.8.2 Teacher characteristics

The demographics of teachers surveyed at midline are similar to those surveyed at baseline. The typical teacher teaching in the early grades is a 38-year-old male who speaks Hausa and English. There is a notable difference between the two types of schools as IQS facilitators are nearly all male, with only 2% of facilitators being female, but across public primary schools 17% of teachers are female. While there has been no significant difference in the proportion of female teachers between baseline and midline, the average midline teachers are two years older than they were at baseline.
Also, the distribution of languages spoken is similar between midline and baseline, with all teachers reportedly speaking Hausa. The great majority also state that they speak English, both in public (88%) and IQSs (79%). The proportion of teachers speaking Arabic is also similar between the two types of schools, at around 30%, with a significant increase in Arabic speaking teachers in public schools.

Almost all surveyed teachers (95%) are teaching P1 to P3 or equivalent levels, although this proportion is slightly lower than at baseline due to the change in sampling approach, which also allowed us to select teachers in upper grades in case they were trained. This is also the reason why there is a significantly larger proportion of surveyed teachers at midline who teach in the upper grades, compared to baseline.

An important difference between baseline and midline is that almost all midline teachers (93%) teach Hausa, compared to only 37% of teachers at baseline. This is again due to the different sampling strategy adopted, which is explained in more detail in the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report, Section 2.3.1. Figure 21 below shows this difference between surveys.

Figure 21: Proportion of teachers teaching non-religious subjects at baseline and midline

The shift toward Hausa reflects the fact that the RANA training is targeted at Hausa teachers, and suggests that the training has been well-targeted, with almost all trained teachers, who were sampled, teaching Hausa. The shift is particularly pronounced in public schools, where only 28% of teachers at baseline were teaching Hausa, compared to 91% of teachers at midline. In IQSs, 55% of teachers at baseline were teaching Hausa, compared to 97% at midline. In contrast, the proportion of English teachers is smaller at midline.

Interestingly, the distribution of subjects taught has also changed significantly when considering only panel teachers, namely teachers who were interviewed at both baseline and midline. Among panel teachers, 94% currently teach Hausa, while only 47% were teaching Hausa at baseline. This trend, observed in both public schools and IQSs, can be explained by teachers shifting from teaching other subjects to teaching Hausa, or teachers at least including Hausa as an
additional subject to their teaching consignment. This would in turn attest to the success of RANA in refocusing teaching around the mother tongue, Hausa.

At midline, teachers in public schools continue to be more experienced than those in IQSs and a greater proportion of public school teachers also report having participated in a training other than the main RANA trainings, during the last two years. This is likely to be related to other interventions targeting public schools, such as TDP and Jolly Phonics. IQS teachers also do not report receiving any GEP training other than RANA, while 35% of teachers in public schools report having received other GEP training, which is likely to be related to the fact that GEP training also targeted head teachers in public schools.

### 4.9 Teaching context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation question</th>
<th>Summary answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How and to what extent have contextual factors beyond the implementers’ control facilitated/hindered achievement of intervention outcomes?</td>
<td>A challenging political, economic and school environment presents challenges both for delivery of the intervention and for the translation of outputs into outcomes. While RANA has successfully delivered the intervention so far, contextual factors may make it challenging for teachers to successfully adopt new teaching practices, and to deliver the RLP consistently at its intended frequency, and for pupils to improve. Stakeholders in Katsina and Zamfara seem generally supportive of RANA. However, both states are characterised by a challenging context: political uncertainty, economic hardship, and persistent insecurity are common factors in both states. These factors are described in detail in GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report, Chapter 3 on the context of the intervention. When it comes to the school and teaching context, the contextual situation is mixed: school infrastructure continues to be poor, and continues to be worse in IQSs than in public schools. However, head teachers support their teachers more at midline, compared to baseline.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is useful and informative to provide a description of the context within which teaching and learning take place. This represents the environment within which the pupils’ and teachers’ results discussed in the previous sections were achieved and includes school size, school leadership and management, school infrastructure and resources, and the gender sensitivity of the schooling environment.

The comparison between the teaching context at baseline and midline further enriches the analysis by helping improve our understanding of how the school environment has changed over the course of the evaluation. Some of the most interesting trends observable over time are presented below and when the difference on an indicator between baseline and midline is statistically significant, this is explicitly defined in the text as a significant difference. It is, however,

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48 As discussed in the methodology section, these additional trainings do not pose a risk of contamination to our impact evaluation, given the implementation pattern of these trainings across our treatment and control groups and their limited magnitude overall.
important to bear in mind that this does not amount to a causal analysis of impact as the trend analysis focuses on treatment schools only, with no comparison to control schools.

4.9.1 School size

Public schools have considerably more teachers than IQSs in non-religious subjects. This is a pattern that was already visible at baseline and is confirmed at midline. The average public school has 8.7 teachers, who teach non-religious subjects, while the average IQS has 2.7 non-religious teachers. It is interesting to note that in public schools, the total number of non-religious teachers has decreased significantly since baseline, while the number of non-religious teachers in the early grades has remained the same.

IQSs have slightly more non-religious teachers, as well as more non-religious teachers in the early grades, compared to baseline. Also of relevance is that fact that the proportion of IQSs that have only one teacher teaching non-religious subjects has decreased significantly, from 47% at baseline to 10% at midline. Figure 22 below reports the average number of teachers at baseline and midline in public schools and IQSs.

Figure 22: Average number of teachers at baseline and midline, by school type

The rate of teacher turnover in P1–P3 seems to have increased significantly, although there are clear differences by state. The Zamfara rate of teacher turnover at midline is similar to that at baseline, while teacher turnover has increased significantly in Katsina. Teacher turnover rates in Katsina at midline are particularly high in IQSs, where on average approximately half the P1–P3 teachers left during the school year prior to the survey. RANA does not seem to have had a positive effect on turnover rates, which may be problematic given the relatively frequent turnover of P1–P3 trained teachers in RANA schools.

Public schools have a considerably higher number of pupils than IQSs. The average public school has 530 pupils across all primary grades, while the average IQS has 130 pupils. Public schools also have higher pupil–teacher ratios than IQSs across all primary grades, but the two types of schools have a similar pupil–teacher ratio in early grades.
School enrolment appears to have increased dramatically since baseline, both overall and in the early grades. In P1–P3, public schools enrol on average close to 100 pupils more than at baseline, while IQSs enrol 55 pupils more on average. This does not seem to be attributable to RANA though, given the lack of a significant difference in enrolment rates at midline between treatment and control schools. Pupil–teacher ratios in IQSs in the early grades have almost doubled compared to baseline, while they have increased to a lesser and not statistically significant extent in public schools.

4.9.2 School leadership and management

School leadership and management actions by head teachers appear to have improved significantly on a number of indicators since baseline. A significantly greater proportion of head teachers report meeting with teachers at least monthly in a group, as well as individually. Head teachers are also significantly more likely to have observed a teacher’s lesson in the past two weeks compared to baseline.

Head teachers in both public schools and IQSs are significantly more likely to meet with teachers and observe their lessons. The proportion of head teachers taking action to improve teacher attendance has also increased in both schools, with a much more marked increase in IQSs (from 55% to 90%) compared to public schools (from 80% to 86%).

There is also a discernible geographical difference, with head teachers in Zamfara more likely to meet with teachers in a group and to observe their lessons than head teachers in Katsina. While head teachers in both states have improved on these indicators between baseline and midline, the differences between the two states have been maintained.

Figure 23: School record-keeping at baseline and midline, by school type

Figure 23 above provides a summary picture of record-keeping in public schools and IQSs at both baseline and midline. It is clear that public schools are more likely to keep school records than

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49 Additional inter-temporal analysis of enrolment rates is hindered by a difference in the approach used to collect enrolment data at baseline compared to midline. Data at baseline were only collected through available records, whilst at midline when records were missing information on enrolment was also gathered from head teachers, who gave an estimate of their school’s enrolment.
IQSs. This trend has been confirmed at baseline and midline. The proportion of IQSs that have updated records of any kind remains low at midline. It is important to note that at midline public schools are significantly more likely than at baseline to have an updated pupil attendance register for P2, and a timetable for P2.

4.9.3 School infrastructure

Public schools continue to be better resourced than IQSs. However, the great majority of both public schools and IQSs continue to need repairs. Worryingly, the proportion of IQSs with a source of drinking water has decreased significantly at midline compared to baseline, while it has stayed roughly the same in public schools.

It is important to highlight a substantial and significant increase in the proportion of public schools that have separate functioning toilets for girls, from 44% at baseline to 70% at midline. The proportion of IQSs with separate functioning toilets for girls has also increased slightly to 12%, from 6%, although the difference compared to baseline is not statistically significant.

4.9.4 Girl-friendliness

As also discussed at baseline, it is challenging to achieve a reliable measure of the girl-friendliness of schools, as information on gender-sensitive factors is difficult to define and collect. The information that was obtained on this for our early learning sample cannot therefore be considered exhaustive. Data were collected on some measures often associated with the girl-friendliness of the school environment.

Schools that have at least one female teacher appear to be more likely to have separate toilets for girls than schools with no female teacher. Female teachers continue to be underrepresented in the sample schools, with the proportion of female teachers still below 10%. There is, however, a big difference between public and IQSs, with the former having almost 50% of female teachers and the latter only around 5%.

When it comes to pupils, there were slightly more boys than girls enrolled at both baseline and midline, with a girls to boys ratio of around 0.8. There is no difference between public and IQSs, while the girls to boys ratio is higher in Katsina than in Zamfara.

4.10 Factors influencing learning

Following the approach set a baseline, we have investigated which factors can be identified as influencing literacy. The majority of teacher- and school-level factors do not appear to be significantly correlated with change in literacy learning outcomes. At baseline, we constructed a regression model to investigate correlations between outcomes indicators of interest at the pupil level (i.e. Hausa scaled scores and English scaled scores) and a range of influencing factors that help explain their learning performance. At midline, we investigate how a similar set of influencing factors can help explain the change in learning outcomes observed between baseline and midline. The two different regression models employed for this correlation analysis, namely an OLS with baseline covariates and a panel fixed-effects model, are described in more detail in the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report, Section 5.6.
Two factors that are found to be significantly correlated with changes in literacy outcomes are school location and school type. Pupils in schools in Katsina have improved significantly more in Hausa and English literacy than pupils in Zamfara, and pupils in urban schools have improved more than pupils in rural schools. Pupils in public schools have improved significantly more than pupils in IQSs on English literacy. On the other hand, school type is not a significant predictor of Hausa literacy outcomes.

By contrast, pupil individual-level factors are not strongly correlated with changes in literacy outcomes and they appear to affect Hausa and English outcomes differently. Gender does not appear to be significantly correlated with changes in literacy outcomes. Age is not correlated with changes in Hausa outcomes, but is significantly correlated with improvements in English outcomes. In particular, age has a non-linear relationship with English outcomes as older pupils have generally improved more in English literacy, but pupils who are much older than average have improved less. Pupils’ wealth is not correlated with English literacy, but relatively richer pupils have improved more in Hausa literacy than poorer pupils.

The timing of the start of the RANA intervention is not found to be correlated with changes in pupil literacy outcomes. Pupils in schools that started receiving RANA in February 2016 show a similar level of improvement in Hausa and English literacy to that of pupils in schools that started receiving RANA in April 2016. This is not surprising, since the levels of intervention received by the two groups of schools are very similar and RANA made an effort to align the two phases with each other as quickly as possible.

When focusing the analysis on the influence of changes in time-varying factors on changes in learning outcomes between baseline and midline, our most relevant finding is that improvements in teacher motivation are highly correlated with improvements in pupil literacy, for both Hausa and English. In particular, pupils’ learning outcomes improved more in schools where teacher motivation increased more between baseline and midline. In contrast, teachers’ knowledge and skills are only weakly correlated with improvements in Hausa literacy and not correlated at all with improvements in English literacy.

Overall, this correlation analysis finds very few factors that are significantly influencing changes in literacy outcomes, and those that are significant are generally small in magnitude. This is likely to be a result of the limited variability that we observe in both learning outcomes and key factors of interest. For instance, teacher competency has not improved on several indicators and any observed improvements have been very small. This can therefore help explain why we do not observe a significant correlation between changes in teaching knowledge and practice and changes in pupils’ learning outcomes.

### 4.11 Conditions for scale-up

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation question</th>
<th>Summary answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Under what conditions can achieved outputs and outcomes be implemented at scale? | The success of a potential scale-up of the RANA intervention will depend on:  
- the availability of schools and teachers that are performing well enough to be able to absorb the RANA methodology; |

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50 We do this through the adoption of a fixed-effects model that controls for all observed and unobserved time-invariant factors.
We present in this section a summary review of the plans and prospects for the RANA scale-up in the two states where the programme operates. We first discuss the situation in Zamfara then the one in Katsina.

### 4.11.1 Zamfara

Scale-up has already started in Zamfara. The SUBEB believes that replicating RANA will not be difficult. The SUBEB has already printed a large number of materials for distribution to non-RANA schools and non-GEP3 LGAs. There seems to be growing interest from these other schools and LGAs in the RANA intervention. SUBEB plans to use the existing network of quality assurance officers, who can be trained in how to support early learning through RANA.

However, the perception that replication will be easy may be due to the fact that the intensity of effort under the controlled conditions of RANA may not be entirely understood. The RANA methodology is popular with stakeholders because it is not only perceived to be effective but also ‘so simple’.51

There will be challenges in scaling to non-GEP3 schools where there has been no preparatory work with head teachers and teachers to create an enabling environment for something new. It is important to note that the LGAs where RANA has been piloted were selected purposefully taking into account ease of implementation. Our evaluation results show how even in these schools the quality of teaching is not satisfactory. The context within which the intervention would be scaled up is therefore of concern, as it is possibly going to be of lower quality.

Our investigation of scalability points to the fact that while scale-up may be slower in IQSs and may reach fewer children than in public schools, it may be more sustainable in IQSs than public schools over time. This is because stakeholders comment that teachers in IQSs are more interested in teaching than those in public schools. They attribute this to the close and vigilant supervision of proprietors, who attach great importance to quality teaching of the Qur’an and extend that to whatever is being taught in their centre.

From the perspective of the programme team, part of the sustainability plan has always been community involvement, especially of the high-status individuals designated as reading ambassadors. Their influence has proved very important. The strategy of having Lead Teachers, who are selected for their teaching ability and trained alongside head teachers, is also credited with motivating teachers. Whether that motivation can be sustained as the novelty wears off cannot be known at this stage.

The key factor that needs to be in place for scalability and sustainability is undoubtedly political commitment to education and to providing the necessary financial resources. If this is present, measures that the community take to support learning can be effective. In some cases, for

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51 The perception that RANA is simple appears to be related to the contrast with other subjects taught in early grade, which have a lot of detailed content that is not age-appropriate and is difficult even for the teachers.
example, the community is so motivated to have RANA that they will provide volunteers who can help weak teachers.

4.11.2 Katsina

In Katsina there is also a desire to scale up RANA, but stakeholders appear to be more cautious about political commitment and note that, if there is no additional funding, any limited expansion will not be sustainable. This is a particular issue because of the very high cost of RANA as currently delivered. Therefore, while RANA is perceived to be effective, there is a question about whether it is cost-effective. At best, Katsina aims to expand RANA to more schools within the pilot LGAs.

There is less confidence that scale-up at quality is realistic in schools that are performing at a low level and in conditions where teacher turnover is high. The SUBEB, in particular, takes a realistic view of the challenge of scale-up of RANA in a context where the rest of the school system is weak. Although children at P1, P2, and P3 are able to read and write in RANA schools, the same is not true of students already at P4. A lack of improvement in learning is also observable in our midline results for P4 pupils. When RANA pupils move to P4 there is no guarantee that the quality of teaching will be sufficient to maintain the skills acquired and to develop them further.

A similar realism is present among Education Secretaries. According to the State Representative of Education Secretaries they are very impressed with RANA and are keen to see it scaled up because of the results they see. At the same time, they are aware that RANA ‘means business’ and that sustaining the benefits will require a change in mindset relating to expectations about learning achievement.

Part of what is perceived as a successful pilot is attributed by stakeholders to the readiness of SBMCs and traditional leaders to support RANA. An effective scale-up can only be achieved if this support is extended and sustained. This support is the result of years of activities, including the EDC and other school improvement activities. This suggests that where the SBMC is strong enough, its ability to sensitise communities could effectively enable RANA to be scaled up effectively.
5 Effectiveness of GEP3’s Support to IQS

5.1 Description of GEP3’s IQSS intervention

GEP3’s strategy for IQE focuses on the improvement of education in IQSs, with the aim of providing meaningful and relevant quality basic education for IQE learners. The final outcomes expected are: improved learning outcomes in basic literacy and numeracy (especially for girls), improved retention of girls, and, to a lesser extent, increased enrolment of girls.

GEP3 targets registered IQSs that have accepted integration (becoming IQSs), largely operate as community-based initiatives that are willing to build links with government, and have girls enrolled.52 GEP3-supported IQSs are meant to specifically target the enrolment and retention of girls. The primary target population are disadvantaged girls and boys attending IQSs and out-of-school girls and boys whose parents are not willing to send them to formal schools and therefore may be more open to sending them to an IQS.53

During the 2015–2017 period 200 IQSs per state across the six GEP3 LGAs in Niger, Bauchi, and Sokoto were meant to receive a full school-level support package. Box 3 summarises the IQSS package that was planned to be implemented at school community level (a more detailed description is presented in the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report, Chapter 3). GEP3’s IQSS began in August 2015, was partially redesigned in 2016, and is meant to continue into 2018, following the publication of a revised IQE strategy paper in 2017. GEP3 redesigned the approach and content of the training of IQS teachers, referred to as facilitators. As part of the redesign, the head teacher training was replaced by a one-day sensitisation targeting IQS proprietors. A review of the actual implementation is presented in Section 5.4.

Box 3: IQSS activities at school and community level

- **Training and mentoring of IQS facilitators**: the approach changed at the end of 2016 from a one-off five-day induction training followed by monthly cluster-level training/mentoring meetings to a staggered training cycle of four multi-day workshops followed by termly cluster meetings and several SSVs per term.
  
  *Planned timing: initial training started mid-2015 for a first cohort of facilitators and mid-2016 for a second cohort, with follow-up meetings over a period of 1.5 years. This was adopted, with training to start December 2016 for the first cohort, and mid-2017 for the second cohort, followed by three other termly trainings.*

- **Provision of a package of classroom teaching and learning materials**: the revised facilitator training also included the development of lessons plans and teaching materials.
  
  *Planned timing: April–May 2016.*

- **A one-day sensitisation of proprietors** about the quality of an ideal IQSs and roles and responsibilities of the CBMC during the first day of the revised facilitator training (this replaced an initially planned training of head teachers consisting of three-day training sessions per term over a two-year period).
  
  *Planned timing: initially planned to start between April and June 2016; replaced by one-day proprietor sensitisation in December 2016 or mid-2017 (depending on IQS cohort).*

- **Capacity building for CBMCs**, consisting of an initial multi-day cluster-level training on the roles and responsibilities of the CBMC and whole-centre development planning, followed by financial management training and mentoring visits, at least once a term, over a period of nine to 12 months.

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52 GEP3 targeted IQS which had girls constituting at least 40% of pupils (UNICEF, 2015a).

53 UNICEF (2017b). In 2017, UNICEF presented a revised strategy paper for supporting IQE. This strategy paper puts more emphasis on girls and boys as target population, while the previous 2015 GEP3 strategy paper more strongly focused on girls as the main target group.
Planned timing: initial training scheduled to take place in July–September 2016.

- **Provision of school grants**, at most twice over a two-year period, and conditional on the development of a Whole-Centre Development Plan (WCDP) and attendance at CBMC training.

Planned timing: first grant planned to be provided from the beginning of the 2016/2017 school year.

Figure 24 visualises the ToC of GEP3’s IQS support. The ToC is discussed in detail in Chapter 4 of the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report as it forms an integral part of the contribution analysis approach that is used for the IQSS evaluation. **The main logic of GEP3’s IQSS is that pupils’ learning, especially girls’, can improve in IQSs when the IQS can provide quality basic education, which requires that facilitators teach more effectively and that the school environment improves and becomes more girl-friendly.** Effective teaching is expected to improve by GEP3 supporting facilitator training and mentoring, sensitisation of proprietors, and the distribution and preparation of teaching and learning materials. CBMC training and the provision of school grants are expected to contribute to an improvement in the school environment.

**Figure 24:** ToC of GEP3’s IQSS

5.2 **Context of the intervention**

It is important to consider the institutional, economic, and security context in which the IQSS activities are implemented. This section provides a summary of the main contextual factors that are worth considering, while a more detailed discussion is included in the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report, Chapter 3. Between the last quarter of 2015 and June 2017, which is approximately the period covering our evaluation, Niger and Bauchi faced political transition, a continued weak IQS institutional environment, and a challenging economy.

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54 This section is mainly based on a document review of GEP3 progress reports and states’ education sector strategies (see GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report, Section 3.2.2), as well as state-level KII.
Institutional context: After the 2015 elections, key political and administrative transitions and appointments continued during the 2015/2016 school year, which resulted in delays in government counterpart funding. Transfers of key personnel at state and Local Government Education Area- (LGEA-) level continued in 2017. In both states resource-intensive government staff verification took place, which caused delays in teacher salary payments and absorbed government staff capacity. Both the Niger and Bauchi governments signalled the importance of education and girls' education in state policy, although political commitment has not necessarily translated into the release of state counterpart funding.55 The non-formal education sector, such as IQSs, remains relatively underfunded, and the involvement of several agencies in the support for IQSs contributes to administrative bottlenecks and institutional rivalry.

Economic context: The states are in an economically precarious position and, even if they were willing to do so, are unable to allocate enough resources to meet the huge needs. While Niger is in a better economic position compared to Bauchi, due to its proximity to Abuja, economic hardship hit in 2016 (manifesting itself in high full prices and power outages), which affected release of funds and delays in teacher salary payments. The economic situation improved in 2017.

Security context: The security situation in both states was mostly calm in the period in question, according to GEP3 progress reports, although in Niger cattle rustling and sporadic kidnapping creates a sense of insecurity and has sometimes affected GEP3 activities. In Bauchi, as a result of security enhancement measures, the security situation was generally safe in the period, although heavy rains mid-2016 affected access to hard-to-reach schools.

Other projects: Other education interventions are taking place besides the ones supported by GEP3. As mentioned in Section 3.2.2, Niger in the past has been successful in attracting support from development partners. The Transforming Education in Niger State (TENS) programme, started in 2016, is a key investment in teacher capacity strengthening and infrastructure enhancement. In Bauchi, NEI+ is implementing an early grade reading intervention, including intensive teacher training and mentoring. While TENS focuses on the formal sector, NEI+ also supports non-formal learning centres and similarly to GEP3 aims to reach OOSC. NEI+ operates in all but one of GEP3's LGAs. It adopts a different approach to that of GEP3: it targets all OOSC, without a special emphasis on girls, and sets up centres in communities to prepare OOSC for mainstreaming in the formal school system. The project does not target, nor specifically support, IQSs, although a learning centre can be placed in an IQS.56

53 Methodology

The ToC of GEP3’s IQSS was used as a framework to formulate the evaluation questions. The evaluation questions interrogate a wide range of the cause–effect assumptions underlying different steps in the ToC, in order to better understand how change may come about. Annex A provides a list of the evaluation questions. Furthermore, the evaluation questions with summary answers are presented in the relevant sections, with key findings below.

The evaluation prioritises questions related to the quality of education, particularly by looking at changes in learning, teaching, and the school environment. Not all evaluation questions included

55 In Niger, the Governor appointed a Special Adviser on Girl Child Education and the Niger State Education Medium Term Sector Strategy, adapted in 2016, emphasises gender and equity in education; in Bauchi, a 21-person taskforce was appointed in 2016 to reshape the entire education sector.

56 This is the case in one of the evaluation case study schools in Bauchi.
in the GEP3 Evaluation Framework are addressed at midline. In accordance with the Evaluation Framework, during the 2015–2017 pilot period the focus of the analysis is on intermediary outcomes, such as changes in teacher knowledge and skills, teaching practices and school management. Learning outcomes are not measured at midline. Furthermore, one evaluation question related to head teacher training became irrelevant due to changes in the intervention design.\textsuperscript{57} The evaluation also pays attention to unintended consequences of the IQSS.

To evaluate IQSS we apply an evaluation approach that draws on the principles of contribution analysis and relies on a strong mix of quantitative and qualitative methods. Contribution analysis is a pragmatic theory-based evaluation approach that assesses causal pathways within the ToC, reports on whether the intended changes occurred or not, and identifies the main contributions to such changes. The IQSS evaluation does not make use of a comparison group to make causal inference but seeks to make credible causal claims about the contribution IQSS is making to observed outcomes by verifying the chain of expected results and assumptions of a credible ToC, as well as assessing the contribution of alternative explanations to observed outcomes (Mayne, 2012; Delahais and Toulemonde, 2012). Section 2.1.4 of the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report presents a detailed methodological review of the contribution analysis.

Based on the IQSS ToC and in line with the evaluation questions three contribution claims were identified, on which evidence has been collected during several rounds of data collection:

1. **Contribution Claim 1**: GEP3’s IQSS contributes to more effective teaching of formal subjects in IQSs;

2. **Contribution Claim 2**: GEP3’s IQSS contributes to an improved, girl-friendly school environment in IQSs; and

3. **Contribution Claim 3**: More effective teaching of formal subjects and an improved, girl-friendly school environment contribute to improved learning levels, particularly among girls.

Only contribution claims 1 and 2 are addressed in this report because measurement of learning outcomes to assess Contribution Claim 3 was planned for baseline and endline data collection.

**Data collection takes a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods.** Quantitative data collection consists of representative sample surveys among GEP3 IQSs in the 12 GEP3 LGAs across Bauchi and Niger. Baseline and midline surveys have been conducted in a cohort of IQSs sampled at baseline. The qualitative research takes place in purposefully sampled case study IQSs that are also included in the quantitative survey sample. The same case study IQSs were visited at baseline and midline. Baseline and midline quantitative and qualitative data collection took place, respectively, in October–November 2015 and 2017. The school-level data collection was complemented with qualitative state-level and national KIIIs with a range of government and non-government stakeholders (see Section 3.1). Furthermore, an intervention implementation and context review was conducted based on a document review of project progress reports, project monitoring data, and ongoing communication with UNICEF. The data collection methodology is explained in detail in Chapter 2 of the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report.

\textsuperscript{57} The GEP3 Evaluation Framework contained an evaluation question about the contribution of GEP3’s head teacher capacity development to pedagogical leadership. Because the head teacher training was revised into a one-day proprietor sensitisation that no longer aims to affect pedagogical leadership, this question has become irrelevant.
The school survey took place in a sample of 60 IQSs, stratified according to the 12 GEP3 LGAs in Bauchi and Niger (five IQSs per LGA, 30 IQSs per state). Within the schools, facilitators were sampled using a probabilistic but not fully random approach: selection priority was given to facilitators that were trained as part of the adapted training, panel facilitators, and facilitators teaching in P1–P3 or equivalent. Because of the unexpected revision of the facilitator training approach in 2016 not all sampled schools have been exposed to the facilitator training with the same intensity and according to the same timeline. The final sample includes 93 teachers, similar to baseline (see Annex C). In addition, the person responsible for the day-to-day management of the school (head teacher or proprietor) and CBMC representatives were surveyed in each school. Data collection instruments mostly similar to the ones used at baseline were administered using computer-assisted personal interviewing.

The qualitative case studies took place in the same six IQSs as were selected at baseline. Cases were selected from three purposefully determined school categories: typical IQSs, ‘higher performing’ IQSs, and ‘lower performing’ IQS. Each case study IQS was located in a different LGA. The qualitative research made use of four research techniques or instruments: qualitative classroom observation; unstructured teacher practice discussions; KIIs with the IQS proprietors, head teachers, community leaders, and local government IQS officers; and focus group discussions with parents, girl pupils, and boy pupils. Applied thematic analysis was used to interpret the data according to themes that were based on the IQSS ToC and those that arose directly from the data.

All data were systematically analysed using the ToC as a framework. All quantitative and qualitative data were systematically organised in an evidence analysis database per causal link or factor influencing change within the ToC. Subsequently, the evaluation team assessed whether the body of evidence either confirmed or refuted the occurrence of postulated explanations and influencing factors. Based on the assessment of all the links in the ToC, we developed the contribution 'story', which explains why it is reasonable to assume that the programme actions have contributed to the observed outcomes per contribution claim.

Various limitations to the above-presented methodology need to be considered. These are presented in detail in Section 2.1.4 of the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report. In summary:

- Changes to the ToC during the evaluation period made one evaluation question related to head teacher training irrelevant.
- The methodology does not foresee the measurement of the net attributable effect of GEP3’s IQSS since change is not measured in a comparison group.
- While sampled IQSs as part of the quantitative survey are representative of the GEP3 pilot IQSs, they are not themselves representative of the entire IQS population in the GEP3 states.

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58 Initially we had planned to survey the same facilitator panel at baseline and midline. However, because the training was revised and the targeted facilitators for training could not be identified at baseline, we had no assurance that a facilitator sampled at baseline would also be trained, particularly as part of the adapted training. Therefore, the sampling employed a priority classification of teachers for eligible for sampling to maximise the number of surveyed facilitators at midline that were actually ‘treated’ by the adapted GEP3 facilitator training and therefore for which an outcome change in line with the ToC could be expected.

59 For the purposes of this evaluation ‘lower performing’ cases were interpreted as schools and communities likely to be most resistant to change in increasing the education outcomes for girls (lower female enrolment, negative attitudes toward girls’ education, and lower levels of acceptance of the integration process). ‘Higher performing’ cases were interpreted as schools and communities likely to be less resistant to change in increasing the education outcomes for girls (higher female enrolment, positive attitudes toward girls’ education, and high levels of acceptance of the integration process).
Not all intervention activities were implemented with the same intensity and timeline across the GEP3-supported IQSs. However, because of sample size limitations we are not able to statistically compare differences in outcomes across multiple groups of IQSs.

We could not analyse the facilitator survey data according to a facilitator panel as intended. Partly, new facilitators were sampled at midline. Therefore, variations in facilitator characteristics between baseline and midline could contribute to changes in outcome variables. However, extensive balancing analysis determined that the baseline and midline samples are largely comparable. Also, given the small number of facilitators within IQSs, often no sampling needs to happen and therefore the midline averages are largely indicative of the facilitators’ population in the IQSs at midline and reflect changes in IQSS on the whole.

The qualitative case study IQSs were purposefully selected to gather in-depth understanding of how the IQSS ToC unfolds within a specific context. The qualitative research does not aim to facilitate sample-to-population inference. Therefore, learning from the case study IQSs may be affected by the choice of communities and schools.

### 5.4 Implementation review

**A review of the IQSS implementation in Niger and Bauchi was undertaken as part of the evaluation.** It was important to understand whether GEP3 followed the intervention’s stated roll-out and implementation goals, so as to assess whether any change (or lack of change) measured in outcome variables could be due to variations in implementation. This section briefly summarises the activities that have been conducted up until July 2017 and reviews the fidelity of the intervention implementation to the intervention’s plan. A more detailed implementation review is presented in the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report, Chapter 3.

#### 5.4.1 Training and mentoring of IQS facilitators

**The approach and content of the IQS facilitator training was revised during the evaluation period.** From August 2015 until September 2016, facilitators were trained according to an approach used by the TDP. Because the TDP’s content and approach was not considered sufficiently fit for an IQS context, the facilitator training was adapted in the last quarter of 2016. The adapted training changed the training cycle, providing a staggered training of four termly multi-day workshops. Furthermore, the adapted training introduced another approach to Hausa teaching—the whole-language approach—and promoted the development of lesson plans and teaching and learning materials.

**Implementation digressed from initial plans, with differences by state and delays in timing.** Two cohorts of facilitators each were trained in mid-2015 or mid-2016 in Niger and Bauchi according to the TDP-based approach. Follow-up cluster-based meetings took place at lower frequency than planned (approximately termly instead of monthly). SSVs, introduced in 2016, reportedly reached all IQSs in Bauchi but only a minority in Niger. After a disruption due to the training redesign, the adapted training was rolled out by December 2016 to half the GEP3 LGAs in both states. In Niger,

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60 The training content was aligned with the public primary school curriculum, while IQSs have their own curriculum. In addition, the TDP-based programme assumes more structured teaching environments and pedagogical skills than are often present in IQSs.

61 The whole-language approach introduces children to continuous texts from the outset to build an understanding of vocabulary and meaning. This is in contrast to a phonics-based approach, where children begin by learning letters and sounds and gradually build towards comprehension (Kitta, 2016).
facilitators in the remaining LGAs started the adapted training in July 2017, while it was delayed for this second cohort in Bauchi until the end of November. Cluster-based meetings in Bauchi continued during 2017, while in Niger only one meeting took place in the last term of the 2016/2017 school year. SSVs were expected to resume in Niger by August 2017, while in Bauchi they took place in March and May 2017.

The training mostly reached the appropriate facilitators, although few female facilitators participated. GEP3 monitoring reports indicate that the targeted number of 200 facilitators was approximately reached for the different training sessions. Survey data confirm that a high percentage of schools sent at least the targeted number of facilitators to the first workshop of the adapted training. Among surveyed facilitators who attended this first training workshop, most also attended the second one. While the GEP3’s Gender Strategy (UNICEF, 2017c) promotes the prioritisation of female teachers for teacher training, female facilitators were less likely to participate.

Participation in cluster-based meetings was more limited, while SSVs were well attended – although they could benefit from having a clearer purpose and the provision of support to visit hard-to-reach schools. School-based feedback through SSVs and peer interaction through cluster-based meetings are important elements of GEP3’s facilitator capacity building approach. Participation in the cluster-based meetings was considerably lower than the training sessions, particularly in Niger, where less than half of surveyed facilitators reported attending a cluster-based meeting. SSVs were relatively well attended: most facilitators in Bauchi and three-quarters of facilitators in Niger attended a SSV in the last term before the survey. This suggests that school-based feedback and peer interaction are feasible in the context of IQSs. However, facilitators and proprietors interviewed as part of the qualitative research in Bauchi struggled to differentiate between the purpose of different visits they were receiving from multiple actors, including the LGA and SUBEB. In all visits some kind of observation appeared to take place, but perceptions that these were support visits as opposed to performance checks were not clear. Furthermore, the lack of support for teacher facilitators conducting the SSVs makes it challenging for them to visit hard-to-reach schools.

Facilitators perceive the training as useful, but it requires more targeting toward the facilitator competency levels and context. Facilitators interviewed as part of the qualitative and quantitative research appreciated the trainings’ usefulness. The qualitative interviews indicate that beyond relatively qualified facilitators teaching in a higher performing case study IQS, facilitators have difficulties demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of the content of the training, particularly when Hausa comprehension is limited, such as in Nupe-speaking communities in

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62 The targeted number of facilitators per IQS was two facilitators. Where the IQS only has one facilitator, we consider the targeted number to be one facilitator.
63 Although 56% of sampled schools in Niger have a female facilitator teaching secular subjects, only 23% of schools sent a female facilitator to the training. In Bauchi, two of the 15 schools that had received training have a female facilitator, but in neither school did the female facilitator attend. GEP3 monitoring data confirm that female participation in the TDP-based training was also very low: 1% of trained facilitators in Bauchi and 17% of trained facilitators in Niger were women.
64 Some degree of social desirability bias may be affecting responses: that is, respondents may have answered positively, as they expected this to be the desirable answer.
65 For example, facilitators in some cases followed the step-by-step lesson plan, but were unable to explain the steps and how they would change the content once the pupils understood it. Moreover, facilitators had difficulties understanding the rationale behind the whole-language approach, insisting on the need for pupils to first learn the alphabet. In the Nupe-speaking IQSs visited, facilitators were unable to explain the content of the training beyond ‘we were taught a story’, and stated that they had only understood very little from the training due to language constraints.
Niger. A facilitator in a Bauchi IQS pointed out that facilitators are not ‘trained teachers’ and therefore need more training.

5.4.2 Provision of classroom teaching and learning materials

Teaching and learning materials reached most IQSs, but with delays and without clear instructions. According to the survey data, 98% and 84% of IQSs in Bauchi and Niger, respectively, received a box of Hausa-based teaching and learning materials. While UNICEF confirmed the distribution of the materials to state government agencies between April and June 2016, there were delays in the distribution to the schools. Instructions regarding how the materials should be used were either not given or were not clear.

The materials distributed in 2016 are rarely used, and frequently not available anymore. Around two-thirds of interviewed head teachers/proprietors could show a copy of the different materials distributed in 2016, and these GEP3 materials were only used by a small minority of the facilitators during classroom observation (both during quantitative and qualitative research). The lack of clarity about how to use the materials may have influenced this. While some IQSs had distributed the materials among the pupils, others kept them locked away, usually at the house of the proprietor or a high-ranking CBMC member. Facilitators in case study schools mentioned that they had not received enough materials, and hence felt hesitant about distributing them to pupils or using them during class. In one IQSs that had distributed the materials, they were mostly lost. In other case study schools, materials were often also missing, worn, or accessed irregularly.

5.4.3 Sensitisation of proprietors

A representative of the school management of most IQSs attended the one-day sensitisation, although often not the proprietor. In almost all surveyed IQSs a representative of the school management attended the first day of the adapted IQS facilitator training. However, only in the case of 35% of Bauchi IQSs and 24% of Niger IQSs did the proprietor attend when the IQS had a proprietor. Often it was a person with a head teacher role who attended the training. To the extent that GEP3 targeted proprietors under the assumption that they have a strong say in school management, the training did not reach the targeted population. Nonetheless, as the school leadership in IQSs is complex and the division of roles and responsibilities varies, the IQSs may have sent the most appropriate person for training, given its context. In general, the assumption that in most IQSs no head teacher role exists, which was a factor in revising the initially planned head teacher training, does not hold true – particularly in Niger.

5.4.4 CBMC capacity development

CBMC capacity building reached the large majority of CBMCs but was rolled out with delays. According to GEP3 monitoring reports, the CBMCs of all GEP3-supports IQSs received the main training on roles and responsibilities/school planning and the subsequent financial management training. Training took place with delays: the majority of CBMCs started training at the end of 2016 or early 2017, rather than in mid-2016. As presented in Figure 25, a large majority of CBMCs were

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66 This refers to the teaching and learning materials distributed in 2016 before the introduction of the adapted facilitator training.  
67 In Bauchi, an LGA officer recounted that it took SUBEB over one year to distribute the materials, so that some schools only received them in September 2017.
reached, but not all. Training participation seem to have been higher in Bauchi, while more CBMCs in Niger confirmed participating in effectiveness monitoring.\textsuperscript{68}

**While the training did not reach all targeted CBMC members, key CBMC members attended, particularly in Bauchi.** The main training targets at least four members of each CBMC: the chair, the secretary, and two other members. Only in 26\% and 54\% of interviewed CBMCs in Niger and Bauchi, respectively, did all these members attend. Nonetheless, in a large majority of CBMCs the chair (or vice chair) and secretary attended. In line with the explicit targeting of a women leader for training participation in Bauchi, a woman leader attended the first training for around half of the CBMCs in Bauchi, while in Niger few women attended. For the financial management training, 80\% of the CBMCs' chairs, secretaries, and treasurers attended in Bauchi. The figure was considerably lower in Niger.

**The training seems to have been adapted to the language of the participants.** All trainings in Bauchi were conducted in Hausa, while in Niger around three-quarters were conducted in Hausa, and the others in English or Nupe. Therefore, in Niger trainers seem to have adapted the language to the non-Hausa-speaking environment of some IQSs. Almost all CBMC members reported that they understood the trainers well, and found the two trainings useful.

**Figure 25:** CBMC participation and reach of different CBMC capacity building interventions, by state

![Figure 25: CBMC participation and reach of different CBMC capacity building interventions, by state](image)

**Source:** GEP3 Midline Survey 2017

### 5.4.5 Provision of school grants

**The distribution of school grants was delayed and they were not received by most CBMCs in Bauchi.** The distribution of the grants to the majority of CBMCs was delayed because CBMCs did not have valid, verified bank accounts (UNICEF, 2016). The midline survey data confirm that most CBMCs in Niger received the intended grant amount of NGN 250,000 during the 2016/2017 school year. However, none of the Bauchi CBMCs had received it during the same period.\textsuperscript{69} According to

\textsuperscript{68} CBMC members were asked about CBMC effectiveness monitoring visits between January and July 2017.

\textsuperscript{69} Interviewed members of two CBMCs reported receiving a grant during the 2017/2018 school year.
UNICEF, transfers were made to 183 CBMCs by June 2017 but few actually received the grant because bank accounts were not operational.

The majority of interviewed CBMCs were not aware of the reason why they had not yet received the grant. The qualitative research confirms that CBMCs members in Bauchi do not understand why they have not received the grants, which is creating discontent about GEP3 not delivering on what the school had been expecting.

5.5 Contribution Claim 1: GEP3’s IQSS contributes to more effective teaching of formal subjects in IQSs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary answers to evaluation questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How well has GEP3 teacher capacity development (training and mentoring) contributed to improved teacher knowledge and skills, and more effective teaching in the classroom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The subject and pedagogical knowledge among facilitators teaching in GEP3-supported IQSs has improved slightly. Overall, this has not translated into more effective teaching practice. GEP3’s contribution to more effective teaching in supported IQSs is overall likely to be limited, although we observe some improvement in pedagogical practices and use of teaching and learning materials that were promoted during GEP3 training. In general, GEP3’s IQS support has only made a minor difference in expanding the number of competent facilitators and improving effective teaching practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How well has GEP3 teacher capacity development contributed to an improvement in gender-sensitive teaching?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is very unlikely that gender-sensitive class practice has improved and that GEP3’s intervention has made a difference. GEP3’s design and implementation lack clear mechanisms for how gender-sensitive class practice is to be achieved and improved. On the surface, gendered differences in facilitators’ pupil engagement appear limited. However, the qualitative classroom observations show gendered differences in the quality of this engagement. Therefore, girls are still marginalised in the quality of classroom interaction and engagements. The qualitative research indicates that facilitators do not demonstrate any new gender-sensitive practices in class beyond those observed at baseline. While facilitators generally verbally express positive attitudes toward girls’ education, gender biases among facilitators prevail when probed deeper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How well have teaching and learning materials supplied through the intervention been perceived by teachers and head teachers as appropriate and well-targeted? Have they been used for more effective teaching?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While the use of teaching and learning materials as part of teaching has increased, their overall use remains sporadic. GEP3 has made some difference, particularly in promoting the use of locally sourced materials and lesson plans, but the overall effect on more and effective use of teaching and learning materials is limited. The teaching and learning materials distributed by GEP3 in 2016 were rarely used, and are frequently not available anymore. Most of the materials were not distributed with sufficient instruction to make them fit for purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How and to what extent have contextual factors beyond the implementers’ control facilitated/hindered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The intervention has been implemented in a challenging context. First, the extremely low competency levels among facilitators make it challenging to improve facilitators’ knowledge and skills, supported by appropriate materials, to a level that results in effective teaching. Second, the low Hausa literacy levels, particularly among non-Hausa-speaking facilitators from Nupe-speaking communities in Niger, affect...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
achievement of intervention outcomes? Which non-intervention-related factors may explain changes in teaching, school management, and learning outcomes in IQSs?

effective take-up of Hausa-based teaching and learning materials and instruction. Third, the challenging school environment, such as overcrowded classrooms, influences facilitators’ abilities to effectively employ the methods learnt. Fourth, the time allotted to the instruction of the integrated curriculum at the IQSs is still below recommended standards, which constrains effective teaching and pupil learning. Finally, facilitator turnover—affected by lack of facilitator remuneration—influences the sustained impact facilitator training can have.

We assess it as somewhat unlikely that other interventions or factors have had a strong positive influence on effective teaching. In Bauchi alone, NEI+ may have contributed to a small extent to changes observed, as IQSs and facilitators are exposed to this intervention.

5.5.1 Synthesis of the contribution claim

Overall teaching of formal subjects in GEP3-supported IQSs has not become more effective. Facilitators’ use of pupil-centred activities has not changed overall since baseline and classroom teaching still mainly relies on rote-based activities. No significant changes have been observed in teachers linking lessons to previous learning and learning objectives, and time on task has even reduced slightly. It is very unlikely that gender-sensitive class practice has improved, as while practices may have been adopted (though no change from baseline), the quality of interaction and engagement still shows strong gendered differences. Nonetheless, we observe some improvement in pedagogical practices and the use of teaching and learning materials during lessons.

GEP3’s contribution to more effective teaching in supported IQSs is likely to be limited, although GEP3-promoted teaching practices and teaching and learning materials are observed in some schools. GEP3’s main mechanisms for improving effective teaching are by enhancing facilitators’ knowledge and skills and by providing and promoting the use of more teaching and learning materials. While we observe small improvements in facilitators’ subject and pedagogical knowledge, as measured by a teacher test, a large majority of facilitators still demonstrate no evidence of competence in different knowledge and skills domains required to be effective teachers. Overall, we find no significant associations between facilitators’ training participation and improvements in effective teaching practice, nor the different knowledge domains. Nonetheless, new pedagogical skills promoted by GEP3 have been observed in some case study schools and facilitators interviewed in those schools attributed their use to GEP3 training. The use of teaching and learning materials has statistically significantly increased since baseline, but remains uncommon. While the use of some materials promoted at the GEP3 training is observed, the teaching and learning materials distributed with GEP3 support in 2016 are hardly used. Facilitators’ motivation has improved since baseline and GEP3 is likely to be contributing to this. However, there is little evidence of improved motivation translating into more effective teaching.

Key assumptions underlying GEP3’s ToC have not held true, which has likely influenced whether IQSS activities achieve their outcomes. First, IQSS activities have been implemented with delays and disruptions, have only partially reached facilitators, and have not been sufficiently targeted at the facilitators’ competency levels and context. Second, it is somewhat unlikely that sufficient time is allotted to the instruction of the integrated curriculum to enable effective teaching and pupil learning. Third, while teaching capacity in terms of number of facilitators has increased, facilitator turnover—affected by lack of facilitator remuneration—has likely eroded this capacity, which
affects the sustained impact facilitator training can have. Finally, the lack of a well-defined approach and actions by the project to address gendered barriers to class participation and teacher-pupil engagement, as well as widely prevailing gender biases among facilitators, have likely hindered improvements in gender-sensitive teaching.

**Other factors have also likely hindered GEP3’s effectiveness.** The extremely low competency levels among facilitators make it challenging to improve facilitators’ knowledge and skills, supported by appropriate materials, to a level that results in effective teaching. The low Hausa literacy levels, particularly among facilitators from non-Hausa-speaking communities, affect effective take up of Hausa-based teaching and learning materials and instruction. The qualitative case studies further highlight the challenges to effective teaching caused by overcrowded and multi-grade classes, and by periods of irregular facilitator and pupil attendance, particularly due to harvest or rainy seasons. As such, facilitators find themselves in a situation where some pupils have understood what is being taught, while others have not, which they state affects their ability to use lesson plans and progress in the content taught.

We assess it as somewhat unlikely that other interventions or factors have had a strong positive influence on effective teaching, although this is likely to be more the case in Bauchi. This strengthens the likelihood that the small improvements observed are largely attributable to GEP3. Few facilitators and head teachers report having intensely participated in other trainings besides the GEP3 training. Only a small minority of facilitators simultaneously teach in public schools, which could provide an alternative channel of improving facilitator competencies. Less than a fifth of IQSs have received teaching and learning materials from sources other than UNICEF/GEP3. The situation is somewhat different across Niger and Bauchi. In the latter state, IQSs have been relatively more exposed to other training and teaching and learning materials distribution, and more facilitators are also public school teachers. In particular, the NEI+ may have contributed to a small extent to the outcomes.

### 5.5.2 Findings related to contribution claim 1

In this section we present the findings supporting the assessment of the first contribution claim. Quantitative and qualitative findings are mixed together to complement and strengthen each other. More detailed analysis of the quantitative data is presented in Section 6.1 of the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report.

We first present the evidence on effective teaching practice, the main anticipated outcome of contribution claim 1. Next, we review possible improvements in facilitators’ knowledge and skills as an important mechanism to enhance effective teaching practice. Gender-sensitive teaching practices are subsequently discussed. This is followed by findings on facilitators’ teaching time, turnover, and attendance, which are considered key influencing factors in the ToC. Next, we review the evidence on teacher motivation and the use of teaching and learning resources; two other mechanisms that can contribute to more effective teaching. We end this section with the findings about head teacher support to more effective teaching.

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70 As referenced in Section 5.2 one of the Bauchi case study IQS also acted as a NEI+ non-formal learning centre, which indicates at least some overlap between GEP3 IQSs and NEI+ centres. NEI+ materials were also observed in two Bauchi case study schools; and two surveyed facilitators in Bauchi indicated having been trained by NEI+.
5.5.2.1 Facilitators’ teaching

Overall, teaching practice has not improved since baseline, although we observe some improvement in pedagogical practices and the use of materials during lessons. The findings of the baseline and midline quantitative surveys were used to develop a composite index to measure teaching practice. The index is based on the extent to which facilitators used pupil-centred (rather than rote-based) approaches in the observed classroom\(^{71}\), observations of the teacher linking the lesson to previous learning and learning objectives\(^{72}\), and time on task in class\(^{73}\). On average, the index has not changed significantly since baseline. Facilitators’ use of pupil-centred activities has not changed overall and is still mainly rote-based, although we observed a significant increase in the share of facilitators that use pupil-centred teacher talk and the use of materials during the lessons has increased considerably (see below). However, on the other hand, there has also been a significant increase in certain rote-based pupil action. No significant changes are observed since baseline in teachers linking the lesson to previous learning and learning objectives, and time on task has even reduced slightly. The qualitative research in six IQSs in Niger and Bauchi confirms that facilitators’ pedagogical competency remains very low, although some limited improvements are observed in terms of the facilitators’ ability to manage and engage pupils, and follow lesson plans. In the majority of case study IQSs, facilitators struggle to manage the multi-grade reality in the class.

Facilitators’ teaching practices differ across states. In line with the baseline findings, Bauchi facilitators demonstrate somewhat higher levels of effective teaching practice. Furthermore, while the teacher practice index has not changed in Niger, it has improved by a small, but statistically significant, extent in Bauchi. The Bauchi facilitators have particularly improved in their use of pupil-centred teaching activities, such as pupil-centred teacher talk, while the pupil-centred teaching sub-index and time on task have decreased in Niger. On the other hand, good pedagogical practice in regard to outlining the lesson and linking the lesson to a previous lesson has improved in Niger. This difference between states is not confirmed in the qualitative research: teaching practice is not observed to have improved in two out of three Bauchi IQSs, though these facilitators have yet to be trained under the adapted training approach.\(^{74}\) In Niger case study IQSs facilitators demonstrate the use of lesson plans, less rote-based teaching, and more active engagement of pupils during class, often through the use of locally sourced materials.

Overall, facilitator training and mentoring seem to have had a limited effect on effective teaching practice, although some teaching materials and methods promoted through the GEP3 training are used. In general, the teacher practice index is not positively correlated with exposure to more GEP3 training.\(^{75}\) However, the quantitative data indicate that full exposure to the adapted GEP3 training has increased the likelihood of facilitators using Hausa story charts and lesson plans, but, overall, the use of such materials was observed in only a minority of classes. In the qualitative case study schools, changes in teaching practice are more evident among facilitators who have received full training, although improvements are marginal in the majority of cases. These improvements in terms of pupil engagement—through play, song, and the use of locally sourced

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\(^{71}\) Which involved, for example, observations of teachers assisting in group discussion, using a child’s name, asking or responding to an open question etc. See GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report, Section 5.3.2, for a detailed discussion.

\(^{72}\) This included, for example, observations of the teacher talking about the previous lesson, outlining the objectives of the observed lesson etc.

\(^{73}\) Measured as a percentage of time the pupils were engaged during lesson observations.

\(^{74}\) In the third Bauchi IQS, the comparative analysis comparing the midline situation with the baseline is difficult as the observed facilitator (the mallam/proprietor) had not been observed at baseline.

\(^{75}\) GEP3 training exposure takes into account attendance in the first five-day and second four-day workshops of the revised training approach, as well as in cluster-based follow-up meetings.
materials (use of sticks and stones) — and lesson planning and structuring can be directly linked to methods taught at the training.

The overall limited influence of the training is likely to be related to the very low subject and pedagogical knowledge levels of the facilitators, language barriers, the challenging class environment, and the fact that the revised training had not been implemented in all LGAs. In the qualitative case study schools, particularly in Niger, facilitators who had demonstrated already relatively good teaching competence at baseline are able to use the methods learnt in training in an adaptive way. The interviewed facilitator could explain her lesson plans and creates new lesson plans for each class, following steps but changing the content. On the other hand, while trained facilitators from IQSs that had lower competency levels at baseline have picked up some practices from training, they were unable to explain why they are teaching in a certain way or how they may adapt the content of the training. This suggests that the training was insufficient to bring facilitators up to a level of effective teaching when they had very low competency levels to begin with. Furthermore, in an IQS located in a Nupe community, the interviewed facilitators used some materials from training following the trained script, but struggled to understand the Hausa-based training and adapt the materials because of a lack of Hausa comprehension. As will be discussed below, in general, the low Hausa comprehension skill among the facilitators is correlated with other skills required for effective teaching. Also, the use of some pupil-centred activities, such as groupwork, is hindered by overcrowded and multi-grade classes; and, the informal nature of the IQS makes the use of lesson plans difficult. A facilitator in Bauchi expressed this as follows:

'I started with that method; planning lesson and putting it in writing. But at the end I stopped and the reason why I stopped is because this is not a formal school. There are no protocols. Sometimes you come and the children are not even there the way they should be and sometimes when you come and you want to refresh their memories, you discover that they didn’t even understand what you taught them yesterday. So the essence of your lesson plan today is eroded so you have to go back to what you taught yesterday. So you flow with it as the need arises.’ (Facilitator, Bauchi).

Finally, the overall effect of the GEP3 training is likely to be further diminished because the adapted trained had yet to be implemented in half of the Bauchi LGAs at the time of the midline data collection. Facilitator training was also disrupted and its approach changed midway through the evaluation period (end of 2016), which may have affected the absorption of new skills by the time of the midline survey. Particularly, the whole-language approach to teaching Hausa literacy was new and appears to not have been fully understood (see Box 4).

Box 4: Response to whole-language approach in case study schools/LGAs

Facilitators in all IQSs that have received the revised training (all Niger IQSs and one Bauchi IQS) state that they have difficulties understanding the rationale behind the whole-language approach. While facilitators in all Hausa-speaking cases can explain the method in terms of ‘starting big’ and ‘then going small’, facilitators have not fully bought in to the method but feel that pupils first need to learn the alphabet. As explained by one facilitator in Bauchi when asked why he had not used the whole-language approach in class:

'There is a reason for that. I was told to teach a lesson just as I would usually teach it. At the moment we haven’t reached the stage where the story can be used as an aid...what we are teaching in this grade three class is what will help them in learning through the story method [as] when they’ve learnt the alphabet, the accents and how the words are formed, then in grade four they won’t have any problems with this [the story approach].'

This was echoed by the teacher facilitator spoken to, who found that pupils first needed to learn the alphabet. Similarly, several LGA officers mentioned that facilitators found this approach confusing.
Hausa as language of instruction gains in use, particularly in Niger, although not at the expense of other languages of the immediate environment. Significantly more facilitators used one language during the observed lesson at midline compared to baseline. In particular, the use of Hausa has increased, while the use of English or other languages has decreased (see Figure 26). This is in line with the intervention, which promotes the use of Hausa as a language of instruction. This change is, however, driven by changes observed in Niger. In Bauchi Hausa use was already common at baseline. This increase in the use of Hausa in Niger does not occur in IQSs located in Nupe-speaking communities, where facilitators are more likely to use Nupe. Hence, the ascendancy of Hausa as a language of instruction does not seem to have restricted facilitators to use the language of the immediate environment when it is other than Hausa. However, the qualitative research in a Nupe-speaking environment does indicate that Hausa use can be introduced as a language of instruction in a way that defeats its purpose: during one mathematics class observed, the facilitator and pupils focused their attention on learning the Hausa mathematical terms, rather than on the mathematics subject. Hence, the use of Hausa did not facilitate better instruction of the subject but focused the class on Hausa language learning.

**Figure 26:** Languages used during lesson at baseline and midline, by language

![Bar chart showing percentage of lessons observed in Hausa, Arabic, English, and Other languages at baseline and midline.](source: GEP3 Midline Survey 2017)

### 5.5.2.2 Facilitators’ knowledge and skills

The IQSS ToC assumes that GEP3 facilitator training contributes to more effective teaching by improving facilitators’ teaching knowledge and skills. We examine changes in three types of knowledge that facilitators draw on within classroom practice: subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and curriculum knowledge.76

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76 Subject knowledge refers to knowing the essential questions of the subject, the networks of concepts, the theoretical framework, and methods of inquiry. Pedagogical knowledge refers to knowledge of the learners in the setting, knowledge of how to provide the conditions that enable pupils to understand, and the selection of learning and assessment materials. Curriculum knowledge refers to knowing what should be taught to a group of students, knowledge of the national syllabus, understanding the school- and grade-level planning documents, and knowledge of the content of examinations.
Facilitators’ subject and pedagogical knowledge have improved; yet many facilitators still display no competence in the different types of knowledge. Composite indices for pedagogical and subject knowledge have significantly improved between baseline and midline, while no significant change is seen in curriculum knowledge. The percentage of facilitators demonstrating no pedagogical knowledge on the teacher assessment has also decreased, though not statistically significantly and a large majority are still unable to demonstrate any pedagogical proficiency (see Figure 27). The percentage of facilitators scoring zero at midline on curriculum and subject knowledge is similar to that at baseline.

Figure 27: Percentage of facilitators scoring zero in pedagogical, curriculum, and subject knowledge at baseline and midline

![Percentage of facilitators scoring zero in pedagogical, curriculum, and subject knowledge at baseline and midline](image)

Source: GEP3 Midline Survey 2017

Similar to the baseline findings, at midline, most facilitators do not display evidence of competence in the pedagogical knowledge and skills sub-scales covered by the facilitator assessment. Figure 28 shows that none of the facilitators assessed at midline are able to show competence in evidencing judgements and diagnosing pupils’ work, while only a few facilitators are found to be competent in identifying low performers. Facilitators’ inability to identify low performers, evidence teacher judgements concerning pupil performance, and diagnose the next steps of teaching present challenges to improving pupil learning as a student learns best when teaching is targeted to what s/he is ready to learn.

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77 The composite indices were constructed using data from facilitator assessments. See Section 5.3.1 in the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report for a discussion of the composition of the indices.

78 At baseline, thresholds were defined for each subscale to differentiate between three facilitator proficiency levels by defining two cut-off points. Section 2.2.4 in the Midline Evaluation Technical Report details the cut-off points for each subscale.
Competency is relatively higher in Hausa Grade 2 knowledge, but few facilitators display competence in Hausa reading comprehension. Even though facilitators are relatively more proficient in Hausa knowledge, the fact that 60% of facilitators are unable to display competence in Grade 2-level Hausa and the fact that Hausa comprehension is extremely limited likely influences facilitators’ ability to raise pupils’ learning levels in this area, and their ability to fully comprehend and translate the Hausa-based training into practice. Furthermore, Hausa comprehension skills are significantly correlated with most other sub-scales, which suggests that the lack of these skills may be hindering performance across a range of the areas facilitators need to be competent in for effective teaching.

Despite the low levels of facilitator knowledge and skills at midline, facilitators, on average, perform better on several sub-scales vis-à-vis baseline. Except on Hausa knowledge and English comprehension skills, facilitators score significantly higher on all other knowledge and skill sub-scales compared to baseline. This also translates into changes in the percentage of facilitators that fall within the different competency bands. As presented in Figure 29, there is a downward trend in the percentage of facilitators that show no evidence of skills across the sub-scales, but this change is only statistically significant in three sub-scales. The largest gains have taken place among facilitators within the lower and middle band, while relatively limited changes are observed in facilitators demonstrating evidence of competence.

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79 This does not include the Hausa comprehension and writing skills, which were introduced at midline. No baseline-midline comparison is possible.

80 Only for the sub-scales ‘Ability to identify low performers’ and ‘Interpreting words and phrases’ has the percentage of facilitators demonstrating evidence of competence significantly increased, and these changes are only from around 0% of facilitators showing competence at baseline to around 10% showing competence at midline.
Facilitators in Bauchi demonstrate more improvements in pedagogical and subject knowledge. Facilitators in both Bauchi and Niger showed improvement in the subject knowledge composite index, with stronger improvement seen in Bauchi. Improvements in the pedagogical knowledge composite index was largely driven by improvements among facilitators in Bauchi. This is in line with state differences observed in terms of changes in more effective teaching practice (see above).

Overall, GEP3’s contribution to improvements in the different knowledge domains is likely to be limited, although new pedagogical skills promoted by GEP3 have been observed in some schools. We find no significant correlation between facilitators’ proficiency in different knowledge domains and training exposure, which indicates that improvements in pedagogical and subject knowledge are unlikely to have been strongly influenced by the GEP3 training. Stronger improvements are also observed in Bauchi compared to Niger, despite half of the LGAs in Bauchi not having started the adapted GEP3 training yet, which also puts in doubt GEP3’s contribution. Nonetheless, the qualitative research does illustrate that facilitators in some case study IQSs have acquired new pedagogical skills from the training – in particular, pupil-centred teaching techniques. Facilitators in the higher performing IQS in Niger stress that training has increased their pedagogical skills: the inclusion of more pupil-centred techniques has made learning more fun, and thus pupils are more engaged. Moreover, these facilitators feel that training has helped them include pupils of different levels: ‘I will now mix the good ones and the slow learners together’. Importantly, though facilitators follow the steps learnt during training, facilitator interviews reveal that facilitators lack deeper pedagogical understanding of why techniques are used and cannot explain scenarios where techniques are appropriate/not appropriate.

Improvements in skills and knowledge may have been influenced by mechanisms other than GEP3 training, although overall their contribution is unlikely to have been strong, particularly in Niger. Few facilitators and head teachers report having intensely participated in other trainings besides the GEP3 training. Also, only 22% of facilitators teach in public schools besides in the IQS (which could provide them with an alternative channel for improving their competencies).
However, this is 40% in Bauchi, and also more facilitators in Bauchi report having attended other trainings, which may have contributed to the stronger improvements in knowledge in this state.

5.5.2.3 Gender-sensitive class practice

GEP3’s design and implementation lack clear mechanisms for how gender-sensitive class practice is to be achieved. GEP3’s ToC and strategy papers promote the use of gender-sensitive teaching, although neither the concept of gender-sensitive teaching nor the mechanisms for how to achieve it are clearly defined.81 The training sessions of the first two rounds of the adapted facilitator training did not address gender in teaching practice; neither has the GEP3 training been able to prioritise training of female facilitators (see Section 5.4.1). Therefore, both in design as well as implementation it remains unclear how teaching is meant to become more gender-sensitive.

It is very unlikely that gender-sensitive class practice has improved, as while differences in pupil engagement appear to be limited, no differences in practice compared to baseline are observed and the quality of interaction and engagement still shows gender bias. Based on the quantitative data, overall no strong gendered differences are observed in the way teachers engage with girls or boys within the classroom.82 However, gender biases in teaching practice are difficult to measure through quantitative methods. As observed at baseline and again at midline, facilitators perform gender-sensitive practices in a tokenistic way—in line with development projects’ sensitisation efforts and influenced by social desirability during observation (knowing what one should do).83 The qualitative research indicates that facilitators do not demonstrate any new gender-sensitive practices in class beyond those observed at baseline (mainly around participation: asking every other girl/boy questions). While the ‘quantity’ of the facilitators’ engagement with girls versus boys may be similar, the ‘quality’ of engagement is different. For example, facilitators ask boys more open-ended questions, and girls more close-ended or follow-up questions. In cases where girls are asked open-ended questions these are often questions that have already been asked of boys or the facilitator does not engage fully with the responses as he does with boys. Similarly, when it comes to reading stories from the board, boys are asked first in the majority of cases, and girls second (once something has already been demonstrated by a boy).

While facilitators generally express positive attitudes toward girls’ education, gender biases and prejudice among facilitators prevail. Similar to baseline, facilitators interviewed as part of the qualitative research all state that it is important for girls to go to school, and state that this is as important as for boys.84 However, when probed further as to why girls should study facilitators tend to stress gendered expectations about girls’ future roles in the household and society: for example, the importance of women being able to help their children with homework, or being nurses (so that women can be treated by women). While some facilitators in Bauchi indicate that they want to focus more on girls than on boys because they are aware that girls will leave school earlier (drop out), others stress that girls are ‘shy’ and therefore do not participate in class, not acknowledging their own role in including girls, nor giving reasons for why girls may be shy, but

81 See the GEP Midline Evaluation Technical Report, Chapter 4, for a review of gender-sensitive teaching references in the GEP3 strategy documents.

82 Gendered pupil engagement is observed in terms of asking open or closed questions differently for girls and boys, asking girls and boys to assist in the lessons differently, using a girl child’s name versus a boy child’s name, or whether the teacher interacts with groups of boy pupils in the class more than groups of girl pupils.

83 For example, during one qualitative classroom observation the facilitator asked only boys during the first 15 minutes, then said, ‘Oh, I should ask girls now, otherwise they will think I only ask boys!’

84 There is a strong indication of social desirability bias in these data, with facilitators becoming quite uncomfortable with regard to these questions in the majority of cases.
placing responsibility for this on the individual girl child. The prevalence of gender prejudice among facilitators is further evidenced through the findings of the facilitator survey, in which facilitators were asked ‘why some people think that a woman should acquire her knowledge from a man and a man must have more knowledge than a woman’; followed by whether the respondent agreed with the statement. Almost all surveyed facilitators had an understanding of the varied reasons driving gender prejudices that can limit and curtail educational equality for girls and women – mentioning, first of all, reasons regarding an intrinsic greater intelligence of men over women, or referring to men’s greater abilities compared to women. This was followed by reasons related to constraints women and girls face societally as a result of gender norms, such as marriage, lack of women’s mobility, and lower educational chances leading to their subordinate educational learning to men. Not only do facilitators have an understanding of the reasons driving gender prejudice, 65% agree with the prejudice. Consequently, though facilitators are aware of gender-sensitive class practices, as discussed above, and acknowledge the importance of girls’ education, this does not constitute a deeper shift in gender attitudes.

5.5.2.4 Facilitators’ teaching time, turnover, and attendance

In order for IQSs to provide more effective teaching and trained facilitators to translate their improved knowledge and skills into practice, the IQSS ToC assumes that sufficient time is allotted to the teaching of the integrated curriculum, and that facilitators remain at the school once trained. Both assumptions are somewhat unlikely to be met. Furthermore, the ToC assumes that facilitator attendance improves and is not hindered by school mobility or closures. While the latter does not seem to have strongly affected teaching, facilitator attendance is unlikely to have improved.

The time allotted to the instruction of the integrated curriculum remains the same and is below the minimum contact hours, although more schools teach Hausa and mathematics. In Bauchi and Niger IQSs an average of 2.4 hours and 3.6 hours, respectively, are allotted to the instruction of the integrated curriculum. This is not significantly different from the baseline situation, and remains below the eight contact hours recommended by the National Benchmark and the four contact hours recommended in the Harmonised IQE Curriculum. Similar to baseline, only a small share of IQSs teach the five core subjects of the curriculum (see Figure 30). However, the share of IQSs teaching Hausa and mathematics has increased. This increase is particularly significant for Hausa teaching in Bauchi. The time allotted to the integrated curriculum remains mostly unchanged in the case study IQSs, although during classroom observations trained facilitators were more capable of fully teaching an approximately 30-minute class using the lesson plans provided in the GEP3 training. However, stakeholders’ interviews also highlight that classes do not always happen as scheduled due to facilitator or pupil absence, particularly during harvest and the rainy season.

Teaching capacity in terms of number of facilitators has increased, but facilitator turnover—affected by lack of remuneration—has eroded this capacity. The average number of facilitators teaching early grades in the IQS has significantly increased, from approximately two facilitators at baseline to three facilitators at midline. While 22% of IQSs had only one facilitator at baseline, almost all IQS have at least two facilitators at midline. The increase is larger in Niger. The number of female facilitators has remained low and largely unchanged, with stark differences between Niger and Bauchi: 56% of IQSs in Niger have a female facilitator, vs 16% in Bauchi. Facilitator turnover remains considerable: similar to baseline, the early grade facilitator turnover ratio stands at 25%. The case study IQSs also face considerable turnover. Low or no remuneration is the main driving factor—particularly in the case of men who consider generating sufficient income to be a key element of their social status—but also due to marriage in the case of female facilitators. The survey data indicate that only 19% of facilitators at midline report receiving some sort of payment as facilitator, which is a stark decline from baseline, when 48% reported being paid.

School mobility or closures do not seem to have strongly disrupted the teaching of the integrated curriculum. Some Qur’anic schools are traditionally itinerant as the mallam moves with pupils to other communities. This can potentially interrupt teaching of the integrated curriculum. School mobility among the school sample has been low since baseline, yet it is somewhat prevalent among the Bauchi schools: five IQSs, or 8% of the total sampled IQSs, and all of the IQSs in Bauchi, have been mobile during the last two years, which in the majority of cases reportedly did not interrupt the teaching of the integrated curriculum. This suggests that the scale of disruption to integrated subject teaching due to the itinerant nature of some IQSs is not very high. About 20% of IQSs reported having irregular closures during the last two years, with Bauchi IQSs more likely to be close than IQSs in Niger, but the closure duration was reportedly small (six days on average).

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87 The turnover ratio is defined as the ratio of facilitators in P1–P3 (or equivalent) that left the school during the last year, as a share of total facilitators teaching at P1–P3 (or equivalent) at the school.
88 The mallam is the Qur’anic teacher, which can be the same person as the proprietor.
**Facilitator attendance is unlikely to have improved.** Similar to baseline, 70% of facilitators reported to be absent at least once during the last three months before the survey, for an unchanged amount of days on average (five days). A larger share of facilitators in Bauchi compared to Niger reported being absent, but for half the amount of days on average. Class time on task has decreased slightly, particularly in Niger. As at the baseline, the qualitative research finds similar constraints to attendance, with facilitators mainly referencing the opportunity cost of teaching as a challenge for attendance. One facilitator in a Bauchi case school highlighted this: 'They [facilitators] don’t have any source of livelihood, this is a farming community and this is harvest time. Even the teachers find time to make a livelihood because they are not expecting to get anything from what they are doing here [in the IQS], so teaching is sporadic and sometimes no teaching takes place at all.' In particular, attendance seems to be affected by the harvest season, influencing both pupil and teacher absenteeism, something that is evident from all case schools.

### 5.5.2.5 Facilitator motivation

Facilitators may improve their teaching not just because of enhanced knowledge and skills, but potentially also because they are more motivated to teach. As detailed in the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report, Section 2.2.5, we use a motivation index to compare changes in motivation over time and between groups. The motivation index reflects facilitators’ perceived self-efficacy, facilitators’ interest and enjoyment in their work, facilitators’ perceived effort and importance of their work, and the pressure and tension experienced in the work. In addition, we examine the quality of interaction between facilitators, which is not seen as part of motivation per se but as an important factor affecting motivation.

**Motivation has improved over time among the facilitators.** Overall motivation has increased by around 0.3 standard deviations compared to baseline (see Figure 31). In particular, there has been a statistically significant improvement in the self-efficacy sub-scale, a weakly significant improvement in pressure and tension, and a weakly significant worsening in effort and importance. Teacher–teacher interaction also appears to have worsened over time.

**GEP3 training is likely to be contributing to increased facilitator motivation.** In the four case study IQSs that have already received the adapted GEP3 training, facilitators have shown increased enjoyment in their teaching because with the practices acquired (such as use of play, songs and local materials) pupils are more engaged, and they feel ‘they know what to do more’ regarding using the lesson plans. However, this is more pronounced in the IQS case where facilitators fully understand what they are doing, and have more motivated facilitators to begin with. Also, while the training seems to be improving motivation around teaching (i.e. ‘it is more fun to teach’), it does not necessarily motivate facilitators more around wanting to be a facilitator, as this is affected by the low remuneration they receive. The quantitative data also indicate that facilitators who have participated fully in the adapted GEP3 training are significantly more motivated than those who have not.

**There is little evidence of a systematic relationship between motivation and teaching practices.** We find no statistical significant relationship between motivation and time on task, or between

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89 An index score of 0 means a teacher is as motivated as the average teacher in the reference group at baseline. A score of 1 means the teacher is one standard deviation more motivated that the average teacher in the reference group at baseline, while a score of -1 means the teacher is one standard deviation less motivated than the same reference point.

90 Section 2.2.5 in the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report discusses the model of teacher motivation used.
motivation and the teacher practice index. Hence, overall the increase in motivation does not seem to translate into more effective teaching, or more time spent engaging pupils.

**Figure 31: Teacher motivation at midline**

![Graph showing teacher motivation at midline](image)

Note. Scores are standardised so that mean baseline scores on each scale are zero. Bars provide 95% confidence intervals.

Source: GEP3 Midline Survey 2017

### 5.5.2.6 Availability and use of teaching and learning resources

As discussed in Section 5.4.2, GEP3 has supported the distribution of teaching and learning materials, which most IQS received – although with delays. Furthermore, the adapted training has promoted the use of self-prepared materials and materials from the local environment. According to the IQSS ToC this will contribute to more effective teaching under the assumption that the materials are fit for purpose and are available for use once they are distributed to the IQSs.

**While the use of teaching and learning materials has increased since baseline, their use at midline remains sporadic.** Figure 32 indicates that there has been a statistically significant increase in the use of tools or objects from the local environment, materials in Hausa, and visual aids, such as posters, charts, or pictures. Nonetheless, these resources were observed in less than 20% of classes.

GEP3’s contribution is noticeable, particularly in promoting the use of locally sourced materials and lesson plans, but the effect is limited overall. While the percentage of classrooms with access to and use of any teaching and learning has significantly increased since baseline, the teaching and learning materials distributed by GEP3 in 2016 were hardly present and were rarely used in the classrooms observed; and this was similar across both states. For example, the most observed GEP3 material—Hausa alphabet charts—was only observed in 14% of classes. Also, Hausa story charts and sentence/word cards prepared during the adapted GEP3 training were used only sporadically. Nonetheless, participation in GEP3 training has encouraged the use of story charts, as well as lesson plans. The survey data indicate that facilitators who have received the full ‘training dosage’ of the adapted training are far more likely to use Hausa story charts and lesson plans. Furthermore, there has been an increase in the use of tools or objects from the local environment, which was promoted during the adapted GEP3 training, even though their use still remains limited, as illustrated in Figure 32. As part of the qualitative case study research, facilitators were observed using locally sourced materials, such as stones, sticks, pencils, and leaves. They perceive the use of
locally sourced materials to aid in teaching pupils, and attribute this to the GEP3 training. Only in the one highly performing case study IQS in Niger, were facilitators also observed using handmade materials, such as their own flashcards or colourful multiplication signs, which is in line with GEP3 training. This suggests again that barriers, possibly related to facilitators’ competency levels and the classroom setting, constrain to what extent they can transfer material development from the training to the classroom.

**Figure 32: Use of general teaching and learning resources at baseline and midline**

Most of the materials were not distributed with sufficient instruction to make them fit for purpose. An expert review of the GEP3-distributed teaching and learning materials package assessed the materials as well designed, simple, using appropriate Hausa language, aimed at early grade pupils, and as a promising teaching resource in the hands of competent teachers.91 However, the review also observed that the lack of instructions could make them challenging to adapt for use in a school context such as that of the IQSs. Furthermore, the distributed teaching and learning materials were not aligned with the whole-language approach promoted during the adapted training, which, without further instruction, is likely to affect their use. Also, the Hausa-based materials are not appropriate for non-Hausa-speaking environments, like Nupe communities in Niger, and can even have negative consequences for literacy learning, particularly without their use being accompanied by sufficient instruction (see Box 5). The promotion of the use of materials from the local environment, on the other hand, is more appropriate for non-Hausa communities, and is perceived by facilitators as useful in regard to improving pupil engagement.

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91 The report of the teaching and learning materials expert review are included in Chapter 7 of the Technical Report.
Box 5: Risk associated with the use of Hausa teaching and learning materials in Nupe communities

In one case school visited in Niger, the community (including the facilitator) did not speak Hausa, with Nupe dominating. Yet, the distributed Hausa teaching and learning materials were displayed and available in the classroom, with the alphabet chart on the wall and books available for pupils to look through in between classes. The qualitative team observed pupils looking at the chart, and stating the Nupe word for the drawing next to the letter (e.g. m for monkey). Problematically, the Nupe word for the object drawn did not always correspond with the letter next to it, which risks pupils associating the ‘wrong’ letter with the ‘wrong’ sound.

There is limited evidence that other factors than GEP3 have contributed to the increased use of teaching and learning materials, although this is more likely in Bauchi. Only 17% of all IQSs report receiving materials during the last two years from sources other than UNICEF/GEP3. Investment in teaching and learning materials via the CBMCs has not been very intensive (for example, via funding provided by the school grant). However, the qualitative case study research in Bauchi observed the use of NEI+ materials in two schools, even when GEP3 materials were absent.

5.5.2.7 Head teacher support

Head teacher positions exist in a large majority of IQSs, with differences between Niger and Bauchi. Figure 33 shows that almost all IQSs have a proprietor and a large majority have a separate head teacher, both at midline and baseline. Niger IQSs are more likely to have a separate head teacher. At baseline, we found that head teachers were about 39 years of age and had an average of 13 years of teaching experience; 22% held a National Certificate of Education qualification and 44% had passed the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE), with differences between Bauchi and Niger. By midline, 20% of baseline head teachers have left the school. On average, ‘new’ head teachers are somewhat younger, have fewer years of teaching experience, are more likely to have an SSCE or higher qualification, and are less likely to have a religious qualification. Similarly, as at baseline, few IQS have women taking up the head teacher or proprietor positions.

Figure 33: School management structure at baseline and midline
More head teachers engage with the facilitators and increasingly observe lessons. Compared to baseline, more facilitators report head teachers meeting them in a group or individually. This trend is more strongly observed in Bauchi. Furthermore, both head teachers and facilitators report more head teachers observing a full lesson during the last term (see Figure 34). The increase is again larger in Bauchi. Overall, the data suggest that head teachers, particularly in Bauchi, increasingly provide support to facilitators.

GEP3’s contribution is unclear but there is some evidence that it has made a difference. GEP3’s contribution is uncertain because the one-day proprietor training content was not focused on how head teachers could support facilitators to provide more effective teaching. Furthermore, half of the IQSs in Bauchi have yet to receive the training, although changes have largely been seen in Bauchi. Analysis of the survey data does not point to head teachers who have attended the training being more likely to meet the facilitators. Another hypothesis could be that head teachers have increased their meetings and lesson observations as a result of the SSVs. However, the data again show similar likelihoods of head teachers meeting and observing lessons, whether the school received SSVs or not. However, because of small sample sizes we cannot rule out these hypotheses. On the other hand, 73% of head teachers who have attended the GEP3 training report making changes to the classroom environment as a result of the training – in the majority of cases, decorating classroom walls by putting up decorations or pictures. When no changes have been made this is mainly due to a lack of resources.

Figure 34: Head teacher observed a full lesson during the last term at baseline and midline

Source: GEP3 Midline Survey 2017
5.6 Contribution Claim 2: GEP3’s IQSS contributes to an improved, girl-friendly school environment in IQSs

### Summary answers to evaluation questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How well has GEP3’s CBMC capacity development contributed to improved school management and increased mobilisation of resources for school investment?</th>
<th>All IQSs at midline have an established CBMC, and membership and attendance of the CBMC has increased. CBMCs have improved school management in terms of school planning and financial management practices. Record-keeping has strongly improved. Resource mobilisation capabilities of CBMCs have improved, but effective resource mobilisation remains a struggle. CBMC capacity building has likely contributed to improvements in school management practices and increased resource mobilisation, although its contribution is moderated by other factors.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How well have CBMCs been able to adequately manage school grants and invest these resources in the improvement of a girl-friendly school environment?</td>
<td>The grant application and disbursement process has not been effective, and it has not strictly followed the guidelines. By the time of the survey not all CBMCs in Bauchi had received a grant. When the grants are received, the CBMCs apply good financial practices and utilise the grant – although, again, not strictly according to the guidelines and with a limited focus on girl-friendly investment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How and to what extent have contextual factors beyond the implementers’ control facilitated/hindered achievement of intervention outcomes?</td>
<td>Several contextual factors have moderated the achievement of the intervention outcomes. First, the proprietor often has an important moderating role influencing school governance. Proprietors accept the CBMC involvement in school management, and have become more involved in the CBMCs since baseline. Second, CBMC functionality is affected by members’ literacy levels, which also influences their capacity to translate the training content into practice. Third, the economic context of the IQS host community influences the CBMC’s ability to mobilise resources. We assess it as somewhat unlikely that other capacity building interventions have had a strong influence on improvements in school management and resource mobilisation. The majority of CBMCs have a member that also sits on a SBMC in a public school, which provides an alternative channel for raising CBMC capacity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which non-intervention-related factors can explain changes in teaching, school management, and learning outcomes in IQSs?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.6.1 Synthesis of the contribution claim

While improvements in the school environment have taken place, they are modest overall and are unlikely to raise the majority of GEP3-supported IQSs to conditions that provide a school environment that is sufficiently supportive of learning, particularly for girls. Overall, schools have not improved noticeably between baseline and midline in terms of hard or soft infrastructure. Nonetheless, we observe modest improvements in water access, functioning toilets, and classroom infrastructure. Infrastructure remains largely deficient and there is weak evidence that pupil–teacher ratios are worsening in Bauchi, while they are improving in Niger. The school environment has not become more girl-friendly.

GEP3 has likely contributed to the modest improvements in the school environment, but not to a more girl-friendly environment. CBMC training has likely contributed to improvements in school
management practices. We find some quantitative and qualitative evidence that confirms, although weakly, a positive link between improved school planning and financial management practices and CBMC training. Furthermore, we find positive correlations, although based on limited sample sizes, between CBMC training and improved resource mobilisation. Given that those IQSs that received a GEP3-supported school grant largely utilised it to make school infrastructure improvements, particularly classroom construction and renovation and toilet facilities, the evidence base somewhat confirms GEP3 making a modest difference in the IQSs’ school environment. However, it is unlikely that GEP3 has contributed to a more girl-friendly school environment because Whole-School Development Plans and grant funding were only modestly targeted toward girl-friendly investments and GEP3’s new IQE strategy no longer seems to prioritise girls as primary beneficiaries of school improvements.

Several assumptions underlying GEP3’s ToC hold true, although with some major caveats, particularly regarding girls’ agency and stakeholders’ active support for girl-friendly school improvements. CBMCs have become more functional and communities remain supportive of IQSs overall. Few schools have moved outside of the community, and, therefore, CBMC functionality is unlikely to have been affected by IQSs’ traditional itinerant nature. Proprietors accept the CBMC involvement in school management, and have become more involved in the CBMCs since baseline. While the training has not reached all targeted CBMC members, key CBMC members have attended in a large majority of IQSs. However, none of the Bauchi IQSs received the school grant as intended, which appears to have resulted in frustration and demotivation among CBMC members. Furthermore, while community members remain positive toward IQSs overall, and are willing to provide support, effective resource mobilisation remains a struggle. CBMCs do not necessarily represent the entire community, with little female influence in school governance. It is highly unlikely that girls’ voices and needs are well represented in the CBMCs.

GEP3’s contribution is moderated by other factors. First, CBMC functionality is affected by members’ literacy levels, which also influences their capacity to translate the training content into practice. Second, the economic context of the IQS host community influences the CBMC’s ability to mobilise resources. Third, while the management of the IQS is generally not an individual responsibility, with clearly defined and delegated responsibilities, the proprietor often has an important moderating role in influencing school governance. Fourth, the role of community members in CBMC leadership seems to have an influence, with CBMCs that are chaired by community members being more likely to be active and to have improved school management practices.

We assess it as somewhat unlikely that other capacity building interventions have had a strong influence on improvements in school management and resource mobilisation. Few CBMC members report having participated in trainings other than GEP-related training. IQSs have improved their school environment through other means than GEP3-supported school grants, but the development of this resource mobilisation capacity has been part of the GEP3 training. The majority of CBMCs have a member that also sits on an SBMC in a public school, which provides an alternative channel for raising CBMC capacity.

5.6.2 Findings related to contribution claim 2

In this section we present the findings supporting the assessment of the second contribution claim. More detailed analysis of the quantitative data is presented in Section 6.1 of the GEP3 Midline Evaluation Technical Report.
We first present the evidence on the three mechanisms through which the school environment is assumed to be improved: school management, resource mobilisation and community involvement and support. The first section examines changes in school management, and the role of the CBMC in school management in particular. Next, we discuss resource mobilisation, including the findings on the use of the GEP3 school grant. Subsequently, we analyse community involvement and support. The final section, reviews the findings of changes in the school environment.

5.6.2.1 School management and the role of the CBMC

The baseline findings pointed to the complexity of school leadership and management functions in IQSs. While most IQSs are private schools owned by a proprietor, different people can take up different school leadership roles. In line with the National Policy on School-Based Management, GEP3 supports capacity development of CBMCs to improve school management, resource mobilisation, and community involvement in the IQSs, with the aim of improving the school environment and making it more girl-friendly.\(^{92}\)

All IQSs have established CBMCs, and membership and attendance has increased. Similar to baseline, most IQSs have a proprietor. While school ownership has hardly changed, all 60 sampled IQSs have a CBMC established at midline, compared to 52 IQSs at baseline. On average, membership numbers increased (see Table 4).\(^{93}\) Similar to baseline, most CBMCs appear to be active (as indicated by their having met during the past school year). Attendance has significantly improved. The situation is somewhat different in Niger versus Bauchi: membership has increased in Niger, while it has remained the same in Bauchi, at around 16 members; the number of meetings held during the last year has also significantly increased in Niger and has significantly decreased in Bauchi, converging at around four meetings per year. Attendance rates have improved in both states. It is very unlikely that CBMC activity has been affected by school mobility. As discussed above, most IQSs have been sedentary since baseline, and, in the case of the five IQSs that have moved out of the community at some point, the CBMCs had met during the past year.

Table 4: Summary of CBMC membership and participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For surveyed CBMCs, the average...</th>
<th>Of CBMCs, on average, ...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• ... membership is 16 members (both Bauchi and Niger), a significant increase of 1.5 members since baseline;</td>
<td>• ...74% have the proprietor as a member, a significant increase from 52% at baseline;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ...attendance rate(^*) at the last CBMC meeting was 63%, a significant increase from 40% at baseline; and</td>
<td>• ...82% have a head teacher as a member (when a separate head teacher exists), a significant increase from 62% at baseline;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ...female attendance rate at the last meeting was 50%, a non-significant increase since baseline.</td>
<td>• ...97% have a female member (representing 26% of total membership), a non-significant increase since baseline;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ...29% have a child member (representing 4% of total membership), a non-significant increase since baseline; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ...97% had a meeting during the last school year, a small, non-significant increase since baseline; with 4 meetings on average per year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Reference to significant or non-significant changes refers to statistical significance at 95% confidence level.\(^*\) Attendance rate is estimated for those CBMCs that keep meeting records, which is approximately two-thirds of CBMCs.

Source: GEP3 Baseline Survey 2017

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\(^{92}\) GEP3’s ToC (UNICEF, 2015b) and the Strategy Paper for Building the Capacity of SBMC/CBMCs (UNICEF, 2015c) assume that grants will be used to improve girls’ education and are directed to priority activities in the Whole-School Development Plan that directly contribute to the enrolment or retention of girls. While the 2015 Strategy Paper on IQE (UNICEF, 2015a) focused on girls as the main target population, the revised Strategy Paper (UNICEF, 2017a) seems to target girls less explicitly and rather focuses on girls and boys.

\(^{93}\) Only nine out of 60 CBMCs have a membership number below the recommended minimum of 12 members.
CBMCs have a large community membership, but their involvement is waning in Bauchi. Similar to baseline, community members make up most of the members in a typical CBMC and their membership has slightly increased in Niger but decreased in Bauchi. Religious or community leaders are part of less than a quarter of all CBMCs (with an increasing membership in Niger, and a decreasing membership in Bauchi). The proportion of CBMCs chaired by a community member has significantly decreased since baseline, particularly in Bauchi (see Figure 35).

Proprietors and head teachers have become more involved in the CBMCs, taking on the key role of chair mostly in Bauchi. Proprietor membership has significantly increased since baseline (see Table 4), although proprietors are not yet members by default, as is assumed in the revised GEP3 Strategy Paper on IQE (UNICEF, 2017a). This increase is reported in both states, but in a more pronounced way in Niger, where proprietors are more likely to be a CBMC member. Similar to baseline, only in a minority of CBMCs does the proprietor chair the committees. This is, however, more common in Bauchi (43%), than in Niger (19%).94 Head teachers have gained in prominence on the CBMC: their membership and chairmanship has increased since baseline, particularly in Bauchi.

Female and child participation in the CBMC and school management remains limited. While, similar to baseline, most CBMCs have at least one female member, women are a minority on the CBMC (see Table 4), with little change since baseline and little difference across states. While female attendance at the last meeting improved from 37% at baseline to 50% at midline (a statistically non-significant increase), it is still below average attendance for all CBMC members. As Table 4 indicates, child representation is also limited, but nonetheless has increased significantly in Niger since baseline, when almost no CBMC had a child as member.9596 Similarly, only one-quarter of CBMCs had a girl pupil as a member at midline. It is therefore very unlikely that CBMCs provide a forum for girls’ voices and needs to be heard, or for girls, or women, to have much influence on decision making related to school management or improvement. The qualitative research confirms that the role of female members is mainly perceived to be sensitisation about girls’ education, particularly among mothers, rather than substantially partaking in school decision making. Power structures and traditional hierarchies within the IQS also make it unlikely that children, girls in particular, can express their concerns and opinions at the CBMC. The revised GEP3 Strategy Paper on IQE seems to accept this situation, introducing support for mothers’ associations at the IQSs: CBMCs focus on developing and implementing school development plans, while mothers’ associations work on the welfare of the IQS learners and their regular attendance. However, the role of mother associations does not seem to entail a specific focus on addressing any specific gendered barriers to girls’ school participation in the school environment.

94 This is despite the fact that the Niger manual for CBMC training recommends the proprietor be the chair of the CBMC.
95 Child members are defined as CBMC members aged 15 years or younger.
96 The Niger manual for CBMC training recommends that two representatives of the learners (a boy and a girl) and a representative of the youth group in the community should be members of the CBMC.
Whole-centre development planning has improved, but mostly in Niger. A specific focus of the five-day CBMC training was on equipping CBMCs with the capacity to produce plans for school improvement – called WCDPs. A significantly larger share of CBMCs have a complete WCDP at midline than did at baseline (see Figure 36); and a large majority are able to show a final or draft copy. However, the difference between Bauchi and Niger is stark: while 71% of CBMCs in Niger have a complete WCDP (a large increase since baseline), only 34% of CBMC in Bauchi have one, presenting little increase.
Midline Evaluation of the Girls’ Education Project Phase 3

Overall, monitoring activities conducted by CBMCs have changed only slightly, with some indications that CBMCs in Niger are more active. CBMC responsibilities include the monitoring of facilitator and pupil attendance and taking steps to increase teacher and pupil attendance. Figure 36 illustrates that monitoring of pupil attendance has increased, while monitoring of facilitator attendance has decreased, but none of these changes are statistically significant. Only in Niger is there a significant increase in pupil attendance monitoring. While the survey data indicate that most CBMCs also monitor the quality of teaching, the qualitative research suggests that this may not focus on the teaching competency of the facilitator, given the capacities of the CBMC members. One interviewed CBMC member explained what teacher monitoring entailed:

'We are the ones teaching Arabic. When the secular teachers come, we move aside and watch what they are doing. They are teaching our children and we are also learning what they are teaching and at the same time monitoring the way they are teaching the children and whenever we see any child not concentrating or misbehaving, we correct the child even before the teacher does because he has a lot of them in front of him and those of us on the side take note more of what the children are doing.' (CBMC interview, Bauchi)

Financial management practices have improved since baseline, particularly in Niger. CBMCs are meant to support the schools’ financial management, in particular mobilising and managing funds to improve the learning environment. Figure 36 indicates that there has been a significant increase in the share of CBMCs with a bank account and that use cashbooks. Three-quarters of CBMCs report using the account to store funds, but only 40% can show evidence of bank transactions, which could indicate remaining capacity constraints among CBMCs around the use of financial services. Also, only 40% can show a cashbook, which is not always updated, indicating that actual use of financial management tools requires more capacity strengthening. Again, capabilities vary significantly across states. Overall, CBMCs in Niger show a marked improvement since baseline, and perform better than CBMCs in Bauchi on a range of indicators, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Changes in CBMC financial management, by state

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bauchi</th>
<th>Niger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% CBMCs with a bank account</td>
<td>BL: 76%</td>
<td>ML: 98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-ML</td>
<td>22%**</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% CBMCs using bank account to store funds</td>
<td>BL: 43%</td>
<td>ML: 43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-ML</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% CBMCs with evidence of bank transactions</td>
<td>BL: 27%</td>
<td>ML: 22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-ML</td>
<td>-5%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% CBMCs that report having a cashbook</td>
<td>BL: 36%</td>
<td>ML: 23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-ML</td>
<td>-13%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *** indicate p<0.01, ** indicate p<0.05, and * indicates p<0.1.
Source: GEP3 Baseline Survey 2017

Record-keeping has strongly improved – again, more significantly in Niger. GEP3 also aims to strengthen record-keeping and data management within IQSs. Figure 37 illustrates that schools are significantly more likely to have pupil records and to have updated pupil records than at baseline. There are no improvements observed in updated teacher attendance records, however. At the state level, improvements are observed in both Niger and Bauchi schools, but Niger schools show improvements that are of a far greater magnitude. CBMC record-keeping has also improved,
such as in keeping meeting records and having written forms of the WCDP available. Again, CBMCs in Niger show greater improvements compared to those in Bauchi.

**Figure 37: School records available at baseline and midline**

![Graph showing school records available at baseline and midline](image)

Source: GEP3 Midline Survey 2017

**GEP3 training has likely contributed to improvements in school management practices.** The survey data point to positive associations between GEP3 training and school management indicators, such as having a WCDP, a bank account, and a cash book. However, sample sizes are generally too small to draw strong confirmatory conclusions. The qualitative research confirms that the training has made a difference in some IQSs. In Niger, the CBMC of two case study IQSs attributed WCDP development to the training: 'When we went there [GEP3 training] they told us that before we do anything, we should make a plan before you take that action, and that is the step we took which we were not doing.' (Interview with CBMC members, Niger).

However, it is likely that factors other than GEP3 have also made a difference. The qualitative research suggests that CBMC functionality is influenced by the capacity of its members, particularly their literacy levels. Also, it is possible that CBMCs have improved school management practices through the influence of members who are also members of SBMCs at public schools. In one of the case study IQSs, the CBMC members attributed having developed their WCDP to a suggestion from a member who also sits on a SBMC. The survey data indicate that 65% of CBMCs have at least one member that is also part of a SBMC. On the other hand, participation in other trainings is very unlikely to provide an alternative explanation for the improvements observed because only 20% of CBMCs indicate having attended other trainings since baseline. Finally, it is likely that GEP3 training has made more of a difference in Niger compared to Bauchi. In general, CBMC activity and school management practices have improved more in Niger. Niger CBMC members are less likely to be a member of a SBMC or to have been trained through non-GEP3

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97 School management indicators are compared between CBMCs that participated in all trainings and monitoring visits versus CBMCs that did not participate, or only partially participated.

98 Furthermore, half of the CBMCs who report having received training other than GEP3 training indicate that this training was organised by UNICEF, which could refer to the facilitator training or previous GEP trainings – therefore, likely still linked to GEP3.
channels. In addition, the association between GEP3 training and having a WCDP holds less in Bauchi. While this evidence points to a stronger GEP3 contribution in Niger, again this may be moderated by other factors – in particular, the role of community members in CBMC leadership. While in the majority of CBMCs in Bauchi the proprietor or head teacher assumes the role of chair in the CBMC, in Niger a community member chairs in two-thirds of cases. The quantitative data indicate that CBMCs chaired by a community member are significantly more likely to have met during the last school year, to have a written WCDP, to have improved financial management practices, and to show greater improvement in record-keeping.

5.6.3 Resource mobilisation

An important role of the CBMCs is to mobilise resources to support school improvement. Raising resource mobilisation capacity was part of the GEP3-supported CBMC training. Furthermore, GEP3 supported the distribution of a school grant, also called a school improvement grant, in the 2016/2017 school year to help schools implement the priority activities identified in the WCDP.

The grant application and disbursement process has not been effective and has not strictly followed the guidelines. As mentioned before, no CBMCs in Bauchi received the grant, while most in Niger did, despite 27% reportedly having complied with the core eligibility criteria.\(^99\)\(^100\) Grant application and eligibility criteria appear to not have been strictly followed in the granting process (see Box 6). The qualitative research shows that while some IQSs highly appreciate the granting process because it incentivises their planning process, training has not been able to sufficiently build capacity to understand the guidelines among CBMCs and LGA support staff.\(^101\)

Once they received the grants, the CBMCs applied good financial practices and utilised the grants, although, again, not strictly according to guidelines and with a limited focus on girl-friendly investment. A large majority of CBMCs that received the grant stored the grant funds in a dedicated bank account and kept records, although they did not account for utilisation to government agencies as per the guidelines (see Box 6). Grant utilisation has been high, but again has not followed guidelines, i.e. investing infrastructure construction and renovation contrary to the guidelines. The qualitative research suggests (although only based on three IQSs in Niger that received a grant) that the GEP3 training prepared the CBMCs for grant managing and record-keeping. All three case study IQSs in Niger invested in infrastructure (toilets or school structures) in line with the immediate needs of the school or considering how they thought the grant should be spent.\(^102\) CBMC members are not always clear on what the grant could and could not be spent on. Only a small percentage of CBMCs used at least part of the grant in girl-friendly investments, which is not surprising since only 46% of CBMCs with a written WCDP reported having any action points in their WCDP, including investments, specifically related to supporting education for girls.

\(^99\) A CBMC was eligible for the grant if it had participated in financial management training, developed and submitted a school improvement plan, and had a functional, separate bank account.

\(^100\) According to UNICEF, the delays in grant distribution in Bauchi were a result of an effort to comply with the guidelines of CBMC having a functional bank account.

\(^101\) One of the interviewed LGA-level IQS support officers in Niger could not explain the grant application process.

\(^102\) In one IQS the grant was invested in new toilet facilities for girls at a new school location because the proprietor thought that this was what GEP grants should be invested in, even though there was not an immediate need for the toilets.
Box 6: Financial management of the school improvement grant

Grant application process
- 27 out of 30 CBMCs in Niger and no CBMC in Bauchi received the grant in the 2016/2017 school year.
- 27% of CBMCs in Bauchi that reported having a functional bank account and a completed WCDP, and that reported attending the financial management training, did not receive a grant in the 2016/2017 school year.
- 97% of CBMCs in Bauchi report having a bank account, of which 22% can show evidence of bank account use.
- 50% of CBMCs in Niger received the grant even though they did not meet the three core eligibility criteria (functional bank account, WCDP, and attendance at financial training).
- A majority of the CBMCs across both states that had not received a grant reported not knowing the reason why they had not received the grant.
- 59% reported not submitting any documents to the SUBEB, SAME, or LGEA to receive the grant.

Grant management process (data based on 27 CBMCs in Niger receiving a grant)
- 80% stored grant funds in a dedicated account in the school’s name.
- 93% of grant funds recorded in the cashbook.
- 70% report keeping records of monthly bank statements of the grant bank account, of which 86% could show the records.
- 22% submitted a grant utilisation report to the LGEA, SUBEB, SAME, or another authority.

Grant use (data based on 27 CBMCs in Niger receiving a grant)
- All CBMCs received the intended amount of NGN 250,000.
- Grant utilisation: grant utilisation rate varied between 74% and 100%, with an average of 97%; 66% of CBMCs had used the entire grant by the time of the survey.
- 81% of CBMC spent at least part of the grant on classroom construction or renovation. Average expenditures were also highest for construction activities.
- Only a minority of CBMCs used the grant for girl-specific investments, although a large share of the total grant amount was spent on girl-friendly practices and toilet facilities for girls.

Figure 38: Grant utilisation per category: share of CBMCs investing in each category and average amount allocated per category

Source: GEP3 Midline Survey 2017
Resource mobilisation capabilities of CBMCs have improved, particularly in Niger. More CBMCs make an effort, and are successful, in raising monetary resources at midline compared to baseline. The estimated median amount raised by CBMCs during the last year is still low at NGN 23,300; nonetheless, this is a slight increase from NGN 20,000 at baseline. While at baseline 30% of CBMCs had access to no funds at all (mobilised or received), this has fallen to only 3% (one CBMC) at midline. In addition, a significantly larger share of CBMCs report mobilising non-cash resources during the last school year. Resource mobilisation efforts, success rates, and amounts raised seem to have improved more in Niger compared to Bauchi.\textsuperscript{103}

However, effective resource mobilisation remains a struggle. All CBMCs in the case study IQSs report struggling with resource mobilisation. In particular, raising funds in communities and among parents with limited means is a real constraint. CBMC members, particularly in Bauchi, point out that a worsened economic situation has had an effect.

5.6.4 Community involvement and support

Community members support the IQS and community involvement seems to have improved in Niger in particular. Communities remain positive overall toward IQSs, and accept integration (see Section 5.5.2.3). CBMCs have a large number of community members, and CBMCs’ attendance and functionality are improving overall, as discussed above. Community involvement is stronger in Niger compared to Bauchi; it seems to be waning in the latter. Furthermore, almost all the cash and non-cash resources mobilised by CBMCs continue to be from community members, indicating continued community support toward CBMC activities and IQSs in general.

However, CBMCs do not necessarily represent the entire community. The qualitative research finds that school management and leadership is still closely tied to the influence of key community individuals, in particular the proprietor, and that the CBMCs of the majority of case study IQSs are made up of ‘elite’ members of the community, such as, for example, religious leaders, the proprietor, and his relatives. By this is meant that individuals who were likely to have already held positions of responsibility, either symbolic or actual\textsuperscript{104}, within the community prior to the establishment of CBMCs, are the same individuals who form the core membership. Furthermore, many community members are not literate, nor are most parents\textsuperscript{105}, which constrains their effective involvement in school management practices and trainings. Therefore, CBMC membership still risks being a ‘symbolic role’, rather than one of holding IQS leadership accountable. Finally, female CBMC membership remains limited, and the qualitative research suggests that women’s actual influence on the CBMC remains low.

Resource support from the community remains highly constrained, although communities innovate in different ways to support the IQS. While IQSs seem to be becoming somewhat more effective in mobilising resources, CBMCs of case study IQSs generally highlight that community members’ limited capacity, rather than lack of willingness, to contribute with funds constraints resource mobilisation to support IQSs. The GEP3-supported grants are therefore highly valued and considered an important incentive to engage in the IQSs. Each IQS adopts various strategies to

\textsuperscript{103} Small sample sizes do not make it possible to arrive at strong statistically significant conclusions.

\textsuperscript{104} This references members in the community who either have contacts outside the community, are relatively wealthier, and/or are related to religious or community leaders (or are in fact religious or community leaders themselves).

\textsuperscript{105} This particularly refers to mothers, who in the majority of focus group discussions were unable to sign their names or even hold a pen.
raise funds and some innovate (see Box 7), but overall levels of resource mobilisation within IQSs are limited.

**Box 7: Resource mobilisation strategies in case study IQSs**

In one of the Niger IQSs visited, the community has overcome some of the financial constraints members face in contributing to the school. The CBMC has set up an agriculture plot for the IQS, where parents and community members help with cultivation. Profits from the produce sold is used to pay the facilitators and contribute to meeting the needs of the IQS. In two other IQSs, one in Niger and one in Bauchi, the CBMCs are trying to reach out to philanthropists to support the schools. However, the majority of CBMCs still rely on parental contributions through school fees.

### 5.6.5 The school environment

IQSs remain mostly in a condition that provides a poor learning environment, although some modest improvements in the school environment have taken place. Overall, schools have not improved noticeably between baseline and midline in terms of physical infrastructure: we observe significant improvements in water access and functioning toilets, but also a decrease in electricity access (see Figure 39). While most IQSs are still in need of repair, classroom infrastructure, in terms of roof or ceiling, walls, floor, or windows, is relatively less in need of repair at midline than it was at baseline. This is in line with the fact that the school grants have largely been invested in classroom construction and renovation. However, on average the number of classrooms per IQS has changed little, and IQSs that have invested the grant in classroom construction and renovation are not more likely to have increased the number of classrooms since baseline. In terms of ‘soft’ infrastructure, there is no significant difference between baseline and midline in the share of schools having a library, a playground, or a pupil club. Finally, class size also affects the experience of pupils within schools. While small sample sizes make any strong conclusions difficult, the survey data suggest that pupil enrolment has increased, and that the pupil–teacher ratio has increased in Bauchi (the pupil–teacher ratio is also significantly larger in Bauchi compared to Niger, on average, with about twice as many pupils per teacher: 46 in Niger, compared to 96 in Bauchi).
The school environment has not become more girl-friendly. We find no evidence that school improvements have, overall, been targeted at enhancing enrolment, retention, or learning for girls specifically (i.e. making it more girl-friendly); rather, they have been targeted at making the school more child-friendly in general, which may also benefit girls. This is likely aligned with IQS stakeholder priorities. While we observe a small increase in the share of IQSs with separate functional toilets for girls, the majority of CBMCs do not prioritise girl-specific action points in their WCDP, nor use the school grant for specifically girl-friendly investments. The presence of female facilitators remains low and largely unchanged since baseline, and female CBMC membership remains limited, and their role is focused on sensitisation about girls’ education. As discussed above, gender biases among facilitators prevail. The qualitative research suggests that when an IQS makes a specific girl-friendly investment, which was the case in two Niger case study IQSs that decided to invest the school grant in girls’ toilets, this decision does not necessarily align with community priorities but is driven by stakeholders’ beliefs about what is expected by the project. School leadership and management, when probed, question why they would invest in things particularly for girls and not for all children: ‘For girls only? To my knowledge, we do not have any items that are solely in favour of the girls. So, I will say: none. The plan is for everyone – both boys and girls.’ (Bauchi IQS). To this extent, IQSs appear to prioritise making the school environment ‘child-friendly’, rather than specifically focusing on girls’ needs. This is not necessarily negative, as the condition of many IQSs require substantial investment that will benefit all pupils, regardless of gender. As such, this neither supports nor refutes the ToC assumption that school leadership, CBMCs, and parents are supportive of gender equity in school planning and investment, but it does highlight that this is often not a priority at this stage of school development.

106 The increase for the overall sample and the Niger sub-sample is not statistically significant, even at a 10% confidence level.
107 In one IQS CBMC members preferred saving the grant funding for ongoing construction of a new class structure at a new location, but in the end followed the proprietor’s argumentation that the grant should be invested in girls’ toilets at the new location for which there was no immediate use. This was in order to be able to ‘show’ UNICEF how the grant had been spent.
5.7 Unintended consequences of GEP3’s IQSS

Summary answers to evaluation questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What unintended consequences does IQSS have for teachers, head teachers, pupils, and proprietors within the IQS, as well as for the broader school community?</th>
<th>The following are potential unintended consequences that require further examination:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There is a risk of parents withdrawing their children, particularly girls, out of public schools to enrol them in IQSs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Unfulfilled expectations, particularly regarding grant disbursement in Bauchi, is leading to demotivation and frustration among IQS stakeholders, and may affect CBMC functionality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At midline, we do not have generalisable evidence that strongly confirms the occurrence of significant unintended consequences as a result of GEP3’s IQSS. Nonetheless, there is some qualitative evidence from the case study IQSs that suggests the project may have contributed to two negative unintended outcomes, which require further examination.

Substitution with public schools. GEP3-supported IQSs do not just reach OOSC, in the sense that they are not enrolled in public school. Baseline findings revealed that 40% of pupils reported attending another school beside the IQS, which mostly referred to public schools in the case of Bauchi, where the percentage of co-schooling was also substantially higher compared to Niger. This did not vary much by gender. The midline qualitative research finds some evidence that parents pull children out of public school to enrol them in an IQS (and that this particularly involves girls) because IQS hours are more flexible in terms of allowing children to take up other roles in the household during the day. In addition, IQS attendance is generally less costly compared to public schools and some parents prefer an IQS because ‘here they [children] get both, Western and Qur’anic’. This unintended substitution effect may affect girls more than boys because in the gendered economy in which GEP3 operates girls have relatively more responsibility for supporting their mothers in running home-based businesses. This substitution effect was also highlighted by some Niger government officials during the state-level KIs, in which competition between IQSs and public schools was referred to, together with reference to some parents withdrawing their children from public schools to enrol them in IQSs because of the perceived quality of instruction in the latter.

Unfulfilled expectations leading to demotivation and frustration among IQS stakeholders. During the qualitative research in Bauchi IQS stakeholders expressed their frustration and demotivation about not having received the school grant as promised: ‘Right now we are waiting for grants/help from you because all our people, I won’t say all but majority of our people are discouraged because they say they will do this, they will do that and nothing is done.’ (Bauchi IQS). Interviewed CBMC members do not understand the reason why the grant was not disbursed. In Bauchi this is compounded by a distrust among some IQS stakeholders that government wants to take their school away from them and the fact that not only were grants not effectively disbursed but also facilitator and proprietor training and distribution of teaching and learning materials were delayed in some LGAs in Bauchi. Given that integration is associated with GEP3, such delays in implementation may affect attitudes toward integration.
5.8 Attitudes toward, and acceptance of, integration and basic education for girls

### Summary answers to evaluation questions

| What are the attitudes toward, and acceptance of, integrating formal subjects in Qur’anic education among community members and leaders? | Communities remain positive overall toward IQSs and accept integration. Parents, in particular, express increased support based on having realised that the school leadership invests a lot of effort in the running of the IQS, which has led to greater understanding that this is a major change. GEP3 has likely contributed to the continued positive attitudes toward integration, being seen as a project that is equated with integration. Support through school grants and monitoring visits motivates and influences community attitudes. However, if the delivery of such interventions is not forthcoming or their purpose not well explained, as is the case in Bauchi, it can lead to disillusionment in the project and negative attitudes toward integration in general.  
Attitudes toward girls receiving formal education do not appear to have significantly changed in the case study communities. Leaders, school stakeholders, parents, and community members express positive attitudes toward girls receiving formal education; however, barriers remain and these include prevailing gender biases and norms around girls’ roles and responsibilities. Demand-side barriers, including poverty, early marriage, and a gendered economy, continue to affect the prioritisation of girls’ education. These factors, combined with gendered expectations, still play an important role at midline in parents’ and wider communities' attitudes toward girls receiving a formal education. |
| What are the attitudes toward, and acceptance of, improving access to basic education for girls through IQSs among local and state education staff? | State education staff view IQS as complementary to public schools and are favourably disposed toward the integration process for all children. |

5.8.1 Attitudes toward integration

An assumption behind GEP3 is that IQS stakeholders (proprietors, teachers, parents, pupils, and other community members) will be supportive of the integrated curriculum in the Qur’anic school. If stakeholders do not accept integration, this could pose a barrier in regard to trained facilitators turning their improved knowledge and skills into improved practices. It is important to note that GEP3-supported Qur’anic schools had already accepted integration at the start of the intervention, and as such were open to the idea of integration from the start.

The qualitative case studies indicate that integration has gained increased acceptance in the majority of case study communities. Leaders, parents, and community members confirm positive attitudes toward integration, considering that this provides a space for children to learn 'both Western and Qur’anic' at the same time, and that this is needed in today’s society. Parents, CBMC members, and proprietors perceive the efforts of stakeholders to support the IQS as having increased, though the extent of support remains limited due to financial constraints. The effort by
school leadership is indicated as a key factor in relation to attitudes around integration improving: 'We have seen that the introduction of boko is not a small thing, as we thought before. We know that it is a serious and good matter because the management is up and doing, they are not resting on their oars.' (Mother, Niger IQS). The provision of the GEP3-funded school grant is also referenced as essential in affecting the attitudes of the community, which may contribute to the more positive attitudes expressed among stakeholders in Niger IQSs. Respondents overall equate integration with GEP3, i.e. positive attitudes toward GEP3 are associated with positive attitudes toward integration. Furthermore, respondents in the case study IQSs perceive the status of communities as having increased following integration, exemplified by the number of visitors coming. However, the increase in monitoring (and other) visits has potentially also had some adverse effects, with one Bauchi IQS community showing negative attitudes toward GEP3 in particular, perceiving the programme to be 'checking on them', without offering support.

Stakeholders beyond facilitators, pupils, and in some cases proprietors, have limited involvement in the teaching approach, but express positive attitudes toward the introduction of new techniques. Overall, in the centres that have received the adapted training, stakeholders are positive about the new techniques. Yet parents, in particular, have limited insight into what takes place in the classroom, cannot elaborate on teaching approaches, or substantiate claims such as IQS being ‘better’ than public schools, beyond referring to pupils receiving both types of education (boko and religious), as compared to only formal education. Parents appear enthusiastic about the more flexible schedule of IQSs as compared to public schools, and similarly the lesser financial demands. There is some indication that parents’ positive attitudes toward the IQS model are influenced by the ability to combine the IQS teaching schedule with other demands on children’s time, and as such the IQSs are seen as a better alternative to public school since they free up time for children to perform other out-of-school responsibilities.

State education staff view IQSs as complementary to public schools and are favourably disposed toward the integration process for all children. At the state level, almost all the education staff interviewed, particularly those in SAMEs, feel strongly about the potency of the IQS system to address the issue of access to basic education for girls. Some say they are motivated because of the realisation that the IQSs can improve the lives of children by opening the doors of opportunities to all children. This applies particularly to girls because parents feel more comfortable when their daughters are close by and IQSs are generally more accessible than public schools. State education staff see IQSs as complementary to the conventional schools. A big part of the reason why state government staff support IQSs and do not see any contradiction is that many, if not all of them, attended IQSs as well as public schools. Several stakeholders view IQSs as the main route to delivering on education as a right for all children and to bringing about equity. However, qualitative findings from the case study schools indicate that there may be a substitution effect between IQSs and public school attendance, where parents become more positive toward the IQS as it provides a more viable alternative for socioeconomic reasons.

5.8.2 Attitudes toward girls' education

Attitudes toward formal education for girls appear generally positive and do not appear to have significantly changed in the case study communities. Similar to the case of facilitators’ attitudes toward gender-sensitive teaching, the message that it is important for girls and boys to attend school appears to have been accepted in the communities visited. Parents and community members express positive attitudes toward girls receiving formal education. Due to GEP3’s prerequisite for IQSs to have accepted integration and girls’ formal education in order to partake
in the programme, IQS stakeholders are likely to display positive attitudes toward integration and girls’ education, either intrinsically or due to response bias. However, barriers remain and these include prevailing gender biases and norms around girls’ roles and responsibilities.

There seems to have been limited reflection on, and reconsideration of, the roles, responsibilities, and capabilities of girls. Facilitators in all qualitative case study IQSs state that it is as important for girls to go to school as for boys. However, though attitudes are positive with regard to girls’ formal education, they are expressed as relatively less important than boys’ formal education. Facilitators, similar to other stakeholders, have gendered expectations of what the outcome of education is meant to be. Girls’ education is seen as important mainly due to the need for female nurses, and to be able to teach children (i.e. ‘if you teach a girl to read, you teach a generation’ (multiple IQSs)), and thus is valued mainly through prior messaging. Furthermore, there is a tendency to place the responsibility for learning (or not learning) onto girls themselves. Some facilitators in Bauchi stress that girls are ‘shy’ and therefore do not participate in class, not acknowledging their own role in including or not including girls, or the reasons why girls may be shy, but instead placing responsibility for this onto the individual girl child.

Demand-side barriers, including poverty, early marriage, and a gendered economy, continue to affect the prioritisation of girls’ education and girls’ educational access and retention. There are indications from the qualitative case studies that CBMCs play some role in limiting these barriers: ‘There is improvement in enrolment as well as retention. Looking at how the girls were married in the past there is now an increase of one year additional because in the past they got married at 14 years but now it is 15 years. This was achieved through CBMC, where the parents were sensitised.’ (Proprietor, Bauchi IQS). Though early marriage may be less of a challenge in terms of retention in the early grades, at midline this continues to strongly influence respondents’ attitudes toward the perceived value of girls’ formal education. Similarly, while girls’ enrolment is cited as having increased, attendance remains an issue, with girls missing class due to hawking and other responsibilities. Of importance is the gendered political economy, in which unmarried daughters fulfil a key role in the running of home-based businesses in northern Nigeria. There is thus a distinction to be made between attitudinal change, and parents’ actual decisions to educate their girl child, upon which parents’ financial capacity constraints may have a critical bearing. These factors, combined with gendered expectations, still play an important role at midline in parents’ and wider communities’ attitudes and decisions toward girls receiving formal education. The extent to which CBMC sensitisation and improved school management alone, and without a more holistic approach, can effectively change attitudes, and ultimately behaviour, is questionable. The gendered political economy of parents’ decision making around girls’ education is one that the ToC of GEP3’s IQSS does not address when it comes to ensuring that girls are able to not only access IQSs, but also to remain fully engaged consistently and long enough for learning to occur. Thus, while GEP as an overarching project appears to have had some influence on attitudes toward both integration and girls receiving a formal education, the depth of attitude change is less clear.

108 There is a quite strong indication of social desirability bias in this data, with facilitators in majority of cases becoming quite uncomfortable with regards to these questions.

109 GEP1 and GEP2 used similar messages regarding the importance of girls education.
5.9 Conditions for scale-up

Summary answers to evaluation questions

Under what conditions can the achieved outputs and outcomes be repeated at scale?

For implementation to be feasible at scale, there needs to be: a functional non-formal education structure in SAMEs; stable funding; strategic decisions about the intervention’s focus on girls’ education and linkages with the public school system; implementation without disruption and in line with expectations; access at scale to motivated and minimally competent facilitators that are willing and economically capable of remaining at the IQS after training; and strategic decisions about how to address challenges related to Hausa not being the language of the immediate environment.

The enabling environment for IQS development is poor. At present the structure for non-formal education in SAMEs is dysfunctional and this gives rise to a proliferation of approaches that are not coordinated or heading in the same direction. SAMEs in the states, with the exception of Bauchi, do not have stable funding. Without this they cannot develop or deliver coherent and effective approaches to integration. If there is a political commitment at federal level, which is by no means guaranteed, this may open a window of opportunity to situate the whole concept of IQSs properly within the education sector and to develop the capacity of SAME staff to drive the IQS agenda. This will require the planned review of the NMEC/SAME Law at the national level going ahead, which will set the framework for a better enabling environment to promote the scaling up of the IQSs.

The project needs to make strategic decisions about its focus on girls’ education and linkages with the public school system. GEP3’s Gender Strategy regarding IQSS is not clear as to whether the project seeks to particularly address barriers to girls’ access, retention and learning, or to improve the quality of education for all learners, which may benefit girls as well as boys. The impact on girls of the latter strategy presumes girls are enrolled in the first place, which may be less the case at scale and more the case in less marginalised communities where girls may also have better access to public schools. In the latter case it is important to understand whether any substitution effect between IQSs and public schools is taking place, to avoid negative consequences for the formal system, particularly when IQSS is implemented at scale. Furthermore, a strategy for the mainstreaming of IQE learners in the formal system needs to be in place when repeating IQSS at scale. A girls-targeted strategy will have to address deeply ingrained gender biases and norms. While it is plausible to assume that such actions would address a barrier that is still common across northern Nigeria, implementation at scale is only advisable after actions are well tested and accepted in a number of pilot schools.

The quality of education in the IQSs is currently hindered by the extremely low level of facilitator competency and by facilitator turnover. Access to motivated and minimally competent facilitators that are willing and economically able to remain at the IQS after training are conditions for effective scale-up. Even then, training and individualised support that is responsive to variations in facilitator competency levels and context will be required.

IQSS needs implementation without disruption and in line with expectations. The IQSS pilot was affected by revisions, delays, and incomplete reach. This raises unsubstantiated expectations and erodes trust in the project and in integration. While adaptation will continue to be required in the
varied context in which IQSs operate, a more stable implementation approach is needed before scale-up.

Identification of teacher facilitators. The current IQS facilitator capacity development strategy relies on SSVs to be conducted by teacher facilitators selected among well-performing IQS facilitators in a geographical area. To effectively scale up this school-based mentoring process sufficient teacher facilitators need to be identified that can be supported to visit a limited number of IQSs. The inception report of the adapted training approach recommended each teacher facilitator be assigned five to eight IQSs (Kitta, 2016). This is likely to be a challenge at scale since already for the pilot in Niger each teacher facilitator is meant to support 16 to 17 IQSs.
6 Conclusions, lessons, and recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

6.1.1 GEP3’s overall relevance and sustainability

The theory of change, on which GEP3 is based overall, is plausible. Compared with the baseline, there is clarity among stakeholders about project objectives and the nature of the interventions, who perceive that there are synergies between its outputs. However, the achievement of GEP3 outcomes is a long-term process, particularly its impact on learning. Short-term achievement is affected by a flawed assumption that the state can provide enough teachers and schools to meet demand. Furthermore, plausibility is weaker in relation to IQSS because of the scale of the challenge and the weak enabling environment.

All states believe they have the human capacity to implement interventions in their current form, but capacity is unevenly distributed and constrained by resources. The main interventions are well embedded in the government system and government stakeholders believe they have the human capacity to implement them in their current form. However, the ability of government staff to implement the interventions effectively is highly constrained by the paucity of financial resources; capacity is not necessarily distributed evenly between responsible departments and across levels of government; and, capacity development needs are not formally assessed. It is possible that human capacity is adequate for the level of financial resources available, but would not be adequate if agencies were properly resourced. Specifically, GEP3’s capacity to implement IQSS is constrained by institutional weaknesses.

All stakeholders, without exception, identify the sustainability challenge entirely in relation to funding and are realistic about its dependence on political commitment. While stakeholders in all states believe they have the human capacity to sustain GEP3 interventions, availability of sufficient financial resources is uncertain and reliant on variable political commitment. Political change deeply affects this commitment with no intervention relying on state funds being guaranteed to be sustained.

Some interventions are more resilient to political change than others. Progress on EDC and SBMCs is unlikely to slip backwards, owing to a strong base of community and LGA-level support. The importance of the ASC process also appears to be widely understood and, at political level, has the potential to provide evidence of effectiveness that can increase electoral support. Although the states are all committed to TCD, the lack of visibility of results, and the entrenched nature of the challenge relating to teachers, gives this intervention a lower profile.

State commitment to prioritising girls’ education is strong and, where there is buy-in from major stakeholders, interventions are highly likely to be sustainable. With the exception of a lone SUBEB member, there is universal support for a continued focus on girls rather than an inclusive approach that does not distinguish between boys and girls. This is evidence of increased awareness of the value of education for girls as well as an indicator of the success of the programme. In the case of IQSS, however, state education staff seem favourably disposed toward the integration process for all children.
6.1.2 Conclusions for the early learning intervention (RANA)

Overall, there are no substantial improvements in pupil Hausa literacy within RANA schools and only minor progress is directly attributable to RANA. Pupils in general continue to demonstrate very low levels of Hausa literacy. At midline, 90% of pupils are yet to acquire the minimum set of skills expected. This means that all progress occurs from a very low base level. For example, we observe an increase in the average Hausa score of pupils performing within the lowest proficiency band, yet no major changes in the standard of learning is observable over the evaluation period. RANA does not seem to have had an effect that is strong enough to shift pupils, either girls or boys, toward higher proficiency bands.

The standard of English literacy skills among pupils in RANA schools has shown substantial improvements, although once again the impact on English that is attributable to RANA is only weakly significant. This may not be surprising given that RANA focuses on Hausa and any impact on English is only expected indirectly. Within RANA schools, the proportion of pupils demonstrating English literacy skills at the highest range increased by 22% over the evaluation period (see Figure 4). Though the lack of a marked difference between treatment and control schools suggests that the improvements in English within RANA schools are at least partially due to a general trend rather than the intervention. The focus of RANA materials on phonics, an approach which may be more suited to English than Hausa (see Section 4.5.1 and GEP3 Midline Technical Report Section 7.1), may help explain some of the observed impact.

In terms of girls’ educational performance, there is no consistent, significant gap in learning observed between girls and boys at midline in public schools, although a gap persists in IQSs. For both Hausa and English literacy, boys are found to perform significantly better than girls in the RANA IQSs while in RANA public schools, there is no significant gender difference in English and only a minor difference in Hausa literacy. As at baseline, these gender differences at midline are most pronounced among older rather than younger pupils, as the gender gap is shown to be widening with age. The impact on learning attributable to RANA is also similar between boys and girls. Although there are subtle differences in impact between boys and girls depending on school type, there is no clear evidence of a gender-specific impact of the intervention.

In RANA schools, the great majority of teachers are still unable to display sufficient competence and comprehension skills in Hausa. However, RANA teachers score significantly higher at midline compared to baseline on other knowledge and skill measures. Over 80% of RANA teachers at midline are unable to display competence in Grade 1 and Grade 2 level Hausa and only around 3% are competent in Hausa reading comprehension. Additionally, teachers’ subject knowledge has not improved significantly and curriculum knowledge levels have deteriorated significantly. By contrast, levels of pedagogical knowledge have improved significantly.

There is limited impact attributable to RANA on increasing the Hausa knowledge of trained teachers. While RANA has had some impact on teacher Hausa knowledge in IQSs, we observe no impact at all on their Hausa knowledge in public schools and no impact on Hausa comprehension skills in public schools or IQSs. Teachers in treatment IQSs are about 19 percentage points less likely to show no evidence of this skill and 12 percentage points more likely to be competent in this skill than teachers in control IQSs. No such impact is observed in public schools.

RANA has had a significant impact on teachers’ skills in ‘interpreting English words and phrases’ and on teachers’ English comprehension skills. Teachers in RANA schools are about 12 percentage points less likely to show no evidence of this skill and six percentage points more likely to be
competent in this skill compared to teachers in control schools. They are also about 15 percentage points less likely to show no evidence of English comprehension skill than teachers in control schools. Also in this case, RANA materials could have played an important role. Even if in a different language, access to and use of materials like storybooks and other reading resources based on a phonics approach would have improved teachers' general comprehension skills.

In terms of pedagogical practices, RANA seems to have had a greater impact in IQSs than public schools. However, no significant differences are observed in the way that teachers engage girls and boys in either type of school. We observe a shift toward pupil-centred activities and an improvement in teacher's skills in Hausa-based instructions, but only in IQSs and not in public schools. As discussed above, there is evidence that RANA has had a significant impact on Hausa knowledge in IQSs, which translates also into a significant impact on Hausa-based teaching for IQSs. While we see an increase attributable to RANA in pupil-centred teacher actions, when it comes to teacher talk there is no evidence of a reduction in rote-based approaches.

Hausa teaching and learning materials are more frequently available and being used significantly more in RANA schools. There is also strong evidence that RANA has had a large and significant impact on the availability of materials, and on their use during lessons. This impact is observed in both public and IQSs. At midline, 86% of treatment teachers are observed using Hausa materials, compared to only 11% of control teachers. Close to 80% of treatment teachers agree that they always have Hausa materials available, compared to 20% of control teachers.

Teacher motivation has increased between baseline and midline among teachers within RANA schools. Specifically, only 30% of the teachers at baseline had the level of motivation that the average teacher has at midline. The increase in the overall motivation comes primarily from a large increase in the self-efficacy scale. Examining the different sub-scales that make up the motivation index used in the analysis, there are increases also in interest and enjoyment, pressure and tension, and effort and importance. We also find that teachers in RANA schools are more motivated than teachers in control schools at midline.

6.1.3 Conclusions about the effectiveness of GEP3’s IQSS

Contribution Claim 1: GEP3’s IQSS contributes to more effective teaching of formal subjects in IQSs

Overall teaching of formal subjects in GEP3-supported IQSs has not become more effective. Facilitators’ use of pupil-centred activities has not changed overall since baseline and classroom teaching still mainly relies on rote-based activities. No significant changes were observed in teachers linking lessons to previous learning and learning objectives, and time on task has even reduced slightly.

Facilitators’ pedagogical knowledge has improved slightly and we observe some improvement in pedagogical practices in the classroom. However, pedagogical competency levels remain very low. Compared to baseline, slightly more facilitators display rudimentary skills in evidencing judgements and diagnosing pupils’ work and are competent in identifying low performers based on a teacher assessment; and, during lesson observations we observe some improvement in the use of pupil-centred teacher talk (among Bauchi facilitators), pupil engagement and use of lesson plans. Nonetheless, approximately 80% of facilitators demonstrate no pedagogical knowledge on the teacher assessment.
Facilitators’ subject knowledge in Hausa has not improved significantly and remains low. Only 40% of facilitators display competence in Grade 2-level Hausa. While this represents an improvement since baseline it is not statistically significantly. Hausa reading comprehension is extremely limited—80% demonstrate no competency—, which is likely to influence facilitators’ ability to raise pupils’ learning levels in this area.

Hausa as a language of instruction has become more widely used, although, encouragingly, not at the expense of other local Nigerian languages of the immediate environment. Significantly more facilitators use Hausa, while the use of English decreased during the observed lesson at midline compared to baseline. This increased use of Hausa is mainly observed in Niger, as in Bauchi all facilitators were already using it at baseline. This increase in the use of Hausa does not occur in IQSs located in Nupe-speaking communities, where facilitators are more likely to use Nupe.

Facilitators’ motivation has improved since baseline. In particular, there has been an improvement in facilitators’ perceived self-efficacy. However, there is little evidence of improved motivation translating into more effective teaching.

While the use of teaching and learning materials during classroom instruction has increased, their use remains sporadic. The percentage of classrooms with access to and use of any teaching and learning has significantly increased since baseline. However, specific materials such as textbooks, Hausa materials or locally made materials are still only observed in a small minority of classes. Also, the teaching and learning materials distributed by GEP3 in 2016 were rarely used and are frequently not available anymore. Effective use of these materials has likely been affected by lack of instruction and guidance on how to use the materials and the absence of their integration in the IQS facilitator training.

It is very unlikely that gender-sensitive class practices have improved. On the surface, while gendered differences in facilitators’ pupil engagement appear limited, girls are still marginalised in the quality of classroom interaction and engagements. The qualitative research indicates that facilitators do not demonstrate any new gender-sensitive practices in class beyond those observed at baseline. While facilitators generally verbally express positive attitudes toward girls’ education, gender biases among facilitators prevail when probed more deeply.

Overall, GEP3’s contribution to more effective teaching in supported IQSs is likely to have been limited, although GEP3-promoted teaching practices and teaching and learning materials are observed in some schools. Overall, we find no significant statistical associations between facilitators’ training participation and improvements in effective teaching practice or in the different knowledge domains assessed. Nonetheless, new pedagogical skills promoted by GEP3 are observed in some case study schools and facilitators interviewed in those schools attribute their use to GEP3 training. GEP3 has made some difference in promoting the use of locally sourced materials and lesson plans, but, overall, the project’s contribution to a greater and more effective use of teaching and learning materials is limited. Quantitative and qualitative data indicate that GEP3 has likely contributed to an improvement in facilitator motivation. Since the IQSS design and implementation lack clear actions regarding how gender-sensitive class practices are to be achieved and improved, any contribution to change is highly unlikely. The overall limited influence of the facilitator training is likely related to the very low subject and pedagogical knowledge levels of the facilitators, language barriers, the challenging class environment in IQSs, and disruptions, delays and partial implementation of the facilitator training process by the time of the survey.
Contribution Claim 2: GEP3’s IQSS contributes to an improved, girl-friendly school environment in IQSs

All IQSs have established CBMCs, and membership and attendance have increased. GEP3 seeks to improve the school environment in IQSs by strengthening the CBMC’s capacity in terms of school management, resource mobilisation and facilitating community involvement. While at baseline not all IQSs had a CBMC established, this is no longer the case at midline. The number of CBMC members and the attendance rate has significantly increased. Proprietors and head teachers are now more involved in the CBMCs, taking up a key role as chairs, mostly in Bauchi. However, female and child participation in the CBMC and school management activities remains limited. It is therefore very unlikely that CBMCs provide a forum for girls’ voices and needs to be heard, or for girls, or women, to have much influence on decision making related to school management or improvement.

CBMC capacity building has likely contributed to improvements in school management practices and increased resource mobilisation, although its contribution is moderated by other factors. CBMCs have improved school management in terms of school planning and financial management practices. Record-keeping has strongly improved. Resource mobilisation capabilities of CBMCs have improved, but effective resource mobilisation remains a struggle. Factors related to CBMC membership, the influence of the proprietor and the community’s economic context in general moderate school management practices and resource mobilisation. We observe relatively more significant improvement in Niger compared to Bauchi.

The grant application and disbursement process has not been effective and has not strictly followed the guidelines. By the time of the survey, all CBMCs in Bauchi had yet to receive a grant. When the grant has been received, the CBMCs have applied good financial practices and utilised the grant, although only a minority reported submitting a grant utilisation report as per guideline, followed the guideline to not invest in infrastructure construction or renovation, and used the grant for girl-friendly investment.

While improvements in the school environment have taken place, they are, overall, modest and are unlikely to raise the majority of GEP3-supported IQSs to conditions that provide a school environment sufficiently supportive of learning, particularly for girls. Overall, schools have not improved noticeably between baseline and midline in terms of infrastructure. Nonetheless, we observe modest improvements in water access, functioning toilets, and classroom infrastructure. Infrastructure remains largely deficient and there is weak evidence that pupil–teacher ratios are worsening in Bauchi, while they are improving in Niger. The school environment has not become more girl-friendly.

6.2 Lessons learnt

6.2.1 Lessons learnt regarding GEP3’s overall relevance and sustainability

The plausibility of GEP3’s ToC was enhanced by the project’s redesign. Stakeholders improved their understanding of GEP3’s objectives and interventions through the redesign process. All stakeholders agreed that this process has increased clarity and focus within the programme as well as reemphasising objectives surrounding capacity development. At the same time, GEP3 is part of longer process of change that started with GEP1 and continued through GEP2. For
stakeholders, all stages are simply known as ‘GEP’ and change is described across this longer timeframe.

The role of the UNICEF state team is important in developing capacity but may be more important in providing motivation. The conditions under which government officials work are very poor. Infrastructure is not maintained, offices are cramped and poorly equipped and basic resources are not available. This means that, whilst some officials are highly motivated and achieve results against all odds, many are not. The presence of the UNICEF state teams, working side by side with government, in only marginally better conditions, matters. They provide constant encouragement and support, driven in part by their need to achieve targets, without which momentum would undoubtedly be lost.

Although there is general acknowledgement that diverse state contexts require different approaches to implementation, in practice, this is difficult to achieve. The structure of the state teams, with recruitment aligned according to the four outputs of GEP3, tends to result in somewhat standardised implementation. In order to maintain and increase relevance, GEP3 implementation needs to be able to demonstrate a greater degree of customised adaptation.

The absence of a formal capacity development strategy limits the potential to customise GEP3 to the specific needs of the state. At any particular time it is impossible to know what the specific objectives of ongoing capacity development are, when the job will be done and what the exit strategy is. This is important because, with GEP now being in its third iteration, it is time to consider ‘what next?’. Experience in GEP3 has clearly demonstrated the fluidity of political commitment. This means that by far the main challenge to sustainability is outside the control of UNICEF and DFID.

Political change deeply affects commitment with no intervention relying on state funds being guaranteed to be sustained. Experience in GEP3 demonstrates the fluidity of political commitment and the pivotal role of the Governor. The picture in any state today is different from in the past and likely to be different in the future. This is by far the main challenge to sustainability and it is outside the control of UNICEF and DFID. The presence of GEP3, and the requirement for counterpart funding, gives states a reason to invest. Without that incentive, many stakeholders fear that funding will not be guaranteed. However, the provision of additional funds may not, by itself, lead to better outcomes.

6.2.2 Lessons learnt for the early learning intervention (RANA)

The effectiveness of teacher training is severely constrained by low levels of knowledge and skills among teachers. The ability to employ better pedagogical practices should follow a greater degree of understanding and comprehension of the subject that is taught (e.g. Hausa). It is important to recognise this element when planning for the next stages of the RANA intervention, as we propose in our related recommendations.

The availability of teaching and learning materials is central to improving learning. They play an important role in motivating teachers and it is possible that the presence and use of materials have contributed to the small improvements in pupil learning that we observe. Having materials in schools and classrooms has many positive direct and indirect effects for both teachers and pupils. Continuously updated and improved materials, with clear instructions, should form part of any intervention package that aims to promote learning.
A substantial level of commitment, both in terms of funding and human resources, can overcome the obstacles posed by the challenging context. The difficult political, economic, and security situations in Zamfara and Katsina risked derailing the implementation of the RANA intervention. However, the commitment of all stakeholders involved, including at the institutional and community levels, have ensured that most intervention outputs were delivered according to plan and RANA managed to reach its target schools and teachers.

6.2.3 Lessons learnt for GEP3’s IQS

Facilitators value the teaching practices promoted by the adapted training, such as the use of song, play, and locally sourced materials, but have yet to fully understand the whole-language approach. Lesson plans are also used, but their promotion needs to be better tailored to facilitators with low competency levels. Facilitators interviewed as part of the qualitative research had difficulties understanding the rationale behind the whole-language approach.

Lack of Hausa literacy, particularly in non-Hausa communities, constrains the effectiveness of facilitator training and distribution of teaching and learning materials. Facilitators who are not Hausa-literate struggle to understand and adapt the training content and promoted teaching and learning materials. The promotion of materials sourced from the environment seems to be well-suited to the context of low Hausa literacy.

The distribution of teaching and learning materials without adequate instruction on how they should be used has limited their contribution toward more effective teaching. Teaching and learning materials were distributed without instruction on how to use them and were not clearly aligned with the whole-language approach promoted during the adapted training. Hausa-based materials are not appropriate for non-Hausa-speaking environments, like Nupe communities in Niger, and can even have negative consequences on literacy learning, particularly without their use being accompanied by sufficient instruction.

The mobility of IQSs does not necessarily affect the teaching of integrated curriculum or CBMC activeness. While only five sampled IQSs moved outside of their community since baseline, this sample suggests that pupils can continue to receive secular classes and the CBMC activity continues in such cases. However, given the small sample size it is worth examining further how representative this finding is, and how this continuity was made possible.

Improvements in financial management practice among CBMCs, such as having a bank account or cash book, does not yet translate into their adequate operational use. While most CBMCs report having a bank account, a minority could show evidence of bank transactions. Similarly, while a majority of CBMCs report having a cash book, a minority have an updated one. This suggest remaining capacity constraints in the operationalisation of financial management practices.

CBMCs do not always make girl-friendly investments. However, the overall quality of schools suggests that investment to make schools child-friendly (and not specifically girl-friendly) may still be worthwhile. A focus on girl-friendly investment does not necessarily align with school and community priorities.

The CBMCs in Niger demonstrate that grant management and utilisation by the CBMCs is feasible. However, guidelines are not always followed or understood. The fact that CBMCs have
yet to receive the grants in Bauchi needs further investigation regarding the bottlenecks affecting grant distribution.

6.3 Recommendations

6.3.1 Recommendations regarding GEP3’s overall relevance and sustainability

**Take stock of capacity development successes and limitations in order to clarify the focus for the remainder of GEP3.** This needs to consider the particular needs of the state, the level of political commitment to developing human capacity and providing the financial resources that enable existing capacities to be effective.

**Continue support to embed girl-centred interventions within government systems while facilitating data dissemination on implementation and results to stakeholders.** Interventions such as EDC, ASC and SBMC are well-embedded in government systems, while interventions such as RANA and IQSS require additional and different types of support to increase sustainability through policies, plans, resource allocations and structures. In order to support ongoing learning and accountability while working through government systems GEP3 can facilitate and promote monitoring and data collections on implementation and results.

**Use the recent GEP3 gender strategy as an opportunity to deepen debate about a continued focus on girls.** It is clear that progress has been made in consolidating support for girls’ education. At the same time, female participation in the education sector is acknowledged to remain low and entrenched gender-biases remain. GEP3 should therefore lead on the debate about next steps to take to address gender disparities, using the publication of its gender strategy as an opportunity to discuss it with government partners; and, at the same time, clarify concepts and ambitions about gender-sensitive teaching and making the school environment more girl-friendly. This is particularly relevant for IQSS for which it is currently unclear whether a girl-focused approach is preferred compared to a universal learner approach.

**Engage in continuing dialogue with high-level government decisions makers about funding and key supply side constraints, in particular improved teacher deployment.** Financial commitment to the project and presence of ‘trainable’ teachers are the two main challenges to achieving project outcomes but are not under GEP3’s control and not even in its direct sphere of influence. Nonetheless, in collaboration with other partners, such as DFID, UNICEF should continue engaging high-level government decision-makers, in particular the state governors, to advocate for these challenges to be addressed and highlight agreed government commitments.

6.3.2 Recommendations for the early learning intervention (RANA)

**The training administered as part of the RANA intervention should place more emphasis on bringing all teachers up to minimum levels of subject knowledge.** The training should therefore be further tailored to a critical mass of low performing teachers for whom minimum levels of subject knowledge are necessary before attempting to change pedagogical practices. Teachers’ poor literacy and comprehension skills continue to be one of the reasons behind poor learning outcomes. Acquiring adequate competency is a first step that teachers need to take before being able to change their pedagogical practices. This overall lack of adequate competency in teachers needs to be addressed.
Access to and use of teaching and learning materials need to be promoted further, including training teachers on how to use the materials properly, given the positive impact that materials seem to be having on both pupils and teachers. Teachers are found to be more motivated if materials are available and improvements observed in pupil literacy could also be the result of more exposure to learning materials together with any improvement observed in teaching practices. Continuing to update, improve, and distribute materials to public schools and IQSs and provide instructions to teachers should therefore remain a priority.

**RANA has not had any impact on pupil retention within RANA schools.** In general, more effort is needed to understand the causes of pupils’ transfers and drop-outs, even though this is not within the scope of the RANA intervention. It would be beneficial, for instance, to systematically track pupils’ transfers across schools, so as to have a better sense of whether they drop out or rather transfer for other reasons. Transfers would be less detrimental than drop-outs for pupils, so it is important to distinguish between the two and understand their respective determinants.

Finally, resources specifically directed to early learning need to be sustained. The programme needs to be given time to reach maturity and any changes in learning outcomes are likely to require the remaining duration of the programme. Given that only two years have passed between our baseline and midline surveys, it is also reasonable to expect more marked improvements in teacher and pupil indicators over a longer period.

### 6.3.3 Recommendations for GEP3’s IQSS

The facilitator capacity building process and any distribution of teaching and learning materials need to be further adapted to the extremely low competency levels of the facilitators. Facilitators’ low Hausa literacy levels are particularly problematic as it constrains Hausa and Hausa-based instruction, the adaptive use of Hausa teaching and learning materials and understanding of the Hausa-based training. Distribution of teaching and learning materials should be integrated into the facilitator capacity building process and accompanied with instructions and demonstration about how they can best support teaching and learning practice in the diverse context of IQSs.

The project needs to address challenges related to Hausa not being the language of the immediate environment in all communities. The evaluation findings indicate that Hausa is not uniformly the language of the immediate environment and that facilitators from non-Hausa communities have difficulties understanding the Hausa-based facilitator training and use the Hausa-based teaching and learning materials. Therefore, the IQSS activities need to make further allowances for IQSS activities adapted to the actual language of the community.

Facilitator support needs to be consistent and continuous. Given their low competency levels facilitators need ongoing support and feedback to build their understanding of child-centred teaching practices. Intervention roll-out needs to support continuity, avoiding delays that disrupt the process and erode trust in the project. The teaching approach promoted needs also to be consistent. While adaptation of the approach will be necessary given the diverse and complex context of IQSs, ongoing revisions of the teaching approach promoted at the training possibly creates confusion among facilitators that are already struggling to understand the training content. A stable intervention design and implementation approach is needed before scale-up.

Improvements in CBMC functionality need to be further and reliably supported. IQS stakeholders appreciate and value GEP3 support, which they equate with integration. CBMCs have improved
their management practices, record-keeping, and resource mobilisation capability. However, CBMCs’ functionality is fragile and unmet expectations about project support leads to demotivation. Therefore, further support is needed, which should be reliable and well explained to CBMCs and other IQS stakeholders.

In order for IQSs to be an effective model to expand access to quality education, project partners need to continue their support for the creation of an effective institutional enabling environment for IQSs. At present, the support to IQS is hindered by poor coordination and alignment of IQS support and mandates across government agencies, and lack of sustained funding, particularly for SAME-supported IQSs. If this is not addressed – particularly reliable funding – coherent and effective approaches to integration cannot be sustainably delivered.
Bibliography


Annex A  Evaluation questions

A.1  Evaluation questions for the early learning intervention evaluation

1. To what extent does the early learning intervention improve Hausa literacy and English language learning outcomes among girls and boys in the early grades in primary schools and IQSs? To what extent does it reduce the gap between the learning outcomes of the lowest performing pupils and the expected outcomes?

2. Does teachers’ knowledge of literacy and language acquisition improve?

3. Do teachers’ skills in early grade, gender-sensitive instruction improve?

4. Do teachers adjust and change their classroom practices?

5. Are more reading and learning materials in Hausa used and are they useful?

6. Does the early learning intervention improve pupil retention, especially of girls?

7. Have contextual factors beyond the implementers’ control facilitated/hindered achievement of intervention outcomes?

8. Under what conditions can the achieved outputs and outcomes be repeated at scale?

A.2  Evaluation questions for the IQSS evaluation

1. How well has GEP3 teacher capacity development (training and mentoring) contributed to improved teacher knowledge and skills, and more effective teaching in the classroom?

2. How well has GEP3’s teacher capacity development contributed to an improvement in gender-sensitive teaching?

3. How well has GEP3’s head teacher capacity development (training and mentoring) contributed to improved pedagogical leadership and school management? *

4. How well has GEP3’s CBMC capacity development contributed to improved school management and increased mobilisation of resources for school investment?

5. How well have CBMCs been able to adequately manage school grants and to invest these resources in the improvement of a girl-friendly school environment?

6. How well have teaching and learning materials supplied through the intervention been perceived by teachers and head teachers as appropriate and well targeted? Have they been used for more effective teaching?

7. To what extent have pupil literacy and numeracy skills, especially of girls, improved in GEP3-supported IQSs? How has GEP3 contributed to such improvement?

8. To what extent does the IQSS intervention contribute to reducing the gap between learning outcomes and expected learning outcomes, as expressed in the curriculum?

9. What are the attitudes of, and what is the level of acceptance by, community members and leaders in regard to integrating formal subjects in Qur’anic education? How have these attitudes and how has this acceptance changed during the intervention? Why? How have attitudes changed in regard to girls receiving formal education?

10. What unintended consequences does IQSS have for teachers, head teachers, pupils, and proprietors within the IQSs, as well as for the broader school community?

11. What are the attitudes toward and acceptance among local and state education staff in relation to improving access to basic education for girls through IQS?

12. How and to what extent have contextual factors beyond the implementers’ control facilitated/hindered achievement of the intervention outcomes?

13. Under what conditions can the achieved outputs and outcomes be repeated at scale?

* Question 3 has become irrelevant and could no longer be answered because the multi-day head teacher training was replaced by a one-day sensitisation of IQS proprietors as part of the IQS facilitator training. This sensitisation does not aim to improve pedagogical leadership.
## Annex B  Status of assumptions contained in GEP3’s overall ToC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assumption (2015 redesign)</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased demand for and understanding/value of basic education by parents has a positive impact on girls’ enrolment and retention</td>
<td>Hypothesis of the design (what is expected to happen), rather than an assumption (beyond project control)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced professional development of teachers (government schools and IQSs) and head teachers has a positive impact on girls’ learning and retention</td>
<td>Hypothesis of the design (what is expected to happen), rather than an assumption (beyond project control)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government can supply primary schools and teachers to meet increased community demand for education, with the support of high-level political engagement</td>
<td>False assumption within the timeframe of GEP3 – the scale of the challenge is too great</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific teaching and learning strategies will positively impact on the acquisition of literacy, numeracy, and life skills, which will benefit girls in future</td>
<td>Hypothesis of the design (what is expected to happen), rather than an assumption (beyond project control)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved effectiveness of SBMCs/CBMCs to communities has a positive impact on girls’ enrolment, retention, and learning</td>
<td>Hypothesis of the design (what is expected to happen), rather than an assumption (beyond project control)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved educational governance (planning and budgeting, including release) will positively impact on girls’ enrolment and retention</td>
<td>False assumption – release is a chronic problem in all states except Sokoto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced participation of women in the education sector at all levels will positively impact on girls’ enrolment and retention</td>
<td>False assumption – no significant change in women’s participation is possible within the timeframe of GEP3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each intervention will have an appreciable impact on girls’ access and attainment, but combined interventions will support the most vulnerable girls more effectively</td>
<td>Hypothesis of the design (what is expected to happen), rather than an assumption (beyond project control)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex C  Sample size of midline survey

C.1 Sample size of early learning intervention at midline

Table 6 below presents a summary picture of the sample achievements of the early learning survey.

The team surveyed 1,083 pupils (535 girls and 548 boys) and 264 teachers from 119 public primary schools in Katsina and Zamfara. The percentage of sampled pupils and teachers from the surveyed schools equals 78% and 74%, respectively. Additionally, in Zamfara and Katsina 888 pupils (381 girls and 507 boys) and 170 teachers were surveyed (65% and 70%, respectively, of the targeted sample size) in 122 IQSs. Apart from eight schools in Katsina State, all sampled schools were observed. The relatively lower percentage of teachers surveyed compared to the targeted sample size was due to the fact that some schools did not have the targeted number of teachers, which was particularly the case in the IQSs in Katsina.

Table 6: Targeted and final sample sizes of the early learning intervention midline survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Public primary schools</th>
<th>IQSs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Katsina</td>
<td>Zamfara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target sample schools</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total school surveyed</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools included in baseline analysis</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra schools at baseline</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target sample pupils</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of target pupils surveyed</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target sample teachers</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of target teachers surveyed</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Fieldwork reports; GEP3 baseline data; GEP3 midline data

C.2 Sample size of IQSS midline survey

Table 7 presents the targeted and final sample sizes of the midline survey of the IQSS evaluation. In total, 60 schools were targeted and surveyed across Niger and Bauchi. The sample was stratified according to LGAs, with equal sample sizes of five schools in each LGA, and therefore 30 per state.

In each IQS, the targeted sample size for facilitators was two facilitators per IQS. Hence, the total targeted facilitator sample size is 120 IQS facilitators. The final facilitator sample size equalled 78% of the target. The below-target achievement of teachers surveyed was due to the fact that a school did not have the targeted number of two facilitators or two facilitators were not available for interviewing. In all sampled IQSs, CBMC representatives and the person responsible for the
day-to-day management of the school (or his/her assistant) were interviewed. No pupils were interviewed at midline.

Table 7: Targeted and final sample sizes of the IQSS midline survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Target sample</th>
<th>Final sample</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitators</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head teachers/proprietors</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBMCs</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

110 In three IQSs an assistant head teacher was interviewed.