

# **Girls Education Challenge (GEC): Empowering Young Female Teachers to Create Inclusive Learning Environments for Marginalised Girls in Malawi**

## **Baseline Report and Independent Evaluation**

Conducted by ILC Africa

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## Table of Contents

<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Project Background</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Malawi In-Country Context</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Theory of Change and Summary of Activities</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>2. Baseline Methodology</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>Evaluation Design and Study Parameters</b> .....	<b>16</b>
Data Entry, Validation and Analysis.....	18
Information Management/Data Management System.....	19
<b>Sampling Framework</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>Limitations</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>3. Results</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Baseline Study Area Characteristics</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Outcome Level Data: Baseline Positions and Targets</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>Output Level Data: Baseline Positions and Targets</b> .....	<b>38</b>
<b>4. Analysis of Project Assumptions and Design Objectives</b> .....	<b>44</b>
<b>5. Conclusions and Recommendations</b> .....	<b>46</b>
<b>Research Dissemination Plans</b> .....	<b>49</b>

## List of Figures

- Figure 1: Power Analysis Calculations
- Figure 2: Project Rollout for Marginalised Girls
- Figure 3: Baseline Sample Size
- Figure 4: Final List of Control and Treatment Schools Accessed during the Baseline Exercise
- Figure 5: Employment Status of Household Heads
- Figure 6: Outcome Indicator 1.0 Baseline Position
- Figure 7: Outcome Indicator 2.0 Baseline Position
- Figure 8a: Calculating the Learning Targets (Literacy)
- Figure 8b: Calculating the Learning Targets (Numeracy)
- Figure 9: Weights assigned to Sample sub-groups in Analysing Learning Outcomes
- Figure 10: Figure 10: Additional Funds Secured during the Life of the Project
- Figure 11: Output 1 Indicators Baseline Positions (Agents of Change run Inclusive Workshops (AoC Training; Girls Clubs; AIDS Toto Clubs; Listening Clubs; Holiday Clubs)
- Figure 12: Output 2 Indicators Baseline Positions (Marginalised Girls' Increase Participation in Co-educational Environments (Girls Clubs; AIDS Toto Clubs; Listening Clubs; Holiday Clubs)
- Figure 13: Output 3 Indicators Baseline Positions (Parents Actively Support Girls' Education (Community Mobilisation and Sensitisation; Open Days; Community Listening Clubs; AoC/ Team Home Visits)
- Figure 14: Output 4 Indicators Baseline Positions (Project Schools are More Safe and Inclusive (CPP Policy put in Place; AoC Training of Teachers in Inclusive Learning Environments and CPP)

## List of Annexes

- A) Project Log frame
- B) Baseline Data Collection Tools
- C) Marginalized Girls Checklist
- D) Enumerator Training Agendas and Main Session Summary
- E) Description of Data Collection Tools Deployed at the Baseline

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

The UK Department for International Development (DFID) Girls' Education Challenge (GEC)-funded project, entitled, *"Empowering Young Female Teachers to Create Inclusive Learning Environments for Marginalised Girls"* will be implemented by Theatre for a Change UK (TfaC).

The project aims to address the barriers that are preventing marginalised girls from accessing quality education in Malawi including:

- Traditional gender norms that mean there is increased pressure on girls to remain at home, rather than attend school and where with limited resources parents prefer to invest in the education of their sons
- Poor quality of teaching in primary schools concerning sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) due to teachers feeling uncomfortable to address the issue and a lack of a safe learning environment for female students who have been open to incidents of sexual abuse from male teachers
- A lack of attention to the SRH needs of girls in general, for example the provision of inadequate sanitation facilities during menstruation and a lack of support for pregnant or new mothers.

By providing training for female Agent of Change (AoC) teachers the Tfac-GEC project will support schools to create girl-friendly learning environments and promote girls' awareness of SRHR, as well as encouraging greater parental and community support and engagement. The project will improve girls' SRH knowledge and practice, confidence and participation in class leading to gains in retention, achievement and learning in school.

## Project Design and Theory of Change

The project design stems from the belief that gender and educational norms, poverty and poor sexual and reproductive health are significant barriers to girls' retention, achievement and learning in primary schools in Malawi.

TfaC has developed a theory of change that identifies and seeks to address the gender, poverty, health and cultural barriers leading to marginalised girls completing a full cycle of education and demonstrating enhanced learning. This can be broken down into four key outputs:

1. Teachers receive training and demonstrate the ability to teach literacy and numeracy in participatory and interactive ways, delivering girl-friendly education across Malawi
2. Marginalised girls' at risk of dropping out of school demonstrate increased participation and confidence at school. Out-of-school girls enrol in school as a result of project activities.
3. Parents and communities have a more supportive attitude towards girls attending school / education.
4. Schools are safer for girls and actively promote their participation in the classroom

The TfaC-GEC project will be implemented in 10 districts in total, covering central and southern Malawi. In the first year this will focus on five districts, including; Chikwawa, Dedza, Lilongwe Rural West, Nkhosakota and Salima. In the second and third years the project will expand to Balaka, Blantyre Rural, Lilongwe Rural East, Mchinji, and Ntcheu.

In support of the anticipated TfaC project, the independent evaluation team conducted a baseline study to establish study area characteristics. Baseline findings can be found in Section 6 of this report.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

In order to determine causal links and/or association between interventions and outcomes, the evaluation team will conduct hypothesis-driven, empirical research. As the independent external evaluation team, ILC Africa will carry out a longitudinal study of a specific cohort of marginalised girls both in-school and out-of-school.

The evaluation team also has the responsibility of conducting visits and spot checks during every school term. In addition to formal interval evaluations (baseline/midline/end-line), enumerators will conduct random spot checks to confirm attendance records and conduct observations of AoC performance.

## Baseline Methodology

The overall evaluation design is quasi-experimental Difference-in-Differences (DID) technique, allowing for the fact that marginalised girls in the different Treatment and Control Groups were assigned rather than a purely random approach. Furthermore, the use of a counterfactual will allow for an understanding of the impact and outcomes only attributable to the TfaC-GEC project.

The baseline report includes results from a total sample of  $n = 1,550$  which is an adequate and representative sample of the population allowing for detection of the effect of the project at the pre-specified probability of 80%. The total sample breaks down as follows;

- $n = 471$  Treatment group girls
- $n = 471$  Control group girls
- $n = 304$  Treatment households
- $n = 307$  Control households

ILC Africa deployed qualitative and quantitative methods and tools comprised of semi-structured questionnaires, surveys, examinations, trackers, interview guides and focus group discussion guides. Data was entered, validated and cleaned into a customized in-house database called So-Go Survey— an online, groupware server with a focus on scalability and open standards. For the purposes of analysing variation in response variables, the evaluation team used Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) as the statistical tool of choice.

## Sampling Framework

The project will use a phased approach to deploy AoC units with 36 AoC units beginning in Year 1 and 189 in Year 2. Thus in total, 225 AoC units will be deployed across 225 schools. In terms of tracking, it is the year 1 cohort only that will be tracked throughout the life of the project. This is because Year 1 and Year 2 girls will have different lengths of exposure to the interventions, and are to be considered differently.

## Limitations

There are a number of limitations within this baseline exercise that may have affected the validity of results in this report, and can be categorized across four general categories – (1) Program design – related; (2) Baseline activity-related; (3) External Confounding Factors; and (4) Process and Logistical Factors for Future Consideration.

## Results

### *Demographics*

- The distribution of the Household Survey was as follows; 36% in Salima, 23% in Nkhotakota, 17% in Lilongwe Rural West, 14% in Dedza, and 7% in Chikwawa. Of the nine tribes represented within the districts and project areas, Chewa was the most commonly represented tribe (76%) with the most common language spoken in households across all districts being Chichewa (84%). Interestingly, out of school girls were slightly more likely to be from the smaller tribe groups and more likely to report difficulties with understanding the predominant local language of Chichewa in school.
- Across all districts, the majority of households were headed by those without formal employment (58%) with most engaged in agrarian activity such as small scale farming and fishing.
- Poverty and low income were key challenges for all households and their communities with 73% identifying themselves as unable to meet their basic needs without assistance.
- Within the household survey, the majority reported stable communities with many families staying in the same location for a number of years. Families of out of school girls were more likely to be less settled, with 40% having moved in to the area in the last 10 years compared with only 29% of in school girls.
- The average age of the girls included in the research was 14 years. 97% were single, and 8% were already mothers. Girls who were out of school were both more likely to be married (3% vs. 1%) than their in school peers and significantly more likely to be mothers (10% compared with 1% of in school girls).
- Being an orphan and being a member of a child-headed household appeared as key drivers in marginalisation. Again, out school girls were more likely to be affected by these two issues with 35% identifying as orphans (compared to 26% of in school) and 17% being members of child headed households (compared with just 2% of in school girls).

### *Home Environment and Support for Girls Education*

- Across all districts, there were a higher proportion of women and girls in the household. With the proportion of women over 18 years at 58% and girls under 18, 63%.
- In line with cultural norms all girls were spending a proportion of their day doing domestic chores; however the amount of time varied. 6% of girls spent a whole day doing chores, 14% a half day, 51% a quarter day, and 26% one hour or less. Out of school girls were more likely to be a part of the group spending a half or whole day doing chores than their in school peers.
- 14% households reported that girls were currently engaged in income-generating work, with 69% of those households being reliant on the money girls contributed.
- Across all districts, over half of household heads had completed primary school (58%); only 10% had completed secondary school with 30% not having completed any formal schooling at all.
- Across all households a large majority claimed to support girls education with 96% expressing that they have the same right to go to school as boys. However, 25% of families agreed that gender does play a role in deciding whether to send a child to school with 17% of out of school girls families agreeing it would make more sense to send a son to school if funds were limited as well as 11% of in-school girl families. Additionally, 32% of families agreed that boys were more likely to use their education. These results highlight that the issue may be more complex than initially indicated.
- Key decision makers on children's education varied across households with the highest number of households for both in-school and out-of-school girls stating that mothers and fathers made joint decisions (37%). Households where there were sole decision makers tended to be made by mothers (36%) and then fathers (9%).
- Only 26% of girls felt that they had a role in decisions made about their education and schooling

### *School Attendance and Supportive Learning Environment*

- The average attendance for all girls was widely distributed between 23% and 83%. The mean school attendance for Treatment in-school girls was 75% and for Control In-school girls was 64%
- The majority of girls (68%) began school at age 5 or 6
- Of the girls who dropped out of school, the majority had done so between the ages of 12 and 14 years (40%). The 3 most common reasons cited were a lack of funds (54%), home demands and childcare (11%), and not seeing value in education (10%)
- 57% of girls felt that they were as confident as their peers in general. However, in discussions many girls felt that in terms of their schooling they were less confident due to the time they had missed and felt they were slower than peers at reading and writing
- Of the 67% of girls who had started their menstrual cycles, only 56% felt able to attend school while menstruating
- Only 39% were satisfied with the quality of teaching at the school, with 39% of households reporting that classes were cancelled because of a teacher's absence. Of those households reporting cancellation, 53% indicated that it happened 'A few times a month,' 42% that it happened 'A few times a year,' and 5% that it happened 'A lot every month.'
- In terms of safety, a majority of marginalised girls and their parents/care givers reported that schools were safe. For in-school girls interviewed, 75% felt school was safe 'All of the time,' 7% 'Most of the time,' 9% 'Some of the time,' and 9% 'Never.'

### ***Literacy and Numeracy Levels***

- 85% of girls self-reported that they were able to read and write Chichewa; however, performance in the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) was low, with the treatment group scoring an average of 41%. In school girls performed higher than out of school girls, scoring an average of 43% compared with 36% for out of school.
- In terms of Numeracy, scores on the Early Grade Math Assessment (EGMA) were slightly higher with an average of 57%. Again in-school girls scored slightly higher on average than out of school girls (60% vs. 53%)
- In comparing these results with the national averages from 2010, the girls performed in line with the national average for standard 4 rather than the average for standard 5 or 6.

### ***Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Knowledge***

- Girls' overall knowledge of SRH issues was limited. In-school and out-of-school girls had similar results with both scores averaging 55%.
- Only 41% of parents reported feeling very comfortable discussing SRHR topics with their children and general levels of knowledge particularly on rights were low.
- AoCs demonstrated high knowledge of SRH scoring an average of 86%; however, their knowledge on sexual rights was lower at 61%.

### **Analysis of Project Assumptions and Design Objectives**

The evaluation team carefully considered the overall design of the project as well as assumptions made in support of interventions. Points of commentary on project assumptions and design objectives are listed below. Additionally, the evaluation team pinpointed specific changes, adjustments, and deletions to outputs and outcomes within the log frame.

- In general, the correct and relevant changes are being measured by the output and outcome indicators within the Theory of Change; however there appears to be a limited relationship between outcomes and outputs. DFID guidance advises such that output indicators should link to outcome indicators and have strong causal links<sup>1</sup>. The ToC may need to be reorganized to establish those clear links.
- The AoC intervention largely relies on the assumption that out-of-school girls will be drawn to come back to school in the afternoons, and then, eventually begin attending school regularly. There are significant barriers to initiating this return to school, and AoCs may need to revisit and ensure they are comfortable with strategies that attract out-of-school girls to school. Reflections on the baseline findings further suggest that the GEC project is targeting the right groups of people but perhaps not targeting the subgroup of out-of-school girls using an after school programme. Out-of-school girls remain a critical target beneficiary; however as of the time of the independent evaluation baseline period, AoCs did not demonstrate full command of this subgroup and fully grasped neither the girls' identities nor their mind-sets.
- Baseline research findings confirm that there is immense potential to leverage self-confidence and self-efficacy towards increasing attendance, since much of the barriers to attending school come from the girls' attitudes and behaviour. It is therefore recommended that self-efficacy and confidence be given equal consideration and attention as an outcome. In support of this suggestion, TfaC staff also indicated the importance of this variable. At this time, these concepts are insufficiently addressed in the log frame; however, the harder outcomes of attendance, literacy and numeracy are visible. The evaluation team confirms that self-confidence and self-efficacy will play a critical role in behaviour change — oftentimes as precursor to literacy and numeracy.
- Because of the critical role that AoCs play, maintaining a supportive environment for AoCs is vital. AoC attrition is a threat to the project, since the project hinges on happy, caring AOCs to impact girls. Currently, factors behind AoC attrition may be related to low remuneration, intense time commitment, high demands of the job and posting in rural areas. These pressures may only intensify after the kick-off of the project if these conditions are not revisited formally.
- TfaC Project management explained that the project has opted for placing AoCs in pairs or individually, depending on the level of experience and confidence level of the teachers. Although this approach addresses variations in AoC competence, it may confound selected findings within the intervention. It may be the additional responsibility of the project to delineate as to whether 1 or 2 or any combination thereof of AoC units impacted marginalised girls. If pairs were more successful than individuals, the number of pairs and individuals should be statistically significant so that findings can be generalized

## Conclusions

At the baseline of this exercise, the evaluation team considered specific factors of the Malawi context to best influence “Improved life chances of marginalised girls.” After a thorough consideration of conclusive data points, the evaluation team has synthesized the following conclusions:

### *Overall*

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<sup>1</sup> [bigpushforward.net/.../Governance-Indicators-VFM-Note-FINAL-81.doc](http://bigpushforward.net/.../Governance-Indicators-VFM-Note-FINAL-81.doc)

- From the baseline findings, poverty emerged as the root of the problem, as girls are being pulled out of school by their families to help households meet immediate income-generation needs. Furthermore, girls repeatedly indicated the need for uniforms, soap, school supplies, exam fees, and these funds are often unavailable at the household level.
- A major strength of the project is in its additional programme interventions related to self-confidence, self-efficacy, mentoring, financial and material support to girls, and SRH knowledge of girls. These aspects, when combined, offer a more representative picture of the wide range of interventions that TfaC plans to provide.
- It is clear from many indicators that out-of-school girls were more likely to be exposed to challenges that made education difficult. They were likely to be from smaller ethnic groups, less geographically settled, from poorer households, spend more time on household chores, to be wives and mothers, and to be orphaned / members of child-headed households.
- The AoC intervention largely relies on the assumption that out-of-school girls will come back to school in the afternoons and then begin attending school regularly. There are significant barriers to prompting this return to school, especially for girls who either head households or have children of their own.
- Some girls were suspicious of the program. Many out-of-school girls in particular indicated that going to a club three times a week would be challenging. AoCs anticipated a difficulty in teaching out-of-school girls since they would be "starting new again." Concerns were that out-of-school girls would have poor concentration, lack of interest, lack of negotiation skills to convince parents to consent, and competing priorities such as household duties, boyfriends, and even madrassas.

### ***Theory of Change, Log frame and Project Design***

- In general, the correct and relevant changes are being measured by the output and outcome indicators within the ToC; however there appears to be a limited causal relationship between outcome indicators and output indicators.
- Findings show that the highest risk time for school drop-out is between the ages of 12 and 14, this supports the project design in targeting girls aged 11 -14 years aiming to provide support for girls ahead and during these crucial years.
- Although the Control group appears slightly stronger in terms of attendance, literacy, and numeracy, baseline findings indicate that midline and end-line data collection will be on track to demonstrate findings clearly and these will be discretely attributable to GEC interventions and non-GEC interventions.
- Moving forward, the greatest challenge with the Control schools will be willingness to participate. The evaluation team found that the decision to participate was heavily based upon the attitude and willingness of the head teachers.

### ***Project Implementation***

- AoCs have reported tension with their colleagues and superiors who believe them to be in receipt of special benefits. During surveys, some respondents purported that limited efforts had been taken by TfaC to address religious tensions and norms especially in the predominately Muslim areas of Dedza, Salima and Nkhotakota.
- In school catchment areas with large Muslim populations, children typically attend madrassas in the afternoon where they are offered financial and material support. Creating competition and division would not be to the benefit of both programs.

- AoCs, communities and some marginalised girls expressed suspicion about the project and felt that some people were treated unequally (i.e. a misunderstanding of why girls who were out of school would be getting support). If not, it is anticipated—based on enumerators’ experiences—that AoCs will encounter some resistance and perhaps even hostility in this endeavour.
- Baseline findings suggest that the project targets the right groups of people, but perhaps not the subgroup of out-of-school girls in the best way possible (i.e. with AoCs leading an afterschool programme). Out-of-school girls remain a critical target beneficiary. As at the time of the independent evaluation baseline, AoCs did not demonstrate a full command of this subgroup, and did not always know the identities of the girls nor fully appreciate out-of-school girl mind sets.

## Recommendations

Additionally, the evaluation team has developed key recommendations that may greatly improve project outcomes and outputs.

The recommendations are as follows:

- TfaC should creatively reconsider addressing economic and financial needs within the scope of its approved interventions and activities.
- TfaC should consider a clear incorporation of self-confidence, self-efficacy, mentoring, financial and material support to girls, and SRH knowledge of girls into the measurement of project outputs and outcomes
- It is important that when all AoCs are in place, they work together with established community forums (mother’s groups, chiefs, other leaders) in order to sensitize the community to what the project plans to achieve and to gain the necessary support. Moving forward to year two, it is essential that all AoCs are in place prior to the commencement of the evaluation exercise.
- The Theory of Change may need to be reorganized to establish clear and causal links between outcome indicators and output indicators. DFID guidance advises that output indicators be linked to outcome indicators and have strong casual links.
- TfaC should explore ways of obtaining support from MoEST to provide support for relationships with Control schools. Additionally, TfaC should consider offering a token of appreciation that would not affect the outcomes of the study.
- TfaC should take care to manage its relationships with schools as well as AoC teachers to promote equality amongst teachers. Relationships could be improved by ensuring that local teachers are consulted for advice on the local context, as they have a better understanding of religious, social and cultural norms
- So as to not conflict with madrassas, AoCs in Muslim communities should find creative ways to address cultural norms and schedule another time of day for the clubs.

- A useful exercise for TfaC may be to sensitize girls, communities and administration officials to “re-admission.” Since many girls are intimidated by the prospect of returning to school after dropping out, AoCs could champion a “re-admission policy,” such as Malawi did at the secondary school level. This would be a way to encourage local teachers to become involved in the larger aims of the programme and would reduce tension. At the same time, the policy would create a school-wide policy in an effort to create positive, safe and non-bullying environments for girls.
- Supervision of AoCs at the site level will be of particular importance. From the limited experience and interaction of enumerators and AoCs, it is recommended that the AoCs receive significant guidance and onsite supervision to effectively carry out their critical role in this project.
- Further AOC training by TfaC should address how to work with out-of-school girls specifically, rather than ‘marginalised girls’ as a whole. AoCs may need to revisit and ensure they are comfortable with the strategies to attract out-of-school girls to school.
- Baseline results highlighted that while AoC teachers are confident in SRH knowledge, there are some areas concerning wider topics such as rights where they were less knowledgeable. More attention is needed to confirm and validate AoC readiness and capability in identifying, encouraging and influencing marginalised girls as desired.
- While the baseline was conducted prior to full AoC training, it is important that TfaC training provides key information and boosts AoCs’ confidence with broader SRHR topics that are key to the overall curriculum.
- Due to poor record-keeping, AoC training at Teacher Colleges should include administrative capacity-building skills and the GEC team should reiterate the importance of up-to-date records during training.
- Key indicators around the attitude and aspirations that parents have for their girl’s education are contradictory as parents give positive responses that do not reflect actual behaviour. We recommend that the outcome be altered to look at how households/parents prioritise girls and boys education (or even the value they place on educating girl children compared to that of male children). This will help TfaC to further explore and identify key attitude and behaviour changes essential to promoting a supportive environment for the girls’ education at home.

### ***Moving Forward***

- In the future, if enumerators have their own smart phones with the capability of utilizing Mobenzi, we recommend it be explored.
- To better engage respondents and allow enumerators to be more effective, all forms should be translated into the vernacular prior to administration, especially those to be reused at later points in the evaluation. This will allow for the engagement of many cadres of enumerators who will be able to administer the forms more quickly in the vernacular.
- As previously advised by TfaC, data collection tools will be shortened in future. A condensed packet will include abridged versions of all forms.
- Because in-school and out-of-school girls have different experiences in relation to schooling, a different version of Form E will be developed for out-of-school girls.
- The format of the surveys will be altered to cater for free text responses when an ‘Other’ option is selected. Additionally, the team should be prompted to conduct follow-up and probing questions when respondents select ‘Other.’

# 1. Introduction

## Project Background

The UK Department for International Development (DFID) Girls Education Challenge (GEC)-funded project, entitled, *“Empowering Young Female Teachers to Create Inclusive Learning Environments for Marginalised Girls”* will be implemented by Theatre for a Change UK (TfaC). Partners in the implementation of this programme are the Malawian Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and ILC Africa, the external evaluator. TfaC Malawi is an independent organization registered in Malawi and linked to TfaC UK through a federation agreement that unites their vision, mission and objectives. TfaC was founded in 2003 and has been active in Malawi since 2007, working within the education sector, employing innovative methodologies and equipping teachers and their students with the skills and information to protect their Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR).

This project design stems from the belief that gender and educational norms as well as poverty and poor SRH practices are significant barriers to the livelihood of girls and women. Thus, interventions focusing on retention, achievement and learning in primary schools in Malawi provide an opportunity to have an early influence on the girl-child. Through improved training of outstanding female Agent of Change (AoC) teachers who aim to create girl-friendly learning environments, the project will improve girls’ SRH knowledge, increase their confidence and participation in school activities, promote girls’ awareness of SRHR, and encourage greater parental and community support and engagement,. TfaC, using proven teacher training approaches and strategies, plans to leverage AoCs to increase the retention, achievement and learning of marginalised girls.

The project seeks to redress key barriers to girls’ education. Previous studies carried out on marginalised girls cite a lack of dynamic and child-centred pedagogies that reduce educational quality and lead girls to struggle to learn effectively. Girls often find themselves in environments that neglect their personal and social needs. It is also purported that a low prevalence of female teachers limits girl-friendly environments and increases girls’ vulnerability to sexual abuse by male teachers.

Additionally, infrastructural barriers to girls’ attendance continue to impact primary school completion rates. A 2012 study suggests that inadequate sanitation in schools for girls during menstruation contributes to significant absenteeism. In Malawi, many girls cite embarrassment about menstruation as a reason for missing school.

Also, girl-students who are mothers are often not allowed to attend school whilst pregnant or following the birth of a child; this can result in severely interrupted learning. For example, almost 9% of girls who dropped out of school in 2010 (15,318 girls) did so because of early marriage and pregnancy. Even girls who miss one term because of pregnancy are unlikely to return to school.<sup>2</sup> This reality can dramatically reduce girls’ literacy levels and ability to escape the cycle of poverty.

## Malawi In-Country Context

Malawi is classified as a low-income country by the World Bank with a GDP of US\$4.264 billion in 2012, an estimated population of 15.9 million and a per capita income of about US\$320 per year.<sup>3</sup> Overall, the country faces many challenges with poverty, health and education. The poverty headcount ratio below the national poverty has declined since the 1990s but remains extremely high at 50.7%. Life expectancy at birth is 54 years old, and the country ranks 165<sup>th</sup> of 193 countries in terms of overall life expectancy.<sup>4,5</sup>

Major barriers such as poverty and gender discrimination hinder progress against national education indicators. At the primary school level, the national enrolment ratio was 97% between 2008 and 2011. However, among the poorest quintile, primary school enrolment was only 71%, illustrating a further 26% gap to the national average.

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<sup>2</sup><http://paa2013.princeton.edu/papers/132776>

<sup>3</sup><http://data.worldbank.org/country/malawi>

<sup>4</sup>[http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/malawi\\_statistics.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/malawi_statistics.html)

<sup>5</sup>ibid.

Amongst the population over fifteen years of age, 69% of females and 81% of males were literate, indicating that at least a combined male and female total of 22% of students attending primary school did not learn to read and write. In terms of school completion, only 53% of students complete a full cycle of primary schooling. Therefore, when comparing the 97% enrolment rate to 53% completion rates, there are influencing factors that cause significant dropout rates and absenteeism. Previous studies cite common reasons for not attending school to include (1) that students find school “uninteresting” or “useless”; (2) that children are married and no longer interested in school.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to poverty and gender challenges, it is well established that Malawian girls and women have poor access to SRHR knowledge and women’s health care services. Only 46% of women have access to contraception. Whilst the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) in 2010 was 460 per 100,000 live births, rendering a country ranking of 160<sup>th</sup> out of 184 countries in terms of MMR comparisons around the world.<sup>7</sup> To add, national surveys indicate only 31% of young women and 41% of young men used a condom at their last incidence of high-risk sex. These alarming indicators translate into large populations of marginalized girls at risk for early death, high risk of transmission of HIV and other STIS, as well as a higher propensity to live a life of poverty.

Amongst challenges with poverty, gender, and health, UNICEF recently reports labour and cultural practices where more than one-quarter of Malawian girls are engaged in unlawful child labour. Moreover, an estimated 12% of girls are married before the age of 15, while 50% are married by 18. Lastly, nearly 35% of Malawian girls have already given birth by the age of 18, which can limit the mother’s access to education and expose her to unsafe SRH practices without proper instruction.

TfaC has developed a Theory of Change (ToC) that identifies and seeks to address these gender, poverty, health and cultural norms as major influencing factors towards girls’ retention, achievement and learning in primary schools. In support of the anticipated TfaC project, the independent evaluation team conducted a baseline study to establish study area characteristics. Baseline findings can be found in Section 6 of this report.

The TfaC-GEC project will be implemented in 10 districts across central and southern Malawi. In the first year it will cover 5 districts, including Nkhotakota, Salima, Lilongwe Rural West, Chikwawa, and Dedza. While in its second and third years of project implementation, the TfaC-GEC project will expand to 5 additional districts (Lilongwe Rural East, Mchinji, Blantyre Rural, and Ntcheu, Balaka). In terms of study area characteristics of the first year cohort, there are structural and historical challenges across the target districts with low learning achievement among women of reproductive age. Female literacy rates vary greatly across districts, ranging from the lowest of 49% in Chikwawa up to 65% in Nkhotakota, with 56% in Salima, 59% in Lilongwe Rural West, 64% in Dedza respectively.<sup>8</sup>

## **Theory of Change and Summary of Activities**

### ***Summarizing the Theory of Change***

As per the TfaC-GEC Theory of Change, TfaC seeks to improve life chances of marginalised girls at the impact level. In order to achieve this, TfaC aims to carry out a series of activities at the output and outcome level.

At the outcome level, TfaC seeks to influence marginalised girls and demonstrate enhanced learning by encouraging girls to complete a full cycle of primary education.

In support of these outcomes are four outcome indicators listed below:

1. Outcome indicator 1 - Number of marginalised girls who have stayed in school through the life cycle of the project.
2. Outcome indicator 2 - Number of marginalised girls supported by GEC with improved learning outcomes.

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<sup>6</sup>ibid.

<sup>7</sup>ibid.

<sup>8</sup>[http://www.nsomalawi.mw/images/stories/data\\_on\\_line/agriculture/wms\\_2011/2011%20Welfare%20Monitoring%20Survey\\_Report.pdf](http://www.nsomalawi.mw/images/stories/data_on_line/agriculture/wms_2011/2011%20Welfare%20Monitoring%20Survey_Report.pdf)

3. Outcome indicator 3 - Additional funds secured during the life of the project alongside DFID GEC funds to support the marginalised girls.
4. Outcome indicator 4 - Project has established mechanisms to enable marginalised girls to complete a full cycle of education.

Additionally, the four key outputs (with activities included in parenthesis) are listed below:

1. Agents of Change run inclusive workshops (AoC training; Girls Clubs; AIDS Toto Clubs; Listening clubs; Holiday Clubs);
2. Marginalised girls increase participation in co-educational environments (Girls Clubs; AIDS Toto Clubs; Listening clubs; Holiday Clubs);
3. Parents actively support girls' education (Community mobilisation and sensitisation; Open days; Community listening clubs; AoC/ team home visits); and
4. Project schools are more safe and inclusive (child protection policy put in place; AoC training of teachers in inclusive learning environments & child protection policy).

In turn, these outcomes and outputs are expected to lead to positive gains in the overall GEC-wide impact indicator of "Improved life chances of marginalised girls."

The evaluation team has been asked to measure progress against indicators at the output and outcome level, with a special focus on measuring additionality over and above gains made by the counterfactual. These indicators are to be measured at the baseline, midline, and endline points as well as throughout routine monitoring points. A full list of all indicators can be found in Annex A.

### **Monitoring**

Although largely managed by TfaC programme implementers, the independent evaluation team plays a critical role in offering guidance on an adequate monitoring strategy. The evaluation team also has the responsibility of conducting visits and spot checks at every school term. In addition to formal interval evaluations (baseline/midline/end-line), enumerators will conduct random spot checks to confirm attendance records and conduct observations of AoC performance.

### **Evaluation**

In order to determine causal links and/or associations between interventions and outcomes, the evaluation team will conduct hypothesis-driven, empirical research through the establishment of a two-arm quasi-experimental study design using the difference-in-differences technique. Data will be collected and analysed at the baseline, midline and end-line points of the project using a combination of data collection methods, both qualitative and quantitative. As part of the evaluation process, ILC Africa will carry out a longitudinal study of a specific cohort of marginalised girls both in-school and out-of-school. By tracking strategic data points related to the cohort of girls, the evaluation team can provide interim progress reports on access, retention and learning outcomes over the life of the project. This longitudinal cohort study will take place from the point of the baseline and leverage other data sources such as school registers, OVC registers and household surveys. The evaluation team expects the longitudinal study to provide data that can uphold and/or qualify the Theory of Change. The impact assessment as a whole offers an opportunity to validate the assumptions made in the Theory of Change and log frame.

The objectives of the baseline evaluation were as follows:

1. Define a group that has consistent characteristics to match against programme beneficiaries, and against which progress can be measured or comparisons made to show the effects and impacts of the project in the final project evaluation report (i.e., develop a Control Group to be tracked as part of a cohort).

2. Establish a Treatment Group among programme beneficiary girls to be tracked as part of a cohort.
3. Establish baseline values and describe initial conditions for all key indicators (impact, outcome and output).
4. Account and control for differences in baseline circumstances at the evaluation outset in order to better establish attributable impact at the midline and end-line.
5. Complete and submit baseline report in a timely fashion.

## 2. Baseline Methodology

### Evaluation Design and Study Parameters

The overall evaluation design is quasi-experimental Difference-in-Differences (DID) technique, allowing for TfaC's slight manipulation of Treatment Groups and Control Groups through a purposive assignment of marginalised girls rather than by pure random assignment. Furthermore, the use of a counterfactual allows for an understanding of the impact and outcomes only attributable to the TfaC-GEC project. In this instance where randomization is impractical, the quasi-experimental design will still allow for generalizations about the target population and successful replication of the intervention in other settings.

#### *Measuring Additionality*

In order to determine the actual impact and/or additionally within this project, the evaluation team will first determine changes in the treatment group over and above what would have happened naturally.

As a first measure, change is calculated over each group. The difference across time, from baseline to end-line is taken within each group as change in the treatment group ( $Y_{t2}-Y_{t1}$ ) and change in the control group ( $Y_{c2}-Y_{c1}$ ). This step eliminates any unobserved group-specific difference over the time period.

Second, the difference *between* the differences of each group is measured. That is, the difference between the changes observed in the treatment and control groups—depicted in formula form as  $(Y_{t2}-Y_{t1})$  subtracted from  $(Y_{c2}-Y_{c1})$ ; or, if  $\Delta$  stands for “change”,  $(\Delta Y_t - \Delta Y_c)$ . This step will eliminate time trends in findings, as it assumes that the treated group would have followed the same progression as the control group had the intervention not been applied.

In order to establish a counterfactual, ILC Africa will assist to track changes on output and outcome indicators within the Control group and over the duration of the 2.5 years of the GEC project. Gains made exclusively by the Treatment group will be considered GEC additionality, as measured using the Difference-in-Differences (DID) technique. This ‘difference’ is initially measured before the project is implemented at the baseline (first-difference). This same measurement is computed at the midline, and ultimately at the endline (second difference). Using the DID technique, the impact of the project is grossly determined as the ‘second difference minus the first difference’. In other words, the evaluation team will measure the difference in outcomes at pre-test and post-test (with some prediction activities occurring at the mid-term).

More specific and disaggregated processes for establishing targets and additionality are provided within this report.

#### *Identifying Project Beneficiaries*

Girls eligible to receive the intervention were purposively selected by TfaC AoCs based upon key characteristics of marginalisation. The project will be rolled out to marginalised girls where new beneficiaries will be incorporated each year. For each school, 30 in-school girls and 10 out-of-school girls from the surrounding catchment area were selected to participate based on a number of key characteristics that defined their marginalisation (e.g., lack of parental or guardian caregivers, poor attendance or previous evidence of dropping out of school, evidence of sexual activity or previous pregnancy, vulnerability to domestic violence or harmful practices against girls). Annex C presents the checklist used to determine girls’ vulnerability and eligibility into the programme.

Participating schools and girls come from five districts of Lilongwe Rural West, Chikwawa, Salima, Nkhoskhota, Dedza in Year 1, as well as five additional districts in year 2; Lilongwe Rural East, Mchinji, Blantyre Rural, Ntcheu, Balaka (added in Year 2). When selecting the districts and zones to work in, TfaC considered other interventions planned through the Ministry of Education related to girls’ education at the zonal level. Seeking to avoid schools where competing NGO activity could contaminate additionality, TfaC collected a wide range of information on possible participating treatment and control schools based on a number of factors, including adequate numbers of girls to sustain the project, proximity to health facilities and road, demographics (marriage

age, birth rate, OVC numbers), attendance rates, and the presence of school feeding or NGO activity in the school.

### **Ensuring Statistically Significant Results**

Using the research carried out as part of the SOFIE project as a reference (a previous project on supporting increased educational access for vulnerable pupils in rural Malawi), the evaluation team used enrolment and retention data as a proxy for girl-child activities within this project. The evaluation team calculated the project's retention rate to have a mean of 12.81( $\bar{X}$ ) with standard deviation of 7.42. Based on the intervention target of 0.2 standard deviation ( $\sigma$ ), we would expect a reduced mean retention rate for treatment group to be 11.33, that is,  $\bar{X} - 0.2\sigma$ .

Using Stata statistical software with 80% power, the required minimum sample sizes with allocation ratio ( $\frac{n_2}{n_1}$ ) of one, is 395 for Control and 395 for Treatment, rendering a total sample size of 790. Conventionally, a test with a power greater than 80% is considered statistically powerful. Thus, 1,550 (471 Treatment group girls and 471 Control group girls, plus 304 Treatment households and 307 Control households) are adequate and representative of the population to detect the effect at pre-specified probability of 80%. Figure 1, below details the calculations.

**Figure 1: Power Analysis Calculations**

```
. sampsi 12.81 11.33, sd(7.42) p(.8)

Estimated sample size for two-sample comparison of means

Test Ho: m1 = m2, where m1 is the mean in population 1
                and m2 is the mean in population 2

Assumptions:

      alpha =    0.0500   (two-sided)
      power =    0.8000
      m1 =      12.81
      m2 =      11.33
      sd1 =      7.42
      sd2 =      7.42
      n2/n1 =    1.00

Estimated required sample sizes:

      n1 =        395
      n2 =        395
```

### **Confirmation and Planning**

TfAC worked together in close collaboration with PwC, Coffey and the TfAC-GEC Steering Group, to advise ILC Africa on requirements for the design of the baseline survey. During the month of October 2013, participating stakeholders worked together to meet client requirements, submit inception reports, revise M&E Frameworks, and plan baseline evaluation activities. The TfAC-GEC Steering Group also deliberated critical programme decisions such as the confirmation of target beneficiaries and programme roll-out considerations on the impact evaluation.

### **Evaluation Methods and Data Collection Tools and Approaches**

ILC Africa deployed quantitative and qualitative methods and tools comprised of semi-structured questionnaires, surveys, examinations, trackers, interview guides and focus group discussion guides. The evaluation team implemented these tools between 14<sup>th</sup> November 2013 and 16<sup>th</sup> December 2013. Enumerators were deployed to the districts in teams of three or more, with one person designated as a Team Leader and supporting group enumerators. Enumerators (including Team Leaders) administered all forms at each school and household before moving onto the next community. Enumerators collaborated with AoCs to identify in-school and out-of-

school girls in the Treatment group for schools currently receiving AoCs. In schools without AoCs, enumerators worked with school staff, community members and used observation methods to engage with girls for the purpose of establishing study area characteristics.

A matrix describing tools and methods is provided in Annex E. With the exception of the electronic administration of the Marginalized Girls' Checklist and the Household Survey (HHS) through mobile phone technology, all remaining tools were administered through a paper-based system. Enumerators entered data via an online platform that syncs with a mobile platform. However, because of the limited number of mobile phones distributed to the evaluation team, the majority of enumerators administered these tools in paper format. In the case of the household surveys, enumerators administered 37% of the household surveys using the mobile platform while the remaining 63% were completed using paper forms.

Additionally, as a catalyst to increasing respondent interest and willingness to participate in the baseline exercise, the evaluation team introduced 'tokens of time and appreciation' such as sugar and salt packs valued at 600 Kwacha and transport/communication subsidies valued from 100 to 200 Kwacha to teachers/AoCs/parents. While acknowledging the ethical risks of using incentives, the external evaluation team (in consultation with TfaC) concluded that the benefits of providing a non-educational token outweighed the risk of interview bias, as subsidies and tokens were not advertised as 'cash for participation'. Additionally, it is customary and acceptable in various cultures to offer a token of appreciation that is not egregious or flagrant by which the evaluation team attempted to abide.

### ***Data Collection Training***

Formal enumerator training sessions took place in the conference facilities of the Bridgeview Hotel in Lilongwe between November 6th and 13th, and refresher enumerator training was also held on December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2013. Additionally, data entry training took place on November 29<sup>th</sup> 2013 at the ILC Africa headquarters in Accra, Ghana. An additional training session for Malawi-based data entry staff was held on December 9<sup>th</sup> 2013.

Training sessions areas were comprised of the TfaC-GEC project background, the role of TfaC and ILC Africa, enumerator and data entry roles and responsibilities, background on the target population, administration of the data collection tools (paper-based and electronic), probing and interviewing techniques, efficient question skipping patterns, quality assurance measures, role-playing and practice administration sessions, ethics and confidentiality measures, child protection, data entry and validation, coding, key variables of interest, compensation/contractual terms and conditions, and logistics.

Overall, the ILC Africa team provided guidance on administering EGRA/EGMA tests and shared good practices on building trust with girls under short time-frames in the field. Trainings also provided a forum for enumerators to provide detailed feedback on the user-friendliness of data collection tools. Evidence of training agendas and sessions are included in Annex D.

### ***Rapid Prototyping and Piloting***

Under the supervision of the Project Director and In-country Project Manager, the evaluation team piloted data collection tools at the Mpingu Primary school in the Lilongwe Rural West district. With the support of TfaC and Mpingu Primary school teachers, girls from Standard 5 and 6 and parents were organized to participate in the pilot. The ILC Africa enumerators piloted the tools by conducting household surveys, focus group discussions, semi-structured interview questions, EGRA and EGMA tests and attendance data tracking.

At the end of the pilot exercise, enumerators and other team members provided feedback on challenges they encountered during the pilot field exercise. The evaluation team then carried out a review of discrepancies and challenges with the tools. Additionally, the external evaluation team revised tools in consultation with the TfaC M&E unit. At the tail end of the enumerator training, the evaluation team went through a detailed process to review and critique iterations of each form and to retrain enumerators on form changes and updates.

### **Data Entry, Validation and Analysis**

The evaluation team restricted data entry and cleaning to key ILC Africa personnel and authorized entry clerks with a full audit trail maintained to ensure data integrity and the maintenance of confidentiality. The team entered

data with each girl's unique identity in the form of a Reference ID Number rather than as a name. This method was designed to comply with the ethical and confidentiality standards established at the inception of the external evaluation. Data were entered, validated and cleaned into a customized in-house database called So-Go Survey— an online, groupware server with a focus on scalability and open standards. All data was entered directly into a uniquely created template on So-Go.<sup>9</sup>

Quantitative and qualitative data were downloaded from the ILC Africa database and exported into SPSS. The external evaluation team conducted statistical analysis on the data to identify the most meaningful relationships between data sets. Data analyses were carried out using SPSS. The team calculated mean, standard deviation, median, quartiles and percentiles. Datasets were given codes and labels and linked to each question found within the suite of data collection instruments (See Annex E). As a final verification point, senior external evaluation staff verified datasets on So-Go and on Excel sheets through random spot checks of data.

For the purposes of analysing variation in response variables, the evaluation team used Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) as the statistical tool of choice. The 1-way fixed-effects ANOVA, makes four important assumptions, namely: (1) individual observations are mutually independent; (2) the data adhere to an additive statistical model comprising fixed effects and random errors; (3) the random errors are normally distributed; and (4) the random errors have homogenous variance. Together, these assumptions imply the validity of the ANOVA results.

### **Information Management/Data Management System**

ILC Africa is managing the development and maintenance of the independent evaluation information & data management system. In total, four software solutions were used:

- 1) Mobenzi, mobile telephone platform.
- 2) So-Go Survey, web-based database platform.
- 3) Excel, spreadsheet analysis software.
- 4) SPSS, statistical software and analysis package.

The Mobenzi platform was pre-established by TfaC and used to store data on the Marginalized Girls' Checklists and the HHS. Data from Mobenzi was downloaded in Excel format and imported into the So-Go database in order to improve efficiency and reduce errors (e.g., version control) by keeping cleaned and validated data together — accessed through a single point of entry. The enumeration team inputted paper records into the So-Go web-based platform as well as in Excel spreadsheets.

As a precautionary measure, the team also created an additional external database to house analysed information and Excel databases, thus retaining two copies of the data. The evaluation team remained compliant with ethical guidelines established in the baseline and inception plans, as well as with quality assurance procedures previously outlined.

### **Sampling Framework**

In terms of project implementation of planned interventions, TfaC-GEC will use a phased approach to deploy AoC units and rollout 36 AoC units in Year 1 and 189 in Year 2. Thus, 225 AoC units will be deployed across 225 schools across the first two years of the project.

As part of the suite of activities under the AoC intervention, in-school girls and out-of-school girls will take part in literacy/numeracy and SRH related activities through participation in AIDS Toto Clubs, Girls' Clubs, Listening Clubs and Holiday Clubs. Figure 2 details the project rollout for AoCs, in-school girls and out-of-school girls. Additionally, parents and other community members will partake in community-based activities (e.g., monthly listening clubs, radio programming, AoC home visits, mothers' groups, and Open Days).

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<sup>9</sup> For the EGRA/EGMA tests, however, the Project Director undertook an extra layer of validation and quality assurance by first scoring the tests through an Excel scoring template. Then scores and other major reference ID identifiers were uploaded into SoGo Survey.

**Figure 2: Project Rollout for Marginalised Girls**

Component Group	School Year 1	School Year 2	Total in evaluation
Intervention Term	1-3	4-6	
Agent of Change Teachers	60	290	350
Agent of Change Units	36	189	225
Number of Treatment Schools <sup>1</sup>	36	189	225
Girls Receiving Intervention for In-School Activities	1,080	5,670	6,750
Girls Receiving Intervention for Out-of School Activities	360	1890	2250
1 There will be 1 full AoC unit deployed to each participating school (see figure above). While some schools may have 2 AoCs teachers, the ratio of full AoC units remains equal among participating schools at 1:1.			

TfaC, in consultation with the external evaluation team, has opted for a design in which Year 1 girls will be the only cohort tracked throughout the entire life of the project. This is because Year 1 and Year 2 girls will have different lengths of exposure to the interventions and are to be considered differently.

The executed baseline sample size in Figure 3 reflects the Year 1 cohort only. At the conclusion of the baseline exercise, the final sample size totalled 942 girls and 611 households. These total figures comprise of 284 girls in the Treatment In-school group, and 187 girls in the Treatment Out-of-school group; alongside 284 girls in the Control In-school group, and 187 girls in the Control Out-of-school group. Additionally, the evaluation team surveyed 611 households, consisting of 304 HHs in the Treatment group and 307 HHs in the Control group.

**Figure 3: Baseline Sample Size**

	Treatment Group	Control Group	Total
	Number	Number	
<b>Tracked Cohort</b>			
In-school girls	284	284	568
Out-of-school girls	187	187	374
Subtotal of Marginalised Girls	471	471	942
Households	304	307	611

The evaluation team used non-random sampling to select 100 girls from various school levels to obtain scores for setting the learning targets. These levels were identified as Standard 1, Standard 2, Standard 6 (already completed through cohort tracking), Standard 7 and Standard 8.

The evaluation team conducted power analysis on the sample to ensure results would be significant. Using a Confidence Level = 95% and a Margin of Error = 5%, the external evaluation team treated each sample sub-group as a unique population and then determined the optimal sample size for each sub-group. The sample sizes detailed in the figure above include Treatment and Control groups based on the total number of project beneficiaries over the life of the project.

Overall, 36 Treatment schools and 36 Control schools were accessed by the external evaluation team as highlighted in Figure 4 below.

**Figure 4: Final List of Control and Treatment Schools Accessed during the Baseline Exercise**

District	Treatment		Control	
	Number of Schools	School Name	Number of Schools	School Name
Dedza	6	Mazanjala, Bembeke RC, Mphunzi, Magaleta, Kamtedza, Mthandiza	6	Csipse 1, Mkomba, Ntokera, EliyaChintedza, Chigwenembe, Kawongo
Lilongwe Rural West	12	Mtemambalame, Kachule, Kapudzama, Chibungo, Mphando,	12	Chikwiyakuti, Maliwa, Kakoma, Mtapo, Nkungula, Malili, Namitete, Chambwe,

		Kaning'a, Chatsala, Mdzobwe, Kafinya, Mtanda, Kalolo, Khanda		Kapunula, Sinumbe, Chalusa, Kachiswe
Nkhotakota	6	Liwaladzi, Msenjere, Jalo, M'ndira, Ngala, Chizewo	6	Mnduluka, Msangu, Chankhokwe, Kalinda, Kaninda, Chombo
Salima	7	Chitiwiri, Makande, Thokozani, Kanjuwi, Mikute, Nthumbo, Chipoka 2	7	Ngolowindo, Chionjeza, Nsauka, Thawale, Matenje, Chitala, Kankhombe
Chikwawa	5	Khokhwa, Mfera, Mitondo, Oleole, Mikolomgo	5	Gumbwa, Ndeleza, Mchacha, Nangali, Kandeu

## Limitations

There are a number of limitations within this baseline exercise that may have affected the validity of results in this report. Additionally, there are limitations, risks, and programme decisions above and beyond the scope of the baseline activity and evaluation team. Limitations can be categorized across four general categories:

- (1) Programme design – related
- (2) Baseline activity-related
- (3) External Confounding Factor.
- (4) Process and Logistical Factors for Future Consideration

### ***Programme Design - Related:***

- The first major limitation relates to the gradual project rollout of the intervention across years 1 and 2 of the project. Due to the phased rollout of the project, not all beneficiaries will be exposed to the intervention for the same period of time. Therefore, the full population of programme target beneficiaries is not reflected in this sample framework and baseline survey. The baseline study only reflects a statistically significant and representative sample from Year 1.
- The purposive selection of districts and schools may not be nationally representative of Malawi. Additionally, there are observed variances in the study characteristics of the identified districts, which may confound results when comparing one district to another. For example, religious influence, agricultural practices, and proximity to peri-urban areas all affect the girls in various and unequal ways across the five districts in Year 1.
- Despite efforts made by TfaC and the evaluation team to contact all Control schools in advance, some pre-selected Control schools had to be immediately switched once headmasters and teachers realized the burden of the EGRA/EGMA and other survey forms across the life of the project. They were resistant to the added work burden of participating in the 2.5 year research effort and decided not to move forward.

### ***Baseline Activity – Related:***

- Due to the limited time availability of teachers during the exam period as well as the effect of heavy rains, the evaluation team decided to increase its team size by 81% in order to meet its target number of girls within the sample. The size of the enumerator team expanded from an initial 16 enumerators to 29 enumerators. These new enumerators did not have an equal length of exposure to the tools and training sessions as the original 16 enumerators, thus affecting the administration style of data collection tools of selected newer enumerators.
- Particular to the girl-beneficiaries, the evaluation team noted a trend in girls not wanting to answer certain questions because of shyness, taboos or other discomforts. This observation was especially true for out-of-school girls at treatment and control schools in which approximately 67% demonstrated a degree of shyness or reluctance in responding to enumerator questions.

- Similarly, enumerators at times were not altogether confident in the truthfulness of respondents. Administrators often claimed to have no out-of-school girls in their entire catchment areas, while parents sometimes reported no child labour/work or other potentially harmful practices in their households. This is, however, contrary to what was observed and reported from girls.
- A more serious limitation of the study was the lack of engagement of traditional authorities and community members to answer questions about the programme concept and planned intervention. In treatment school areas, this was true approximately 57% of the time. This is often a struggle with baseline exercises, as beneficiaries and community members are not aware of the programme (as should be expected at the baseline).
- One particular challenge encountered when setting the standards for out-of-school girls was that children in Standards 1 and 2 did not have the literacy and numeracy skills to pass the EGRA and EGMA. While a learning benchmark could still be set at some score above zero, the pervasive inabilities of Standard 1 should be noted.
- In some schools, AoCs had not arrived in place due to challenges with transfers from their current schools; in these cases, enumerators had to identify girls and households with the support of other teachers. While the numbers were achieved, these teachers were less knowledgeable about the project.
- Due to project delays and time challenges commensurate with working in rural areas, extra enumerators had to be hired in order to complete the baseline survey. Although new enumerators received training, they had less exposure to the materials before deployment to the field and may not have been as experienced as the original group.
- A major challenge was missing information. Much of this missing information was due to the fact that girls and households declined to answer many questions; perhaps the meaning was not understood, but there was definite shyness and reticence when it came to engaging with the enumerator. In future, it is recommended that AoCs or school representatives take part in household surveys to encourage a spirit of openness and trust.

#### ***External Confounding Factors:***

- A possible challenge to isolating GEC impact may be newly implemented World Food Programme (WFP) School Feeding Programmes. It may not be possible to attribute increased retention, attendance and learning to TfaC-GEC interventions alone where school feeding programmes are introduced between 2013 and 2016. When comparing the impact of the TfaC-GEC intervention between Treatment and Control schools, the confounding factor should be accounted for based on the spread of WFP School Feeding Programmes at 7 Treatment schools and 6 Control schools<sup>10</sup>.
- A second and similar confounding factor may be CAMFED's provision of uniforms and sanitary napkins to girls, which is also designed to increase school attendance rates. This programme, though, was implemented in very few of the Treatment and Control schools.
- Additionally, a competing factor will be the madrassas that operate as religious clubs and offer girls financial and material support as compensation for their attendance. These clubs will compete for girls' time as they already operate in the afternoon in Salima, Nkhotakhota and Dedza.

#### ***Process and Logistical Factors for Future Considerations:***

The following factors affected the quality and data by affecting enumerators' time spent with beneficiaries and stakeholders and/or the quality of access to beneficiaries:

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<sup>10</sup> Treatment (7): Chipoka 2, Chitwili, Mazanjala, Mfera, Mikolongo, Khokhwa and Mitondo  
Control (6): Malili, Nangale, Mchacha, Gumbwa, Chigmula and Chombo

- Approximately 47% of AoCs could not avail themselves to complete the marginalized girls' checklist, which was a critical starting point to determining programme beneficiary eligibility. This inability occurred in new school environments where the AoC had not yet identified girls and delayed the establishment of the Treatment and Control groups lists before enumerators could conduct data collection exercises.
- Approximately 11% of AoCs had been transferred to different schools, and as they attempted to connect with the new community and overcome geographic isolation in a new context, several were resistant to spending time in the new communities or identifying out-of-school girls alongside the enumerators. Without this AOC support, enumerators used other means to identify girls within the community. This may have affected the quality of the selection list of eligible girls chosen for the baseline report. However, we are confident that the girls included in the sample are representative of the girls who will be part of the project, even if they do not end up officially enrolling in the project for the next 2 years.
- A fairly large proportion of out-of-school girl contact data (67%) was either not available or not updated. Some out-of-school girls had become pregnant or married or moved to different parts of Malawi, or even other countries, but were indicated as planned programme beneficiaries for January 2014. Replacement out-of-schools were quickly identified; however, this may have affected the quality of the selection list of eligible girls for the baseline report.
- A minor limitation during the period of performance isolated to the Salima region was voter registration. Beginning the week of December 2<sup>nd</sup>, many head teachers and AoCs in the Salima region were engaged in paid work with the Government of Malawi in registering voters from catchment areas at primary schools. This restricted the ability of enumerators considerably to engage with teachers who were already busy with primary exams as well as voter registration, thus increasing the amount of pushback from schools. Respondent answers may not be as informative or complete due to these competing factors.
- A second and uncontrollable factor was that the rainy season occurred during the data collection exercise. Due to the remote location of schools and the only option of travel by the back of a bicycle, the heavy rains consistently affected travel plans as well as the daily target number of schools and households planned to be visited. This may have affected the quality of the respondent data, which in these cases may have short-responses because of limited time at site.
- Roads and pathways were, at times, impassable, and bicycle taxis occasionally refused to transport enumerators to more remote communities and schools — most prominently those in the Livens and Chicaned areas in Chikwawa, the Kaongozi area in Nkhotakota and the Chilanga area in Dedza — where hills and vast distances without trading areas made transportation both challenging and time consuming. This may have affected the quality of the respondent data, which in these cases may have short-responses due to limited time at site.
- The most prominent challenge of the baseline exercise period was the one-week “stop work” order. This delay affected the time period during which enumerators could engage with students and teachers, particularly prompting enumerators to have to interfere with student examination schedules and holiday closing schedules at the end of November and early December 2013. Schools, teachers and administrators were not welcome to infringement on exams, particularly in Control schools that had limited relationships and knowledge of the project intervention. This may have affected the quality of the respondent data, which, in these cases, may have short-responses due to limited time at site.
- Due to limited access to the lists and out-dated contact information on the lists, sampling became more non-random, using snowball and replacement techniques in some cases. Overall, the baseline hinged upon direct and immediate contact with in-school and out-of-school girls, particularly from the Treatment group. This limited readiness had an effect on the enumerators to find girls who would be willing to reveal information and adequately, completely respond to questions. This may have affected the quality of the selection list of eligible girls selected for the baseline report.

### 3. Results

#### Baseline Study Area Characteristics

Demographic data about the TfaC-GEC target population of Treatment and Control school girls were primarily obtained from household surveys (HHS) and other supporting data collection methods, particularly FGDs and SSQs. The distribution of the administration of HHS was 36% in Salima, 23% in Nkhotakota, 17% in Lilongwe Rural West, 14% in Dedza, and 7% in Chikwawa. Furthermore, the number of in-school girl households totalled 67% while the remaining 33% came from out-of-school girl households. In terms of HHS administration, 38% of the surveys were entered using Mobenzi-enabled mobile phones, while the remaining 62% were conducted using traditional paper methods.

#### *Tribe, Ethnicity and Language of Households*

Of the nine tribes mostly represented within the districts and catchment areas, Chewa was the most commonly represented tribe at 76%. Less commonly represented tribes were Tonga (6%), Ngoni (5%), and Sena (4%). The less common tribes were particularly apparent in Chikwawa and Nkhotakota districts.

Comparing the tribes for in-school and out-of-school girl households produced a similar breakdown. For in-school girl households, Chewa was again the most represented tribe at 77%, then Tonga at 6%, Sena at 5%, and Ngoni at 5%. Out-of-school girl households were slightly more likely to have a higher representation in the smaller tribe groups, with Chewa at 74%, Ngoni at 7%, Tonga at 6%, and then Sena at 4%.

Of most importance to note are the strong cultural and religious norms that are attached to minority tribes. For example, the Sena tribe requires that young girls take over the wifely duties of any aunt or female relative that dies. In some cases, a 10-year old girl can drop out of school to take over the wifely duties of an aunt who has died and she must perform all acts, including sexual and household responsibilities.

The most common language spoken in households across all districts was Chichewa at 84%. To a much lesser extent, Yao (2%) and Tumbuka (1%) were also cited as additional languages spoken at home. A remaining 11% of respondents indicated languages in the “Other” category<sup>11</sup>.

Disaggregating by in-school and out-of school girl households demonstrated a similar breakdown with Chichewa cited by 84% of in-school households and 85% of out-of-school households. Interestingly, the “Other” category was selected by 10% of in-school households and 13% of out-of-school households. Although small, this percentage difference suggests that more out-of-school girls came from households who speak less widely disseminated languages. These findings are supported by anecdotal evidence that speakers of minority languages often struggle more to understand Chichewa and feel more alienated from school environments than those speaking the national language.

#### *Heads of Household & Female Representation within Households*

Men and women were heads of households at similar levels, where adult women represented 51% of household heads and adult men (no response accounts for 1%). Across the five districts, however, adult women had a stronger presence in households at 58%. Similarly, girls under the age of 18 had a higher presence in the household than boys at 63%.

There was a significant difference between male and female-headed households when comparing those for in-school and out-of-school girls. For in-school girls, male-headed households totalled 56%, female-headed households 43%, and the remaining 1% came from non-responsive participants. However for out-of-school girl households, male-headed households totalled 34%, female-headed households 65%, and non-responsive participants counted for the remaining 1%. The representation of female-headed households offers TfaC-GEC

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<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, the evaluation team did not structure the survey to cater for free text responses or follow-up probe questions to indicate what the “Other” languages are. The structure of the survey

insight into the cultural mind-set of households where dropouts appear to be more present in female-headed households. This may indicate that women influence younger girls to drop out and are the decision-makers in dis-enrolling girls from school.

It may also indicate, however, that girls from female-headed households are more likely to either not have enough resources to go to school or be needed by the household head for income-generating activities. When asked about the financial status of the household, female-headed households indicated being 'Unable to meet basic needs without charity' 82% of the time whereas male-headed households indicated the same status only 65% of the time.

**Time Spent within Communities**

When asked how long the household had been in the current community, a total of 66% of households reported having lived in the community for ten or more years, while 32% reported having lived there for one to nine years, and less than 1% reported having lived there for eleven months or less.

When comparing in-school and out-of-school girl households, it is interesting to note the discrepancy in the reported rates of duration in the community. 29% of in-school girl households had lived in the community for less than ten years while 40% of out-of-school girl households responded in this same category. This data indicates that frequent moving may not be an applicable predictor of girls' enrolment, attendance or retention for in-school girls. However, out-of-school girl households are less stable in the community and may pose problems for the programme intervention if they move away from school catchment areas within the life of the programme.

**Employment and Livelihood of Households**

Across the districts, an overwhelming majority of head of households claimed to have no paid job but work in the informal sector. Figure 5 below highlights the distribution of self-reported employment status.

**Figure 5: Employment Status of Household Heads**

Employment Status	Percentage
Household head has no paid job	57.77%
Household head performs occasional work	19.97%
Household head is a paid worker	14.08%
Nonresponse rate	8.18%

When head of household respondents were then asked to indicate their occupation, 67% chose not to respond. It is unknown whether the lack of response is due to unemployment or an unwillingness to respond. Of those who did respond, 29% indicated "Farm Labourer" and 21% indicated "Farmer/Fisherman (sells crops/produce)." Other occupations of notable mention included Subsistence Farmers/Fishermen (8%), Labourer (7%), and Craftsman/woman (5%). These responses indicate a population of low-skilled workers in agrarian occupations. These livelihoods render the households vulnerable to the slightest environmental/climate changes to surrounding land and water sources.

It is interesting to note the differences in occupation for in-school and out-of-school girl households. The evaluation team found that the head of twice as many out-of-school girl households labour on farms without the added income of selling crops or the benefit of subsistence farming (42% vs. 21% for in-school girls). Therefore, it appears that out-of-school girls may be more likely to support families with agricultural and household responsibilities.

**Educational Profile of Heads of Households**

Across all districts, 10% of head of household respondents had completed secondary school; 58% primary school; and 30% had not completed any formal schooling. Additionally, qualitative tools utilized on out-of-school girls allowed the team to purport that most mothers of out-of-school girls had never been to school themselves.

The completion of secondary schooling by heads of households was particularly pronounced in Lilongwe Rural West (23%) and Salima districts (18%). As the programme intervention rolls out, the evaluation team will pay special attention to observing correlation, if any, between the educational background of the head of household and the attendance rate of the girl.

When comparing the education level of heads of households for in-school to out-of-school girls, there is again a marked difference. For in-school girl households, 24% reported no formal schooling, 59% primary level, 16% secondary level, and 1% a training certificate. For out-of-school girl households, however, 43% reported no formal schooling, 56% primary level, and 1% secondary level. Since almost twice as many household respondents from out-of-school girl households reported no formal schooling, the TfaC-GEC intervention will need to work closely with parents to ensure they see the value of education and reduce any pushback from those who have not had formal schooling themselves.

### ***Socio-Economic Profile of the Household***

In terms of household income, head of household respondents were asked to best identify with the following seven responses to Question 11.3 on the HHS: “Which of the following applied best to your household?”

- 1) Unable to meet basic needs without charity
- 2) Able to meet basic needs
- 3) Able to meet basic needs with some non-essential goods
- 4) Able to purchase most non-essential goods
- 5) Plenty of disposable income
- 6) Unsure
- 7) No response

Overall, the poverty status of respondents was immediately revealed with 73% of respondents claiming inability to meet their basic needs without charitable assistance<sup>12</sup>, 23% were able to meet basic needs, 2% were able to meet basic needs with some non-essential goods, and 2% were unsure. It is important to note that responses to this question were probably skewed toward the inability to meet basic needs without some charitable assistance since field enumerators were most often viewed by respondents to be part of a “charitable programme.” However, poverty was still an important contributing factor, particularly when considering the different subgroups.

Disaggregated by in-school and out-of-school girls, the socio-economic profile of the households remained similar. In-school girl households were less likely to report an inability to meet basic needs without charitable assistance (72% vs. 75% for out-of-school girls).

### ***Household Decision-Making***

In terms of decision making, father and mothers were making joint decisions (37%). Interestingly when decisions were indicated to have been made by an individual, it was more likely to be mothers making the decisions alone (36% vs. 9%).

For in-school girl households, mothers were the sole decision maker 36% of the time, fathers 11%, mothers and fathers 35%, and other combinations including grandparents and tribal leaders 18%. For out-of-school households, mothers were the sole decision maker 36%, fathers 6%, mothers and fathers 39%, and other combinations 19%. It is interesting to note that respondents reported mothers as the sole decision maker in 36% of both in-school and out-of-school households.

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<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, the evaluation team did not structure the survey to cater for free text responses to this question nor did the team conduct follow-up probe questions to learn from whom respondents receive assistance. The structure of the survey can be altered as a future recommendation.

This data is even more illuminating when compared to responses for male and female-headed households. Although it seemed that out-of-school girl households were dominated by women (65% of out-of-school household respondents indicated that females headed the household), only 36% of those same households indicated that mothers were the sole decision maker.

### ***Marriage and Motherhood Status of Marginalised Girls***

An overwhelming majority of marginalised girls surveyed in the HHS were single (97%) and not mothers (92%). When stratifying girls by marriage status, 1% of in-school girls were married whereas 3% of out-of-school girls were married. When stratifying girls by motherhood status, 1% of in-school girls were mothers whereas 10% of out-of-school girls were mothers. In terms of the project intervention, key barriers to school attendance for those out of school are early marriage and motherhood. The project will need to consider how to alleviate these challenges and consider the impact that childcare responsibilities and the prevailing impact of discrimination against mothers in school will have on retention.

### ***Languages and Self-Reported Literacy by Marginalised Girls***

The first language of marginalised girls as opposed to the most commonly spoken language in households was Chichewa (90%). Additionally, the majority of girls (85%) indicated that they were able to read and write in Chichewa. However, this self-reported data point is contradicted by actual performance on EGRA and EGMA tests, detailed in the subsection “Learning Measurements” from Outcome Level Data.

### ***Marginalised Girls and Reported Daily Activities***

As part of the Household Survey, respondents were asked whether or not the girl spends time on four specific activities. For all households, 92% of girls spent time doing housework, 79% spent time caring for family members, 78% helped with growing crops, and only 11% helped with a family business outside of the home. These findings are critically important, as they demonstrate established household and cultural norms about the role of girls in the family. These expectations of girls may serve as barriers to programme interventions and indicate where community led interventions should complement the programme.

For those households who indicated that girls contributed to the household’s income (14%), the majority rely on financial contributions from the work of marginalised girls; 69% of households find the money from the girls’ work “important.” It is important to note, however, that this number probably underrepresents the financial contributions from girls to the household. In some cases, an enumerator was told that a girl did not contribute to a household’s income and then saw that same girl carrying maize to sell at a nearby trading post.

In terms of the amount of time that marginalised girls spend on household tasks, activities and chores, a majority of respondents (51%) indicated that the girls spend a “Quarter day/few hours” on housework. Of the remaining, 26% indicated “A little time/an hour or less,” 14% a “Half day,” 6% a “Whole day,” and 2% did not know. As would be expected, there is a large discrepancy in responses when disaggregated by in-school and out-of-school girl households. In-school girls were less likely to be spending a large part of their day doing household chores, with 7% doing half a day compared with 27% of their out-of-school peers, and only 1% spent a full day in comparison to 16% of out-of-school girls. This reinforces a challenge that the programme will face in terms of encouraging families to encourage girls to attend school and alleviate the current burden placed on girls in terms of household activities.

### ***Self-Confidence Levels of Marginalised Girls***

While 57% of household representatives ranked the confidence level of the girl as the same as her peers, 23% indicated that she was less confident than her peers, with only 13% indicating she was more confident than her peers (7% unsure).

When comparing in-school and out-of-school girls, there were differences in confidence levels as reported by household representatives. For in-school girls, more than double were reported as more confident than their peers as compared to out-of-school girls (16% vs. 7%). This was further supported by only 20% of in-school girls who were reported as having less confidence than their peers compared with 27% of in-school girls.

Investigation of qualitative data (detailed below) helped to support the notion that schooling factors considerably into the confidence levels of marginalised girls.

Across the out-of-school girl FGDs, participants indicated that they were confident, but less confident than their peers because they have not learned as much and could not read or write as fast. A consistent theme in the focus groups was that girls believed their confidence would increase if they returned to school. Additionally, at almost all schools, administrators indicated that they did not believe that girls felt as confident as boys at school — which is in direct conflict with girls' self-reported information from FGDs. A number of reasons were given for girls presumed lack of confidence and participation (in order of most commonly mentioned): 1) Girls are shy compared to boys; 2) Boys are more active than girls; 3) Girls feel inferior; and 4) Girls find it hard to participate in class because they sit on the floor more often than boys. In some cases, it was even mentioned that boys threaten girls who try to sit in chairs, an action that is rarely corrected by teachers.

Anecdotes from in-school girls show their uniforms can pose a barrier to participation — in ways an observer might not initially expect. Classrooms often do not have chairs, so students, boys and girls alike, sit on the floor. In Malawi, it is common practice for a student to raise her hand, be called upon, stand up to answer a question, and then sit down again. Wearing dresses, girls often feel uncomfortable standing up and sitting down again. They are worried the dresses would become revealing. The seating and uniforms create an environment of self-consciousness, and girls actively try to get through the day without being called on. Whether they know the responses or not, they do not want to answer, so they do not engage.

### ***Self-Reported Age at Start of School and Drop-Out Rates***

Often, the foundation and start of schooling can be indicative of future educational success. For in-school girls, according to the household representatives, 43% began school at the age of six, while 25% at the age of five, 13% at the age of seven, 10% at the age of four, 6% at the age of eight, and a combined 3% above age eight. These results compare well to national averages that show most children begin school at age six.

In addition to starting school, it is important to consider “Age at Drop-Out” to begin exploring relationships of causality to interventions. Nearly two-thirds of those interviewed were still in school and had not yet dropped out, however, of those who had dropped out, there were sharp hikes from ages 10 to 17 where the age of 12 was the most frequently self-reported age at dropout, followed by 14 years of age and then 16 years of age. In terms of the most vulnerable age-range of dropout, ages 12 to 14 experience the highest risk. This is a significant finding in the sense that it supports the TfaC-GEC programme target group of Standard 5 and 6 girls who most often fall between the ages of 12 and 14.

### ***Child-headed Households and Orphans***

Based on data from the Marginalised Girls Checklist, being an orphan is a more apparent driver of marginalisation than belonging to a child-headed household. 28% of marginalised girls were reported as orphans whereas only 6% were reported as coming from child-headed households.

Disaggregating by in-school and out-of-school girls demonstrates an imbalance in these two marginalisation indicators. For in-school girls, 26% were reported as orphans and only 2% were reported as coming from child-headed households. For out-of-school girls, however, 35% were reported as orphans and 17% were reported as coming from child-headed households. This distinction suggests that coming from a child-headed household and to a lesser degree being an orphan are strong indicators of marginalisation status for out-of-school girls.

### ***Barriers to Attending School***

Based on the Household Survey, focus group discussions and semi-structured questionnaire data, there were three often-repeated barriers to attending school: (1) financial-related concerns, (2) household activities, and (3) lack of confidence. The first two in particular will pose a challenge for the TfaC-GEC programme whereas the third has been targeted by the intervention.

The most common reasons cited by household representatives for girls no longer attending school were insufficient funds (54%), home obligations including housework and childcare (11%), perceived uselessness of schooling (10%), pregnancy (7%), feeling too old (6%), failing an exam or not being able to do schoolwork (6%),

and death of a family member (5%). These percentages illustrate a household concern for funds, a small amount of which are necessary to send girls to school.

In corroboration with the above data, a common finding from the perspective of girls across various focus groups was that they often did not go to school due to a lack of personal funds. A second and common finding across all FGDs was the lack of soap to clean uniforms, viewed as necessary in order to regularly attend school. Girls at the Mfera school (of Chikwawa district) mentioned their preference for income-generating and social activities, such as washing clothes for a fee, attending funerals and participating in other social gatherings, instead of attending school.

In-school and out-of-school FGD data indicates a number of key reasons for dropping out of school. In order of the most often mentioned, the reasons for dropping out include: (1) Need for financial support to pay for school resources and school-related fees; (2) Need for a school uniform (including soap to wash that uniform); (3) Poor academic performance or missing an exam; (4) Lack of confidence in their abilities. In these same focus group discussions, the causes of poverty were often unspecified, but some reasons girls cited indicated the death of their parent/guardian, lack of support from relatives, as well as divorce in the household.

Moreover, fear of bullying and being laughed at by peers also repetitively emerged as a concern in FGDs, where out-of-school girls explained that in some cases they were too intimidated to return to school after having dropped out. Among marginalized girls who were specifically orphaned, income came up many times in the FGDs and was consistently described as an issue; girls were frankly unable to pay for school development funds and exam fees.

Furthermore, the evaluation team gleaned that seasonality became an important determining factor in attendance and is a barrier to attending school. January and February for instance, the critical months of the “famine period” before the harvest, leave households in precarious and income-insecure states. Children (both boys and girls) from marginalized households, for instance, are encouraged to work at the tobacco estates (this tendency was particularly pronounced among the Kalolo School respondents in Lilongwe Rural West District) on which children make money picking, grating and preparing tobacco for sale.

Based on focus group discussions, out-of-school girls report the nature of their non-school activities to include chores, agriculture/working in the fields, fetching water, cleaning, selling firewood near the lake, playing netball, and school attendance (presumably occasionally). Several girls reported doing nothing all day. Almost all out-of-school girls indicated that they would like to return to school but in many cases are unable to do so because of a lack of money.

Although primary school has officially been free in Malawi since 1994, many families feel the strain of hidden fees for exams, activities, and school-related materials. One grandmother from the Lilongwe Rural West District questioned the current fee structure. She has big dreams for her granddaughter, who currently attends Malili Primary School, of finishing tertiary education and pursuing the career of her choice. According to the grandmother, the girl is denied certain activities at school when the family is unable to pay the additional funds, thus negatively impacting the girl’s ability to further her education.

Many girls had difficulty talking about returning to school. Some out-of-school girls in the FGDs indicated that if classes could be in the afternoon then they would come back to school. Reasons for afternoon sessions were not altogether clear, however when triangulating the findings, perhaps planting activities in agricultural households and domestic tasks take precedence in the morning. This bodes well for TfaC and its Theory of Change, which proposes to engage girls in the afternoon and may reduce barriers to their attendance. Some girls indicated that they could leave their children with their mothers to return to school. It was noted that small interventions can make a big difference — particularly the provision of school materials.

School administrators also shared perspectives on attendance and barriers to attendance. The evaluation team synthesized administrators comments that they believed school enrolment would increase in the coming years from the influence of mother’s groups, village-to-village advocacy, parent-teacher councils, the proximity of the school to the trading centre, AoC teachers’ influence and the ability of fishermen to leave their children in the village to learn. Despite perceptions of increased enrolment, however, administrators did not equally believe in a future reduction of dropouts because they felt that enrolment was easier to achieve due to the lure of school-

feeding and positive peer pressure within the community. However, getting a dropout to go back to school was deeply influenced by economic, family and cultural reasons.

### ***Sexual and Reproductive Health Knowledge and Rights***

In-school and out-of-school girls were administered a knowledge assessment as well as a rights assessment on key sexual reproductive health topics. Overall, marginalised girls scored 56% on a knowledge assessment of gender, sexual and reproductive health topics and likewise scored 58% on an assessment of their gender, sexual and reproductive health rights.

According to FGD data, out-of-school girls were less likely than in-school girls to have knowledge about SRH. Furthermore, from the focus group discussions, the evaluation team learned that reproductive health topics were not introduced into the curriculum until Standard 5, suggesting that girls who dropped out before Standard 5 know less about SRH topics for this reason. Outside of school, the evaluation team learned that most girls obtain SRH knowledge through church, village-level forums, traditional leaders, home-based “traditional ceremonies,” and health professionals. Other respondents indicated learning about SRH through the police department (in Chikwawa), “Eleven for Health Club” and “community clubs” that all provide education on STIs and safe sex.

Discussing SRH topics with young and vulnerable girls is a sensitive and confidential matter, yet many household representatives expressed their comfort in discussing these topics. When asked about their level of comfort to talk about sex, puberty and female adolescence, 42% cited “very comfortable;” 35% cited “comfortable;” 23%, “uncomfortable;” and 1% no response. It is important to note, though, that this is self-reported and may not reflect the actual situation.

In corroboration with the above finding, FGD data from in-school girls showed that most were comfortable talking about SRH issues. Even girls who confessed to know little about SRH topics indicated that they were comfortable discussing these topics with friends, so as to obtain more information. However, in a community of Lilongwe Rural West, several out-of-school girls in the FGD were uncomfortable talking about SRH.

Through triangulation exercises with the 360 degree oral exams, the evaluation team found that girls’ overall knowledge of SRH issues was limited (average of 56%). Both in-school and out-of-school girls scored similar percentages on the assessment and on questions related specifically to preventing HIV/AIDS and to other STI topics (e.g. abstinence, condoms, not sharing materials coming into contact with blood, etc.). Both in-school and out-of-school girls scored averages of 55% on these questions.

The team also noted a negative connotation of sex from respondents — select respondents claimed “It’s bad to have sex with men,” or, “It’s bad to have sex when you’re too young.” Banning of some cultural practices such as *fisi*<sup>13</sup> and *chokolo*<sup>14</sup> can also help to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS. According to UNICEF, “During the initiation ceremonies<sup>15</sup>, girls have had to have unprotected sex with men to prepare themselves for womanhood. Without undergoing this process, a girl is considered to be a child and is therefore not eligible for marriage.”<sup>16</sup> Such issues should be handled with care by AoCs so as not cause friction or further alienate the AoC from the community.

In terms of menstruation and how it was dealt with at school, the evaluation team investigated the relevant group’s ability to attend school while menstruating. Despite the fact that one-third of respondent girls had not yet started their menstrual cycles, the remaining two-thirds responded as follows — 56% indicated that they were able to attend school while menstruating; 28% were unsure (as this might be indicative of discomfort, shyness and inability to answer the question), while 12% were completely unable, and 4% were sometimes able.

Other focus group discussions around menstrual cycles and school attendance helped to unveil additional feelings of frustration. Based on findings in the household survey, it appeared that menstruation played a minor role in attendance. However, when girls were organized amongst peers and encouraged to speak freely in

<sup>13</sup> Literally meaning “hyena” in Chichewa, the cultural practice of *fisi* happens when a man is thought incapable of impregnating a woman. A “*fisi*” is then called upon to have sex with the woman.

<sup>14</sup> A cultural practice in Malawi that occurs when a wife who has a sister passes away. The deceased’s husband would then marry the sister.

<sup>15</sup> Refers specifically to “*Kusasa Fumbi*,” a ceremony that occurs when an unknown man (also known as a “*fisi*” or hyena) sleeps with a girl shortly after she has had her first period. This practice occurs predominantly in the Chikwawa district.

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.unicef.org/malawi/reallives\\_6980.html](http://www.unicef.org/malawi/reallives_6980.html)

FGDs, the topic of menstruation emerged in more than 50% of focus groups. As an overall perspective of girls from the FGDs, there appeared to be a lack of privacy at schools as slightly over half of the girls indicated feeling uncomfortable attending school while menstruating. One girl mentioned not coming to school during menstruation because her mother told her it was safer to remain at home. In support of these feelings, one girl attending the Msenjere School (of Nkhotakhota district) indicated difficulty attending school whilst experiencing menstrual cramps. She went on to state, “The classroom environment is okay, but since we can’t sit on chairs, we have difficulty remaining standing [while we are on] our periods.” Lack of classroom facilities — particularly desks or seating for all pupils, thus has some negative impact on girls’ comfort to attend school during their cycle of menstruation.

### ***Incidence of Disability and Serious Illnesses among Marginalised Girl Respondents***

Anecdotal evidence from the enumerators indicated that students with disabilities were rarely provided services at school that would enable them to learn. Of the range of long-term disabilities most often cited in the household survey, the three most frequently mentioned were hearing impairment (25 mentions), vision impairment (20 mentions), and leg disability/moving impairment (14 mentions). Other disabilities and medical conditions, however, were cited and described as preventing girls from attending school.

One poignant example came from a 12-year-old girl with albinism at Mdzobwe Primary School. Because of her condition, she is ostracized by her family, village members and peers. She cannot see well in poorly lit classrooms with cement blocks instead of window panes, yet she continues to attend school even without the hope of writing exams, as she cannot see the blackboard. After the death of her mother, she has struggled to survive and found work dancing in local music videos, in which she has been seen wearing her school uniform (likely her only outfit) and has been subject to mockery.

“I am going to leave school if I do not get any help,” the girl confessed. “My father abandoned my mother because of my condition. He said I was a monkey when I was born, and he could not look after such a child. The teachers do not help me in class as I have poor eyesight. The people in our village do not accept me.”

Lack of disability awareness and sensitivity among communities and teachers jeopardizes the future of students like this girl and places them at risk.

In addition to citing disabilities, almost a quarter (22%) of households indicated that their girls had encountered major health problems that prevented the girls on occasion from going to school. The top three serious illnesses mentioned were malaria, severe and persistent headaches, and severe and persistent stomach pains.

### ***Household Beliefs, Attitudes, Perspectives on Education***

The evaluation team noted a strong disconnect between the daily expected activities/tasks/chores of girls and future aspirations of the household for those same girls. This became most apparent through household survey response and FGDs.

Based on the responses from household representatives, virtually all households (97%) associated education with a better life and a similar percentage (96%) agreed that girls have the same right to go to school as boys. However, 67% of the sample was currently enrolled in-school while the remaining 33% was out-of-school. As many as 25% of respondents felt that gender was indeed a factor in deciding whether or not to send a child to school. The disconnect in these responses suggests a perceived importance of education among households, but the persistence of gender-based norms that accept lower school attendance rates for girls. Moreover, there appears to be an idealistic appreciation amongst respondents that girls have the right to school, yet that ideal situation is not fully practiced.

In support of this, the following questions further demonstrate that a majority of households have a positive view of girls’ education. When asked if it would make more sense for a family to send a son to school instead of a daughter with funds only available for one child, household representatives disagreed with this statement 77% of the time, agreed 13%, and were either unsure or did not respond 10%. It is interesting to note, however, that out-of-school households agreed with the statement 17% of the time whereas in-school households agreed only 11% of the time.

Compared to the previous data point, a higher percentage of overall respondents felt that it would not make sense for a married daughter to continue her education. Still, the overwhelming majority (73%) disagreed with the question while over a quarter (17%) agreed, and the remainder (10%) were either unsure or did not respond. Furthermore, in-school and out-of-school household representatives responded similarly to this question with 17% of in-school households and 19% of out-of-school households agreeing.

In terms of an education's impact on the future, almost a third of respondents felt that a boy (compared to a girl) is more likely to use his education when he leaves school. To specify, 31% of respondents agreed with the previous statement, 55% disagreed, and the remaining 14% either did not know or were unsure. When disaggregated by in-school and out-of-school households, about the same percentage of each category agreed with the statement: 32% of in-school and 30% of out-of-school household representatives.

When asked about a woman's role in the family compared to her right to education, 12% of respondents agreed that it is more important for a woman to be a good wife and mother than to be educated, 79% disagreed, and 9% either did not know or were unsure. Responses, when disaggregated by in-school and out-of-school households, showed a divide in perspective. While only 10% of in-school households agreed with the statement, 16% of out-of-school households agreed. Based on this difference and the discrepancy described in the question about sending a son or daughter to school, it is evident that out-of-school households will pose a greater challenge to the TfaC-GEC intervention in terms of changing the beliefs, attitudes and perspectives surrounding girls' education.

As noted previously, there remains a growing disconnect between household aspirations for girls versus the everyday barriers to attending school (i.e., household chores, care of family members, generation of income for the household). Approximately 44% of households wanted girls in the household to complete tertiary and university level studies, while 34% desired college and vocational school credentials for their girls. A slightly lower percentage (17%) desired their daughters to complete secondary school, while only 1% wanted girls to stop after completing primary school.

### The Overall School Experience

Regarding the school environment in general, the average class size at most schools was 46 students when averaged across all grade levels and based on data collected during the SSQ with school administrators. At Mfera and Mikolongo schools in the Chikwawa district, however, school administrators indicated that the average class sizes were more than 200 students. Limited classroom space and a shortage of teachers (on average only 16 teachers worked at each school) are two of the many reasons for over-crowded classrooms.

In terms of transportation to school among those enrolled, an overwhelming majority (99%) of girls walk to school while (1%) use a bicycle. Table 6 below indicates the length of time in minutes that it takes in-school girls to travel to school. Over half of all respondents (55%) indicated that it takes the girl more than 50 minutes to walk one way to school, a considerable investment of time and effort alongside the school day and household obligations.

**Figure 6: Responses to HHS School Attendance Questions 6.3 (How long must the girl travel to school each day?)**

Length of time (minutes)	Percentage
Less than 5	4%
Between 5 and 10	7%
Between 10 and 20	6%
Between 20 and 30	13%
Between 30 and 40	7%
Between 40 and 50	7%
Between 50 and 60	17%
Between 60 and 90	14%
Between 90 and 120	20%

More than 120	4%
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Also, among those households with enrolled girls, 81% reported that they attended for 6 hours per day, 13% for 7 hours a day, and 6% for 5 hours a day. Some respondents (5%) reported that they attend for 7 hours per day and 4% for 5 hours.

Overall, it appears that households were dissatisfied with their girls' schools with the most common complaints related to textbooks, classrooms, and teaching quality. To specify, an alarming 49% of in-school girl households purported to be "unsatisfied" with school textbooks, while 30% were "satisfied," and 21% "almost satisfied." Amongst those enrolled, levels of satisfaction with classrooms were mixed, where 46% were "satisfied" while 40% "unsatisfied," and 15% "almost satisfied." And finally, a minority of respondents (39%) were satisfied with the quality of teaching in schools; whilst 27% were "unsure," 23% were "almost satisfied," and 12% were 'unsatisfied'.

Based on FGDs and SSQs, there were conflicting opinions as to girls' participation in the classroom. While a majority of participants in the in-school girl FGDs thought that they participated equally to boys in the classroom, the administration officials were more sceptical about this. About half of the administration officials interviewed opined that girls participated less than boys in the classroom and would benefit from further teacher encouragement.

Focus group discussions about why students enjoy school offered helpful insight into the thoughts and perceptions of girls. When asked the question as to why students liked coming to school, common reasons included enjoyment of learning, gaining knowledge, future job security, opportunities to play, opportunities to read and ability to one day help their parents.

Girls tended to indicate Life Skills, Science and English as favourite subjects, while boys cited English, Mathematics and Science. Other popular favourite classes among both genders were Agriculture and Chichewa language. A common vocational goal of girls was to become a nurse, teacher or police officer, whereas boys preferred positions requiring more educational qualifications such as a pilot, engineer or doctor.

### **Safety and Risk of Violence**

In terms of safety, a majority of marginalised girls and their parents/caregivers reported that schools were safe. For in-school girls interviewed, 75% of them felt that schools were safe all of the time, 7% most of the time, 9% some of the time, and 9% never. In corroboration with these findings, parents/caregivers also reported high levels of safety for their girls attending school. Even among the 10% of household representatives who reported instances of violence at school, 78% reported that the daughter was "never afraid" of attending school, 15% "sometimes afraid," and 7% "often afraid."

Additional feedback from FGDs indicated that girls tended to be more comfortable when there were no issues of rape in their villages or when a neighbourhood watch existed. Reasons for feelings of insecurity included not having appropriate personal clothing such as tattered, revealing clothing that could bring shame onto the girl, thus making her more vulnerable to rape and taunting. A second and common reason was a fear of meeting boys on their way to school who might harass them. Third, travelling at night (when girls are considered more vulnerable to robbery), and fourth, bullying and mockery. The majority of in-school girls felt safe at school, however, a few feelings of insecurity emerged persistently in the FGDs.

Overall, girls indicated feeling most safe when there was no incidence of violence at their schools or when the headmaster was labelled as "nice," indicating the importance of engaging head teachers to support feelings of safety among girls at school. In certain school catchment areas, however, such as Chombo (District of Nkhohota), there was a particularly noted lack of perceived safety and security due to the danger of beginning to menstruate, fear of dropping sanitary napkins, and fear of catching cholera from the state of the toilet facilities. This could be indicative of health and infrastructure challenges at the school, which the AoCs may try to address. In contrast, girls at Mitondo school (of Chikwawa district) indicated that they had good toilet seats and facilities, which contributed to their feeling of safety at school.

## Outcome Level Data: Baseline Positions and Targets

The following tables and narratives provide information on baseline positions of outcome Indicators in support of the project. Outcome data is relevant to the following four outcome indicators:

Outcome indicator 1 - Number of marginalised girls who have stayed in school through the life cycle of the project

Outcome indicator 2 - Number of marginalised girls supported by GEC with improved learning outcomes

Outcome indicator 3 - Additional funds secured during the life of the project alongside DFID-GEC funds to support the marginalised girls

Outcome indicator 4 - Project has established mechanisms to enable marginalised girls to complete a full cycle of education

Included in this section are cohort-tracking data on critical programme indicators such as:

- Enrolment and Attendance
- Literacy and Numeracy Tests Results
- Learning Targets

This information can be used by TfaC to compose their targets for each indicator, as appropriate and relevant to programme needs.

**Figure 7: Outcome Indicator 1.0 Baseline Position**

<b>Outcome Indicator 1.0</b>	<b>Number of marginalised girls who have stayed in school (or equivalent) through the life cycle of the project (as defined by enrolment, attendance and drop out data)</b>		
<b>Appropriateness and Usefulness</b>	By capturing historical attendance data and following each throughout the project lifecycle, the project will indicate how after-school clubs affect in-school enrolment and attendance. This is useful in gauging the long-term impact of the GEC intervention.		
<b>Level of disaggregation</b>	District, school, enrolment status, household characteristics		
<b>Frequency of measurement</b>	Baseline, mid-line, end-line, and on a per-term term basis		
<b>Data Sources</b>	Form B – Attendance Tracker		
<b>Evaluation Interval</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Midline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
<b>Target Position</b>	N/A	TBD	TBD
<b>Actual Position</b>	39%	N/A	N/A

### ***Retention, Enrolment and Attendance***

The baseline position of 39% reflects the overall attendance rate among the Treatment group — both in-school and out-of-school girls. The overall baseline position for the control group, however, was 45% and reflective of both in-school and out-of-school girls. The concern, in this case, is that the Control schools, on average, appear to have better attendance rates at the start of the exercise.

The range of attendance for the complete sample was widely distributed between 0% and 83%. When considering only in-school girls, though, the mean school attendance for Treatment in-school girls was 75% and for Control In-school girls 64%.

Several factors affect attendance and enrolment, as highlighted within the baseline study area characteristics section of the report. Overall, poverty, cultural and family norms, and gender appear to most influence attendance.

The evaluation team will simply interpret retention as those girls who remain in the programme for the two years of implementation. In order to determine indicators of retention, in future, the team will triangulate data through official attendance trackers, club attendance tracker and EGRA/EGMA exams.

**Figure 8: Outcome Indicator 2.0 Baseline Position**

Outcome Indicator 2.0	Number of marginalised girls supported by GEC with improved learning outcomes		
<b>Appropriateness and Usefulness</b>	This indicator, tracked through EGRA and EGMA testing will assess the extent to which clubs have improved literacy and numeracy. However, given that a girl may see one improve without the other, it is suggested that disaggregating the data for this indicator is essential for a precise understanding of learning outcomes.		
<b>Level of disaggregation</b>	District, school, enrolment status, household characteristics		
<b>Frequency of measurement</b>	Baseline, midline, end-line		
<b>Data Sources</b>	Forms Q and R (EGRA and EGMA tests)		
<b>Evaluation Interval</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Midline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
<b>Target Position</b>	N/A	TBD	TBD
<b>Actual Position</b>	0%	N/A	N/A

### Learning Measurements

#### EGMA

All 942 girls of the cohort were administered EGRA and EGMA tests to establish baseline scores of their literacy and numeracy knowledge. In all cases the F-test shows that the observed differences are statistically significant. In terms of numeracy, the Treatment group as whole (both in-school and out-of-school) scored an average of 57% on the EGMA test. However, the Control group as a whole earned an average 65%. The concern, at this time, is that the Control group performed 8 percentage points better than the Treatment group.

When further disaggregating the in-school girls and out-of-school girls, in-school girls performed better across the board than the out-of-school girls, which was to be expected. However, the Control in-school girls performed better than the Treatment in-school girls, more specifically 72% to 60%, indicating a 12 percentage point difference. These findings may pose concerns that the groups might not be of similar aptitude or characteristics at the onset of this exercise. These differences can be mitigated, however, as progress is set against itself in the form of learning benchmarks, and not necessarily between Control and Treatment groups. So, at no point in the future will the 72% and 60% be compared against each other.

#### EGRA

Literacy performance overall was poorer than numeracy performance. The majority of students could not complete the expected tasks of reading and comprehension activities within the specified time frame. In all cases the F-test shows that the observed differences are statistically significant (0.955).

In terms of literacy, the Treatment group as a whole (both in-school and out-of-school) scored an average of 41% on the EGRA test. However, the Control group as a whole earned an average 40%. The EGRA scores, unlike the EGMA, showed only a negligible difference between Treatment and Control group performance.

Also, in-school girls outperformed their out-of-school counterparts, scoring an average of 43% compared to 36% as expected. In the Control group, the average EGRA score for in-school girls was 43% and 36% for out-of-school girls. Among the Treatment group, in-school girls scored 43% and out-of-school girls scored 36%.

**Figure 9a: Calculating the Learning Targets (Literacy)**

	Literacy Learning Mean		Standard deviation (ta)	Target score for cohort group (T = 0.2σ above average), where T <sub>1</sub> is the midline target and T <sub>2</sub> is the end-line target)
	Treatment Group	Control Group		
<b>Baseline</b>				
Cohort Performance (in-school)	43.3%	43.3%	N/A	N/A

Cohort Performance (out-of-school)	36.1%	36%	N/A	N/A
Standard 7 Girls	48.0%	N/A	24.2	$T_2$ (ISGs for S5)= +4.84
Standard 8 Girls	61.7%	N/A	20.9	$T_2$ (ISGs) for S6= +4.18
Standard 6 Girls*	40.1%	N/A	19.5	$T_1$ (for S5)= +3.9
Standard 2 Girls	22.5%	N/A	16.3	$T_2$ (OSGs)= +3.26
Standard 1 Girls	5.1%	N/A	8.0	$T_1$ (OSGs) = +1.6

\* Same as "Cohort Performance (In-School, Standard 6). Instead of surveying additional Standard 6 girls, which would unnecessarily duplicate the workload, we used the score of 100 randomly selected Standard 6 girls already tested as part of the cohort.

**Figure 9b: Calculating the Learning Targets (Numeracy)**

	Numeracy Learning Mean Overall score based on equal weights of test components*		Standard deviation (ta)	Target score for cohort group ( $T = 0.2\sigma$ above average), where $T_1$ is the midline target and $T_2$ is the end-line target)
	Treatment Group	Control Group		
<b>Baseline</b>				
Cohort Performance (In-school)	59.9%	71.5%	N/A	N/A
Cohort Performance (Out-of-school)	52.5%	54.4%	N/A	N/A
Standard 7 Girls	68.4%	N/A	26.2	$T_2$ (ISGs for S5)= +5.25
Standard 8 Girls	84.1%	N/A	21.8	$T_2$ (ISGs) for S6= +4.36
Standard 6 Girls*	59.5%	N/A	27.0	$T_1$ (for S5)= +5.4
Standard 2 Girls	30.4%	N/A	21.8	$T_2$ (OSGs)= +4.36
Standard 1 Girls	11.7%	N/A	11.0	$T_1$ (OSGs) = +2.2

\* Same as "Cohort Performance (In-School, Standard 6). Instead of surveying additional Standard 6 girls, which would unnecessarily duplicate the workload, we used the score of 100 randomly selected Standard 6 girls already tested as part of the cohort.

### Learning Targets

As per DFID GEC guidance, the learning outcome target is 0.2 standard deviations of the relevant grade level, a robust target designed to accommodate local context yet still standardize progress across DFID-GEC projects. Since the in-school and out-of-school girls have differing educational backgrounds, learning targets have been set against different standards. The target for the midline will be 0.2 standard deviations higher than the grade above, and the target for the endline will be 0.2 standard deviations higher than 2 grades above.

In order to set learning benchmarks, 100 girls were randomly selected across each of the Standards 1, 2, 6, 7 and 8. Figures 9a illustrates literacy learning targets from the reported EGRA scores, while Figure 9b illustrates learning targets from the reported EGMA scores.

**Figure 10: Additional Funds Secured during the Life of the Project**

Outcome Indicator 3	Additional funds secured during the life of the project alongside DFID GEC funds to support the marginalised girls		
Appropriateness and Usefulness	Assist the project in determining Value for Money		
Level of disaggregation	Project Beneficiary		
Frequency of measurement	Baseline, midline, end-line		
Data Sources	Project Financial Records		
Evaluation Interval	Baseline	Midline	End-line
Target Position	N/A	TBD	TBD
Actual Position		N/A	N/A

### Funding Secured alongside DFID-GEC Funds

This information for Outcome Indicator 3.0 has not been adequately determined by the evaluation team and may require more access to project-related financial data. Key informant interviews with staff have yet to result in obtaining adequate financial data to determine a baseline position. The evaluation team will seek guidance on how to better address this outcome.

TfaC indicates to have already secured £382,243, however, in match funding for the project in year 1. TfaC is anticipating receiving funding from a recent proposal to Medicor, which would also support the project. If this is successful it will gain £200,000 in 2014, £250,000 in 2015 and an additional £50,000 by the end of the project. TfaC is currently negotiating for continued funding from Christian Aid, so it now has two opportunities for leveraging in additional funds.

**Figure 11: Outcome Indicator 4.0 Baseline Position**

<b>Outcome Indicator 4.0</b>	<b>Project has established mechanisms to enable marginalised girls to complete a full cycle of education (or equivalent)</b>		
<b>Appropriateness and Usefulness</b>	Tracking of attendance, enrolment, exam and promotion data for each year of the project will provide details about how many club girls ultimately complete a full-course of education, helping to improve their life chances.		
<b>Level of disaggregation</b>	District, school, enrolment status, household characteristics		
<b>Frequency of measurement</b>	End-line		
<b>Data Sources</b>	Form B		
<b>Evaluation Interval</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Midline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
<b>Target Position</b>	N/A	TBD	TBD
<b>Actual Position</b>	0%	N/A	N/A

In key informant interactions, the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST) confirmed and suggested more institutional grounding for the project to improve sustainability. The Ministry has indicated that for the project to be sustainable, it needs to work and develop a strategy working closely with the Ministry. If the Ministry serves as a main entry point, it can create policies to ensure sustainability. MoEST representatives would like to see more on how the strategy can be maintained. MoEST representatives stated, “At the end of Year 2, it should not be a project anymore, but a programme implemented by all districts.” So that the project’s institutional life is not controlled by the interest or indigence of particular individuals, (i.e., vulnerability due to institutional staff turnover), an MoU between the Ministry and TfaC/DFID-GEC was highly recommended by the Minister.

In anticipation and response to these comments made by MoEST, TfaC-GEC has already actively engaged the Ministry from the outset. TfaC currently holds an MoU with MoEST, which runs up until 2015. As the Ministry, at both district and national levels, is such an important part of ensuring the project garners support and can be sustained through teacher training colleges, TfaC has a target to re-sign the MoU with the Ministry by 2015.

A final area of feedback from the Ministry was that the intervention was not reaching more districts. The Ministry suggested greater promotion of the programme through media outlets (TV, radio, etc.), as well as upkeep and updating of the teacher training manuals to include emerging issues. The Ministry also suggested that the mother’s groups do some counselling alongside teachers to ensure all are equal and have the same opportunities.

## Output Level Data: Baseline Positions and Targets

The following tables and narratives provide information on the baseline positions of output Indicators. Included in this section are cohort-tracking level data from the Treatment group as well as narratives on both the Treatment and Control groups for comparison purposes. This information can be used by TfaC to compose their targets for each indicator, as appropriate to their programme needs.

Figures 11 through 14 provide baseline positions on the GEC Output Indicators.

**Figure 12: Output 1 Indicators Baseline Positions (Agents of Change run Inclusive Workshops AoC Training; Girls Clubs; AIDS Toto Clubs; Listening Clubs; Holiday Clubs)**

Output Indicator 1.1	Percentage of AoCs who demonstrate ability to teach literacy, numeracy and life skills in participatory and interactive ways		
<b>Appropriateness and Usefulness</b>	Shows whether AoCs have necessary literacy/numeracy/life-skills knowledge as well as teaching ability. It will also indicate whether additional training is needed for AoCs.		
<b>Level of disaggregation</b>	District, school, years of teaching experience, subject (literacy/numeracy/life-skills)		
<b>Frequency of measurement</b>	Baseline, midline, end-line, on a per term basis		
<b>Data Sources</b>	F24, G16 (midline only), H08, I09, I13		
<b>Evaluation Interval</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Midline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
<b>Target Position</b>	N/A	TBD	TBD
<b>Actual Position</b>	0%	N/A	N/A
In terms of self-assessment, 100% of AoCs positively report that they have the ability to teach in participatory and interactive ways. This information is a self-assessment, however, and should be carefully considered against other more objective verification means conducted by TfaC (perhaps through evaluation at Teacher Training Colleges). The baseline indicator will be set once AoCs are in school and can be observed using a standard assessment tool whilst teaching literacy, numeracy and life skills.			

Output Indicator 1.2	Percentage of AoC and trainee teachers with correct basic SRH knowledge		
<b>Appropriateness and Usefulness</b>	Shows whether AoCs have necessary SRH knowledge as well as teaching ability. It will also indicate whether additional training is needed for AoCs.		
<b>Level of disaggregation</b>	District, school, years of teaching experience, SRH topic		
<b>Frequency of measurement</b>	Baseline, midline, end-line, termly.		
<b>Data Sources</b>	F22, F23, F25, G16 (midline only), H08, I09, I15, Form S		
<b>Evaluation Interval</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Midline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
<b>Target Position</b>	N/A	TBD	TBD
<b>Actual Position</b>	86%	N/A	N/A
Given the responsibility and mandate of AoCs to impart knowledge (in participatory ways) to marginalized girls, it is important that AoCs possess correct basic SRH knowledge at the onset of the project. An ideal way of determining knowledge is through an examination. At the baseline, there are two opportunities to examine correct basic SRH knowledge: (1) teacher training college baseline survey administered by TFAC; (2) Form S – 360 degree oral examination on basic sexual and reproductive health knowledge administered by ILC Africa. AoC scores on Form S ranged from 55% to 100%; however the average score of all AoCs fell at 86%. These scores indicate that most AoCs are highly equipped to begin the project and impart knowledge to marginalised girls.			

Output Indicator 1.3	Percentage of AoC and trainee teachers with knowledge of girls' gender, sexual and reproductive health rights		
<b>Appropriateness and Usefulness</b>	Shows whether AoCs have necessary SRH right knowledge as well as teaching ability. It will also indicate whether additional training is needed for AoCs. Baseline, midline and end-line data cannot capture information on trainee teachers.		
<b>Level of disaggregation</b>	District, school, years of teaching experience, SRH rights topic		
<b>Frequency of measurement</b>	Baseline, midline, end-line, termly.		
<b>Data Sources</b>	F22, F23, F25, G16 (midline only), H08, I09, I15, Form T		
<b>Evaluation Interval</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Midline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
<b>Target Position</b>	N/A	TBD	TBD
<b>Actual Position</b>	65%	N/A	N/A
It is equally important that AoCs have a strong knowledge base of gender and SRH rights, especially child protection related to policy and advocacy. An ideal way of determining knowledge is through an examination. At the baseline, there are two opportunities to examine knowledge of rights: (1) teacher training college baseline survey administered by TFAC; (2) Form T – 360 degree oral examination on Girls Gender, Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights administered by ILC Africa. AoC scores on Form T ranged from 33% to 100%; however, the average score of all AoCs fell at 65%. In order to increase the potential of the programme's success to pass on knowledge from teacher to student, this percentage of			

knowledge of AoC may need to be elevated. These scores indicate that AoCs may require additional training and knowledge.

Output Indicator 1.4	Percentage of girls on club register who attend x% of AoC run sessions		
<b>Appropriateness and Usefulness</b>	This indicator can show over time how many girls are attending the sessions and the consistency/trends of attendance. Need to stipulate a target percentage of girls and a target percentage of AoC sessions. As such, this indicator is presently incomplete.		
<b>Level of disaggregation</b>	School, district, enrolment status, household information		
<b>Frequency of measurement</b>	Baseline, midline, end-line, termly.		
<b>Data Sources</b>	Form B, Form C, E07, E08, E27 (midline), I16, K17		
<b>Evaluation Interval</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Midline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
<b>Target Position</b>	N/A	TBD	TBD
<b>Actual Position</b>	0%	N/A	N/A
This value cannot be determined at the independent evaluator baseline and should be assumed as zero because the programme has yet to start. However, at the midline using Form C: Club Session Attendance, tally the percentage of attendance for each girl by dividing the times she attended by the total number of sessions. We then tally up how many girls attended at threshold percentage (as defined by TfaC) of the sessions and divide by the total number of girls.			

Output Indicator 1.5	Percentage of girls who actively participate in AoC run workshops and clubs		
<b>Appropriateness and Usefulness</b>	Shows how engaged girls are and can demonstrate how AoCs can improve pedagogy to engage girls, as well as how to ensure non-participating girls are engaged. Can help nuance understandings of attendance and learning outcomes.		
<b>Level of disaggregation</b>	School, district, enrolment status, household information, type of club, co-ed or all-girl		
<b>Frequency of measurement</b>	Baseline, midline, end-line, termly.		
<b>Data Sources</b>	E10, E09, E11, F07, I17, I20, L13, M12, Form J, Form L, Form G		
<b>Evaluation Interval</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Midline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
<b>Target Position</b>	N/A	TBD	TBD
<b>Actual Position</b>	0%	N/A	N/A
This value cannot be determined at independent evaluator baseline and should be assumed as zero because the programme has yet to start. However, at the midline this will be evaluated by direct observation and self-assessment. The self-assessment of current level of participation in class may be a strong indicator of the girls' behaviour in the clubs. In Form E-Semi-structured questionnaire for Girls, respondents are posed 'How often do you raise your hand or speak up at the clubs. Additionally, observers will also document how many girls participate in discussion as well as observe frequency of hands raised.			

**Figure 13: Output 2 Indicators Baseline Positions (Marginalised Girls' Increase Participation in Co-educational Environments (Girls Clubs; AIDS Toto Clubs; Listening Clubs; Holiday Clubs)**

Output Indicator 2.1	Percentage of club girls with awareness of their gender, sexual and reproductive health rights		
<b>Appropriateness and Usefulness</b>	Demonstrates girls' learning gains relating to their health, rights and self-efficacy over the course of the project, measured.		
<b>Level of disaggregation</b>	School, district, enrolment status, household information, age		
<b>Frequency of measurement</b>	Baseline, midline, end-line, termly.		
<b>Data Sources</b>	J15, Form T		
<b>Evaluation Interval</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Midline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
<b>Target Position</b>	N/A	TBD	TBD
<b>Actual Position</b>	58%	N/A	N/A
The baseline score of marginalized girls' awareness of rights is a critical starting point that TfaC requires for this programme, as it is expected that the programme will increase girls' knowledge of this baseline point. Cohort girl scores on Form T spanned the entire range of possible scores for 0 to 100%; however, the average score of all girls fell at 58%. These scores indicate that girls are somewhat cognizant of their rights, however most lacked knowledge of 'status of a minor' and child protection laws. It further became apparent that most girls get their SRH knowledge from friends, which can result in significant misinformation since SRH knowledge overall was quite low. As such, improving girls' SRH can have a significant multiplier effect as girls communicate correct and useful information on treatment and prevention of STIs and pregnancy to their peers.			

Output Indicator 2.2	Percentage of club girls who believe they have the power to make decision in their own lives		
<b>Appropriateness and Usefulness</b>	Can demonstrate learning gains in self-efficacy through club participation. Will help demonstrate impact of AoC teaching and other environmental factors.		
<b>Level of disaggregation</b>	School, district, enrolment status, household information, type of club, age		
<b>Frequency of measurement</b>	Baseline, midline, end-line.		

<b>Data Sources</b>	E30, E31		
<b>Evaluation Interval</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Midline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
<b>Target Position</b>	N/A	TBD	TBD
<b>Actual Position</b>	24%	N/A	N/A
Marginalised girls were posed two questions. The first question was as to whether they had a say in decisions made at home. In response, 15% stated "All the time," 1% stated "Most of the time," 21% stated "Some of the time," 53% stated "Never," and 10% had no response. The second question posed to girls was whether they had a say in decisions made about going to school. In response, 25% stated "All of the time," 6% stated "Most of the time," 22% stated "Some of the time," 37% "Never," and 10% had no response. Compared to decisions made at home in general, some girls felt they had at least some say in their own education. Each weighted equally, the values for "All of the time" and "Most of the time" for each girl is represented in the baseline value.			

<b>Output Indicator 2.3</b>	<b>Percentage of club girls demonstrating ability to confidently interact with boys in co-ed learning environments</b>		
<b>Appropriateness and Usefulness</b>	Shows gender dynamics in co-ed environments. Girls who are confident interacting with boys in the classroom may attend more as they are less intimidated by school.		
<b>Level of disaggregation</b>	School, district, enrolment status, household information, type of club, age		
<b>Frequency of measurement</b>	Baseline, midline, end-line, termly.		
<b>Data Sources</b>	E18		
<b>Evaluation Interval</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Midline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
<b>Target Position</b>	N/A	TBD	TBD
<b>Actual Position</b>	59%	N/A	N/A
At the baseline, the self-reported assessment is the most indicative report of confidence. At the onset of the project, observers will be able to report on self-confidence that is observed. On Form E of the Semi-Structured questionnaire for Girls, the cohort was posed "Do you feel confident talking to and participating with boys?" A total of 49% of girls responded "All of the Time;" 20% responded "Never," 15% responded "Some of the time," and 10% "Most of the time," and 6% left the question blank. These initial data indicates tremendous opportunities for AoCs to influence and mentor girls to gain greater confidence. Values for "All of the time" and "Most of the time" are represented in the baseline position, as they more positively demonstrate confidence more often than not.			

<b>Output Indicator 2.4</b>	<b>Percentage of club girls able to attend school during menstruation</b>		
<b>Appropriateness and Usefulness</b>	Can shed light on reproductive health issues rooted in gender that prevent girls from attending school either because of personal comfort, culture or facilities.		
<b>Level of disaggregation</b>	School, district, enrolment status, household information, age		
<b>Frequency of measurement</b>	Baseline, midline, end-line.		
<b>Data Sources</b>	J12, E24		
<b>Evaluation Interval</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Midline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
<b>Target Position</b>	N/A	TBD	TBD
<b>Actual Position</b>	56%	N/A	N/A
The figure above represents the number of girls able to attend school or sometimes able to attend school while menstruating taken as a percentage of all club girls. Although club activity has not formally started at the schools, girls were posed the question at the baseline as to whether they could attend school during menstruation. Among the two-thirds of girls who had begun their period by the time of the baseline, 56% responded positively to being able to attend and 28% were unsure, (as this might be indicative of discomfort, shyness and inability to answer the question), while 12% were completely unable, and 4% were sometimes able.			

<b>Output Indicator 2.5</b>	<b>Percentage of club girls who report that they enjoy school</b>		
<b>Appropriateness and Usefulness</b>	This percentage will be a strong proxy for increased enrolment and attendance with the natural inclination that if students enjoy school more, they will attend more. If girls enjoy school but do not attend, this also suggests external barriers; if girls' do not enjoy school, suggests poor engagement, learning, practicality or sense of positive future (i.e., purpose of education). Girls are more likely to stay in school and get more out of it if they enjoy it, and education should be enjoyable.		
<b>Level of disaggregation</b>	School, district, enrolment status, household information, age		
<b>Frequency of measurement</b>	Baseline, midline, end-line.		
<b>Data Sources</b>	E25, E26, J19, J16, K13, L11,		
<b>Evaluation Interval</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Midline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
<b>Target Position</b>	N/A	TBD	TBD
<b>Actual Position</b>	80%	N/A	N/A

The programme aims to increase interest in school, therefore, it is important to document school enjoyment at the baseline and measure progress as a result of interventions. Form E, the Semi-Structured Questionnaire for Girls poses the question “Do you enjoy School,” on which 80% report “All the time;” 10% said “Most of the Time;” 4% left the question blank; 3% “Sometimes;” and 3% reported “Never.” In focus group discussions with in-school girls, out of school girls, and boys, the evaluation team posed the question as to whether they enjoyed school. So as to ensure the relevance of this indicator—the baseline position of which is already high—only the percentage for “All the time” is represented in the baseline position above.

**Figure 14: Output 3 Indicators Baseline Positions (Parents Actively Support Girls’ Education (Community Mobilisation and Sensitisation; Open Days; Community Listening Clubs; AoC/ Team Home Visits)**

Output Indicator 3.1	Percentage of girls’ club parents/ guardians who demonstrate positive attitudes towards girls’ education		
<b>Appropriateness and Usefulness</b>	Girls with positive encouragement at home are more likely to stay in school. Results can help TfaC understand household-level attitude barriers to girls’ education.		
<b>Level of disaggregation</b>	School, district, age of girl, household information		
<b>Frequency of measurement</b>	Baseline, midline, end-line		
<b>Data Sources</b>	Form A, E22, K13, L11		
<b>Evaluation Interval</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Midline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
<b>Target Position</b>	N/A	TBD	TBD
<b>Actual Position</b>	98%	N/A	N/A
Parent attitudes towards education often correlate to girl-child attendance and enrolment. Therefore, as a baseline position, 98% of parents/guardians demonstrate a positive attitude towards girls’ education. This percentage is a reflection of 2 questions posed on the household survey about parent’s opinions on educating girls. When triangulating this data point, the evaluation team asked the girl to rate how happy she thinks her parents/guardian are in terms of sending her to school. Since almost all parents have a positive attitude toward girls’ education, this indicator will serve useful when comparing the perspective of parents to the reality of girls’ education, but will not provide significant value by being measured at output level in the log frame.			

Output Indicator 3.2	Percentage of community members on listening club register who attend x% of listening clubs		
<b>Appropriateness and Usefulness</b>	Shows over time how many community members are attending the listening clubs and the consistency of attendance.		
<b>Level of disaggregation</b>	School, district, household information		
<b>Frequency of measurement</b>	Baseline, midline, end-line, termly		
<b>Data Sources</b>	Form A, Form D, F21, H16, H17, H18, I21, I22, M12		
<b>Evaluation Interval</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Midline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
<b>Target Position</b>	N/A	TBD	TBD
<b>Actual Position</b>		N/A	N/A
This value cannot be determined at independent evaluator baseline and should be assumed as zero because the programme has yet to start.			

Output Indicator 3.3	Percentage of girls’ club parents/ guardians of with knowledge of girls’ gender, sexual and reproductive health rights		
<b>Appropriateness and Usefulness</b>	Shows whether listening clubs and radio broadcasts may be making a difference. May indicate or affect likelihood of parents being comfortable talking to their girls about SRH issues.		
<b>Level of disaggregation</b>	School, district, household characteristics		
<b>Frequency of measurement</b>	Baseline, midline, end-line		
<b>Data Sources</b>	A101, F19, H08, Form T, Form S		
<b>Evaluation Interval</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Midline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
<b>Target Position</b>	N/A	TBD	TBD
<b>Actual Position</b>	65%	N/A	N/A
The baseline score of parents’ awareness of rights is an influential part of the programme, whereby parents increased knowledge of rights may positively impact children in the household. Parents’ scores on Form T ranged from 27% to 87%; however the average score of all parents fell at 65%. These scores indicate that parents are not altogether aware of their rights, and community listening clubs have the potential to be of great benefit.			

Output Indicator 3.4	Percentage of girls’ club parents/guardians who want their daughter to complete primary school (disaggregated by sex)		
<b>Appropriateness and Usefulness</b>	Will facilitate an understanding of intra-household gender dynamics in attitudes towards girls’ education and mother or fathers’ propensity to send girls to school.		
<b>Level of disaggregation</b>	School, district, household characteristics		

<b>Frequency of measurement</b>	Baseline, midline, end-line		
<b>Data Sources</b>	A15.8/12.13, F19, K14, K19 (midline), M16		
<b>Evaluation Interval</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Midline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
<b>Target Position</b>	N/A	TBD	TBD
<b>Actual Position</b>	97%	N/A	N/A
<p>In response to the question—how many levels of schooling do you wish your daughter to complete, a total of 97% of parents wanted their daughters to complete primary school or beyond. A total of 44% of households wanted their daughter to complete tertiary education, 34% urged them onto college/vocational school, 17% only desired them to complete secondary school, 3% per not interested in their girls finishing school, while a mere 2% hoped their girls completed primary school only. The non-response rate was less than 1%. Since almost all parents would like their girls to complete primary school and/or continuer further, this indicator may not be useful. In FGDs, again, almost all girls in each category indicated that their parents were supportive of their education.</p>			

<b>Output Indicator 3.5</b>	<b>Percentage of girls' club parents/ guardians who report feeling comfortable discussing SRH issues with their daughters</b>		
<b>Appropriateness and Usefulness</b>	Can be an indicator of parents' attitudes toward girls' SRH, girls' own SRH knowledge and they support girls' receive at home.		
<b>Level of disaggregation</b>	School, district, sex, household information		
<b>Frequency of measurement</b>	Baseline, midline, end-line		
<b>Data Sources</b>	A102, E23, M14, Form S, Form T		
<b>Evaluation Interval</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Midline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
<b>Target Position</b>	N/A	TBD	TBD
<b>Actual Position</b>	41%	N/A	N/A
<p>How much exposure girls have had to SRH knowledge at home and how it is viewed in their environment can affect their overall understanding of SRH rights. On the household survey, 41% of parents reported they were very comfortable talking about SRH with their daughters, while 34% reported they were comfortable, and 25% that they were uncomfortable. These results indicate that parents' comfort talking about SRH issues varies from household to household, and the differences might be a factor in girls' knowledge of SRH or receptiveness to learn throughout the programme.</p>			

**Figure 15: Output 4 Indicators Baseline Positions (Project Schools are More Safe and Inclusive (CPP Policy put in Place; AoC Training of Teachers in Inclusive Learning Environments and CPP))**

<b>Output Indicator 4.1</b>	<b>Percentage of AoC teachers with comprehensive knowledge of child abuse reporting mechanisms in school</b>		
<b>Appropriateness and Usefulness</b>	Will demonstrate teacher's learning on child protection policies, which increases an environment of child protection in the schools to which they are deployed. Moreover, if they do not have the necessary knowledge they cannot impart it onto girls.		
<b>Level of disaggregation</b>	District, school		
<b>Frequency of measurement</b>	Baseline, midline, end-line		
<b>Data Sources</b>	F22, F23, G16, G17, I09, Form T		
<b>Evaluation Interval</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Midline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
<b>Target Position</b>	N/A	TBD	TBD
<b>Actual Position</b>	TBD	N/A	N/A
<p>This value cannot be determined at independent evaluator baseline and can be determined at the start of the project. At midline, administrators will be asked to rate AoC teachers' knowledge of reporting mechanisms from 0 to 5. At baseline, the value might be calculated from initial training assessments conducted by TfAC.</p>			

<b>Output Indicator 4.2</b>	<b>Percentage of non-AoC teachers with positive attitudes towards girls' participation in class</b>		
<b>Appropriateness and Usefulness</b>	Will demonstrate teachers' encouragement of girls, which may help them overcome feelings of intimidation girls' may feel in co-ed environments. This would encourage girls to stay in school.		
<b>Level of disaggregation</b>	District, school		
<b>Frequency of measurement</b>	Baseline, midline, end-line		
<b>Data Sources</b>	E20, F13, G22, O13,		
<b>Evaluation Interval</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Midline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
<b>Target Position</b>	N/A	TBD	TBD
<b>Actual Position</b>	58%	N/A	N/A
<p>At baseline, this information can best be gleaned by girls' ratings in the Semi-Structured Questionnaire of how positive non-AoC teachers were about girls' participation in class. Girls rated their teachers as "All the Time" (53%), "Sometimes" (20%), "Never" (13%), and "Most of the Time" (5%), respectively. The baseline position above reflects people reporting positive attitudes all the time and most of the time.</p>			

Output Indicator 4.3	Percentage of club girls who feel equal to boys in classrooms		
<b>Appropriateness and Usefulness</b>	Feeling of equality and value in the classroom will indicate positive gender equality dynamics in the classroom and a lack of intimidation, positive teaching and school environments, as well.		
<b>Level of disaggregation</b>	District, school, household characteristics, enrolment status		
<b>Frequency of measurement</b>	Baseline, midline, end-line		
<b>Data Sources</b>	E19, F22, F23, G16, I09, G17		
<b>Evaluation Interval</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Midline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
<b>Target Position</b>	N/A	TBD	TBD
<b>Actual Position</b>	55%	N/A	N/A
<p>Understanding the learning environments of girls involved in the project can illuminate if the current school situation is helping girls to feel equal and wanted at school and in what ways it is failing. On the Semi-Structured questionnaire, 42% of girls reported they felt equal to boys in the classroom “All the time,” 13% “Most of the time,” 9% “Sometimes,” 6% No Response, and 3% “Never”. When girls feel equal to boys in the classroom, they are more likely to believe in their own ability to succeed and remain motivated to attend school. The responses show that over half of the girls feel they are being treated equally. Also, when it comes to classroom participation, girls and boys in FGDs indicated that they get equal participation and equal treatment and encouragement from teachers.</p>			

Output Indicator 4.4	Percentage of club girls reporting they feel safe at school		
<b>Appropriateness and Usefulness</b>	Shows girls’ feelings of safety at school over time. Will be a predictor of girls’ own willingness and agency in decision to attend or not attend school.		
<b>Level of disaggregation</b>	District, school, household characteristics, enrolment status		
<b>Frequency of measurement</b>	Baseline, midline, end-line		
<b>Data Sources</b>	E15, F12, J18, K20,		
<b>Evaluation Interval</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Midline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
<b>Target Position</b>	N/A	TBD	TBD
<b>Actual Position</b>	76%	N/A	N/A
<p>Safety at school could be a potential factor in a girl’s decision to attend. On the Semi-Structured questionnaire, 70% of girls report they feel safe at school “All the time,” 8% “Sometimes,” 8% No Response, 7% “Never,” and 6% “Most of the time.” These results show that safety may not be a significant issue for most girls in their ability to attend school, although considering the 24% gap from girls feeling safe both “All the time” and “Most of the time” to lesser degrees of reported safety, a significant portion of girls exists to impact.</p>			

Output Indicator 4.5	Percentage of club girls able to identify a person in school that they could report abuse to		
<b>Appropriateness and Usefulness</b>	Demonstrates girls’ understanding of child protection policies in schools as well as trust with school staff. If girls can identify an individual to report abuse to, they may feel safe coming to school, feeling that they have an advocate.		
<b>Level of disaggregation</b>	District, school, household characteristics, enrolment status		
<b>Frequency of measurement</b>	Baseline, midline, end-line		
<b>Data Sources</b>	E16, E17, Form T		
<b>Evaluation Interval</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Midline</b>	<b>End-line</b>
<b>Target Position</b>	N/A	TBD	TBD
<b>Actual Position</b>	45%	N/A	N/A
<p>This value can best be examined through the Semi-Structured Questionnaire for Girls, which asks girls to identify a person that they could report abuse to if they knew a friend was being abused by a teacher. Of the respondents, 45% identified someone while the remaining 55% could not. The results demonstrate girls lack sufficient knowledge of reporting mechanisms for SRH abuse. FGD data indicates that low levels of confidence and trusted adults to whom they can seek advice may prohibit girls from putting this knowledge about health and their rights into practice in their relationships.</p>			

## 4. Analysis of Project Assumptions and Design Objectives

The evaluation team carefully considered the overall design of the project as well as assumptions made in support of interventions. Points of commentary on project assumptions and design objectives are listed below. Additionally, the evaluation team pinpointed specific changes, adjustments, and deletions to outputs and outcomes within the log frame.

- In general, the correct and relevant changes are being measured by the output and outcome indicators within the Theory of Change; however there appears to be a limited relationship between outcomes and outputs. DFID guidance advises such that output indicators should link to outcome indicators and have strong causal links<sup>17</sup>. The ToC may need to be reorganized to establish those clear links.
- The AoC intervention largely relies on the assumption that out-of-school girls will be drawn to come back to school in the afternoons, and then, eventually begin attending school regularly. There are significant barriers to initiating this return to school, and AoCs may need to revisit and ensure they are comfortable with strategies that attract out-of-school girls to school. Reflections on the baseline findings further suggest that the GEC project is targeting the right groups of people but perhaps not targeting the subgroup of out-of-school girls using an after school programme. Out-of-school girls remain a critical target beneficiary; however as of the time of the independent evaluation baseline period, AoCs did not demonstrate full command of this subgroup and fully grasped neither the girls' identities nor their mind-sets.
- Baseline research findings confirm that there is immense potential to leverage self-confidence and self-efficacy towards increasing attendance, since much of the barriers to attending school come from the girls' attitudes and behaviour. It is therefore recommended that self-efficacy and confidence be given equal consideration and attention as an outcome. In support of this suggestion, TfaC staff also indicated the importance of this variable. At this time, these concepts are insufficiently addressed in the log frame; however, the harder outcomes of attendance, literacy and numeracy are visible. The evaluation team confirms that self-confidence and self-efficacy will play a critical role in behaviour change — oftentimes as precursor to literacy and numeracy.
- Because of the critical role that AoCs play, maintaining a supportive environment for AoCs is vital. AoC attrition is a threat to the project, since the project hinges on happy, caring AOCs to impact girls. Currently, factors behind AoC attrition may be related to low remuneration, intense time commitment, high demands of the job and posting in rural areas. These pressures may only intensify after the kick-off of the project if these conditions are not revisited formally.
- TfaC Project management explained that the project has opted for placing AoCs in pairs or individually, depending on the level of experience and confidence level of the teachers. Although this approach addresses variations in AoC competence, it may confound selected findings within the intervention. It may be the additional responsibility of the project to delineate as to whether 1 or 2 or any combination thereof of AoC units impacted marginalised girls. If pairs were more successful than individuals, the number of pairs and individuals should be statistically significant so that findings can be generalized

### Specific Changes/Adjustments to Outcome and Output Indicators

The evaluation team has reflected on the baseline results and concludes that that the project is mostly measuring the right changes, however the following suggested changes and additions to outcomes and outputs would better represent the full suite of planned programme interventions:

- Add an outcome indicator that measures self-efficacy and self-confidence as it relates to reading, writing, and speaking.

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<sup>17</sup> [bigpushforward.net/.../Governance-Indicators-VFM-Note-FINAL-81.doc](http://bigpushforward.net/.../Governance-Indicators-VFM-Note-FINAL-81.doc)

- Divide the learning outcome 2.0 into a numeracy outcome and literacy outcome to separately appreciate progress and findings.
- Add an output indicator that measures correct knowledge of basic SRH of girls and households.
- Add an output indicator that measures financial and material support to girls such as “Amount of funds raised in support of poverty reduction strategies centered on out-of-school girls.”
- Add an output indicator that documents actual average score increases of EGRA/EGMA as opposed to the standard deviation analysis at the outcome level.
- Delete percentage of girls' club parents/guardians who demonstrate a positive attitude toward girls' education, as almost 100% of households theoretically believe this. This can possibly be replaced with “Percentage of Parents, who Believe Gender is a Factor in Sending Children to School,” which is currently at 25%.
- Delete Output Indicator 3.4 (“Percentage of girls' club parents/guardians who want their daughter to complete primary school (disaggregated by sex)”) as almost all respondents indicated that they would like their daughter to complete primary school and/or continue on to even higher levels of education.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The baseline has yielded comprehensive data to serve as a basis for the evaluation and measuring of additionality and change over time. The information should be sufficient for TfaC to generate outcome and output targets that can then be followed and measured at the midline and endline.

After a comprehensive review of project literature and baseline key findings, the evaluation team has synthesized the following high-level conclusions.

### Conclusions

#### *Overall*

- From the baseline findings, poverty emerged as the root of the problem, as girls are being pulled out of school by their families to help households meet immediate income-generation needs. Furthermore, girls repeatedly indicated the need for uniforms, soap, school supplies, exam fees, and these funds are often unavailable at the household level.
- A major strength of the project is in its additional programme interventions related to self-confidence, self-efficacy, mentoring, financial and material support to girls, and SRH knowledge of girls. These aspects, when combined, offer a more representative picture of the wide range of interventions that TfaC plans to provide.
- It is clear from many indicators that out-of-school girls were more likely to be exposed to challenges that made education difficult. They were likely to be from smaller ethnic groups, less geographically settled, from poorer households, spend more time on household chores, to be wives and mothers, and to be orphaned / members of child-headed households.
- The AoC intervention largely relies on the assumption that out-of-school girls will come back to school in the afternoons and then begin attending school regularly. There are significant barriers to prompting this return to school, especially for girls who either head households or have children of their own.
- Some girls were suspicious of the program. Many out-of-school girls in particular indicated that going to a club three times a week would be challenging. AoCs anticipated a difficulty in teaching out-of-school girls since they would be “starting new again.” Concerns were that out-of-school girls would have poor concentration, lack of interest, lack of negotiation skills to convince parents to consent, and competing priorities such as household duties, boyfriends, and even madrassas.

#### *Theory of Change, Log frame and Project Design*

- In general, the correct and relevant changes are being measured by the output and outcome indicators within the ToC; however there appears to be a limited causal relationship between outcome indicators and output indicators.
- Findings show that the highest risk time for school drop-out is between the ages of 12 and 14, this supports the project design in targeting girls aged 11 -14 years aiming to provide support for girls ahead and during these crucial years.
- Although the Control group appears slightly stronger in terms of attendance, literacy, and numeracy, baseline findings indicate that midline and end-line data collection will be on track to demonstrate findings clearly and these will be discretely attributable to GEC interventions and non-GEC interventions.
- Moving forward, the greatest challenge with the Control schools will be willingness to participate. The evaluation team found that the decision to participate was heavily based upon the attitude and willingness of the head teachers.

#### *Project Implementation*

- AoCs have reported tension with their colleagues and superiors who believe them to be in receipt of special benefits. During surveys, some respondents purported that limited efforts had been taken by TfaC to address religious tensions and norms especially in the predominately Muslim areas of Dedza, Salima and Nkhotakota.
- In school catchment areas with large Muslim populations, children typically attend madrassas in the afternoon where they are offered financial and material support. Creating competition and division would not be to the benefit of both programs.
- AoCs, communities and some marginalised girls expressed suspicion about the project and felt that some people were treated unequally (i.e. a misunderstanding of why girls who were out of school would be getting support). If not, it is anticipated—based on enumerators’ experiences—that AoCs will encounter some resistance and perhaps even hostility in this endeavour.
- Baseline findings suggest that the project targets the right groups of people, but perhaps not the subgroup of out-of-school girls in the best way possible (i.e. with AoCs leading an afterschool programme). Out-of-school girls remain a critical target beneficiary. As at the time of the independent evaluation baseline, AoCs did not demonstrate a full command of this subgroup, and did not always know the identities of the girls nor fully appreciate out-of-school girl mind sets.

## Recommendations

At the baseline of this exercise, the evaluation team considered specific factors of the Malawi context to best influence “Improved life chances of marginalised girls.” After a thorough consideration of conclusive data points learned from the HHS, key informant interviews, semi-structured questionnaires, focus group discussions, EGRA/EGMA examinations, and direct observation, the evaluation team has translated conclusions a matrix of ‘Levers of Influence’ as well as actionable recommendations.

From baseline findings, the evaluation team firmly believes that there are ‘Levers of Influence’ that TfaC-GEC can manipulate to improve the life chances of marginalized girls. To ensure that the program is meeting the needs of what was discovered in the baseline, the evaluation team suggests a re-visitation of its interventions against the following levers.

### Levers of Influence Matrix from Conclusive Baseline Findings

No.	Category	Description
Lever 1	Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pressure to Contribute to Household Income</li> <li>• Require School uniform</li> <li>• Require Laundry soap</li> <li>• Require Bathing soap</li> <li>• Require School supplies such as notebooks, pens, and book bag</li> <li>• Require Exam Fees</li> <li>• Require Feeding at Clubs</li> </ul>
Lever 2	AOC Skill and Competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to transmit literacy and numeracy pedagogy</li> <li>• Ability to transmit knowledge of SRH</li> <li>• Ability to transmit knowledge of Child Protections and Rights</li> <li>• Ability to influence Self-Confidence and Self-Efficacy</li> </ul>

Lever 3	Cultural Norm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competing duties to do domestic/housework chores</li> <li>• Competing duties to care for family members'</li> <li>• Duty to support household with agricultural duties</li> <li>• Family pressure to marry early</li> </ul>
Lever 4	Self-Confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to pass a grade level and not repeat a grade level</li> <li>• Ability to read, count, write, and speak</li> <li>• Ability to interact with boys and teachers</li> <li>• Counteract bullying and intimidation to return to school</li> </ul>
Lever 5	Sexual and Reproductive Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of SRH and SRH rights</li> <li>• Ability to negotiate sexual decisions and reduce risky sexual behaviour</li> </ul>

Additionally, the evaluation team has developed key recommendations that may greatly improve project outcomes and outputs.

The recommendations are as follows:

- TfaC should creatively reconsider addressing economic and financial needs within the scope of its approved interventions and activities.
- TfaC should consider a clear incorporation of self-confidence, self-efficacy, mentoring, financial and material support to girls, and SRH knowledge of girls into the measurement of project outputs and outcomes
- It is important that when all AoCs are in place, they work together with established community forums (mother's groups, chiefs, other leaders) in order to sensitize the community to what the project plans to achieve and to gain the necessary support. Moving forward to year two, it is essential that all AoCs are in place prior to the commencement of the evaluation exercise.
- The Theory of Change may need to be reorganized to establish clear and causal links between outcome indicators and output indicators. DFID guidance advises that output indicators be linked to outcome indicators and have strong casual links.
- TfaC should explore ways of obtaining support from MoEST to provide support for relationships with Control schools. Additionally, TfaC should consider offering a token of appreciation that would not affect the outcomes of the study.
- TfaC should take care to manage its relationships with schools as well as AoC teachers to promote equality amongst teachers. Relationships could be improved by ensuring that local teachers are consulted for advice on the local context, as they have a better understanding of religious, social and cultural norms
- So as to not conflict with madrassas, AoCs in Muslim communities should find creative ways to address cultural norms and schedule another time of day for the clubs.

- A useful exercise for TfaC may be to sensitize girls, communities and administration officials to “re-admission.” Since many girls are intimidated by the prospect of returning to school after dropping out, AoCs could champion a “re-admission policy,” such as Malawi did at the secondary school level. This would be a way to encourage local teachers to become involved in the larger aims of the programme and would reduce tension. At the same time, the policy would create a school-wide policy in an effort to create positive, safe and non-bullying environments for girls.
- Supervision of AoCs at the site level will be of particular importance. From the limited experience and interaction of enumerators and AoCs, it is recommended that the AoCs receive significant guidance and onsite supervision to effectively carry out their critical role in this project.
- Further AOC training by TfaC should address how to work with out-of-school girls specifically, rather than ‘marginalised girls’ as a whole. AoCs may need to revisit and ensure they are comfortable with the strategies to attract out-of-school girls to school.
- Baseline results highlighted that while AoC teachers are confident in SRH knowledge, there are some areas concerning wider topics such as rights where they were less knowledgeable. More attention is needed to confirm and validate AoC readiness and capability in identifying, encouraging and influencing marginalised girls as desired.
- While the baseline was conducted prior to full AoC training, it is important that TfaC training provides key information and boosts AoCs’ confidence with broader SRHR topics that are key to the overall curriculum.
- Due to poor record-keeping, AoC training at Teacher Colleges should include administrative capacity-building skills and the GEC team should reiterate the importance of up-to-date records during training.
- Key indicators around the attitude and aspirations that parents have for their girl’s education are contradictory as parents give positive responses that do not reflect actual behaviour. We recommend that the outcome be altered to look at how households/parents prioritise girls and boys education (or even the value they place on educating girl children compared to that of male children). This will help TfaC to further explore and identify key attitude and behaviour changes essential to promoting a supportive environment for the girls’ education at home.

### ***Moving Forward***

- In the future, if enumerators have their own smart phones with the capability of utilizing Mobenzi, we recommend it be explored.
- To better engage respondents and allow enumerators to be more effective, all forms should be translated into the vernacular prior to administration, especially those to be reused at later points in the evaluation. This will allow for the engagement of many cadres of enumerators who will be able to administer the forms more quickly in the vernacular.
- As previously advised by TfaC, data collection tools will be shortened in future. A condensed packet will include abridged versions of all forms.
- Because in-school and out-of-school girls have different experiences in relation to schooling, a different version of Form E will be developed for out-of-school girls.
- The format of the surveys will be altered to cater for free text responses when an ‘Other’ option is selected. Additionally, the team should be prompted to conduct follow-up and probing questions when respondents select ‘Other.’

### **Research Dissemination Plans**

Research results will be disseminated to the project’s institutional stakeholders, including to those who are part of the Steering Committee and their partners. It is important that beneficiary communities are invited to provide feedback and obtain information on the research. Such participatory methods — drawing on the techniques of

rapid rural appraisal and participatory poverty assessments — call for engaging communities in focus groups in order to comment and correct any information or misinformation. Following the endline survey, it is recommended that the external evaluation team and TfaC collaboratively host workshops in multiple communities to this effect. Results will be delivered to TfaC, who may further disseminate the information in scholarly and professional circles or publications.