Using community-based structures in education programming

Thematic Review

JULY 2021
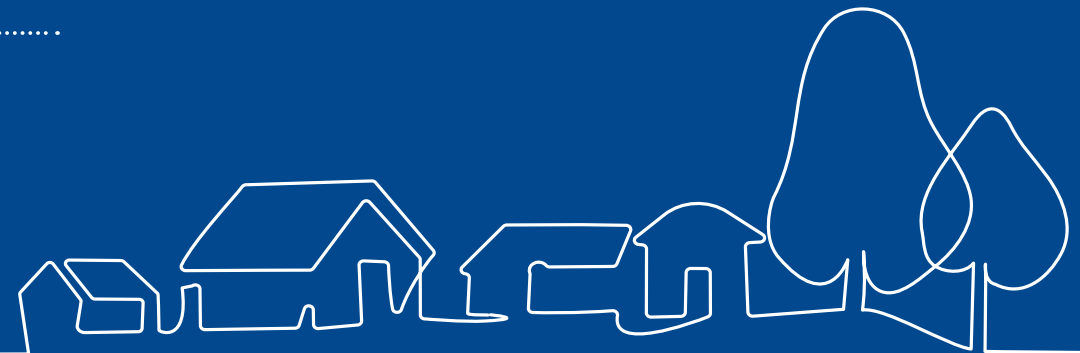
This Thematic Review summarises the learning around how community-based structures (CBSs) supported projects during COVID-19 school and community-based education closures.

It examines the role of CBSs in supporting Girls' Education Challenge projects to pivot successfully and identifies six characteristics of successful utilisation of CBSs.

This Thematic Review is primarily aimed at projects, implementors and non-governmental organisations interested in working with CBSs to maximise project outcomes now and in the future. It is also useful for researchers and policy makers, supporting conversations about how to best work with communities and CBSs.

- Link Education International: Team Girl Malawi and STAGES

- STAGES: Afghanistan

- People in Need: CHANGE

- Education Development Trust: Let Our Girls Succeed

- International Rescue Committee: TEACH

- Plan International: GATE-GEC

- I Choose Life: Jielimishe

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Introduction

In emergency contexts (which includes the context of COVID-19), the community's role in education often becomes more prominent. As the state's ability to deliver quality education diminishes when schools close and restrictions are imposed, community-based structures begin to play a more significant role.[1]

During times of crisis, the modality of how structures function to support education necessarily changes from school-based – school councils, parent-teacher groups or school management and governance committees – to community-based – parents, mothers', fathers' groups, community health volunteer networks, home learning centres, and community protection committees. This Thematic Review explores how structures from within the community – or community-based structures (CBSs) – contributed to the successful implementation of the Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) projects' interventions.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, GEC projects leveraged community-based structures to:

1) maintain project activities and inputs;
2) monitor and support girls' wellbeing; and
3) preserve and fortify safeguarding and child protection pathways.

Although the broader goals of learning, transition and sustainability remained steadfast, the pathway to those outcomes shifted –girls' wellbeing and safety preceded academic gains, COVID-19 related hygiene protocols and awareness campaigns became a part of all project activities, and the delivery mechanisms of activities adapted to national, state and local restrictions. As schools closed, education projects were forced to adapt not only *what* they did but also how they did it: turning to structures that were actually within the **community**

in place of those within **schools**. This Thematic Review examines the evidence from GEC projects that successfully utilised community-based structures and identified six characteristics that contributed to project achievements during COVID-19 school closures. These six characteristics of successful utilisation of community-based structures are not unique to the COVID-19 closures and instead set the stage for powerful linkages between education projects and communities even when schools reopen.[2]

The Girls' Education Challenge Fund Manager (GEC FM) worked with projects to develop "humanitarian-development coherence"[3] to operationalise interventions in the emergency context of COVID-19. For many organisations implementing GEC projects, March 2020 was the first time they shifted from operating as a development-oriented organisation to a humanitarian-oriented one. Anecdotal evidence collected by the FM[4] suggests that community-based structures enabled projects to pivot effectively. Furthermore, by utilising CBSs, projects ensured girls' wellbeing, mitigated safeguarding risks, and maintained learning.

WHAT ARE COMMUNITY-BASED STRUCTURES AND WHY DO THEY MATTER?

Community-based structures are any formal or informal structures that facilitate community participation in education. Community participation in education includes the processes and activities that allow community members to be heard, that empower them to be part of decision-making processes and that enable them to take direct action on education issues (INEE, 2021). The role of community-based structures in education vary significantly in their roles and responsibilities and relationship with government systems. As the ability of government systems to deliver education diminished during COVID-19 related school closures, the importance, scope and role of community-based structures flourished.

[1] https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000183364/PDF/183364eng.pdf.multi

[2] Projects that successfully utilized CBSs were identified through workshops held by the GEC's Fund Manager with project teams. While not all projects participated, among those that did, successful utilisation meant they maintained services to girls through the pandemic at or above 90% of their pre-pandemic reach. See 'How was this review conducted?' for more details.

[3] INEE 2021

[4] In March 2021, the FM invited projects to one of two workshops to share their experiences of the impact of COVID-19-19 school closures on girls' learning, well-being, and return to school, including highlighting activities and interventions that showed promise in addressing these impacts. Not all projects were represented in these workshops, and to solicit broader input, the FM drafted and is in the process of circulating the *GEC Strategic Refresh Synthesis Paper: Understanding the Impact of COVID-19 on girls and the GEC Response (May 2021)*.

This Thematic Review probes the anecdotal evidence to understand how eight GEC projects successfully utilised CBSs to achieve outcomes. The review is not intended to be comprehensive, rather illustrative of how CBSs can be utilised. The eight projects selected represent the geographic[5], programmatic[6] and design[7] variability of the GEC portfolio.[8] While 20 projects had anecdotal evidence of successfully utilising CBSs, eight were deemed to have the most substantial evidence and had maintained reach to 90% or more of their pre-COVID-19 beneficiaries. For these eight, project documentation and discussions with the project teams gathered further evidence of how projects successfully utilised CBS.

Although borne out of necessity, community-based structures are indifferent to project cycles, hold local knowledge and access to resources, and already work to mitigate social problems in their communities. In turn, CBSs represent untapped potential in the long-term success of education projects. This Thematic Review describes six characteristics of GEC projects that successfully utilised CBSs to achieve outcomes to influence long-term choices made by funders and implementing partners going forward.

Both positive and negative contributions to education by CBSs have been noted in recent documentation. For example, the World Bank 'Cost-effective approaches to improve global learning' paper reports that community-based education has increased enrolment and tests score among all children but especially girls in Afghanistan.[9] However, some research notes the challenges governments and CBSs experience when the diversity of communities is not considered, making collaboration between the two difficult[10]. Furthermore, if the inclusion of CBSs is an 'extractive' relationship and not one that fosters local ownership and accountability[11] then the potential benefits of working with community-based structures are hard to realise.

"Community-based structures have been integral in GEC projects to ensure girls' well-being, mitigate safeguarding risks, and maintain learning."

[5] Asia, Eastern and Western Africa

[6] Projects with interventions targeted towards one or more of these actors to help improve educational opportunities for girls: schools, communities, education officials at national to local levels, in-service and pre-service teacher training, employers and parents and caregivers.

[7] Projects funded through the GEC-Transition window primarily reach girls in the formal education system; projects funded through the Leave No Girl Behind window focus on reaching out-of-school girls primarily through community-based education.

[8] The authors' intentions are not to overlook these important differences across projects; on the contrary, it is because of these differences that the characteristics of success that cut across projects are the focus of the review.

[9] World Bank 2020

[10] Bray, M (2010)

[11] Rose, P (2010)

Table 1. *GEC projects included in the Thematic Review lists the eight projects included in this Thematic Review*

Country	GEC Funding Window	Project name	Implementing Partners	
Afghanistan	GEC-T & LNGB	Steps Towards Afghan Girls' Education Success (STAGES)	STAGES	*
Ethiopia	GEC-T	Supporting Transition of Adolescent Girls Through Enhancing Systems (STAGES)	Link Education International	
Ethiopia	LNGB	CHANGE	People in Need (PIN)	
Kenya	GEC-T	Wasichana Wetu Wafaulu (Let Our Girls Succeed)	Education Development Trust (EDT)	
Kenya	GEC-T	Jielimishe (Educate Yourself)	I Choose Life	
Malawi	LNGB	Transformational Empowerment of Adolescent Marginalised Girls (TEAM Girl)	Link Education International	
Pakistan	LNGB	Teach and Educate Adolescent Girls with Community Help (TEACH)	International Rescue Committee	
Sierra Leone	GEC-T	Girls' Access to Education (GATE)	Plan International UK	

What are community-based structures?

Community-based structures are any formal or informal groups that facilitate community participation. For the purposes of this review, we limit the scope to groups within the education space, including formal and non-formal education. INEE defines community participation in education as the process and activities that allow community members to be heard, empowering them to be part of decision-making processes and enabling them to take direct action on education issues[12].

Two main factors influence the degree to which community members influence education systems: their location in relation to the formal (or informal) education system and the extent of their authority.

Community actors typically operate as part of the decentralised process within the larger education system; however they may also be autonomously established and operated. The decentralisation of authority and decision-making over school operations works differently across contexts, meaning the space available for community influence yields a wide range of types of community-school linkages. Linkages – and by extension, the level of decision-making power – reflect the level of school autonomy. Communities have a greater range of influences when schools have greater autonomy; where schools have restrictions on the types of decisions they oversee, communities have limited avenues to influence education decisions.[13]

However, as formal systems have a reduced capacity to deliver quality education in emergency and/or in low resource contexts, school-based structures generally become less relevant, and community-based structures take prominence. Impervious to the extent of school autonomy, community-based structures take on a central role in relation to education systems and can garner increased levels of authority. In emergency contexts, CBSs are increasingly relied upon by national and local government and non-governmental bodies to help prioritise and strategise solutions to issues as they arise. Community-based structures' involvement in education decisions can be active or passive; they tend to be more active during emergencies. In the INEE Standards[14], an active role of community members in education in emergencies is a core Standard: *Emergency-affected community members actively participate in assessing, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the education programmes.*

"Communities have a greater range of influences when schools have greater autonomy; where schools have restrictions on the types of decisions they oversee, communities have limited avenues to influence education decisions."[10]

[12] INEE Standards 2004
[13] Gertler et al 2007
[14] INEE Standards 2004

How do community-based structures in GEC projects compare before and during the pandemic?

Figure 1 illustrates the changing and expanding role of community-based structures on GEC projects from non-crisis to the COVID-19-induced crisis contexts. Some aspects of community structures supporting education have remained the same – community health volunteers, mothers' groups and networks of community educators continue to support learning, at times with additional responsibilities. However, the crisis context has also ushered in roles for existing community structures in the education space. For example, religious leaders and chiefs in Ethiopia now play a crucial role in mobilising resources and Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs), who now provide more than financial support to improving education. Figure 1 also shows the types of education supported, the type of involvement of CBSs and the nature of community participation activities from predominantly passive activities in non-crisis contexts to active activities during the pandemic.

Figure 1. *Community-based structures on GEC projects: before and during the pandemic*

	NON-EMERGENCY CONTEXTS	EMERGENCY CONTEXTS	
Structures	• School councils • School management committees • Parent-teacher groups • Volunteers • Mothers' groups	• Mothers' groups • VSLA groups • Community action groups • Trusted adults • Community health volunteers	• Disability persons organisations • Shuras • Learning Centre Management Committees (LCMCs) • Traditional leaders
Types of education supported	• Formal education • Community-based/ non-formal education	• Formal education • Community-based/ non-formal education	• Distance/ home learning • Small group/neighbourhood learning
Types of involvement in education	• Access to education • Quality of education	• Access to education • Quality of education	• Well-being and connectedness • Safety and protection
Community participation activities	**PASSIVE** • Use of a service • Contribution of money, materials, labour • Attendance • Consultation	**ACTIVE** • Participation in the delivery of a service • Participation as implementers of delegated powers • Participation in real decision-making at every stage	

How do GEC projects successfully utilise community-based structures?

Figure 2 summarises six characteristics of successful CBS utilisation by GEC projects. While the examples in the following sections provide in-depth descriptions of how projects engaged with CBSs, the primary focus of this review remains on the unifying characteristics and not the structures themselves. Thus, for example, the characteristic 'projects nurtured agency' (characteristic #2) was observed across a wide variety of community-based structures, irrespective of the type of CBS, its location within the education sector or the project's design.

Figure 2. *Six characteristics of projects that successfully utilised community-based structures*

Characteristic #1: Build upon existing CBS *Evident in 8 projects*			
Characteristic #2: Nurture agency *Evident in 7 projects*	**Characteristic #3:** Actively listen to communities *Evident in 6 projects*	**Characteristic #4:** Capitalise on delivery to achieve more *Evident in 5 projects*	**Characteristic #5:** Partner with non-education CBS *Evident in 4 projects*
Characteristic #6: Work within all levels of the system *Evident in 2 projects*			
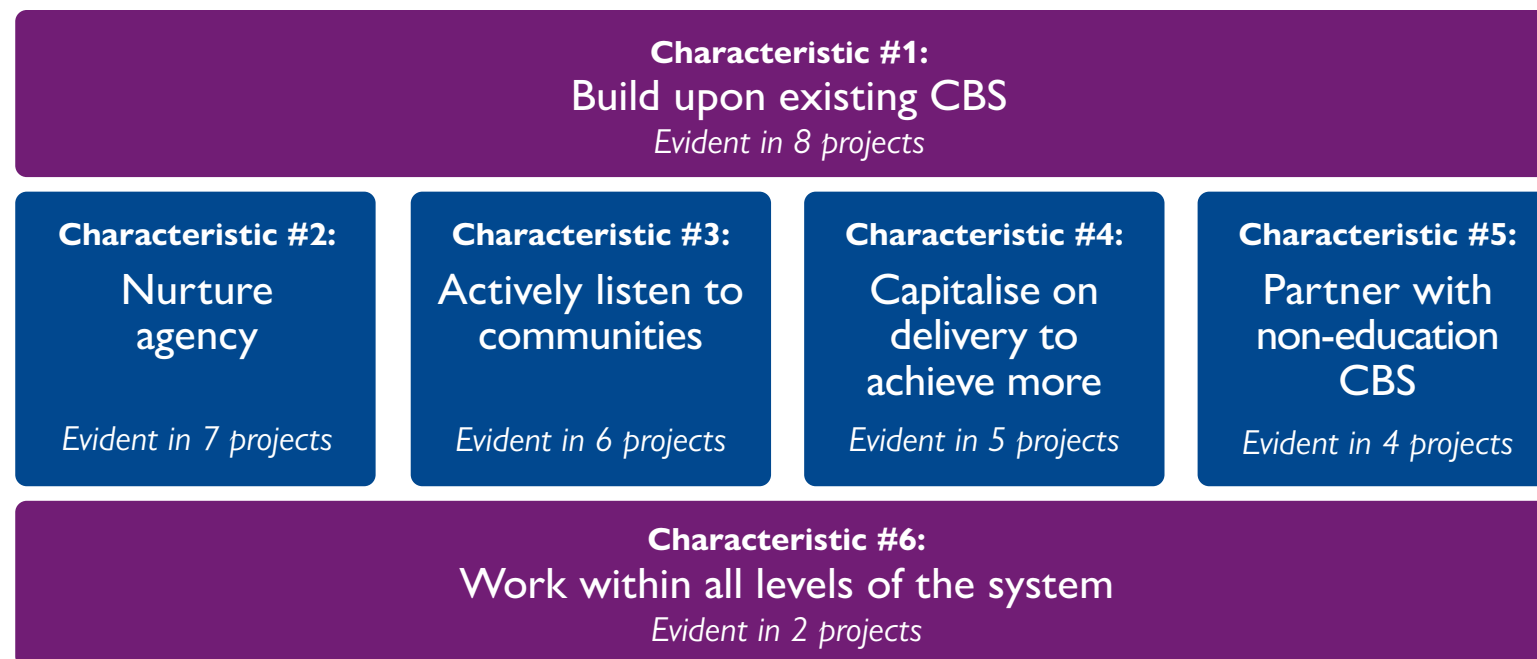
While Figure 2 summarises the six characteristics, Table 2 presents the characteristics observed by project. The most common characteristic – build upon existing CBSs – was observed in all eight projects; the least common characteristic – work within all levels of the system – was observed in two of the eight projects.

Table 2. Characteristics by project

Characteristic of successful utilisation of CBS	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Build upon existing CBSs	Nurture agency	Actively listen to communities	Capitalise on delivery to achieve more	Partner with non-education CBSs	Work within all levels of the system
STAGES Afghanistan	✔	✔	✔	✔		
STAGES Ethiopia	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔
CHANGE Ethiopia	✔		✔	✔	✔	
Let Our Girls Succeed Kenya	✔	✔				
Jielimishe Kenya	✔	✔	✔		✔	
TEAM Girl Malawi	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔
TEACH Pakistan	✔	✔	✔	✔		
GATE-GEC Sierra Leone	✔	✔		✔	✔	

Build upon existing community-based structures

Community-based structures that were in place prior to the COVID-19 CBE/school closures were able to quickly step-in and expand their roles to support project activities. Projects that successfully utilised existing CBSs did so through a quick re-examination of the structures available to them, assessing their capacity and training needs, and by engaging with those structures to pave a path forward.

Projects differed in their initial design, with some developing and embedding CBSs in their programming; others developed their relationships with CBSs as the project progressed. All projects consulted for this review had partnered with CBSs in some way before the pandemic, suggesting that it was a more accessible and quicker process to rely on these networks during the pandemic. The degree to which CBSs were embedded into programming differed; unsurprisingly, projects that reported having stronger partnerships with CBSs before the pandemic noted greater successes. However, all projects reported engaging deliberately and intensely at the beginning of the pandemic to weave existing structures together and strengthen linkages with the project. Those that did this carefully through consultation and relationship building were the most successful.

Projects also differed in their approach to working with communities and CBSs due to the location of their project within the formal system: not all projects worked with schools, and their programming was located explicitly in community-based education (CBE). Unsurprisingly these projects, primarily LNGB-funded ones[15], were able to shift their operations and delivery quicker. However, even those projects whose original design was to work in schools could successfully utilise existing CBSs during the pandemic in this review.

What defines the approach taken by all eight projects is that they relied on CBSs to access communities, help understand the situation, get up-to-date information on barriers and opportunities, and communicate with and link to government structures operational in the education sector. In addition, many projects reported that they were impressed with the existing CBSs' ability to shift rapidly to working in different ways. Where CBS activities could be aligned with project goals and vice versa, the synergy produced even greater outcomes. Notably, the shift in projects' focus towards keeping in touch with girls, wellbeing and safeguarding allowed greater engagement across a broad range of CBSs with a wide range of missions.

Following are two examples to illustrate how projects built upon existing CBSs. The first example from GATE-GEC describes how the project strengthened relationships within communities through CBSs to ensure safeguarding and child protection pathways were maintained. Other projects also reported working with trusted adults and mother groups to maintain safeguarding and child protection referral pathways. By doing so, projects reported that identification and response to reports continued through the pandemic. In addition, working with the CBSs helped embed the concept of and taking responsibility for safeguarding and child protection deeper in communities.

The second example from TEAM Girl describes how the project utilised existing CBSs to support learning. The pre-pandemic partnerships to support learning allowed the project to continue learning activities that the CBSs monitored.

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[15] The first phase of the programme, GEC I, ran from 2012 to 2017, with GEC II running from 2017 to 2025. GEC II is comprised of two types of project: Projects funded through the GEC-Transition window primarily reach girls in the formal education system; projects funded through the Leave No Girl Behind window focus on reaching out-of-school girls primarily through community-based education.

What did the project achieve?

Strengthened linkages between existing structures to maintain child protection referral pathways.

How were CBSs successfully utilised?

GATE-GEC partnered with existing government structures, such as Child Welfare Centres, Community Health Posts, Community Health Centres,the government's 116 hotline for reporting Gender Based Violence (GBV) and child abuse, one-stop centres, Family Support Units and Ministry of Social Welfare. This strengthened linkages between these structures and those in the communities directly served by the project, including Safeguarding Focal Points, School Management Committees, head teachers and Teachers. While GATE-GEC did not focus on one specific structure or institutionalising a new CBS, the project focused on strengthening linkages between the community and government structures so that child protection referral pathways could be easily accessed and were effective. To establish connections, GATE's partners positioned themselves in education, economic empowerment initiatives, and in activities addressing gender equality and inclusion to strengthen the project's relationships with key government stakeholders (e.g., Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Teaching Service Commission, Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Gender & Children's Affairs and Teacher Training Colleges). Through strengthened relationships, the project increased awareness of the protection and safeguarding responsibilities that sat with each structure and linked the structures together in a resource services map. This map outlines safeguarding and protection reporting mechanisms at district and community levels and is distributed to School Management Committees/Board of Governors, protection/safeguarding focal points, Community-Based Rabilitation Volunteers, teachers and head teachers.

What did the project achieve?

Maintained learning outcomes.

How were CBSs successfully utilised?

As the Learning Centres remained closed, there were concerns that learners were likely to drop out and, in some instances, get married due to the long time spent at home and the pressures on family income created by the pandemic. There was also a chance that some of the learners would fall pregnant, which would impact their learning once the Learning Centres reopened. In addition, missed time in the class led to fears that learners would not complete the curriculum. Finally, there were increased child protection concerns due to the stress of the pandemic and lack of contact with protection systems. Therefore, there was a need to maintain contact with the learners during this time, so TEAM rolled out a distance/home learning programme to address the above concerns during the closure of CBE centres. However, it was not easy to know if learning was taking place, so the Learning Centre Management Committee (LCMC) was tasked to support Facilitators to monitor whether learning was happening and encourage distance/home learning. This structure previously existed to support the CBE centres, but during CBE/school closures, TEAM engaged the LCMC to close the information gap and manage learning. The consequence of this closer engagement with the LCMC and subsequently for learners was a greater understanding of learner needs which has informed CBE centres on reopening. This closer relationship is being maintained moving forward.

Nurture agency

The more agency the CBS had the greater the successes achieved. Successes were myriad, covering all outcomes of projects, from safeguarding to learning to sustainability. The degree to which the relationship between the project and the CBS was a trusted, two-way conversation mattered and impacted on what was achieved.

Projects that reported successful working relationships with CBSs embodied principles regarding CBS' agency: recognising that CBSs needed some level of autonomy, that they needed to be in the driver's seat concerning decision-making, and that there should be a degree of trust between the project and the CBS that reduced the 'power' often held by project structures. Even when projects held some level of oversight over the work conducted by CBSs, they described their role in terms of partnership and less in terms of management.

CBSs which had greater agency were stronger partners to projects. The following were how projects ascribed greater agency to CBSs:

1. CBSs owned responsibility for routine, accurate and timely information to project staff

2. CBSs were part of the monitoring processes and gave feedback to projects on activities

3. CBSs were trusted by the project to deliver and equally trusted the project to support them where necessary

4. CBSs were autonomous as project processes and structures were 'hands off', stepping back to promote and encourage CBS autonomy

5. CBSs were able to gain the trust of communities and projects alike through transparency and positive relationships

6. CBSs had a working relationship with local government structures and acted as a broker between them and the community

CHARACTERISTIC #2 IN ACTION:
NURTURE AGENCY OF CBS IN PAKISTAN

What did the project achieve?
As a structure that represents the interests of the community, Village Support Groups have a stake in all education interventions implemented by the project.

How were CBSs successfully utilised?
IRC engaged members of the village to support education interventions from the beginning of the TEACH project. Village Support Groups (VSGs) include 10 to 12 members per community across 240 communities served by TEACH. During COVID-19 closures, however, the scope and involvement of VSGs increased. As the only body that linked TEACH and the community, VSGs remit transformed from liaising between the community and TEACH to actively engaging in the delivery of TEACH interventions. Before COVID-19-related school closures, VSGs liaised with the project to identify risks to girls in their community, identify locations for Accelerated Learning Centres, and liaise with parents and caregivers. During COVID-19, VSG members stepped up their reach. They became the 'face' of TEACH activities in the communities, a move welcomed by the community since the VSG members had established relationships with the girls and their families. While the VSG was the 'face' of the TEACH project in the community, the project team played a strongly supportive and guiding role. For example, while the VSG developed the Community Safety Action Plans – which addressed issues such as reducing risks of GBV, accessibility, threats to girls' wellbeing, TEACH staff vetted the plan with girls and then provided in-kind materials to the VSG to execute the approved plan. Similarly, VSGs helped identify home-based learning centres based on criteria determined collaboratively by VSGs and TEACH staff and then helped secure homeowners consent and timings. In contrast, TEACH staff provided learning materials and training.

Moreover, projects reported that CBSs are poised to continue their role as schools reopen, an essential step towards sustainability of interventions. Most importantly, the valued role of the CBS within the community grows, so their increased level of agency within the project activities is an important stepping stone to longer-term partnerships with the community and local government.

What did the project achieve?

Maintained contact with girls during school closures through community action groups.

How were CBSs successfully utilised?

Community Action Groups (CAG) were set up at the start of the project to work with communities. They are a new group based on existing structures and the project report they are the most critical aspect of linking the project with communities. They are based on the existing Kebele (local government) structure. They include representatives from all local government offices (Justice, Women and Children etc.) and the community (parents of girls, community leaders, religious leaders, school supervisors and health workers).

CAGs became the only mechanism to maintain regular contact with girls during restrictions, notably to support home-based learning activities. Home-based learning involved a small group of girls; CAG members liaised with families to ensure that learning was happening. CAGs have now become central to the project's implementation strategy, even as schools reopened.

PIN reported that the CAGs afforded them to:

1. Understand the variation in support needed by communities.

2. Know and map the potential resources available in the community, e.g. Some places were allowing the project to use their compounds for teaching and learning spaces despite not being in the project.

3. Mobilise marginalised groups and understand who is absent, needs support, and follow-up safeguarding concerns. CAG members held discussions with family members and were able to respond to issues as they arose immediately.

4. Work with the communities in-depth and address sensitive issues, such as sending girls with disabilities back to school or discussing the disadvantages of early marriage.

5. Respond quickly as they understand the context and have strong relationships with community members, teachers and girls.

6. Work with Kebeles as they respect the CAG members and are used to working together. But, more importantly, there is a direct link from the CAG to communities, enabling the work to be aligned and transparent (communities cannot do anything without the Kebele authority).

Since reopening, the project has found that the CAGs have become more autonomous and are dealing with issues directly and telling project staff after the fact, e.g. incidences of potential early marriage were identified, resolved and reported to the project team.

Actively listen to communities

Project teams engaged in active listening when they were open to new ways of working with communities, were willing to help address issues that community members brought to their attention, and approached conversations without assumption or pre-emptive problem solving. Projects intentionally embedded ways of working with CBSs that went beyond consultations or surveys. They iteratively and routinely listened to communities at every step of the way: identifying issues, making programming decisions, conducting monitoring and evaluation. Active listening became a necessary part of every decision.

Listening to the communities at the beginning of the pandemic was common. Projects solicited the help of community-based structures to help identify new barriers and possible solutions and understand the evolving situation on the ground to ensure project activities continue. However, those projects that did not silo the act of listening to ascertain information, but instead embraced active listening as part of their ongoing relationship with the community garnered more significant successes. Hand in hand with harbouring greater agency for CBSs and communities, projects that actively listened to communities saw increased community involvement and cohesion and the increased potential for sustainable outcomes. Moreover, active listening – coming to the table without pre-existing assumptions or solutions – allowed projects to establish genuine mutually beneficial partnerships with CBSs.

Projects thought carefully about the mechanisms to use to listen and engage with communities actively. For example, many projects reported running rapid assessments at the start of school closures. They immediately recognised that they had a situation which they could not respond to in isolation. Among projects that already had a track record of two-way dialogue with the community, executing a rapid assessment came with ease as the project and communities followed a familiar routine. However, few projects could meaningfully engage with communities through one-off consultations or questionnaires, particularly when those were not used in the interactions with communities before the pandemic.

In short, active listening was not an activity; it was a process. It was not one-off consultations or questionnaires to gather perceptions, barriers, or suggestions. Instead, active listening meant ongoing dialogue – and most importantly – hearing from members of various community-based structures and collaboratively identifying viable solutions. In prioritising what mattered to CBSs and, in turn to communities, projects were able to forge longer-term partnerships instead of short-term, on-the-ground delivery partners.

What did the project achieve?

Community cohesion and collaboration around shared goals.

How were CBSs successfully utilised?

By working with Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) and a wide variety of community groups (e.g. mother groups and other special interest groups), EDT significantly contributed to community cohesion. By collaborating on the ground, sharing information and refraining from introducing new reporting mechanisms, EDT worked with community-based structures to elevate their solutions. The project purposefully focused on what community groups were doing and linking them together through information sharing networks and inclusive conversations. In addition, project field officers and community volunteers worked together to identify gaps. For example, when they determined that radio programming was not reaching all places (one of the areas where the project works is hard to reach rural areas), they collaborated with the local government to expand reach via local radio stations.

Similarly, when they saw that parents were not accessing radio programmes because they did not know timings, the project responded through provisions of printed materials and community volunteers, which were distributed via community-based structures. Another example of nurturing community cohesion comes from EDT's work with mentors. Girls who graduated serve as mentors to girls in school by supporting tutorials and reading camps during school closures, distributing COVID-19 related information (mask-wearing, etc.) and passing on information to project staff about possible early marriages and schools on learning issues. Schools then used the information provided by EDT's mentors diagnostically to support learners when they returned to school. In short, EDT became a conduit of information and passed this to the relevant stakeholders.

What did the project achieve?

Establish linkages and effective communication across an ecosystem of community-based structures.

How were CBSs successfully utilised?

BeBefore COVID-19, STAGES liaised regularly with a range of community members. Particularly through trainings and school performance appraisal meetings with existing formal community-school structures which play a role in school improvement planning, and through more recently developed structures of Mother and Father Groups.' Regular interactions included School Performance Appraisal meetings, review of project materials and review/signoff of tools and field activities, conducting school visits together (STAGES and Kebele leads), and day-to-day collaboration on small activities as well as cornerstone events such as dissemination of baseline findings and launches During COVID-19, and following a Rapid Assessment to determine the status of project girls following school closures, Link Ethiopia adapted its way of working with school communities to create an 'ecosystem' of support to girls to keep in contact, provide safeguarding and hygiene information, and follow-up to study and learning. Kebele Leaders, Education and Training Boards, Mother and Father Groups played particularly key roles in providing support. The project also worked through local radio to provide key messages. In each Kebele a map of services was posted in a central place, with key contact details of local services and the project office. During school closure, 72 project girls were married, and the project, working closely with government and community structures (Woreda Gender Officers, Mother Group member and Link staff member) supported visits to the households of the girls. They determined the status of the girls and whether the girl was likely to return to school or not, and to speak with family members. Working with community and other key structures in this way, meant that 65 of the 72 girls married returned to school when they reopened. Community based structures were key to STAGES' COVID-19 response, given that schools were closed and many school staff returned to their home areas. By working with CBSs as community liaisons, STAGES in practice has connections with girls and their families at the individual level

Capitalise on delivery to achieve more

All projects reported utilising CBSs to support the delivery of materials, messaging and PPE during closures. Community-based structures were often the only people on the ground able to access communities and learners; their knowledge of the situation and locations was invaluable in supporting projects logistically and in planning. However, projects soon found that they were able to utilise their CBSs for so much more – in decision making, ensuring that girls were learning and progressing, to explore new directions in implementation, and empowering community members to embrace sustainable solutions. In turn, projects began to see project activities embedded in local systems and structures.

Projects reported they had under-estimated how much CBSs played a role in delivering resources throughout COVID-19 restrictions. When CBSs were given autonomy and agency (characteristic #2) and projects actively listened to communities (characteristic #3), then CBSs were poised to play a more fundamental role in achieving outcomes. However, the 'boots on the ground' model of partnering with community-based structures only took projects so far – it limited not only the CBSs' primary role during closures but also the vision of partnership. The case studies below illustrate this and show that when successful the CBS becomes a partner of the project, supporting communities.

Working with CBSs to manage relationships in the community has opened the space for projects to bring CBSs into the fold, partnering more broadly around the project's goals. For example, projects have worked with CBSs to increase access to information, establish two-way communication with project teams and local government, and strengthen their ability to liaise with various actors in the community. While this characteristic goes hand-in-hand with active listening, it uniquely captures the projects where ground logistics was the entry point to their collaboration with CBSs. Even when projects did not lead with active listening as an intentional way to partner with communities, they came upon successful partnerships with CBSs when they went beyond the logistics aspect.

Those projects that had initially seen CBSs as a means for delivery of materials, PPE and basic data collection learned that the CBSs could be so much more in contributing to the success of the project and the sustainability of interventions. The STAGES example below demonstrates how the project learned from the CBS (CBE Shuras[16])and how that enabled the project to introduce additional learning methods (homework) previously not accepted. This partnership has fundamentally shifted how students access learning.

[16]Shuras are school or community education center based management committees.

STAGES

What did the project achieve?

Implemented new learning approaches.

How were CBSs successfully utilised?

CBE Shuras are integral to the STAGES programming and working with communities. Comprised of five community leaders (15 members for government school Shuras), CBE Shuras are responsible for a specific geographical area. They meet with parents/caretakers to address many issues, including attendance, dropout, retention, transition, enrolment, early marriage, child labour and safeguarding. Moreover, they offer logistical support to projects, facilitate communication in rural/remote communities, and mobilise communities to engage in educational activities like securing donated learning spaces, classroom rehabilitation, social audits and awareness campaigns.

During CBE/school closures, the CBE Shura's role enabling delivery of learning materials during the lockdown, where field staff were restricted from travelling to the field and sharing lessons and monitoring updates with STAGES field staff. In addition, CBE Shuras went beyond their remit and invested their own time and resources to achieve project goals. For example, they used their transport, reached out to girls households routinely by phone and through home visits, put in additional hours to support learning and supported advocacy training to lobby the local government to establish schools in rural areas.

The most significant impact the work of Shuras had was supporting the introduction, implementation and monitoring of home-based distance learning. Homework and home-learning are not generally used as a learning activity in the areas in which the project works. Therefore the newly developed programme became a novel approach to distance learning, particularly in project areas with limited/no access to the internet, radio, television and electricity. During CBE/school closures, the project instigated this with the support of Shuras, who talked to communities and families about the need to have students continue their learning at home through home-based learning materials that were developed every two to four weeks by teachers in coordination with STAGES field staff.

As a result of the approach to distance learning, parents/caregivers have seen their children complete these activities, are now more engaged with education and continued their education once schools reopened. In addition, shura members mobilised households to identify educated family members and neighbours to support small group learning. This was especially important for those students whose parents are illiterate and unable to assist with their home studies). Shuras also shared ideas on how to support education. Finally, they monitored how well students were progressing with their learning, especially in the face of increased child labour and marriage during COVID-19 lockdowns.

Timely feedback, advocacy and ownership/commitment of education in their communities mean that this is now an integral part of education delivery as CBE centres reopen. In addition, the project has learned that distance learning is possible without the internet, TV, electricity, radio or electronic devices/smartphones. Still, the most significant learning was how Shuras could drive education outcomes through engagement, delivery and monitoring.

What did the project achieve?

Village Support Groups (VSGs) helped mobilise and make communities aware of girls' education needs, establish home-based learning centres, distribute kits but, in the process, become the 'face' of the project in communities.

How were CBSs successfully utilised?

IRC has worked with VSGs as their single point of contact in communities since the beginning of the project. At the beginning of the COVID-19 related closures, IRC teamed up with VSGs to disseminate messages about COVID-19, identify evolving needs of girls and, identify protocols for the safe distribution of learning and dignity kits to girls in communities. Out of this logistics partnership, the VSG stepped into a more prominent role, supporting the identification of safe spaces for home-based learning centres and engaging with men and boys in addressing detrimental perceptions of girls and women. As a one-stop resource for all TEACH activities in the village, VSGs identified appropriate safety protocols for distributing kits and learning materials. In addition, they also identified and helped establish 960 safe home-based learning centres, connected girls with available radio sets from community members so they could listen to radio lessons, engaged boys and men in identifying harmful gender norms and promoting positive gender roles at the family level and expanding livelihood opportunities for girls, and helped develop and execute Community Safety Action Plans. The VSGs now also serve as a link from the community to the project.

Partner with non-education community-based structures

Community-based structures that can influence the education space do not only have to be those that traditionally operate within it. Projects found success by going outside the 'usual suspects' – or structures that they were used to working with. By expanding their horizons and diversifying contacts within communities, projects tapped into the potential of non-education structures, for example in finance and health services.

For some, the need and desire to work with non-education focussed community structures arose from previous implementation experiences. For example, projects had previously attempted to create community education groups that focused on learning but found that they could not realise their desired impact. However, projects like EDT (see case study below) found that when they partnered with a non-education CBSs and integrated their work with the Community Health Volunteers, they experienced more significant success.

Consequently, non-education groups were purposefully included by some projects and supported through training so that they could successfully support education activities.

For example, linking education activities with income generation groups that were already established and accessing funding. Many examples and iterations of Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) that projects worked with to support the distribution of project-funded cash grants and offer education-support loans to families. The cash grants provided by VSLAs addressed the negative impact of COVID-19 on livelihoods, health, wellbeing and children's education (see case study below). During COVID-19, however, VSLAs expanded their remit to support the project in empowering women at the community level and responding to girls' needs, especially child protection and safeguarding issues. Projects also reported that VSLAs, whose members included women from the community, allowed women an opportunity to champion child abuse referrals and case follow-up.

Another outcome reported by projects is that VSLA groups use the money raised through income generation directly to support girls getting back to school and purchasing sanitary products. In addition, VSLAs and Village Agents continued to connect with existing financial institutions and promote positive attitudes and behaviours regarding girls' education. They became involved in advocating for out-of-school girls to be enrolled in government schools.

Of particular note is the partnering with health services that opened up communication channels. Across projects, these networks have not only benefitted projects during COVID-19 closures but are being utilised and embedded into school reopening strategies. Partnering with health services in Kenya has led to a greater understanding of girls' lives, better access to communities on a household level and the increased ability of projects to make informed decisions around individuals and learning. Where successful, projects' layered' activities (e.g. delivery, monitoring and reporting) into what the health CBSs were already doing, which inherently leveraged health CBS expertise in logistics, salaries, and remit with Health and local government ministries their existing relationship with communities. Projects reported that this was key in achieving success as it built on health CBS operations rather than imposing new ones.

CHARACTERISTIC #5 IN ACTION:
PARTNERING WITH NON-EDUCATION CBS IN KENYA

Healthy Africa, Empowered People!

What did the project achieve?

Supporting income-generation activities alongside cash transfers to alleviate long-term and short-term barriers to girls' education.

How were CBSs successfully utilised?

ICL Kenya is working with Self Help Groups (SHG) in Kenya to alleviate financial barriers to girls' education long-term. In Kenya, SHGs are local bodies registered under the Ministry of Gender and social services; they must have a constitution and membership of at least 15 members. SHGs advance a common goal within the community. In this case, ICL partnered with SHGs to support income-generating activities such as poultry, sheep and goat farming with communities receiving cash transfers. The SHG is not dependent on the project yet extends and contributes to ICL's work in financial empowerment to improve conditions for girls' education to thrive. For example, ICL works with four SHGs in Laikipia County. The project supported the institutionalisation of the SHGs in the early part of the project; they include parents of girls in the primary and secondary schools which receive direct interventions. ICL provided entrepreneurship training and training on breeding techniques to the SHGs in Likipia County; in six months, the group managed to double their income. Through COVID-19 and for the foreseeable future, the SHG's in Likipia County expect to sell batches of 30 sheep every five months, representing a steady source of income for families who faced significant financial barriers to their girls' education.

CHARACTERISTIC #5 IN ACTION:
PARTNERING WITH NON-EDUCATION CBS IN KENYA

Education Development Trust

What did the project achieve?

Ensuring girls safety and ability to continue learning and reducing propensity to drop out.

How were CBSs successfully utilised?

Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) were already supporting the project in collecting data on psychosocial security of girls, dropout, GBV and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) issues as they can access learners on a household level. Their role becomes even more critical during school closures as they were the only people allowed into households and communities. The project utilised them to support the community reading camps, initially supplying learners with reading materials and answers. However, the CHV were not simply conduits of delivery. Still, they engaged with communities around the messaging on the importance of home learning (at home, in clusters or otherwise). In addition, they monitored their engagement with learning activities, talked to parents about their concerns, ensured girls' psychosocial wellbeing and referred learners to local counselling networks if needed.

The CHV role in education was successful primarily because the volunteers had a clear structure and deep trust with communities. The CHV already has a voice in the community, is well known and has good networks across the community in all areas. They can work with many people, pool stakeholders to attain information and act on issues. The project benefitted from knowing what local leaders and local government think, and with this information and access to homes, they can pre-empt problems like dropout and reach girls before this happens.

Work within all levels of the system

Of all the characteristics exhibited by successful projects, working within all levels of the system was by far the most elusive and hardest to achieve. However, when projects worked within all levels of the system they were able to support the linking of CBSs with local, regional and national government and broker conversations that went both up and then back down the system which contributed to the development of an 'ecosystem of CBSs'. When projects considered how their work with communities was able to speak up and down the system and structures in country the impact was multiplied and embedded in the formal system.

Projects that worked within all levels of the system saw greater success in working with community-based structures, particularly since this approach aligned with their sustainability approach. As two sides to the same coin, establishing and strengthening linkages among community structures serves both a stronger mechanism for project delivery as well as strengthened networks to sustain outcomes after projects have closed.

Systems and structures, by nature, are rigid and successful projects reported having a role to play brokering conversations between the levels of local, district and national structures, and while there were few examples of where this was done successfully, it is clear that strengthening these linkages is key to increasing the resilience of systems to adapt and respond to crisis and also moving forward.

Central to this characteristic is the implementing partner's philosophy and approach to working with communities and CBSs. The belief among projects that communities should be the ones a) to make important programming decisions, b) to determine the direction of their work based on an understanding of needs, processes and 'what works', and c) are best placed to affect change, is fundamental to successful project implementation with CBSs.

The case studies below come from one implementing partner – Link Education – with two projects in Ethiopia and Malawi. Central to Link Education's operation and existence is working with communities in every aspect, supporting the project's outcomes to be relevant to the local context and sustainable.

What did the project achieve?

Greater engagement and ownership among communities.

How were CBSs successfully utilised?

The project uses facilitators to support learning in CBE centres; the selection of facilitators for the project was entirely in the hands of the community. First, Village Development Committees were consulted to find out where retention of primary teachers was low to identify the location of centres and the facilitators. Then, communities looked for and put forward names of people to be facilitators, given a set of criteria. Finally, the project advertised the role, communities gave the project the shortlist, and the candidates were interviewed. Final selection lay in the hands of the community: TEAM checked candidates' literacy and numeracy levels and further refined the list of eligible candidates, but it was the community that approved the final selection of facilitators. This process illustrates that working with communities in partnership is time-consuming; the result is increased ownership by communities over the process and a willingness to embed project activities within existing structures.

Ownership, however, does not come from partnering at one level of the system. Instead, TEAM links up levels within the system from local to district to national, both before and during Covid-19 closures. An example is TEAM's adaptive management process. Before Covid-19, communities were included in TEAM management meetings; during Covid-19 and CBE closures, the project saw the need to diversify their community engagement: community reflection meetings were broadened to include more people. Guardians and parents of learners were brought onboard more to share information and help the project make decisions around learners. TEAM reported that extensive community engagement in partnership not only takes time but is also initially expensive. Over time, costs decrease as processes become embedded and the benefits, in the long run, offset initial costs.

What did the project achieve?

Establish linkages and effective communication across an ecosystem of community-based structures.
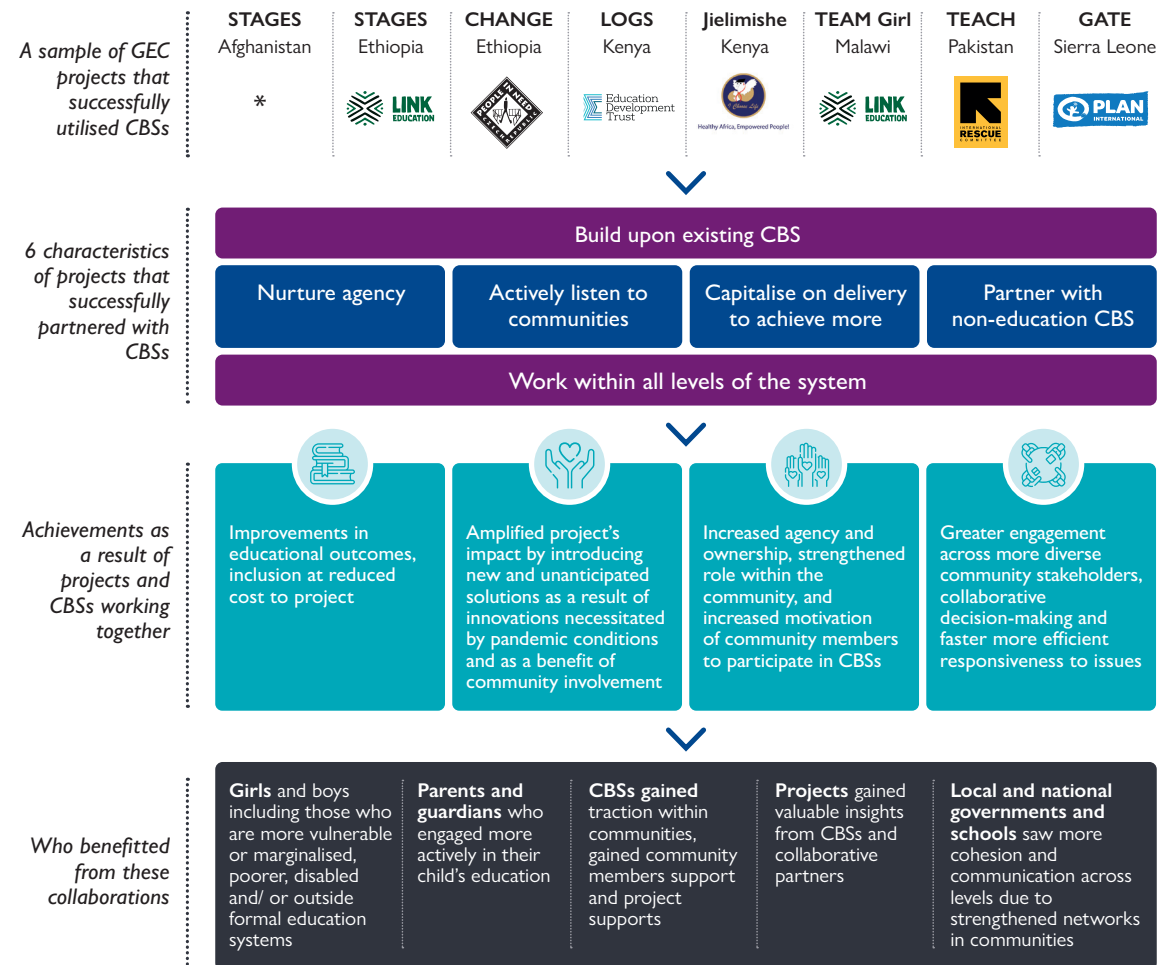
How were CBSs successfully utilised?

Before Covid-19, STAGES liaised regularly with a range of community members: providing training for PTSAs, School Improvement Committees and Kebele Education and Training Boards, SMC, head teachers, government safeguarding lead and education officers, Mothers' Groups and Fathers' Groups. Regular interactions included SPAMs (School Performance Appraisal Meetings), review of project materials and review/signoff of tools and conducting school visits together (STAGES and kebele leads). Additionally, day-to-day collaboration on small activities as well as cornerstone events such as dissemination of baseline findings and launches. During Covid-19, STAGES turned to these familiar counterparts and worked with them to provide a 'map of services' in each Kebele – including contact information for all community structures as well as STAGES. STAGES worked closely with all their community links to address child safeguarding issues. For example, STAGES identified that in their target districts (Woredas), 72 girls had been married off during closures during school closures. The team coordinated a strategy of home visits through community liaisons to get families of the married girls to bring the girls back to school. 71 of them were visited, 65 are back to school as of June 2021. The project team facilitated this, the Mothers' groups and Fathers' Group, kebele administrators, gender officer from education office to make home visits, work with the caregivers and the girls' in-laws.

Summary

Working with community-based structures has brought many benefits to projects and ultimately in their achievement of project outcomes. While projects intuitively knew the benefits of working with CBSs, the experience over the past year has brought to the fore how important it is to partner with CBSs, invest in constructive engagements, actively listen to and explore how to work with a wide variety of CBSs and bring together stakeholders from all levels of the system.

This Thematic Review has highlighted six characteristics that enable the successful utilisation of community-based structures to achieve project goals. These are summarised in the diagram below.

A sample of GEC projects that successfully utilised CBSs

STAGES Afghanistan	STAGES Ethiopia	CHANGE Ethiopia	LOGS Kenya	Jielimishe Kenya	TEAM Girl Malawi	TEACH Pakistan	GATE Sierra Leone
*	LINK EDUCATION	PEOPLE IN NEED	Education Development Trust	Healthy Africa, Empowered People!	LINK EDUCATION	INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE	PLAN INTERNATIONAL

6 characteristics of projects that successfully partnered with CBSs

Build upon existing CBS

Nurture agency	Actively listen to communities	Capitalise on delivery to achieve more	Partner with non-education CBS

Work within all levels of the system

Achievements as a result of projects and CBSs working together

Improvements in educational outcomes, inclusion at reduced cost to project	Amplified project's impact by introducing new and unanticipated solutions as a result of innovations necessitated by pandemic conditions and as a benefit of community involvement	Increased agency and ownership, strengthened role within the community, and increased motivation of community members to participate in CBSs	Greater engagement across more diverse community stakeholders, collaborative decision-making and faster more efficient responsiveness to issues

Who benefitted from these collaborations

Girls and boys including those who are more vulnerable or marginalised, poorer, disabled and/ or outside formal education systems	**Parents and guardians** who engaged more actively in their child's education	**CBSs gained** traction within communities, gained community members support and project supports	**Projects** gained valuable insights from CBSs and collaborative partners	**Local and national governments and schools** saw more cohesion and communication across levels due to strengthened networks in communities

* Organisation name not included for security reasons.

Conclusions

All projects in this review consistently reported that the intensity of project engagement with CBSs increased during COVID-19 and the role CBSs played changed significantly. This happened to such a degree that project implementation and the achievements realised throughout this period would not have been possible without the direct involvement of CBSs.

For many projects, as they emerge from the restrictions of COVID-19, this has meant a re-examination of how to work with CBSs moving forward and embed learning around building back better. In addition, projects are also considering how to work with and through CBSs, should similar situations arise again, or where countries have re-introduced COVID-19-related restrictions.

What is evident in all of these scenarios is that CBSs matter, and they can significantly improve education delivery, outcomes and sustainability.

Crucially, the pre-existing strength of community structures matters to support and encourage education continuity and enhance the quality of provision and prevent dropout. Choices around with 'which CBS' to partner are essential. Understanding the trade-offs between existing community structures that may persist longer and have broader institutional support versus project support groups/structures that may fade away, post support is needed. Sustainability needs to be the focus in many contexts by challenging the perception that education provision is a government responsibility alone and community/parent engagement and support are unnecessary.

What have we learned should the situation arise again?

Central to the success of projects' ability to successfully pivot their activities during COVID-19 was the realisation that CBSs were the best (if not only) means to understand the situation and continue to achieve project outcomes. Projects have identified the need to prepare for future situations like this and ensure that programming is more resilient to shocks. Projects have learned that this can be achieved through partnership with CBSs.

Working with CBSs creates stability in times of emergency. Accessing and working with a wide variety of community groups takes a lot of organisation, agreement and scrutiny, but as they are already in situ, it creates an environment of stability as the actors are known and trusted by communities. Successful examples demonstrated that projects need to put in place the mechanisms to listen actively, engage and encourage the agency of CBSs as the creation of stability can only happen with communities taking responsibility and having ownership over what happens and how.

Committed volunteers are essential to successful CBSs, and projects need to identify committed volunteers quickly. COVID-19 connected more people with a shared sense of purpose. However, successful projects tended to underestimate the degree to which committed volunteers existed and the motivation of communities to come together and contribute to project outcomes. Mapping CBSs and engaging communities to find committed volunteers is a must, should a similar situation arise again.

One of the unintended outcomes of COVID-19 has been greater social accountability. CBSs have an increased understanding of education and educational outcomes. As a result, they can better discuss and agree on indicators of a good school/CBE centre and better question schools/CBE on their activities and delivery. In addition, the increased educational knowledge and experience of CBSs will enable a quicker pivot to continue learning should the need arise.

"**COVID-19 brought more people closer together with a shared sense of purpose**. However, **successful projects tended to underestimate the degree to which committed volunteers existed and the motivation of communities to come together and contribute to project outcomes.**"

What have we learned about building back better?

The mass movement of volunteers in the community during the COVID-19-related restrictions created momentum that increased the intensity of community engagement with project aims, and projects have expressed the desire to maintain this moving forward. The increased engagement saw many positive outcomes, including increased consciousness around the value of girls' education, a deeper understanding of and commitment to safeguarding and child protection, and a positive shift in parental/caregiver engagement in education. The increase in parental/caregiver interest and engagement in their children's education is an area which projects aim to support more in the future by working with CBSs as stronger relationships between parents/caregivers and school are crucial to communication and support, which ultimately impact learning and social outcomes.

The need to engage CBSs early on in programming, while known, was brought to the fore during COVID-19. Projects overwhelmingly reported that working with CBSs resulted in greater community cohesion; this was mainly observed when projects consciously encouraged greater participation of communities, actively listened and relinquished power structures. As a result, projects are keen to engage CBSs in the future, earlier on and to a greater extent, in their programming.

The increased focus on listening to communities meant that projects became more aware of those who were not being reached or were experiencing a reality not previously considered, which has implications for future programming. For example, during CBE/school closures, girls have had to deal with competing demands on their time and their learning. This has been carried out primarily in a more flexible situation, i.e. without the constraints of a rigid school system. As a result, they have sometimes had an increased voice, a sense of responsibility and autonomy, and how they will manage going back into a formalised system remains to be seen. Already projects are reporting anecdotally that older girls are not so interested in coming back to school; they have started to work and do not see a future for themselves in the school system, which calls for alternative responses to girls' realities.

Ultimately to ensure that the positive outcomes of working with CBSs are maintained with a focus on sustainability, a strategic approach to working with CBSs is needed. A more formalised system around CBSs would be beneficial. The traditional view of education has been that it starts and ends with school/CBE. However, there is a crisis in education that schools, CBE and teachers alone cannot address. Projects report that work by CBSs, be they education-based or not, has dramatically supported educational outcomes. Other areas like health and conservation have actors on the ground in communities to champion and strive for better results. Education also needs this support.

"The increased focus on listening to communities meant that projects became more aware of those who were not being reached or were experiencing a reality not previously considered, which has implications for future programming."

Annexes

How was this Thematic Review conducted?

This Thematic Review was motivated by the desire to document and learn from the anecdotal evidence of the success of utilising CBSs for project delivery and implementation during school closures. Accordingly, this Thematic Review used an appreciative inquiry approach to identify how CBSs contributed to successful project implementation during COVID-19 closures. While the authors recognise that there are challenges and difficulties inherent in any context, studying the *'strong and worthy in great detail'* allows us to work out ways to learn and bring these ideas to other settings and enable change.

The review began with the anecdotal evidence obtained through FM-led workshops in March 2021[17] then validates the initial findings with additional evidence from project and Fund Manager documentation and discussions with implementing partners. Whilst the review focuses on eight of the 20 projects that had participated in the workshops (out of 41 projects in the portfolio) – we recognise that most projects engage with communities in various ways. The findings drawn from this review are not meant to suggest that the eight projects are wholly favouring CBSs, nor that CBSs are a panacea. To fully explore the affordances and constraints of CBSs across the GEC would require a more extensive study.

The following questions guided the inquiry with each project selected for the review:

1. What **types** of community-based structures did projects utilise during the COVID-19 school closures?
2. What are the key **achievements** associated with using community-based structures?
3. How did projects **successfully utilise** community-based structures?
4. Why was the **interaction** with community-based structures successful?
5. **Who benefited** from the achievements the community-based structures engendered?
6. What key **recommendations** can be drawn from the Thematic Review to support future implementation?

Limitations

The primary limitation of this review is that it is a retrospective study of evidence from a selected sample of GEC projects. Second, the projects included were selected based on anecdotal evidence which may mean that not all successful examples of utilising CBSs were collected. Third, successful utilisation of CBSs was not assessed based on pre-existing criteria; but instead emerged from anecdotes. Projects that appeared to be successful were confirmed using beneficiary reach figures (proportion of pre-COVID-19 girls were reached during COVID-19). Fourth, some projects may not have reached successful utilisation of CBSs as of the time of this writing. Finally, GEC-T projects work with schools are fundamentally different from LNGB projects that, by design, reach girls who are out of school – the differences in experiences by funding window are not extracted here.

[17] In order to better understand projects' experience of working throughout the pandemic, a series of workshops structured around wellbeing, learning and return to school were run to collate project learning.

Girls'
Education
Challenge

UK**aid**
from the British people