

**Supporting marginalised girls
in basic education:
- a performance review
of UK aid**

**Approach Paper
May 2016**

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Purpose and rationale for review

The purpose of this review is to assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of DFID's education programming in supporting girls who are marginalised in education.

The topic is a timely one, given the Sustainable Development Goals and the commitment to leaving no-one behind. In the coming years, DFID will need to pay more attention to the targeting of its programmes, not just towards the poor but also to remote, marginalised and excluded groups. As DFID has prioritised girls within its education programming for some time, this is an opportunity to assess how well DFID performs at overcoming marginalisation.

In addition, DFID has used a large centrally managed programme, the Girls Education Challenge, to address the challenge of girls' marginalisation. With centrally managed programmes playing an important role in DFID's business model, this performance review raises pertinent questions as to how well DFID ensures coherence between centrally and country-managed programmes.

Type of review

This performance review explores the effectiveness and value for money of UK aid and the factors that determine its performance. It focuses on accountability by assessing the quality of design and implementation of aid programmes and their emerging results.

This topic is suitable for a performance review because there are an established set of programmes that have been delivering results for some time through a variety of channels, giving rise to a range of important delivery challenges. Furthermore, the question of how to target programming efficiently and effectively towards marginalised groups will be a key performance issue for the UK aid programme in the future.

Scope

This review focuses on basic education, which DFID defines as primary plus lower secondary education. The Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2010 defined marginalisation in education as "a form of acute and persistent disadvantage rooted in underlying social inequalities." There is a working definition used by the Girls Education Challenge: "girls (age: 6 to 19) who have not been enrolled or have dropped out from school (whether living in slums, remote areas, ethnic/religious minorities, girls with disabilities, girls who become pregnant, girls affected by conflict) or are in danger of doing so."¹ The causes of marginalisation in education vary according to context. Marginalisation may be apparent in levels of enrolment, completion and learning achievement. Factors leading to marginalisation in education interact, leaving some groups particularly badly affected.² Analysis by Lewis and Lockheed (2007) has shown that, of those girls who have never been to school, the majority come from the most disadvantaged communities and face multiple types of difficulty. These may be due to location, ethnicity and low socioeconomic status.³ Given this, the groups of girls targeted by DFID's programmes and the types of interventions required need to be context specific. However, some barriers to girls' education are widespread, and some types of intervention are widely used.

1. Girls Education Challenge Business Case [link](#)

2. UNESCO (2010) Education For All, Global Monitoring Report "Reaching the marginalised" [link](#)

3. Lewis, M. and Lockheed, M. (2007). Inexcusable Absence: Why 60 million girls aren't in school and what to do about it, Center for Global Development

The review will cover all DFID bilateral education programming relevant to girls' basic education. It will include both centrally managed and country-led programmes. The review will consider different types of interventions, including those focused on access and retention in primary and lower secondary schooling. The quality of that education and the programmes aiming to bring marginalised girls back into the school system will also be assessed. In addition, the review will examine education interventions for girls affected by conflict, where this is delivered through basic education programming.

The review will not assess the performance of multilateral funding, because DFID's influence over programme delivery is indirect, raising a completely different set of performance issues. However, the review will take account of relevant multilateral programmes in country assessments where the review team visits the country, particularly the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), as part of assessing the overall coherence of DFID's support for basic education. The review will be limited to programmes operational between 2011 and 2015, in the period of the previous DFID Results Framework.

We note that the programmes relevant to this review form part of the broader education sector portfolio. Based on information provided by DFID, we have provisionally identified the following programmes as relevant to this review:

- **Country-led programmes** There are 76 country-led basic education programmes that were active since 2011.⁴ Our initial analysis has identified that 31 of these have a particular focus on girls' education or include a girls-specific component.⁵ We refer to these programmes as 'girl-focused' programmes.
- **Centrally managed programmes** These comprise the large Girls Education Challenge programme, four core grants to UK and international NGOs (Programme Partnership Arrangements) which include girl-focused components and nine other programmes supported by the Gender policy team, UK Aid Direct and the Civil Society Challenge Fund.

The number of projects in each category and associated budget⁶ is presented below.

Overview of Programmes (based on the total lifetime budget of programmes operational during 2011 - 2015)

Bilateral Programme Type	Number of Programmes	£ million
Girls Education Challenge Fund	1 (37 projects)	355
Programme Partnership Arrangements (PPAs)	4	22*
Other centrally managed funds with relevant activities	9	65
County-led basic education programmes, including:	76	4,200
Programmes either focused on girls or with a component that specifically targets girls	31	2,088
Other basic education projects	45	2,112
Total	90	4,642

* PPAs provide core funding for organisations. The scale of activities and expenditure relevant to this review remain to be confirmed, but will be less than the total shown here.

4. These are bilateral programmes which include some focus on primary or lower secondary education. This is taken from a list of programmes operational during 2011-2015 which DFID supplied. This list has been cleaned to reduce duplicate data and multilateral programmes. We have excluded 6 projects which have a budget of less than £1m from the sample frame. DFID has also supplied us with ARIES data on 293 programmes from the same period (all channels including multilateral and bilateral) which include an 'education sector' input code. The list of basic education programmes is currently being cross-checked with this longer list of programmes to ensure that all relevant programmes have been identified.
5. Our analysis has reviewed and developed an initial classification completed by DFID for the purpose of this review.
6. Due to the timeframe for analysing project data at this stage in the review, budget calculations are based on the total lifetime budget for each project operational during 2011-2015. The stated total budget therefore includes funds allocated for years falling outside the review period.

Background

There has been real progress in tackling marginalisation of girls in education around the world. Between 2000 and 2015, the number of girls for every 100 boys has risen from 92 to 97 in primary education and from 91 to 97 in secondary education. The number of countries that have attained gender parity in both primary and secondary education has increased from 36 to 62 between 2000 and 2015 (from a total of 145 countries).⁷ However, huge challenges remain. There are more than 62 million girls who should be in primary and lower secondary school but are not.⁸ In DFID partner countries, there are still more girls than boys of primary age out of school (17.9 million girls compared to 13.6 million boys in those countries for which DFID has data).⁹ Fewer than half of countries achieved the Education for All goal on gender parity in primary and secondary education by 2015, and no country in sub-Saharan Africa achieved parity at both levels.¹⁰ Gender disparities exist in completion and attainment in some contexts, and these disparities can be particularly stark for marginalised girls.¹¹

While the causes and proposed solutions for marginalisation of girls in education vary according to context, there are some common barriers that many girls face. These include cost (both direct, indirect and opportunity), distance to school, schools not being girl-friendly, restrictive gender norms and expectations, school-related gender-based violence, and early marriage and pregnancy.¹² Barriers specific to girls' learning, as opposed to enrolment or attendance, include out-of-school factors (such as domestic chores, gender norms and societal expectations) and in-school factors (such as a lack of female teachers, teachers' attitudes towards girls, curricula which reinforce gendered stereotypes and reliance on assessment methods that favour boys).¹³

Various kinds of interventions have been used to address this marginalisation. These include those that focus on resources and infrastructure (physical and material inputs that target either the supply of or demand for education), interventions that focus on policy development and changing institutional cultures at different levels, and interventions that focus on changing norms, such as advocacy campaigns.¹⁴ Moreover, education interventions that are not specifically targeted at girls can also benefit girls. Indeed, a review of evidence by Glick (2008) found that the demand for girls' schooling is often more responsive than boys' to gender-neutral changes in school distance, price and quality.¹⁵ Given the importance of a positive enabling environment for girls' education, interventions designed to benefit girls may also support boys and men.

DFID made commitments to girls' education by signing up to the education Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – universal primary completion and gender parity at all levels of education – and to the Education for All (EFA) goals.¹⁶ More recently, the theme of marginalised girls' education speaks directly to two of the new Global Goals (“Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” and “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”). The Global Goals have expanded the focus on education beyond access to incorporate quality, equity and learning.¹⁷

7. UNESCO (2015) Gender and EFA 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges [link](#)
8. King and Winthrop (2015) Today's Challenges for Girls' Education [link](#)
9. DFID (2012) Girls Education Challenge Business Case [link](#)
10. UNESCO (2015) Gender and EFA 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges [link](#)
11. Plan (2013) Girls' Learning: Investigating the classroom practices that promote girls' learning [link](#) King and Winthrop (2015) Today's Challenges for Girls' Education [link](#)
12. King and Winthrop (2015) Today's Challenges for Girls' Education [link](#)
13. Plan (2013) Girls' Learning: Investigating the classroom practices that promote girls' learning [link](#)
14. Unterhalter et. al. (2014) Interventions to enhance girls' education and gender equality. Education Rigorous Literature Review. DFID [link](#)
15. Glick, P. (2008) What Policies will Reduce Gender Schooling Gaps in Developing Countries: Evidence and Interpretation. World Development, Volume 36, Issue 9, Pages 1623–1646 [link](#)
16. The EFA goals include Goal 5: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality. [link](#)
17. Target 4.1 states that “by 2030 all girls and boys should complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes” [link](#).

DFID published a strategy on girls' education in 2005,¹⁸ in which it set out the action DFID planned to take and the leadership it planned to provide to ensure gender equality in education. Since then, DFID has made commitments in various strategy and policy documents. DFID's *Education Strategy 2010-2015*¹⁹ includes the aim to "prioritise girls and other marginalised groups". DFID's *Strategic Vision for Girls and Women* prioritises progress in four interlinked areas, including girls' completion of primary and secondary education.²⁰ In its 2013 *Education Position Paper*,²¹ DFID defines keeping girls in school and helping the most marginalised girls stay in school and learn for longer, as core priorities for its education programming. In 2012, DFID launched the ongoing Girls' Education Challenge (GEC), which aims to support one million marginalised girls through funding to non-state organisations²² through an investment of £355 million.

In 2014, education was the fifth largest sector of spend for UK ODA, at £821 million.²³ Between 2010 and 2015, DFID reports that it met its commitment to supporting 11 million children in education. Of these, 5.3 million were girls in primary and lower secondary education.²⁴ In October 2015, the Secretary of State made a commitment that the UK will help 6.5 million more girls to attend school over the next five years.²⁵

This review will build upon existing evidence, including three earlier ICAI reviews²⁶ on education since 2012, and is also linked to the ongoing ICAI review on Violence against Women and Girls.²⁷ ICAI is not aware of any planned studies in this area by other scrutiny bodies, such as the National Audit Office.

Theory of change

DFID does not have an overarching theory of change for addressing marginalisation of girls in education. However, from the education strategy documents cited above and the GEC theory of change,²⁸ it is possible to identify the main types of results, causal pathways and assumptions that underpin DFID's approach.

Gender inequalities in education, which are most severe for marginalised girls, have been described above. Education is valuable for girls in and of itself. Moreover, there is strong evidence that educating girls delivers significant economic, health and social benefits to the girls, their families and their communities. Evidence shows that educating girls reduces child mortality, adolescent marriage rates, fertility, and rates of HIV infection. It also increases earning potential and improves maternal health outcomes.²⁹ The GEC theory of change argues, on the basis of a review of evidence, that there is no single solution to overcoming barriers, particularly for marginalised girls. This is because they face multiple disadvantages (eg location, poverty, rural isolation, ethnicity, etc.). Different solutions, often used in combination, are needed to respond to the local context, including intersectional issues (multiple forms of discrimination) experienced by some girls. Some potential solutions have stronger evidence for their effectiveness than others. The strength of DFID's approach to using such evidence, and filling gaps, will also be assessed through this review.

DFID's 2013 *Education Position Paper*³⁰ emphasises the importance of children not only being in school, but actually learning, in order for education to maximise its transformational potential. This paper also presents a 'Learning Framework', which is a conceptualisation of the multiple and interrelated elements that DFID understands impacts on learning. These include the importance of strong and accountable education systems, good teachers and classroom practices, and of the school environment and students' home background. One further issue which this review will need to explore is DFID's support and expansion of non-state provision and its role in this in reaching marginalised girls.

18. DFID (2005) *Girls' education: Towards a better future for all* [link](#)

19. *Learning For All: DFID's Education Strategy 2010-2015* [link](#)

20. DFID (2011) *A new strategic vision for girls and women: stopping poverty before it starts* [link](#)

21. DFID (2013) *Education Position Paper: Improving Learning, Expanding Opportunities* [link](#)

22. See information about GEC [link](#)

23. DFID (2015) *Statistics on International Development* [link](#)

24. DFID Annual Report and Accounts 2014-15 [link](#)

25. DFID Press Release "Britain to help 6.5 million girls in poor countries go to school" [link](#)

26. DFID's Education programmes in Nigeria, DFID's support for Health and Education in India, DFID's Education programmes in three East African Countries

27. See ICAI reports and Approach Papers at [link](#)

28. DFID (2012) *Girls Education Challenge Business Case* [link](#)

29. See King and Winthrop (2015) *Today's Challenges for Girls' Education* [link](#)

30. DFID (2013) *Education Position Paper: Improving Learning, Expanding Opportunities* [link](#)

Existing evidence

A range of documents are publically available for DFID education programmes, including business cases and annual reviews. Independent evaluations are available or underway for some programmes, for example an ongoing independent evaluation of GEC. For programmes in the countries selected for country assessments, documentation relating to these ongoing evaluations will be requested.

Various reviews of the evidence on this topic have been undertaken, some commissioned by DFID. In particular, a rigorous review of literature by Unterhalter and colleagues in 2014,³¹ funded by DFID, investigated what kind of interventions can lead to an expansion and improvement in girls' education, and assessed the strength of the evidence for different types of intervention. It found that the strength of evidence varies. It also noted that a number of studies point to the value of combining a range of interventions. Another evidence review highlighted a lack of empirical research into the impact of non-formal schooling on learning or identifying which components are effective in helping girls return to formal schooling.³² Other reviews have examined topics including the impact of non-state schools on education in developing countries and the impact of the provision of separate toilets for girls.³³ These reviews will inform an assessment of the evidential basis for DFID's programming choices.

DFID does not compile data on expenditure on supporting marginalised girls in education. This review will seek to estimate the proportion of expenditure that has a focus on girls' education, and on marginalised girls' education.

Review criteria and questions

The review is built primarily around the OECD-DAC Evaluation criteria of **relevance, effectiveness** and **efficiency**. It will consider the following questions and sub-questions.

1. **Relevance:** how relevant are DFID's basic education programmes given what is known about the causes of marginalisation and barriers to access, retention and learning for marginalised girls?
 - a. To what extent are programmes addressing the different barriers to girls' basic education?
 - b. Are the design of programmes based on good evidence/learning on what works and why?
2. **Effectiveness:** how well are DFID's education programmes performing in delivering results for marginalised girls?
 - a. What results is DFID reporting?
 - b. How effectively is DFID targeting interventions to support the education of marginalised girls?
3. **Efficiency of delivery mechanisms:** are delivery mechanisms cost-effective in getting marginalised girls' in school and supporting their retention and learning?
 - a. How efficient are different mechanisms (state and non-state) in addressing the education needs of marginalised girls?
 - b. How does DFID ensure value for money in delivering education for marginalised girls?

A review framework, which sets out the evidence required to address these questions and the applicable components of our methodology, is presented on page 15.

31. Unterhalter et. al. (2014) Interventions to enhance girls' education and gender equality. Education Rigorous Literature Review. DFID [link](#)

32. Sperling and Winthrop (2015) What Works in Girls' Education: Evidence for the World's Best Investment. [link](#)

33. Birdthistle et. al. (2011) What impact does the provision of separate toilets for girls at schools have on their primary and secondary school enrolment, attendance and completion?: A systematic review of the evidence. London: EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London. [link](#)

Day et. al (2014) The role and impact of private schools in developing countries: a rigorous review of the evidence. Education Rigorous Literature Review. Department for International Development. [link](#)

Core ICAI issues

ICAI's reviews fall within a framework consisting of five strategic themes that reflect UK aid's challenges and priorities.³⁴ This review relates primarily to ICAI's 'leaving no one behind' theme, through its focus on marginalised girls.

ICAI has also identified certain core issues relating to UK Aid's fitness for purpose and its cross-cutting policy commitments. This review will help to build the evidence base in relation to DFID's promotion of gender equality. As a performance review, it will also inform evidence around ICAI's core theme in relation to programme delivery. This will include how DFID chooses delivery channels (including the role of non-traditional education and partners) and how DFID achieves coherence across country-led, centrally managed and multilateral programming.

Overview of methodology

Overview

The methodology is structured to facilitate assessment of DFID's strategic approach to supporting basic education for marginalised girls (covering expenditure, strategies, guidance and contribution to the evidence base), and to examine delivery (through assessment at the country and programme levels).

There are three main components to the methodology:

- 1. Literature review** – targeted to identify how barriers to education for marginalised girls are conceptualised and explain aspects of context that drive gender inequality in education. It will summarise knowledge about successful approaches to reducing marginalisation of girls in education. The findings of this review will inform the assessment of how well suited DFID's basic education programmes are to support the needs of marginalised girls.
- 2. Strategic review** – a review of DFID's overall approach to supporting basic education for marginalised girls. It will examine the appropriateness and capacity of DFID's strategic approach to supporting interventions that aim to benefit marginalised girls. This will include the quality of guidance for those responsible for programming and use of research and evaluation outputs to support continual improvement.
- 3. Country assessments** – assessments of DFID's relevant activity in six countries, including programme reviews of all girl-focused centrally managed and country-led bilateral basic education programmes in these countries. For four of these countries, these assessments will be conducted remotely. For the other two countries, visits will allow a deeper review of relevant programming. Face to face interviews conducted in-country will allow consideration of contextual and performance evidence from a wider range of sources than will be feasible within country desk reviews.

Together these components allow a broad analysis of DFID's overall approach to marginalised girls' education, as well as in-depth review of progress and performance for selected countries and programmes. This will allow the identification of factors affecting performance.

34. ICAI's five themes are: 1) Inclusive Growth, 2) Crises, Resilience and Stability, 3) Transparency, Accountability, and Empowerment 4) Leaving No One Behind and, 5) Beyond Aid.

Literature review

The literature review will provide a concise summary of the key issues and conclusions emerging from both academic and 'grey' literature, commenting on the state of knowledge and the quality of evidence underlying the main conclusions. For efficiency, the review will make full use of existing literature reviews and summaries. The literature review will explore the following questions:

- What is the scale of marginalisation of girls in basic education? What are the benefits of basic education for marginalised girls?
- What are the barriers to access, retention, learning and achievement in basic education for marginalised girls?
- What interventions are used to support basic education for marginalised girls?³⁵
- What interventions work in supporting basic education for marginalised girls?
- How do education policies and systems need to be reformed to support basic education for marginalised girls?
- What are the costs and benefits of delivery through different delivery models and channels?
- What evidence is there on value for money in addressing marginalisation of girls in education arising from evaluations?
- What is the performance of other donors in terms of tackling marginalisation of girls in education?

The findings will support judgements about how effectively evidence is being used to develop strategic approaches and programmes which target the right interventions at the right girls to optimise value for money.

For example, this task will support the strategic review (eg assessment of the extent to which relevant DFID guidance demonstrates understanding of evidence of what works) and country assessments (eg quality of the use of evidence in programme design).

Strategic review

We will carry out a strategic review of DFID's relevant expenditure and activity, tracing the evolution of the department's approach to supporting education for marginalised girls since 2011 and gathering evidence to assess overall performance. This will involve a range of analytical tasks:

- Describing DFID's strategic approach to supporting basic education for marginalised girls as embodied in current relevant strategies and predecessor strategies (including UK Aid Strategy, DFID's Strategy for Women and Girls and DFID's Education Strategy).
- Mapping how relevant policies and guidance have evolved, to reveal the contextual basis for the evolution of central programming, including the Girls Education Challenge, as well as other centrally funded projects and bilateral programmes.
- Assessing the quality of these strategies and the overall theory of change with regard to coherence with identified needs/opportunities and good practice highlighted in the literature.
- Analysing centrally managed and country-level bilateral programme expenditure on support for basic education and, as far as this can be discerned from centrally held data and programme documents, estimating the extent to which this is targeted at girls. The starting point for this task is DFID's own initial assessment of expenditure associated with girl-focused programmes.³⁶

35. The programmes that are in scope are based on DFID's categorisation of education sector projects. The contribution of interventions in other sectors, such as health, which have wider objectives to support education but which have not been classified by DFID as involving education sector input are out of scope for this review.

36. 20160208 ICAI Education programmes 2011-2015 Complete list (DFID internal document produced for this review)

- Analysing the overall reported results of centrally managed and bilateral programmes supporting basic education and the contribution that they make to DRF targets related to gender parity in enrolment and retention in basic education.
- Reviewing DFID’s approach to supporting evidenced-based practice in this area of work including:
 - a. funding research to fill gaps in knowledge;
 - b. contributing to global education research through the Building Evidence in Education Network (BBE 2);
 - c. promoting centrally managed and country-level research to improve understanding of needs/opportunities and effectiveness of different approaches;
 - d. supporting strong evaluation practice; and
 - e. ensuring that programme designs reflect lessons from past experience.
- Assessing the quality of DFID guidance and dissemination including its Education Position Paper (2013) and its guidance on VAWG in education.³⁷
- Examining DFID’s performance in developing and embedding methodologies and guidance relating to assessing value for money for basic programmes that have a particular focus on addressing barriers to education experienced by girls.³⁸

New data will also be gathered through:

- Key informant discussions with DFID headquarters staff, including those with responsibilities for education research and evidence. This will inform our understanding of relevant systems and processes and the assessment of DFID’s approach to achieving results.
- An online focus group of a sample of country-level Education Advisors to verify the processes used to facilitate the effective use of evidence in programme design (as mapped from the documentary review).

Country assessments

The methodology will explore DFID’s performance in programming in 6 selected countries. Countries were selected through purposive sampling, with the objective of allowing assessment of how DFID’s basic education programming for marginalised girls performs in a wide range of contexts. From an original list of 25 countries where DFID has spent money on basic education programming in the review period, a shortlist of 13 countries was selected. (We excluded countries with one or fewer country-led basic education programmes operational in the review period and those with no country led girl-focused projects operational in the review period). We then selected 6 of these countries for assessment to reflect the following marginalisation situations:

- Situations of fragility.
- Lack of gender parity in participation at primary level.
- Lack of gender parity in participation starting at lower secondary level.
- Lack of gender parity in learning achievement (in the absence of lack of parity in participation).

37. McAslan Fraser E and Fancy K (2014) DFID Guidance Part A: Rationale and Approach. Addressing Violence Against Women and Girls in Education Programming and McAslan Fraser E and Fancy K (2014) DFID Guidance Part B: Practical Guidance. Addressing Violence Against Women and Girls in Education Programming

38. eg DFID (2015) Value for Money from the Girls Education Challenge.

The final selection of countries was also designed to ensure they provided an opportunity to examine the following aspects of DFID basic education programming:

- Highly girl-focused programmes (ie those which are primarily focused on girls, rather than merely including some girl-focused activities within a broader programme).
- Girls Education Challenge programmes of all three types (Innovation, Step Change and Strategic Partnership).
- Global Partnership for Education (GPE) activity.

This approach reflects the importance of understanding the aspects of context that influence marginalisation and which may affect the development, implementation and performance of programmes. This approach provides a basis for detailed examination of the various ways in which DFID's basic education programming supports the situation of marginalised girls, looking across the country education portfolio as a whole. This focus on the country level allows for an assessment of whether DFID's efforts on tackling marginalisation of girls are joined up between education and other sector programming.

We will carry out country assessments of DFID's work in Lebanon, Malawi, Pakistan, South Sudan, Kenya and Tanzania. For Kenya and Tanzania, the review team will carry out country visits to provide more in-depth contextualised assessment of DFID's support for basic education for marginalised girls. Two country visits is the maximum feasible to carry out within the constraints of the review timetable. Kenya and Tanzania have been selected to represent different national situations in relation to the marginalisation of girls in education, and to cover a wide range of DFID programming (see the sampling strategy). The country assessments in Kenya and Tanzania will, in addition to the questions answered for all the country assessments, examine coordination between bilaterally funded activities and multilaterally funded programmes, in particular the GPE. A detailed plan for each country visit, including selection of site visits, will be developed once more information is collected on DFID's education programmes in the two countries.

Country assessments will be guided by the use of a standard Country Assessment Framework specifying the information that should be collected and providing standard criteria for evaluative judgements.

This framework will cover:

- The relevance of the bilateral basic education portfolio as a whole in that country (which includes programmes with no activities designed specifically to benefit girls). This will be judged with reference to identified drivers of marginalisation and barriers to expanding and/or improving girls' education, and evidence of what works in tackling marginalisation of girls.
- Results of interventions reported by DFID, and constraints on and success factors for programme performance.
- The strength of approaches to maximising value for money, including the use of benchmarks and the robustness of options appraisal in business cases where appropriate benchmark data is unavailable.

For girl-focused programmes, we will conduct a more detailed assessment against effectiveness and efficiency questions, based on the relevant questions in the Country Assessment Framework. Across the 6 selected countries, there are 12 girl-focused country-led programmes, 10 GEC projects and three other centrally managed programmes. This will involve examining programme documents including, where available: business cases; logical frameworks; annual reviews; project completion reports; independent evaluations; and any other relevant documents identified (eg baseline reports, inception reports, related research and analytical work). The relevant questions in the Country Assessment Framework will then be used as the basis for tailoring questions for structured interviews, in the light of the evidence already collected from programme documents. Interviews will be conducted (by telephone, except in visited countries) with key people involved with the programme, including (as appropriate):

- The responsible DFID adviser and/or programme manager.
- The responsible manager of the implementing agency.

Beyond interviews conducted as part of programme reviews, country assessments will be informed by structured telephone interviews with DFID Education Advisors in Lebanon, Malawi, Pakistan and South Sudan. In the case of visited countries, face-to-face interviews with a broader range of stakeholders will be conducted, including further DFID country office staff, government officials with relevant responsibilities, and staff from other agencies and third party institutions/organisations.

Limitations to the methodology

The review sets out to examine DFID's expenditure on education programming to support girls who are marginalised from basic education. This is ambitious due to the scale of relevant basic education programming and the number of factors that need to be considered in deciding which interventions support marginalised girls' education. This review is therefore at a strategic level, giving a broad understanding of the spending priorities attached to this area of work and the contribution of different funding channels.

The methodology has a number of limitations. First, given the large and complex portfolio, the review will only be able to examine programmes selectively. This will place limitations on the extent to which the review will be able to report findings which can be generalised. This is mitigated by good overall coverage of the expenditure of bilateral girl-focused education programmes and the inclusion of two country case studies which will look at performance across multiple funding streams. Secondly, many of the programmes to be reviewed are long-term investments and some will only be reporting early results at this time. Where results are not yet observable or documented, we will explore available evidence concerning progress in our discussions with stakeholders.

Ethical considerations

ICAI reviews are undertaken with integrity and transparency. When commissioning and conducting reviews we are guided by ethical guidelines and code of conduct of professional bodies such as OECD DAC.³⁹

All research will be conducted in a way that respects the privacy of informants and all data will be kept confidential and used anonymously in reporting. Informants will be told about this when they are invited to take part in interviews.

The review methodology does not include primary research with final beneficiaries, although some interaction may take place during site visits in the case study countries. Any information about individuals that is reviewed as part of the documentary analysis, or which may be revealed in interviews will not be used for the reports except where arrangements are made to obtain permission.

Research tools

Research tools will be developed and agreed as this approach paper is finalised. The research tools include a country assessment framework and programme review template as well as a set of questions to guide the literature review.

39. OECD DAC, Quality Standards for Development Evaluation 2010 [link](#)

Quality assurance and peer review

This review will be carried out under the guidance of ICAI Lead Commissioner, Tina Fahm. The quality of the review will be assured by the Review Oversight Unit of ICAI's Secretariat, using OECD DAC evaluation standards. This review will be externally peer reviewed at two points: an initial assessment of this approach paper and the draft report. The peer reviewer is Professor Michele Schweisfurth from the University of Glasgow. Professor Schwiesfurth is Professor of Comparative and International Education and Co-Director of the Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change, as well as chairing the Research Committee of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies. She is a former editor of the journal *Comparative Education* and has also worked as a teacher, trainer or teacher educator in Sierra Leone, Indonesia, Scotland and the Turks and Caicos Islands. She has wide experience of conducting research on education in a range of contexts internationally.

Risk management

The main risks to the successful delivery of the review and how they will be mitigated and managed are summarised in the table below.

Risk	Mitigation and management actions
<p>Given the breadth of the portfolio being reviewed, the review is overly dependent on self-reporting by DFID, creating a risk of positive bias.</p> <p>Disruption to the review fieldwork plan due to unforeseen events.</p>	<p>The team will identify the quality of evidence behind progress reports and make judgments as to whether they are well founded. External evaluations will be prioritised over internal reviews. The team will seek out external stakeholders to obtain third-party views, including critical voices from within partner country governments and civil society. As far as possible, the team will triangulate DFID's claimed results against other data sources.</p> <p>There is always a possibility that external events will force a cancellation of a planned country visit. If an alternative case study cannot be arranged at short notice, the case study country will be downgraded to a desk review and the most robust findings will be presented based upon the evidence available from documentary sources and telephone interviews.</p>

Timeline and deliverables

Key Stages and Deliverables	Indicative Timeline
Inception phase	End-January – mid-April 2016
Desk research & programme analysis	Mid-March – May 2016
Fieldwork	May – June 2016
Analysis and emerging findings	June – August 2016
Reporting	August – October 2016
Fact checking by DFID	October 2016
Publication and dissemination	November 2016

Review framework

1. Relevance: how relevant are DFID's education programmes given what is known about the barriers to access, retention and learning for marginalised girls?

Risk	Evidence required	Link to methodology	Additional analysis required
<p>a. To what extent are programmes addressing the different barriers to girls' basic education?</p>	<p>What are the main barriers being addressed by programmes?</p> <p>To what extent does DFID use relevant evidence and analysis on barriers to education for marginalised girls in a particular context? How effectively is local knowledge and experience harnessed (including directly through the involvement of women)?</p> <p>To what extent is tackling marginalised girls' education evident in country operational plans?</p> <p>How many of DFID's bilateral education programmes have a focus on girls/ marginalised girls?</p>	<p>Literature review to identify and classify different barriers to education and intervention types.</p> <p>Strategic review to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of country operational plans to determine level of coverage of girls' education/ marginalised girls' education. Stakeholder interviews to identify opinions on the extent to which different barriers are being addressed. High-level analysis of programme documents to identify whether bilateral basic education projects have girl-focused activities, and classify these activities according to intervention typology. <p>Country assessments to provide evidence on DFID's approach to needs assessment. Assessment of the coherence of DFID's relevant activity in those countries, and whether DFID is addressing the most relevant barriers to girls' marginalisation in education in those contexts. Programme reviews within country assessments to assess the effectiveness of identification of barriers to education in programme contexts, and of appropriate interventions.</p>	<p>Synthesis of evidence of barriers from the literature review.</p> <p>Articulation of overarching Theory of Change for marginalised girls' education and mapping of programmes against this, to assess the scope and coverage of different barriers through programmes.</p> <p>Analysis of proportion of country plans with a focus on girls' / marginalised girls' education, as well as change over time (from 2011 plans to 2014 plans).</p>
<p>b. Are the designs of programmes based on good evidence/ learning on what works and why?</p>	<p>What is the quality of processes for knowledge management and learning and their appropriateness to inform programme design?</p> <p>What is the quality of DFID guidance on addressing marginalisation of girls in programming, and the effectiveness of its dissemination?</p> <p>How effectively is DFID filling evidence gaps through research funding?</p> <p>How effectively is local knowledge and experience harnessed (including directly through the involvement of women)?</p> <p>To what extent does DFID use relevant evidence on what works in programme design?</p>	<p>Literature review to examine evidence of what works and gaps in evidence.</p> <p>Strategic review to assess the extent to which programmes reflect the consensus on what works, including through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder interviews to identify the quality of knowledge management functions (eg Helpdesks) and processes and extent to which evidence is harnessed to improve the effectiveness of programmes. Strategic document review to assess quality of guidance and its dissemination, map research programme objectives and outputs against identified evidence gaps and to assess evidence of research impact. <p>Country assessments to assess how effectively programmes have made use of available evidence on what works, including DFID guidance.</p>	<p>Qualitative assessment of guidance against findings from literature review.</p> <p>Qualitative assessment of knowledge management and learning processes.</p> <p>Qualitative assessment of DFID research priorities in light of gaps identified in systematic reviews.</p> <p>Programme reviews within country assessments to assess the use of evidence in programme design.</p>

2. Effectiveness: How well are DFID's education programmes performing in delivering results for marginalised girls?

Risk	Evidence required	Link to methodology	Additional analysis required
<p>a. What results is DFID reporting?</p>	<p>What progress has DFID made towards MDG 2 (universal education) and MDG 3 (gender equality)?</p> <p>What is the performance of DFID's education programmes against DRF gender parity indicators?</p> <p>How well are DFID programmes performing in delivering results for marginalised girls?</p>	<p>Strategic review to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of MDG target data to provide a contextual understanding of progress. • Analysis of DRF Results data to assess the contribution of DFID education programmes. • Stakeholder interviews to gather opinions on DFID performance, and reasons for performance. <p>Country assessments to assess performance of all of DFID's basic education programmes in supporting marginalised girls' education in those countries, through assessment of project, outcome and output scores, and reasons for the performance of programmes.</p>	<p>Synthesis of country assessments and of programme reviews to provide information on the performance of DFID's programmes in supporting education for marginalised girls, and reasons for performance.</p>
<p>b. How effectively is DFID targeting interventions to support the education of marginalised girls?</p>	<p>How far is DFID targeting interventions to support education of marginalised girls?</p> <p>How effectively are marginalised girls identified and targeted in programme implementation?</p> <p>To what extent do general education programmes seek to optimise benefits for marginalised girls?</p>	<p>Literature review to gather evidence to support the assessment, including on effective targeting and the extent to which education interventions not targeting girls/marginalised girls benefit these groups.</p> <p>Strategic review to assess quality of guidance and its dissemination on targeting interventions to support the education of marginalised girls.</p> <p>Country assessments to assess, through programme reviews, how effectively the right girls are being targeted in implementation.</p>	<p>Synthesis to assess the effectiveness of programmes (both those that are girl-focused and general programmes) in supporting the education of marginalised girls.</p>

3. Efficiency of delivery mechanisms: are delivery mechanisms cost effective in getting marginalised girls in school and supporting their retention and learning?

Risk	Evidence required	Link to methodology	Additional analysis required
a. How efficient are different mechanisms (state and non-state) in addressing the needs of marginalised girls?	<p>How strong is the rationale for choices of delivery channels and consideration of efficiency factors?</p> <p>What is the relative performance of different delivery channels?</p>	<p>Literature review to assess evidence on cost-effectiveness of different delivery mechanisms.</p> <p>Strategic review to identify rationale for choices of delivery models.</p> <p>Country assessments to provide information on how choices are made and evidence regarding efficiency of different delivery mechanisms.</p>	<p>Synthesis of evidence from each component to assess whether choices are justified.</p>
b. How does DFID ensure value for money in delivering for marginalised girls?	<p>To what extent are appraisal and selection processes designed and implemented effectively to optimise value for money?</p> <p>To what extent are appropriate benchmarks available and used to optimise value for money for support for marginalised girls?</p> <p>To what extent do programme Business Cases demonstrate understanding of the drivers of costs and opportunities for efficiency gains?</p> <p>Relative performance on equity (as per “four Es” approach to value for money) of different delivery channels.</p> <p>Quality of management and monitoring processes to embed value for money approaches, including guidance to staff responsible for designing programmes and taking funding decisions.</p>	<p>Strategic review to identify DFID’s approaches to ensuring value for money for education for marginalised groups, and assess implementation of the approach.</p> <p>Country assessments to identify approaches to ensuring value for money, including the implementation of DFID’s guidance on value for money, and evidence on value for money in delivering for marginalised girls.</p>	<p>Mapping of DFID business processes for value for money assessment during appraisal, selection and delivery of projects and assessment against guidance.</p> <p>Assessment of the approach to decision-making to optimise value for money in programmes reviewed within country assessments.</p>

Sampling strategy

Our countries for country assessments were selected through purposive sampling, the objective being to allow assessment of how DFID’s basic education programming for marginalised girls performs in a wide range of contexts.

To ensure that we selected countries with sufficient relevant DFID-funded basic education programming to justify detailed assessment, we used the following exclusion criteria to draw up a shortlist of countries:

- Those with one or fewer country-led basic education projects operational in the review period.
- Those with no country-led girl-focused basic education projects operational in the review period.

From a list of 25 countries where DFID has spent money on basic education programming in the review period, a shortlist of 13 was produced (see Table below).

List of countries with country-led programming of relevance, from which a shortlist was selected

Country	Total lifetime budget of all country-led basic education projects (£m)	Number of basic education projects	Number of girl-focused projects
Bangladesh	504	6	2
Burma	17	2	0
Burundi	4	1	0
DRC	43	2	0
Ethiopia	558	6	2
Ghana	195	4	2
India	442	5	3
Jordan	15	1	0
Kenya	64	3	2
Lebanon	36	3	2
Malawi	103	5	1
Monserat	2	1	0
Mozambique	46	2	0
Nepal	15	1	1
Nigeria	229	4	2
OPTs	298	2	0
Pakistan	851	10	4
Pakistan (projects active in KP)	305	6	3
Rwanda	129	2	0
Sierra Leone	20	2	2
South Sudan	109	3	2
Tanzania	285	4	2
Vietnam	17	1	0
Yemen	14	1	1
Zambia	38	1	1
Zimbabwe	97	4	2

From this shortlist, countries were selected to each cover different marginalisation scenarios, as well as to cover a broad range of DFID's relevant programming.

The aspects of marginalisation that the country sample aimed to encompass were:

- The situation of refugee girls associated with conflict.
- Situations of fragility.
- Lack of gender parity in participation at primary level.
- Lack of gender parity in participation starting at lower secondary level.
- Lack of gender parity in learning achievement (in the absence of lack of parity in participation).

Data on aspects of gender parity in education was drawn from the World Inequality Database on Education (WIDE).⁴⁰ This data source was used for country sampling because it permits comparative assessment at the country level and it was readily accessible in the timeframe for preparing the approach to this review. Alternative and more recent data on education equality will be examined during the review.

The aspects of DFID basic education programming the country sample as a whole aimed to encompass were:

- Highly girl-focused programmes (i.e., those which are primarily focused on girls, rather than merely including some girl-focused activities within a broader programme).
- Girls Education Challenge programmes of all three types (Innovation, Step Change and Strategic Partnership).
- Global Partnership for Education (GPE) activity.

In the analysis, Pakistan was considered just in terms of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province⁴¹ because, due to the scale of basic education programming in Pakistan, covering the whole country would be unrealistic given the timescales for this review.

These selection criteria were applied to the shortlist of 13 countries. Of these, the GPE was active in all but two (India and Lebanon), and therefore any selection of countries would encompass GPE activity.

In selecting countries according to aspects of marginalisation, the most severe case was selected according to each criterion (unless already selected). This resulted in a list of five countries: Lebanon, Malawi, Pakistan, South Sudan and Tanzania.

Given the distribution of GEC projects in the five countries selected according to marginalisation criteria, it was necessary to select one more country with a range of GEC projects to ensure all GEC project types were covered. Kenya was selected because it has the GEC project types not already adequately covered, as well as a highly girl-focused country-led project. These six countries included three highly girl-focused projects, so further country selection to encompass this aspect of programming was not necessary.

As well as reflecting a variety of marginalisation scenarios, this selection of countries provides good coverage of the overall basic education portfolio. The key characteristics in terms of programme coverage are:

- £902 million of bilateral country-office led expenditure of total expenditure of £4,200 million (21%). This includes 24 of the 76 programmes (32%).
- £564 million of £2,088 million total expenditure on bilateral country-office led programmes with a specific focus on girls (27%). This includes 12 of the 31 relevant programmes across the country office-led programmes (37%).
- £69 million in GEC funding, from a total of £355 million (18%). The selected countries have a total of 10 GEC projects (of 37 in total), and cover all three funding windows - Step Change (3), Innovation (5) and Strategic Partnerships (2).
- Inclusion of some other centrally-managed programmes.

Two countries have been selected for country visits with reference to the marginalisation scenarios and are designed to facilitate examination of the fullest possible range of DFID funding for basic education, including the GPE.

- Kenya was selected because the programming covers a diversity of causes of marginalisation, with interventions targeting refugee and disabled girls, urban slum dwellers, and girls in arid and semi-arid lands. It will also allow detailed exploration of the fullest range of bilateral programming, including all three types of GEC programmes (Innovation, Step Change and Strategic Partnerships). There are ten girl-focussed programmes that have been active in Kenya in the review period, including GEC and other centrally managed programmes.

40. The World Inequality Database on Education (WIDE) website [link](#)

41. There is also major basic education spending in Punjab, which has been the subject of a previous ICAI review.

- Tanzania was selected because, based on the latest available WIDE data on the transition rate to lower secondary school,⁴² nationally there was gender parity in participation in primary level but not in transition to lower secondary level, which would contrast with Kenya. The lower levels of participation of girls and boys at primary and lower secondary levels would also contrast with Kenya. Tanzania therefore allows examination of DFID's performance in a contrasting marginalisation scenario. Tanzania has a large bilateral basic education budget and a range of both centrally managed and country-office led programmes. Tanzania has four relevant programmes which will be assessed.

The WIDE data shows that, like Tanzania, Malawi has not achieved gender equity in secondary school education. It also has girl-focused country-led and centrally-managed programmes. We have selected Tanzania for a visit instead of Malawi because DFID has a higher relevant expenditure there, and because the levels of participation of girls and boys in primary and secondary education is substantially lower in Tanzania than in Malawi, providing a greater contrast with Kenya.

Assessments for South Sudan, KP Province in Pakistan and Lebanon will be implemented through desk reviews because there are higher costs associated with visiting insecure locations. We assess that a desk review represents the more cost-effective option.

42. The original source of this data is the 2010 Demographic and Health Survey



This document can be downloaded from www.icaI.independent.gov.uk/
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