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Notes:

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Strategic Approaches to Girls' Education External Evaluation Report

Non-Formal Cohort 2 tracer

December 2022

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- **Name of project:** Strategic Approaches to Girls' Education (STAGE)
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Acronyms

ALP	Accelerated Learning Programme
CBE	Complementary Basic Education
CEA	Complementary Education Agency
COC(s)	Community Oversight Committee(s)
COME	Community Mapping Tool
DSP(s)	Downstream Partner(s)
DSWO(s)	District Social Welfare Officer(s)
EE	External Evaluator
EFA	Education For All
EGMA	Early Grade Mathematics Assessment
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
FCDO	UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office
FM	Fund Manager
FT	Formal track
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GEC	Girls' Education Challenge
GES	Government Education Service
GESI	Gender and Social Inclusion
GEA	Ghana Enterprise Agency
GSIT	Gender Sensitive Inclusive Training
HH	Household
IGAs	Income Generating Activity/ies
IGSE	Inclusive and Gender Sensitive Education
IGST	Inclusive and Gender Sensitive Training
ILO	International Labour Organization
IO(s)	Intermediate Outcome(s)
KII(s)	Key Informant Interview(s)
LNGB	Leave No Girl Behind
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MCP(s)	Master crafts person(s)
MoE	Ministry of Education
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NFT	non-Formal track
NVTI	National Vocational Training Institute
RCT	Randomised Control Trial
SRHR	Sexual Reproductive Health & Rights

STAGE	Strategic Approaches to Girls' Education
SC	Steering Committee
VfM	Value for money
VST	Vocational Skills Training
VT	Vocational training
WEI	World Education, Inc.

Executive summary

This report presents the findings from the non-Formal track tracer evaluation for the Strategic Approaches to Girls' Education (STAGE), conducted approximately 10 months from girls' completion of the Vocational Skills Training (VST) delivered by STAGE. The evaluation was conducted by DT Global (formerly IMC Worldwide), an external evaluator (EE), hired by the project implementing agency World Education, Inc. (WEI). This report follows the evaluation guidelines provided by the Fund Manager (FM) and reflects the evaluation scope of work detailed in the STAGE Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework (Annex 2) and Inception Report (Annex 9).

Project Background. The project targets highly marginalised girls in regions of Ghana where there are high levels of extreme poverty and deep-seated traditional and social norms towards gender roles (early marriage, early and/or unwanted pregnancies, and responsibility for household chores) that negatively impact girls' ability to complete their education and gain decent employment. The project consists of two tracks – a single cohort Formal school track for girls aged 10-14, and three cohorts of non-Formal track girls aged 15-19. The non-Formal track provides participant girls with a nine-month Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) focused on literacy, numeracy, life skills training, and vocational training. The vocational skills training is facilitated by master crafts persons (MCPs). The aim is for girls to find employment/become self-employment. Additional support is provided via interventions including business start-up support to girls and awareness raising on the importance of girls' education at different levels. The project is being implemented from January 2020 until June 2023 and seeks to reach 16,794 girls (8,769 in the non-Formal track) across eight regions of Ghana.

Evaluation Approach. The purpose of the tracer evaluation is to assess to what extent STAGE has achieved its intended objectives for the non-Formal track cohort 2, what factors have contributed to, or hindered progress, and how sustainable STAGE interventions are likely to be. In doing so, the evaluation refers to key logframe indicators at Outcome and Intermediate Outcome (IO) level and assesses the relevance and plausibility of the STAGE Theory of Change (ToC). Five overarching evaluation questions (EQs) (including sub-questions) have been answered (Section 4).

The evaluation is a mixed methods design and the EE applied a Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) lens to ensure girls and marginalised sub-groups were thoughtfully considered and reported. Quantitative analysis (household survey, girls survey, Life Skills Index) makes use of pre-post comparison gains in learning and improvement between the baseline and final data to identify significant levels of improvement over time. Qualitative data sources were used to assess the experiences of project girls and stakeholders and build a deeper understanding of 'how and why' and 'under what circumstances' change has or has not occurred. The approach is further detailed in Section 2.2.

Data collection took place between August and September 2022 in three regions and four language groups. The qualitative sample covered three communities in each region.

For quantitative surveys, due to budget considerations, the sample was reduced to 400 girls, that were a stratified random subset of the original 640 at baseline. However, the sample size is sufficiently large to detect statistically significant changes and meet minimum power requirements and, given this is the last evaluation point, attrition for future data collection is not an issue. Whilst the qualitative sample has been slightly reduced overall, several new stakeholders have been interviewed as key informants.

Socio-demographic characteristics of non-Formal track girls

STAGE project's profile. Non-Formal track girls come from households with high levels of marginalisation. At the time of the baseline evaluation, the average age of the evaluation sample was 17.2, reflecting the average age and the region/language group make-up of the non-Formal cohort 2 girls. At the time of tracer data collection, the average age of the sample was 18.5.

The evaluation assessed child functioning by asking girls' caregivers the Washington Group questions on child functioning focused on physical, socio-cognitive and mental health domains. It is noted that this is in no way intended to be a medical diagnostic of disability prevalence among girls. At tracer, 3.8% (15 girls out of 400) had a disability compared to 8% at baseline and only 0.7% of girls (three girls) had a disability other than anxiety or depression. The sample was designed to be proportionally representative of seven language-region groups out of the 10 covered by STAGE in interventions.

Marginalisation characteristics of non-Formal track cohort 2 girls

A list of subgroup characteristics for the EE to report on was determined at baseline in 2020, building on the MEL framework and community mapping which identified key subgroups of girls at risk of marginalisation. The non-Formal cohort 2 tracer evaluation has a reduced number of subgroups, as agreed with the Project and FM. The prevalence of tracked subgroup characteristics at baseline and tracer is presented below (ES Table 1).

ES Table 1 - Characteristic subgroups, non-Formal track cohort 2, baseline and tracer

Characteristic	Proportion of sample with this characteristic – Baseline	Proportion of sample with this characteristic – Tracer
Is a mother	50.7%	56.6%
Married	21.1%	24.1%
Lives with neither parent	21.3%	24.3%
HH unable to meet basic needs[1]	7.8%	10.8%
High Chore Burden (Half a day or more) [2]	33.1%	31.9%
Has a disability	8.0%	3.8%
Source: Analytical Dataset Caregiver Survey N =	639	399

Some subgroups such as married or mother have slightly increased in size, this is to be expected as girls grow older, and some get married or become pregnant/mothers. The most common characteristics reported by households are being a mother (56.6% of the sample), high chore burden (31.9%, slightly lower than at baseline), being married (24.1%) and not living with either parent (24.3%). Whilst still relatively low, the share of households unable to meet basic needs has slightly increased (from 7.8% to 10.8%). Considering the intersectionality of characteristics, it is worth noting that 60.5% of girls from households unable to meet basic needs are also mothers, and experience high chore burden (55.8%, significant).

Overall, region/language groups compare to each other in a similar way at tracer than at baseline, except for Upper East (Kasem) where the participants observed are disproportionately marginalised compared to other areas. Central (Fante), and Eastern and Oti regions (Akuapim Twi language) show lower levels of marginalisation overall, although Oti/Akuapim communities still have the highest prevalence of mothers (86%). Distribution of mothers regionally has changed substantially: in some regions, the share of mothers in the sample decreased considerably (Northern, Likpakpaaln) which might indicate attrition from either the project or from consenting to being part of the sample, or that the reduced evaluation sample is capturing this subgroup less than before.

Barriers to transition among non-Formal track cohort 2 girls

The caregiver reported reasons for not enrolling in school (combined in six categories) were added after the original baseline design for both the Formal and non-Formal track, as the Project required reporting on subgroup

[1] Defined as answering Household Survey question 'PCG_5econ Please tell me which of the following phrases best suits your household situation' with '[_] 1 unable to meet basic needs without charity'
[2] Defined by the caregiver as at least half a day spent on household chores such as fetching water or caring for family members.

characteristics (discussed above) and barriers. The intended STAGE transition pathways for non-Formal track girls are employment/self-employment or enrolment in further non-formal education. As such, the use of the original barrier categories and their interpretation as 'barriers to formal education' would not be meaningful for assessing the non-Formal track intervention. At tracer, a mixture of new questions and already used questions were used to identify whether these are serving as barriers to successful transition.[3] These are analysed below (for reference, baseline values are presented in Table 42, Annex 15).

ES Table 2 - Barriers to education among non-Formal track cohort 2 girls, baseline and tracer

Barrier	Proportion of sample affected by this barrier – Tracer
Economic (Chores or Poverty)	35.4%
Travel or Work Safety	14.7%
Disability-related	3.9%
Social Norms (Disinterest by Parent/Girl)	6.1%
Vocational Skills Training (VST) safety	1.5%
Demographic (Age/Pregnant/Parent/Married)	58.5%
STAGE VST delivery (dissatisfied with one or more aspects of STAGE VST)[4]	20.9%
Source: Analytical Dataset Girls survey: All girls (tracer) N	407

At tracer, the most prominent barrier to transition into income generating activities (IGA) was the demographic one (cited by 58.5% of the sample). This could be because girls who are married, pregnant, and/or mothers are disproportionately impacted by the influence that their demographics have on their aspirations, their ability to seek opportunities for economic empowerment, and their ability to further their education, as also found at baseline. At tracer, mothers and pregnant girls still faced more challenges than others to attend the ALPs and VSTs and transition to decent employment/self-employment, due to factors such as lower concentration capacity or household-related care responsibilities. Second, economic-related barriers (i.e., household unable to meet basic needs, and household chores preventing work) were prevalent among 35.4% of girls. Married girls and girls living with neither parent (the two groups largely overlap) were more likely than average to experience different types of barriers (beyond demographic), such as related to their experience at STAGE VST ('STAGE VST delivery'), or economic- and travel-related. Barriers related to unsupportive social norms are most prominent in Central/Fante communities, making up 19.8% of the sample in this region/language group vs. 6.1% overall.

Overview of logframe indicator results

The following table (ES Table 3) provides a snapshot of indicator progress across the programme, full details can be found in Section 3 of the report.

[3] 1) Economic (Work or Costs) include: poverty status (household ability to meet basic needs); and high chore burden preventing work. 2) Travel include: "Girl does not feel safe at work or in community"; Work safety, added for tracer, includes feeling safe or risk of injury at work; 3) Disability refers to the disability status analysed as characteristic as well as the caregiver reporting a disability prevents or limits the girl's ability to work; 4) Social Norms refers to low community (based on caregiver questions about community) and low caregiver support for girls' economic empowerment and further education; 5) VST Safety (replacing School barriers) relates to safety and treatment by VST craftsperson; 6) Demographic refers to age, pregnancy status, parental status, and marital status; 7) STAGE VST delivery refers to dissatisfaction experienced by girls with aspects of the MCP teaching style or language of instruction.

[4] Disagreed with at least one of the following (from Intermediate Outcome Indicator 2): I could easily understand the language of instruction of the VST; I have received individual support/encouragement from the MCP; I had the opportunity to practice skills learnt at the end of each VST session; The materials/equipment were adequate; There was flexibility in setting up classes at a time/frequency suitable with my schedule; The duration of the VST was sufficient; I felt safe with the MCP I was assigned to.

ES Table 3 - Overview of indicator results

Indicator #	Measure	Baseline level	Endline target	Tracer level	EQ
Outcomes					
1. Learning					
Life skills	See Intermediate Outcome Indicator 3.1				
2. Transition					
O2.1 % of girls completing an "appropriate" transition: decent employment/self-employment and/or additional training	Caregiver survey Endline: N = 400	N/A (no girl transitioned)	80% (end of project for NFT cohort 2: October 2021)	84.4% (Tracer, 10 months after end of project)	1
3. Sustainability					
Community					
O3.1.b % of parents/caregivers of marginalized girls who actively[5] support girls' education/employment opportunities	Caregiver survey Scoring: 0 - 4	2 (49.3% % of parents actively supporting girls' education)	N/A	2 (56.6% % of parents actively supporting girls' education) At least 40% of parents are actively supporting girls' education/employment - behaviour (e.g., allowing more flexibility in girl child's household routine to ensure school attendance, advocating to others the importance of girl child's education)	3
O3.2.b Extent that key community leaders and power holders support girls' education/employment (see IO indicator 4.2)[6]	Modified indicator KII with DSWOs, head teachers, leaders, teacher	0	N/A	2 Community leaders are showing improved practices/behaviours	3

[5] Active support is defined as meeting all of the following conditions: i) key knowledge, understanding, and a basic level of supportive attitude towards girl's education (measured through positive responses to the following survey questions: 1. Do you think [GIRL] has a right to education even though she is not in school?; 2. To what extent do you agree that "even when funds are limited it is worth investing in a girl's education?; 3.To what extent do you agree "a girl is just as likely to use her education as a boy?); ii) Active support: 1. Caregivers did not say any of the following were acceptable reasons for a child not to attend school: child needs to work, child needs to help at home, child is married, child is too old, child unable to learn, education is too costly, child is a mother; 2. When asked, girls stated that chores, work supporting home economic activities, or working in a family business were not a reason keeping her from enrolling in school or a vocational education programme

[6] For example, advocating to others the importance of girl child's education, collaborating with others to create functional structures to promote girls' education.

Indicator #	Measure	Baseline level	Endline target	Tracer level	EQ
	Scoring: 0 – 4			towards girls' education	
O3.3.b Extent of communities with functional structures to support inclusive girls' education[7]		1	N/A	1 Parents report being able to access services for their children with disabilities some of the time; some indication of functional community structures	3
System					
Extent of district assemblies with functional structures to support inclusive girls' Vocational Skills Training and employment[8]	Modified indicator KII with DSWOs, head teachers, leaders, teachers KII DSWOs/CEA and T-VET New indicator Scoring: 0 – 4	1	N/A	2 District assembly demonstrate support to the project and have improved capacity to support girls' education/employment through their existing functions and adopting new approaches.	3
Extent of TVET institutions with practices that promote girls' vocation skills training in project districts[9]		N/A	N/A	N/A	3
Extent that NFED/MoE adopts the STAGE curriculum for ALPs to support non-Formal education programming in Ghana	Interview with CEA and T-VET Ghana.	N/A	N/A	N/A	3
Intermediate outcomes					

[7] Referring to the following revised indicators in sustainability plan: # of communities with functional structures to support inclusive girls' VST and employment (e.g., establishment of a community-based support scheme for girls' education, platforms for knowledge sharing and brainstorming, establishment of catch-up classes, mentoring and coaching support, availability and unrestricted access to services for PWDs).

[8] Referring to the following revised indicators in sustainability plan: # of districts with functional structures to support inclusive girls' VST and employment (e.g. establishment of scholarship scheme, platforms for knowledge sharing and brainstorming, establishment of catch-up classes, mentoring and coaching support, availability, and unrestricted access to services for PWDs, functional child protection and safeguarding policies, availability of functional Girls Education officers and Social Welfare Officers).

[9] Referring to two revised sustainability indicators in this area: "# and % of TVET institutions with practices that promote girls' vocation skills training in project districts"; and "Extent that MoE/G-TVET adopts parts of STAGE VST model to support CBT programming in Ghana". For example, platforms for knowledge sharing and brainstorming, dedicated officer of Unit for Inclusive education, Functional and trained SEAH structures/officers, functional child protection and safeguarding policies.

Indicator #	Measure	Baseline level	Endline target	Tracer level	EQ
IO1. Attendance					
IO1.1 Attendance rates of girls (% of girls that reported attending all or most of the classes)	Girls Survey, Self-reported attendance	N/A	N/A	85.3%	2
1.2 Extent that girls, caregivers, teachers and school leaders feel the support received helped reduce the barriers to regular attendance	Qualitative data from girls, caregivers, teachers, leaders.	N/A	N/A	N/A	2
IO2. Quality of teaching					
2.1 % of Girls that agree that their master craft person was effective at the learning centre	Girls Survey[10]	N/A	75%	93.4%	4
2.2 Extent that master craft persons apply inclusive gender-sensitive education (% of marginalised girls that agree their master craft person was effective at the learning centre/school)	Girls Survey[11] KIIs girls/teachers/facilitators	N/A	75%	92.5%	4
2.3 % of facilitators who demonstrate effective literacy/numeracy instruction	WEI classroom observation summary KIIs girls/teachers/facilitators	N/A	60%	88.9%	4
IO3. Life skills					
3.1 Life skills index score	Same sampling as Learning Test and HH Survey	56	75	74.6	1
3.2 Extent that caregivers perceive positive changes in girls' life skills (% of caregivers who agree or strongly agree with positive changes in life skills)	Same sampling as Learning Test and HH Survey	61.3	Positive trend	91.2	1
IO3. Increased community and district support for inclusive girls' education					
4.1 % of caregivers who feel it is equally viable to invest in a girl's	Same sampling as Household Survey	80.3%	85%	95.7%	2

[10] Seven questions were inserted in the survey to assess effectiveness of MCPs at the vocational skills training. The questions referred to practices including: providing individual support to pupils; organising paired/group work; valuing contribution of pupils in the lessons and other attributes of effective teaching as per STAGE logframe and STAGE classroom observation tool. The overall result for this indicator is calculated as the prevalence of girls that strongly agreed or agreed to all eight questions.

[11] The value reported from the EE quantitative data calculates the prevalence of marginalised girls (under any of the marginalised sub-groups) that strongly agreed or agreed to all four questions to assess effectiveness of MCPs at the VST. As per STAGE logframe, gender sensitive education is defined as: Marginalised girls, girls and boys get equal level of attention, interaction, praise/criticism, roles, classroom resources; are encouraged to engage with each other in class/seating; are encouraged/facilitated; gender and inclusive discriminative language is challenged and explained. The EE considers that HH survey questions cover key gender sensitive teaching practices, except for that relating to challenging and explaining discriminative language and obviously not capturing boys' perspectives.

Indicator #	Measure	Baseline level	Endline target	Tracer level	EQ
education as a boy's education even when funds are limited	Question PCG_32g (Strongly agree or agree)				
4.2 Extent that religious and traditional leaders actively mobilise households to support excluded girls into education (% of leaders that speak at least quarterly in support of girls' education).	Same sampling as Household Survey Question PCG_34g2[12]	10.9%	N/A	33%	2
4.3 Extent that NFED/MoE adopts the STAGE curriculum for ALPs to support non-formal education programming in Ghana	KIIs with national actors, DSWOs, community leaders Scoring: 0 - 4	0	2	2 NFED/MoE is convinced by performance and results from STAGE curriculum changes	2

Evaluation question summary findings

EQ 1. What impact did the STAGE project have on the transition of highly marginalised girls into education/learning/training or work opportunities?

STAGE has overachieved end of project targets in both key outcomes of learning and transition. 10 months after graduation from ALP/VSTs, life skills learning and transition to decent employment/self-employment and/or additional vocational training greatly exceed target for girls graduating from VSTs (80% transition target in October 2021). Results vary substantially between regions and are lower for some marginalisation subgroups, although no subgroup is far below the overall average. Overall transition has been successful and sustained for 84.4% of non-Formal track cohort 2 girls. Qualitative findings suggest more girls would attend VST if they could, but the cost of training and demands on their time remain obstacles. Others are able to work and attend VST concurrently.

Social norms and poverty remain critical obstacles to successful transition. Girls facing social norms-related barriers or that cannot meet their basic economic needs have significantly lower transition rates (76% and 78% respectively). Those facing social norms-related barriers are significantly more likely to be attending additional training, and less likely to be working (both work that is safe and fairly paid, therefore counting towards successful transition, as well as work that is not safe and fairly paid) than the overall sample. Girls in this subgroup are also more likely to be engaged in temporary work than the overall sample. Girls from households with extreme poverty are more likely to be working but are less likely to be fairly paid for their work. Whilst 95% of girls from poor households reported working for money, these girls are 10 percentage points less likely to be engaged in fairly paid employment than girls in less poor households. Mothers, married girls and girls living with neither parent have slightly lower than average transition rates (83.6%, 82.3% and 81.4% respectively). This might mean that motherhood responsibilities and family duties tend to be prioritised over other work and education endeavours.

A substantial portion of girls pursued additional vocational training. Beyond STAGE, over a quarter of girls undertook additional vocational training (18.9% were undertaking further training at the time of data collection and 8.3% did so at some point after graduation but were no longer in training at the time of the survey). The most common

[12] Responses to question: PCG_34g2: How often (have leaders in your community spoken out in support of girls education? Quarterly or more frequently (monthly, weekly).

training areas are hair dressing, braiding, plaiting (40.8% of those who undertook additional training); soap making (22.4%); and beads, used for various women clothing and fashion items (15.8%). Of note, some subgroups are more likely to undertake additional training than the overall average: girls affected by social norms-related barriers (52% vs 18.9% for the overall sample, significant), girls with a disability (33.3%), and girls older than 19 (25%).

Some regions with higher marginalisation also had higher rates of successful transition. Despite having low learning scores and high levels of marginalisation at baseline, LIkpakpaaln speakers (in Oti and Northern regions) had the highest levels of successful transition. Upper West (Dagaare) and Upper East (Kasem) have the lowest transition rates (66.7% and 75% respectively): whilst they have higher than average rates of additional VST, they also have lower rates of girls working for fair pay and under safe conditions than average. These two regions also have a higher prevalence of poverty which is negatively correlated to lower transition rates.

While most girls work, it is typically temporary, seasonal, or part-time. When asked, 91.5% of girls in the sample said that they earned money in the past year; of those who do work, over half of them (53%) do either temporary work (40%) and/or seasonal work (32.5%).[13] Further, different data points to girls being engaged part-time in multiple activities during the course of the year and having diversified sources of income. Most girls (87.2%) said they would work longer hours if there was more work available to earn more money – though STAGE did not aim to get girls into full-time jobs. Girls with high chore burden, on the other hand, were significantly less likely to be able to work more even if they wanted to and significantly more likely to be engaged in temporary and seasonal work (60%). Girls affected by social norms-related barriers were less likely to work (76% vs 91.5%) and less likely to have successfully transitioned (75% vs 84.4%).

No girl surveyed reported being employed outside the family. Nearly all girls are self-employed, either running an IGA on their own, or with a business partner/family member, and 5.7% are doing work for a household economic activity.

Girls seem to be engaged in a range of work in different sectors, at different times of the year and for varying periods of time. A majority of girls (52.4%) reported that their main activity is in agricultural related sectors, rather than in a vocational skill area covered in the non-Formal cohort 2 VST.[14] Specifically, 38.3% stated their primary IGA is in agriculture, and 13.1% in subsistence agriculture or related sectors. Other prevalent sectors are sales and service workers (23.5%) and artisan, craft, and trade workers (23.2%). This diversification of activities and income sources is likely a response to fluctuations in the market and the need to contribute to seasonal farming.

Despite reporting that they have work in the field of the VST they received in, the main economic activity of most girls remains agriculture.[15] 75% of girls reported working in the sector they acquired skills in, which seems to contradict reports that a majority are working in agriculture. The qualitative data supports this finding, pointing to prevalence of farm work as a primary activity, and – as a result of STAGE – girls being engaged in other activities such as hairdressing, dress and sandal making, catering and pastry businesses. There is large regional variation in the industry of work which seemingly links to the availability of market opportunities (as perceived by girls) in those regions and a higher or lower likelihood of working in the VST sector.

Six out of seven girls whose IGAs have costs are able to cover their costs most of the time. Among all girls that work, 63.8% of respondents have costs to run their work/activity. Of those with costs, 86.7% earn enough money

[13] Some work is both temporary and seasonal.

[14] The Project initially included agriculture as a vocational area they covered i.e., in the non-Formal track, cohort 1; however it did not consider feasible to continue offering training in this area for the non-Formal track, cohort 2, due to the high costs associated, and the limited government support. Besides, the land tenure system and brevity of the training period were also considered. Many women do not own farming lands and are not in full control to make certain financial decisions for themselves.

[15] The period data collection took place coinciding with harvesting season - especially in Northern and Oti regions – might have had an impact on the high rates of girls working in agriculture found by the evaluation.

to cover their costs most of the time or always and 13.3% earn enough to cover costs only sometimes or never. Almost all girls report they are very (45.5%) or at least somewhat (50.1%) fairly paid. The cost of materials and production was seen as a key issue to IGA sustainability. These findings support project reporting which mentioned that the worsening economic context in Ghana has made the cost of inputs expensive (thus contributing to 15% of the IGAs being inactive).

Girls whose businesses are less likely to cover costs are concentrated in Northern (Likpakpaaln) and Upper East (Kasem). Despite this, almost all girls consider they are very (45.5%) or at least somewhat (50.1%) fairly paid. The cost of materials and production was seen as a key issue to IGA sustainability; this may be a result of the worsening economic context in Ghana, with high inflation rates over the intervention period.

Almost all girls agree they feel safe in the community and at work, though 15% do not feel safe with equipment/machinery at work.

Over three quarter of girls (77.6%) are able to spend all or most of the income earned as they choose. Over 30% of girls can only spend some or none of their income and evidence suggests this might be because a consistent share of girls' income goes towards family expenses.

The Life Skills Index score improved by 8 percentage points since baseline, exceeding recommended targets (significant at 90% confidence level, but not at 95%). Life skills subcategory scores all increased compared to baseline. Caregivers had high levels of confidence in their girl's life skills in all areas and in relation to all sub-groups at baseline but the Caregiver's Assessment has still increased statistically significantly since baseline (91.2). Concerningly however, the girls' Life Skills assessment Sexual & Reproductive Health & Rights (SRHR) section scores remained low.

EQ 2. How successfully did STAGE reduce barriers to full participation in formal education or vocational education for highly marginalised girls?

Completion and attendance rates of ALPs and VSTs were high though some challenges were noted for nursing mothers and those with other household or family work responsibilities.

Economic barriers were reduced by free VST for a six-month period followed by provision of an IGA start-up fund and equipment/material, together with sensitisation on the importance of girls attending vocational education and achieving economic empowerment. Encouragingly, almost all girls stated that their working conditions are better now as a result of participating in STAGE. There were some indications that the start-up fund was not sufficient for starting or scaling a business. This perception has likely been influenced by the challenging economic context in Ghana, with high inflation affecting the girls' ability to purchase inputs needed for their businesses. This has also likely diminished the real term value of IGA start-up funds.

Activities implemented to reduce economic barriers to attendance and transition were mostly effective. Results were mixed for girls affected by demographic barriers which proved a challenge to attendance, for example motherhood and pregnancy, and social norms barriers and which proved a higher challenge for successful transition than for girls not affected. There are some concerns around the sustainability of transition for some due to external factors/labour market conditions.

Regional variation in transition. Most girls work in fair and safe conditions but experiences vary between region/language groups in terms of the prevalence, industries, and reliability of working opportunities. Both the determinants of success and what success looks like is unique to each regional subgroup in the project. To an extent, it seems current labour market conditions as well as non-economic factors such as family/community support have an impact (as well as the programmatic capacity of implementing partners). The project tracked both these assumptions during the project, despite labour market conditions being outside of the project's control. It is not clear the extent to which the project was able to link girls to market opportunities appropriate for their community, however

the Project has provided some examples, such a linking girl who trained in weaving to people in Southern Ghana for business opportunities. Girls could also have preferred to work in agriculture, if this is more profitable than a vocational area covered by the VST, or been influenced by the family in this regard.

Family support improved, but gendered norms persist. Ultimately, the evaluation evidence does suggest that caregivers and families are supportive of girls' vocational training and employment, and that there have been changes as a result of STAGE. What is less clear overall is if these changes are because families would like the girls to contribute financially to the family, or if they believe girls have the right to the same opportunities as boys regardless of income contribution. Further, examples of active support for girls' education and economic empowerment (such as reducing chore burden for girls or mobilising funds) were not widespread. This, considered along with evidence of increased household chores for many girls, is a reminder of how gendered roles in households are deeply rooted and complex to change, especially in situations of widespread poverty.

Community support has increased from very low levels at baseline, but it is primarily concentrated in certain regions. While community leaders were widely seen as supporters of women working and learning outside the home in Kasem and Likpakpaaln-speaking communities, their perceived support was minimal elsewhere. Some local leaders felt they did not have an active role to play in STAGE or the promotion of the project. **Community animation sessions** contributed to community support for girls' attendance, changing communities' perception to girls' vocational training and transition in Kasem and Likpakpaaln-speaking communities alone.

Findings pointed at **supportive attitudes towards education and inclusion of girls with a disability** in the class and a **better awareness of the challenges of girls with high chore burden and care responsibilities** amongst project implementers and trainers.

EQ 3. How sustainable were the STAGE activities funded by the GEC and was the programme successful in leveraging additional interest, investment, and policy change?

STAGE has worked with national, district and local actors on strengthening the Apprenticeship Vocational Skills Training Model, by promotive introduction of Inclusive and Gender Sensitive Education (IGSE) and safeguarding in VST delivery and seeking partnerships with existing vocational training institutions and structures (e.g., using certified MCPs already living in communities for VST delivery). In addition, STAGE attempted to effect sustainable change in social norms and gendered views around girls' education and economic empowerment within households and communities. At national level, there were indications that STAGE has been working closely with CEA and T-VET Ghana in the establishment of strategies, policies and activities that have been influenced by the STAGE model, and a three-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is in place with CEA. However, it is noted that CEA have not yet begun implementation of these initiatives, and as such the effects are not seen at community or district level. Similarly at district level, there was indication that sustainability interventions are in place including the creation of partnerships and networks. The data collected by the EE found limited examples of sustainability interventions at community level, however it is to be noted that almost all respondents reported that families and local leaders are encouraging of girls continuing their businesses. While not directly reported on in the qualitative data, the presence of MCPs, and the support of many local leaders in the communities can be taken as an indication that there will be at least continued verbal support for inclusive girls' VST and employment beyond the project end.

EQ 4. What works to facilitate transition of highly marginalised girls into education/training/employment and to increase learning?

Evaluation findings suggest that implementation of IGSE practices, safeguarding/child protection, the VST and ALP/CBE curriculum all contributed to girls' learning and transition. Further, monitoring and supervision have enabled gains in learning and transition by ensuring the effective implementation of the CBE curriculum and IGSE/safeguarding and accompanying the girls through sustained transition.

Quality of teaching and IGSE. Girls' experience at the ALP and VST offered by STAGE was overall very positive. Qualitative evidence points to the fact that while the classes were designed or modified for the girls to learn at the level and rate that was appropriate for them, it is the behaviour, attitudes, and demeanour of the facilitators which

helped the girls to engage and continue with the programme. Still some challenges were mentioned working with girls with a disability. Another challenged highlighted by some was the teaching SRHR topics, however WEI have reported that this was identified during implementation and engaged Ghana Health Service staff in various communities to support in teaching these topics.

The life skills were seen as a very useful part of the ALPs, especially with regard to an increase in confidence, an increase in knowledge of personal hygiene and the environment, and money management. **Opinions on usefulness of STAGE activities are very positive** amongst girls without much variation among activities, nor by region. However, it is notable that girls identified numeracy and VST as the two most important forms of support, compared to other activities directed specifically to support transition (IGA start up fund). Even among those that received the IGA start-up fund, this was not among the top four helpful aspects of support.

Vocational training duration could be longer, according to various respondents and corroborated by quantitative and qualitative findings. About one fifth of girls felt they need more time to master a skill than the six-month VST for many skills. In particular, girls in Oti (Likpakpaaln), Upper West (Dagaare), and those trained in sales or service-related fields reported that the duration of training was insufficient. CEA also noted this time is not enough to acquire skills to scale up a business, however they also noted that the skills they learnt in the six-month period were "impressive". According to the Project, though, a distinction needs to be made, as the optimal skill building and VST duration varies across areas.

Safeguarding and Child Protection. In all three locations girls spoke about knowing their rights and knowing how to report abuses as a result of the STAGE programme. This was likely the result of STAGE training, but girls also participated in other initiatives (e.g., by UNICEF) on child protection and safe school policies.

EQ 5. What are the most cost effective and impactful activities implemented through the STAGE intervention which have helped girls to transition to schools and employment opportunities? What life skills are most valued and useful for girls in the STAGE program?

Beyond findings on effectiveness and sustainability already presented, the light touch Value for Money analysis pointed at the **relevance of STAGE interventions**. Namely targeted strategies put in place to encourage attendance, transition and learning of marginalised subgroups, and the project building upon existing community structures to deliver interventions.

Several respondents pointed to the **cost effectiveness of the VST** and of STAGE in general, especially compared to other government vocational education programmes (though the length of the VST was considered as too short by some).

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on key project findings and lessons learned from the evaluation evidence (see Sections 5 and 6).

1. Future programmes focused on marginalised girls should consider long-term, targeted interventions for married girls and mothers to tackle the social norms which disproportionately affect them and that can take an extended time period to change. For example, engaging husbands, boys and wider families and offering caregiving solutions for mothers to facilitate attendance, or – as proposed by STAGE – shorter/targeted trainings to facilitate their attendance.

2. Findings on resistance to social change point to a need for a longer programme timespan/vision to make space for deeper changes in social norms. In some cases, positive changes in attitudes to girls' working were linked to girls' financial contributions to the family, and prevalence of active family support for girls' economic empowerment and education was lower than vocal/basic support. rather than as a sign of indicating support for equal rights to education for girls. Perhaps the community animation sessions could be revised/strengthened or fewer participants targeted over longer periods of time could make space for deeper changes in social norms.

3. Continued work on changing social norms and gender distribution of chores – including involving men – can reduce risks to sustainability linked to expectations of girls' contribution to household chores, in addition to being engaged in work outside the household.

4. Girls from poor households had lower than average transition rates, lower safety nets and less resilience to shocks. Consider targeted interventions for this subgroup.

5. STAGE transition findings suggest that tailoring VST to market opportunities, or linking to these opportunities, worked less well in some regions. This confirms the importance of VST design which considers regional differences in market conditions, maximises diversification and avoidance of oversaturation in any particular industry/ies.

6. Given positive results, approaches to work safety from STAGE might be showcased and shared, though the perception of unsafe equipment and materials for 15% of girls merits attention in future programmes.

7. In designing future programming, the challenges observed in progressing awareness/knowledge and practices of SRHR life skills over the lifespan of STAGE should be considered.

8. While it was noted that the level of skill the girls acquired in six months was impressive, some respondents considered the duration of VST too short to acquire skills of the level needed to scale. However, the EE acknowledges that lengthening the training period would come at an additional cost to the programme and that optimal training duration can vary across areas.

9. Better integration into existing education systems and practice, and better demonstration of community initiative is needed. Consider involving leaders right from the outset as they are key to functional structures for VST support being place. A branch of programmatic, strategic activities focused on advocacy and influencing key government actors in non-formal education and youth employment promotion might increase public funding for non-formal education and the development of integrated plans at different levels of government/administration supporting VST.

10. Areas for future research:

    a. Investigate the relationship that is leading those facing social norms barriers to continue VST at higher rates and to work at lower rates. In particular, look to see if there are structural reasons keeping them from working, and if further VST will remedy them.

    b. Exploring the reasons for regional disparities and why what facilitates transition in one region (Oti and Northern) but not in another (Upper West and Upper East) could lead to more nuanced programming approaches in different regions in future.

    c. Unpack specifically what worked well for girls with a disability to understand what elements might be integrated into future programme design/showcased.

    d. Given praises of efficiency and cost effectiveness for STAGE VST, important to understand what elements might be integrated into future programme design/showcased.

1. Background to project

1.1 Project context

Ghana made notable efforts towards achieving Education for All (EFA) in the post-Jomtien period of the 1990s and 2000. However, despite initial increases in rates of enrolment, significant expansion in terms of access nationally did not necessarily translate into equality or equity of opportunity (Akyeampong et al, 2012). In the early 2000s, Ghana passed clear policy guidelines through the 2002 – 2015 National Action Plan on EFA that sought to decrease girls' dropout rates in primary and junior high school (JHS), and while this led to increases in primary enrolment, challenges in transition and retention of JHS girls persist and from 2014-2016 national transition rates from primary to JHS declined. In 2017 the Government pledged to make secondary education free thus removing a significant barrier to students staying in school.

In addition to financial challenges, extensive literature (UNICEF 1993; Mfum-Mensah, 2003; Farrell & Hartwell, 2009; Mfum-Mensah & Ridenour, 2014) highlights that rigid formalised school systems based on fixed timetables and a loaded curriculum that greatly depends on trained teachers, often do not perform as well in rural environments with respect to providing the basic literacy, numeracy and other skills that are relevant to the local environment. Traditional schools operate on insufficient budgets and little funding is allocated to vocational training and apprenticeship programmes. There is a correlation between the regions with the highest incidence of poverty and lowest levels of education and the regions with the least Government of Ghana per pupil expenditure in education (World Bank, 2010). Out-of-school children, especially girls, have few options to re-enter school or find viable options to generate income.

UNESCO studies found the gender gap in educational attainment increases at JHS. Ghana's Education Sector Performance Report (2016) indicated that gender parity (GPI) was achieved at the primary and JHS levels nationally (0.97 in 2015/16), but in deprived districts, the GPI is 0.93 (2015/16) and 0.79-0.9 or below in Northern, Ashanti, Greater Accra, and Upper West regions. Girls in these targeted areas are not finding their way and have barriers to entering school.

Evidence strongly suggests that the factors contributing to educational exclusion are multifaceted and intersectional and children suffering multiple disadvantages are considered most at risk. The barriers affecting education are interrelated throughout community, school, and system levels impacting all children, disproportionately girls. Addressing these multiple barriers will engender an enabling environment for girls' education and change the perception at the individual, community, and institutional levels. Ultimately it will equip the girls to be agents of change.

Programme Design

The Strategic Approaches to Girls' Education (STAGE) project, implemented by World Education, Inc. (WEI), addresses barriers to education through two tracks (a Formal school track and a non-Formal track focused on vocation skills and employment). It is designed to provide a holistic approach that tackles barriers at individual, community, school, and system levels, and support girls in accessing education and fair employment.

STAGE specifically targets communities in eight regions of Ghana[16] with high levels of extreme poverty, in combination with existence of deep-seated traditional and social norms that act as a barrier to girls' education. STAGE targets girls in these areas that are highly vulnerable and systematically marginalised due to factors such as early marriage, pregnancies, disabilities, and high chore burden. Additionally, with poverty being such a key factor issue, STAGE works to reduce financial barriers, to ensure that girls become better educated and are put on pathways that break the cycle of poverty. The project builds on learning from the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and USAID funded CBE.[17]

[16] Originally targeting seven regions but updated following the creation of six new regions after the 2018 referendum.

[17] Programme that was set up to provide children between eight and 14 years old with basic literacy and numeracy skills, targeting children in remote and deprived areas that would normally be unable to attend school. CBE aimed to equip children with knowledge and skills comparable to those learnt in the first three years of formal school, and on completion of the accelerated learning children were able to transition into local primary schools.

The non-Formal track will provide 15–19-year-old girls with nine months of accelerated learning on literacy and numeracy together with life skills training, and vocational training from MCPs with the purpose to support future employment for the girls via interventions such as support to caregivers, and awareness raising on the importance of girls' education.

COVID-19 Impact on education

The context in which STAGE was implemented changed significantly as Ghana was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting measures imposed to control its spread.[18,19,20] According to the UN, "COVID-19 has created the largest disruption of education systems in history, affecting nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries and all continents" and "exacerbating pre-existing education disparities by reducing the opportunities for many of the most vulnerable children".[21]

Schools in Ghana first closed in March 2020 and remained closed for 10 months. UNHCR estimates that 9.2 million schools' students and 0.5 million tertiary education students were impacted at the peak of the pandemic by the closure of learning institutions and the interruption of literacy and lifelong learning programmes in Ghana.[22]

The Ghana Education Services (GES) sought to mitigate the disruption to education provision through digital learning with lessons available online and transmitted via radio and television, developing a COVID-19 Coordinated Education Response Plan for Ghana in April 2020. GES opened a website[23] and in partnership with the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation expanded their digital learning offer, developing a further 700 lessons in English, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Integrated Science.

The Government implemented a staggered re-opening of education institutions; students in classes with exams returned in October 2020, most new and continuing pre-tertiary students in January 2021 and in March 2021, first-year Senior High School students.[24] The Government launched a Back-to-School Campaign in January 2021, to encourage learners and especially girls to return to school safely[25] and the GES issued guidelines that mandated measures including the wearing of masks, temperature checks[26] and regular hand washing with soap to enable schools to open safely.

Changes to STAGE external context

STAGE non-Formal cohort 2 starting in early 2021 and the EE understands that it was not as affected by COVID-19 measures as other tracks. Programme wise, WEI identified the risks to programme and programme participants as a result of COVID-19, along with mitigations in the STAGE Response Plan. This plan and the revised work plan are found in Annex 19 and 20 of the Formal Midline Report. At the period of writing this report, the EE understands that because of COVID-19 and reductions in UK Official Development Assistance funding, STAGE went through a re-scoping of activities.

[18] Measures put in place by the government to curb the virus spread have included enhanced hygiene protocols, restricted movement within country, a ban on all public gatherings including conferences, funerals, festivals, and religious activities and authorisation for schools to shut down. See: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7641588/

[19] The COVID-19 vaccination campaign began on 1st March 2021, starting with 600,000 doses of the CoviShield vaccine received through the COVAX facility (WHO, CEPI, GAVI, UNICEF). The vaccine rollout initially focused on the three most affected regions: Greater Accra, Ashanti and Central, and prioritised health care workers and frontline workers, adults over 60 years of age and persons with known underlying comorbidities. See: https://reliefweb.int/report/ghana/unicef-ghana-covid-19-situation-report-no16-1-31-march-2021

[20] On 21st March the rollout was extended to target health care workers in all regions. As of 30th August 2022, 18,396,070 vaccine doses had been administered. See: https://covid19.who.int/region/afro/country/gh

[21] The United Nations. "Education during COVID-19 and beyond"

[22] https://www.unhcr.org/gh/2021/01/25/un-ghana-joint-statement-in-commemoration-of-2021-international-day-of-education/

[23] https://www.peacefmonline.com/pages/local/education/202004/405898.php

[24] https://reliefweb.int/report/ghana/unicef-ghana-covid-19-situation-report-no16-1-31-march-2021

[25] https://www.unhcr.org/gh/2021/01/25/un-ghana-joint-statement-in-commemoration-of-2021-international-day-of-education/

[26] Temperature checks and mandatory wearing of masks. - (https://www.africanews.com/2021/01/19/schools-in-ghana-reopen-as-covid-19-cases-surge//

1.2 Target groups

The direct beneficiaries of the STAGE **non-Formal track** are 15-19-year-old out of school teenage mothers, girls living in extreme poverty and remote communities, and other marginalised girls facing different barriers. The girls are living in the Central, Oti, Northern, and Eastern regions. Three non-Formal cohorts underwent the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) delivered by STAGE. According to STAGE Community Mapping over 75% of community members of the non-Formal track cohort 2 were involved in farming (crop and livestock) and petty trading, with little to no innovation on how activities were conducted. Teenage mothers (<18) made up 23% of the girls in non-Formal track cohort 2 communities, and 17% of girls were married before 18 years old. Overall, 30% of those interviewed had never been to school. The most prevalent characteristic though was being from a household unable to pay for the basic needs of the girl (43%).

The main non-Formal track learning outcome is improvement of literacy, numeracy, cognitive and non-cognitive skills by the end of the ALP, with a focus on life skills and vocational training. Success in the second key outcome (transition) is defined as girls who begin their own entrepreneurial activity or gain decent employment or pursue further vocational training/non-formal education (see Table 1).

Table 1 - Proposed intervention pathway, non-Formal track

Which girls follow this pathway?	How many girls follow this pathway?	How long will the intervention last?	How many cohorts are there?	What literacy and numeracy levels are the girls starting at?	What does success look like for learning?[27]	What does success look like for transition?
Girls aged 15-19	8,769	6 months ALP and 3 months IGA	3 cohorts	Grade 0-1 for literacy and numeracy	Girls begin their own entrepreneurial activity and use skills learnt from STAGE[28]	Girls set up their own business for income generation, obtain decent employment, or pursue additional vocational training

Indirect beneficiaries include boys, ALP Facilitators and community members. Please see Annex 8 for a detailed breakdown of project participants – including indirect beneficiaries.

1.3 Theory of change

This section presents the original project ToC as set out in the MEL Framework (Annex 2). The project has confirmed there have been no changes to the logframe, notwithstanding the change in the operating context; and no changes to the original ToC diagram (see Annex 1 for ToC diagram).

IF highly marginalised adolescent girls who have dropped out or have never been to school are provided with tailored and inclusive learning, and life skills, **AND IF** this is combined with family and individual level financial education and resource support, community wide behavioural change interventions, and institutional support mechanisms, **THEN**

[27] The evaluation was designed around the 0.2SD measure for improved learning outcomes. This has the advantage of focusing primarily on overall improvement, rather than meeting a minimum benchmark. Particularly in the case of the non-Formal track, literacy and numeracy requirements of operating one's own business will vary highly based on the sector that the girl is working in and should be part of girls' individualized plans, rather than set project-wide. This is compounded by the fact that comparisons across languages cannot be made because of how literacy acquisition varies by language, and therefore common minimum thresholds cannot be set across all languages. Only measures of improvement where girls are being compared to their past improvement are appropriate. See EGRA Toolkit, p.10 "How EGRA Should Not Be Used."

[28] For the non-Formal track, success refers to: Ability to start and manage their own business; Ability to work under another vocational master making use of skills learnt from STAGE (WEI).

the girls will be able to successfully pursue educational and vocational pathways or use their acquired skills and set themselves on a path to self or paid employment.

Overall goal of STAGE is to improve life chances of marginalised girls by lowering the barriers they face in achieving a decent education. The girls in STAGE all have lives full of potential and promise but need significant support and guidance to enable them to overcome the barriers that hold them back. To achieve this overall impact, STAGE will work towards three key outcomes – *Learning, Transition, and Sustainability*. While these are three separate outcomes, they are also causally linked to each other. Girls with improved ***learning*** outcomes will be able to ***transition*** into formal and non-formal education or careers and will work with communities to create ***sustainable*** changes by empowering women to be change agents and creating an encouraging environment by working with community institutions and power structures.

Learning will be measured by the number of marginalised girls with improved learning outcomes. To achieve these outcomes, girls will need to a) regularly attend learning sessions, b) have access to well-equipped facilitators and educators who provide inclusive learning opportunities and c) be able to acquire the critical life and non-cognitive skills needed for success. These intermediate outcomes will collectively increase participation, self-esteem, and support for gender equity as girls will learn to use their voice, engage more with their peers, and achieve better learning outcomes.

The non-Formal cohort 2 was not impacted by the temporary closure of ALPs and the pivoting to distance learning experience by cohort 1, as the start of ALPs in February 2021 was after the peak of the COVID-19 emergency. In August – November 2020, STAGE worked with the non-formal division of GES on regional and district level, staff from social development and districts assemblies to help them in the identification and registration of cohort 2 non-Formal track learners. Overall, the original ToC assumptions on learning should stand. cohort 2 were provided with repackaged Teaching and Learning materials including Peer Education Manual, Sewing Reusable Pads, Safeguarding and new life skills content incorporating COVID-19 preventative practices.

Learning might be negatively impacted if:

- STAGE ALP and VST centres are not operational, have adequate facilities, material and equipment especially for vocational training.
- Quality teaching in literacy, numeracy and life skills and inclusive and gender sensitive education and child-centred pedagogy are not applied consistently.
- Barriers of girls preventing attendance especially for specific subgroups are not adequately addressed.

Unsupportive social norms and gendered attitudes at community and family level prevent girls from attending**Transition** will be measured by the number of marginalised girls who have been able to move into vocational training, or safe, fairly paid employment or self-employment. The key IO enabling this transition is the increased community and district support for inclusive girls' education. Because of the specific characteristics and needs of these girls, local ecosystems (made up of stakeholders such as local businesses, vocational training centres) that are well sensitised and prepared to accommodate the target population must be advocated for and developed. Non-Formal girls will have improved learning outcomes through the community-based ALP platform where literacy, numeracy, life skills and vocational training will be taught. On life skills, the non-Formal curriculum focuses particularly on money management, work ethics and business management. At the end of the ALP, non-Formal track girls will not be placed into the formal school system but be given livelihood options based on technical skills acquired from MCPs in addition to the ALP. An IGA fund is available for girls choosing the self-employment path.

Transition might be negatively impacted if:

- Transition support material, including bicycles and transition kits are not delivered as planned.
- Collaboration with GES and industry associations/craftspeople is not effective.
- The evolution of COVID-19 pandemic represents a barrier too large for girls' transition (through a range of adverse economic, social and health impacts on girls and their families).

- As noted in cohort 1 baseline, the main question on transition for the non-Formal track is in relation to the availability of jobs/income opportunities for the girls to transition into. There is also a risk that the economic repercussions of the pandemic further limit the availability of safe and decent employment/self-employment opportunities.

STAGE is not able to link girls with identified employment opportunities and monitor/follow up of non-Formal transition pathways to take corrective actions where needed**Sustainability** will be measured by demonstrating that the changes brought about by the project go beyond the initial targets. Strong and active partnerships and engagement with government, community, school, and other key stakeholders involved in girls' and inclusive education would continue reaching the most highly marginalised girls. STAGE will leverage existing programmes, organisational and community structures and policies to educate, enhance, advocate and demand accountability from all actors. For example, STAGE would continue national sensitisation efforts on the matter of inclusive education through participation in various working groups like the CBE working group, disability working group under non-Formal Education and GEC/LIfora. STAGE would also continue working with the non-formal division of GES, staff from social development and Districts Assemblies and industry associations on the provision of safe and quality vocational training for non-Formal girls. MCPs deployed to communities (a maximum of three per community) would undergo safe vetting before being trained for a day on child protection, safeguarding, GESI, disability, child labour and programme expectations and goals, among other topics. Existing GES tools, such as the Inclusive Education and Monitoring Tool are adapted to focus on marginalised girls. GES staff is involved in community mapping and animation as well. By building the capacity of GES in developing and using these tools, STAGE ensures that interventions can continue after project support ceases.

Sustainability might be negatively impacted if:

- Support for girls' vocational training/employment at community level/sensitisations are not able to reduce safeguarding/GESI/COVID-19-related issues and barriers to girls' vocational training/employment, especially for marginalised sub-groups.
- Coordination with MoE, Complementary Education Agency (CEA), T-VET at all levels is not effective; capacity of government/community actors to continue ensuring STAGE girls' continued education/support to vocational training is not built; there are insufficient incentives/resources to ensure continued government/community action in support of girls' continued education/vocational training following the end of the programme.

2. Evaluation approach and methodology

2.1 Evaluation purpose(s) and evaluation questions

The purpose of the tracer evaluation is to assess to what extent STAGE has achieved it's intended objectives for the non-Formal track, what factors have contributed to, or hindered progress, and how sustainable STAGE effects are likely to be. In doing so, the evaluation will refer to key logframe indicators at Outcome and IO level, together with assessing the relevance and plausibility of the STAGE ToC. Table 2 details the evaluation questions of the STAGE programme. These have been partially reviewed since baseline, and some sub-questions added.

Table 2 – Evaluation questions and data sources/analysis required to answer question

Evaluation question	Qual data/analysis required to answer question	Quant data/analysis required to answer question
EQ1. What impact did the STAGE project have on the transition of highly marginalised girls into education/learning/training or work opportunities?	Qualitative data will identify any unintended impacts on girls and girls' experiences in transition.	Quantitative analysis from a representative sample of girls on their transition status and life skills learning for the non-Formal track.

Evaluation question	Qual data/analysis required to answer question	Quant data/analysis required to answer question
- To what extent does the STAGE ALP/VST prepare girls for transition to livelihoods opportunities? - To what extent have STAGE girls improved learning outcomes? Who, if any, are the outliers (individuals and communities) in terms of learning outcomes identified in different regions, lessons from whom may be adopted for scale across Ghana to improve the intervention?		Project girls transition status and learning proficiency assessed at baseline and tracer (one year after end of intervention). This will allow identification of change in learning and transition status (in decent employment/self- employment or further vocational training). Findings to be disaggregated by respondent characteristics (household and region), including marginalisation category where possible.
EQ2. How successfully did STAGE reduce barriers to full participation in formal education or vocational education for highly marginalised girls? - To what extent have STAGE interventions at various levels (district, community and school) been able to positively influence the socio-cultural norms, perceptions and attitudes that perpetuate gender inequality and social exclusion? - To what extent have the initiatives implemented by the STAGE program contributed to increased knowledge of the challenges marginalised girls face in Ghanaian communities?	Qualitative data from girls, caregivers and other relevant stakeholders will seek to understand how the project reduced the barriers identified during project development. The barriers include cultural beliefs on marginalised girls' roles, household poverty, beliefs on disability, inaccessible teaching methods, district level awareness and actions.	Quantitative analysis of the different outcomes achieved by girls with different marginalisation status.
EQ3. How sustainable were the STAGE activities funded by the GEC and was the programme successful in leveraging additional interest, investment, and policy change? Have the project implementation approaches, or interventions built the capacities of existing structures and created the platform for continuity of activity interventions beyond the project's life?	Qualitative Data collected at community and system level to understand more about the changes in key stakeholders' attitudes and behaviours and changes in relevant agencies, budget, and actions.	Quantitative Data collected at community and system level to understand quantitative changes in key stakeholders' attitudes and behaviours and changes in relevant agencies, budget, and actions.
EQ4. What works to facilitate transition of highly marginalised girls into education/training/employment and to increase learning? - Which elements of the training model contribute most to the effectiveness of the facilitators	Qualitative data will explore girls, caregivers, MCPs, facilitators, and other relevant stakeholders' understanding of what works for transitions.	Quantitative data produced to answer EQ1 will be analysed to look at associations between transition/learning outcomes and project activities/intermediate outcomes (attendance, quality of teaching, life skills, support to family)

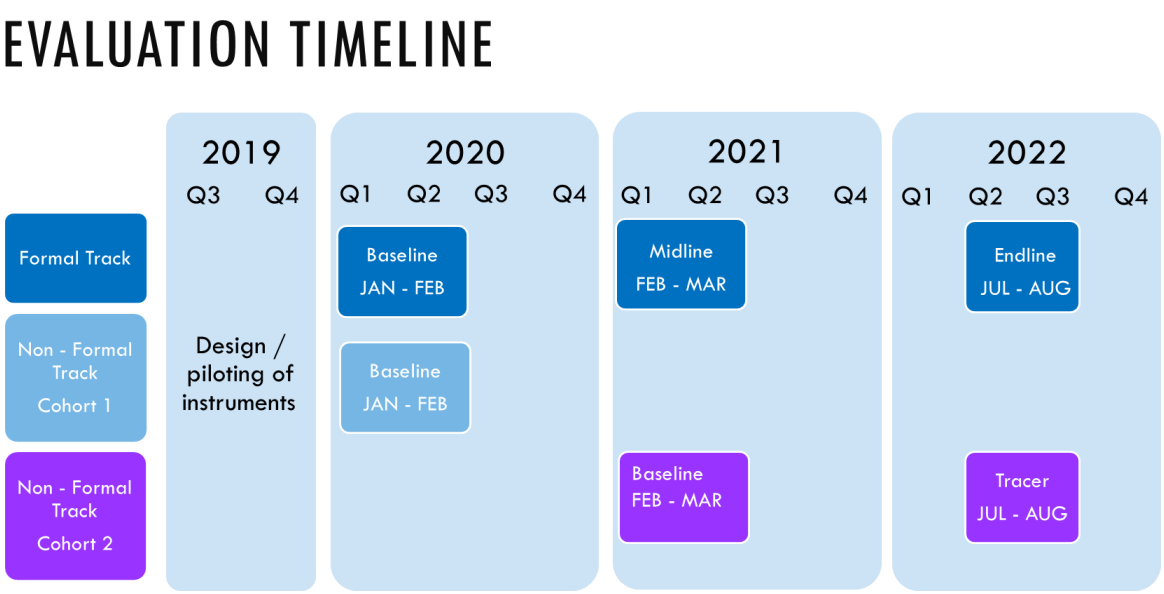
Evaluation question	Qual data/analysis required to answer question	Quant data/analysis required to answer question
(and in turn the learning outcomes and transition of the girls)? Which pedagogical approaches have been identified as most effective in contributing to the quality teaching and learning in the ALPs and VSTs? - Which activities have been most effective in raising literacy, numeracy, and life skills levels among STAGE girls? - Which factors and interventions are most correlated to sustained transition rates and increased learning?		
EQ5. What are the most cost effective and impactful activities implemented through the STAGE intervention which have helped girls to transition to schools and employment opportunities? What life skills are most valued and useful for girls in the STAGE programme?	N/A	Analysis of results of EQ1 Impact, EQ2 What works, and EQ3 Sustainability against the costs of different activities. Possible calculations: ● Cost per girl enrolled in ALP/vocational training ● Cost per girl completing STAGE ALP/vocational training ● Cost per girl achieving appropriate of transition (see definitions below) ● Views of girls on usefulness of various STAGE activities.

2.2 Overall evaluation design

The evaluation design is a mixed methods evaluation. Since STAGE targets marginalised girls with special attention to those with disabilities, it is not feasible to design a RCT where some girls will be randomly assigned to the intervention and other girls will be left out of this. Progress at tracer is considered by comparing the cohort's average outcome scores at baseline and endline/tracer. Quantitative data will be used to identify relationships between variables and assess the effect of some explanatory variables on the outcomes of interest, for example, marginalisation characteristics of the target group as well as characteristics of the environment (learning space, perceived level of community support for girls' education). Qualitative data will be used to assess harder to quantify issues and build a deeper understanding of 'how and why' and 'under what circumstances' change has or has not occurred. To understand the proposed design, a visual model below shows tracking of both STAGE tracks (Formal and non-Formal) over the course of the programme.

The data collection and timelines are aligned with the programme work plan. For the non-Formal track cohort 2 this includes baseline and, one year after the end of the ALPs, tracer[29] (Figure 1).

Figure 1 - Evaluation timeline (updated, September 2022)



Given the split implementation model of the STAGE project the design uses a different evaluation approach for each track to best measure the impact of the interventions in the eight regions where STAGE is working. With three distinct cohorts of non-Formal track girls who will go through an ALP and transition into vocational training or employment, the original evaluation design proposed to conduct baseline and endline for cohort 1, and baseline and tracer assessment for the girls in cohort 2. This would enable measurement and understanding of the impact of the STAGE project on Learning and transition to work opportunities (EQ1 and EQ4):

- By evaluating the endline of cohort 1 at the end of the ALPS and vocational training it would allow STAGE to learn about the success of its intervention on key Outcomes; and the learning can be used to improve both cohort 2 and cohort 3.
- A cross-over design such that the results of girls of cohort 1 can be compared with the baseline of similar target group for cohort 2.
- Evaluating cohort 2 a year after the end of the ALPs/vocational training allows a year for girls to find employment, thus, sufficient time for the transition outcome to be evaluated for the non-Formal track. Further, allows the project to draw lessons in terms of the factors that facilitate the transition of marginalised girls to sustainable income generating pathways.
- Data Collection for cohorts 1 and 2 can be timed to match the data collection for the Formal track, this facilitates cost-efficiency which then allows more data collection for the same evaluation budget.

For cohort 1, the baseline was conducted in January and February 2020 and an endline was scheduled for September 2020. However, the evaluation timeline and structure have changed in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting changes to programme implementation and shift in priorities over the use of evaluation resources. At the request of the Fund Manager and WEI, the external evaluation endline of cohort 1 was cancelled and replaced with an internal project assessment. For cohort 2, the baseline was conducted in February and March 2021 to coincide with the transition to school of the Formal track (midline). STAGE also conducted an internal assessment at the endline of non-Formal cohort 2 (November 2021).

[29] These timelines are based on current knowledge of project and school timelines. These might shift due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

non-Formal cohort 1: **Baseline** – January 2020; **Endline** – Cancelled.

non-Formal cohort 2: **Baseline** – February/March 2021; **Tracer** – July/August 2022

It is not possible to draw comparisons between the EE cohort 2 tracer and the endline results of cohorts 1 and 2, internally conducted by the Project with a different methodology; and that the evaluation results can be generalised only to cohort 2. This round of non-Formal cohort 2 research refers to key results from the internal assessments conducted by the Project, thus contributing to providing a more comprehensive view of the experiences and outcomes of girls in the non-Formal track.

Due to the number of communities (total of 132), multiple intervention tracks and separate cohorts the evaluation design includes a representative sample of communities. STAGE monitoring has regularly collected data from all project communities and assessing all project stakeholders. For the EE a stratified representative sample of communities has been selected. The monitoring system provides data for the EE as they attempt to disaggregate the different elements of the intervention and how they are impacting variance within the results. Monitoring data is also needed to report against some of the IO indicators in the STAGE logframe.

Evaluating the link between Intermediate Outcomes and Outcomes

At non-Formal cohort 2 tracer and Formal cohort midline and endline the status of IOs is measured. Associations between the samples' quantitative transition/learning outcomes and project activities/IOs (attendance, quality of teaching, life skills, support given to family) are calculated. This quantitative assessment is complemented by qualitative analysis which uses KIIs and focus groups to better understand the link between IO and Outcomes.

Gender and social inclusion (GESI)

To understand GESI the evaluation will disaggregate both Learning and Transition Outcomes, together with **Life Skills Outcomes by girl's age, disability and key project identified characteristics**. The endline/tracer survey questionnaires for both tracks have some questions on the girls' experience of gender sensitive teaching practices. Complementing this will be specific questions within the qualitative data collection to explore the experiences and potential barriers for girls with different marginalisation characteristics.

Revised FM evaluation principles

The GEC Revised Evaluation Principles (September 2021) state that "As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and reductions in Overseas Development Aid funding, the original evaluation approaches laid out in the GEC MEL handbook and project MEL frameworks may no longer be feasible or appropriate". The Principles also refer to changes in the way GEC Outcome-level Indicators and Targets are to be reported across projects, noting in particular how the removal of the Payment by Results mechanism eliminates the need for a standardised approach across projects to measure impact (0.25 SD difference-in-differences design). Other key changes relate to a shifted focus of GEC MEL from accountability to learning on 'what works'; and approval from FCDO to use project monitoring data alongside evaluation data. In line with these changes and budget cuts, the evaluation methodology has changed since the non-Formal cohort 2 baseline and Formal cohort midline evaluation point (see Section below).

2.3 Evaluation methodology

Summary of key changes since last evaluation point

As agreed with the Project in the inception report (see Annex 9), the endline and tracer evaluation point assessment scope and methods changed. The revised methodology is in line with the revised evaluation principles shared by the FM and the approaches recommended to be used to measure them. The evaluation has made use of secondary data sources and monitoring data where possible. For some indicators, the EE has relied on information provided by the Project.

Key changes for the non-Formal track methodology related to the sample (both quantitative and qualitative), the way barriers and marginalisation characteristics are reported, quantitative measurement of learning (focussed on life skills only), sustainability reporting and data collection tools are detailed in Annex 10.

Data collection tools

Outcomes and IOs have been assessed using quantitative and qualitative tools developed by the EE and reviewed and approved by STAGE and the FM prior to starting data collection.

The quantitative tools included: a household questionnaire comprising sections for (1) the primary caregiver; and (2) the participant girl, including the life skills tool. Importantly, the Head of household part of the questionnaire – which was present in previous evaluation points - has been eliminated due to the limited usefulness for the analysis. Most relevant questions have been incorporated in the primary caregiver survey. The qualitative tools included Key Informant Interview (KII) tools for all stakeholders.[30] Focus groups for girls were eliminated.

A summary of changes can be found in the "Note accompanying the STAGE endline tools review" (Annex 10). See Annex 10 for a detailed description of the life skills questionnaire, approved methodology, and administration.

In addition to primary data collection, the evaluation has in a few cases referred to monitoring data/reporting from STAGE: STAGE Annual Report Year 4, Sustainability Plan (May 2022), STAGE COVID-19 Plan, STAGE master logframe July 2022. Where this is the case, it has been specified in the report. Additionally, in revising the primary data collection tools for non-Formal cohort 2 tracer, the evaluation reviewed STAGE Community Monitoring (COME) tool.

Data collection and analysis. See Annex 4.

Sampling

Quantitative sample selection[31]

The same sampling strategy was developed for the evaluation of both the non-Formal and Formal tracks of the project. As agreed with the Project and the FM, both the Formal and non-Formal track quantitative samples were reduced from 640 to 400 girls (and caregivers) per track. To ensure the data collected is both representative of the project and comparable to previous evaluation points, the sample remained proportional by region to the previous evaluation points.

Community Sampling: The evaluation uses a clustered sampling approach, where a representative group of communities and eight girls within each sampled community were selected randomly at baseline. Communities were selected based on their language-region pairing (see Table 3 detailing quantitative sample sizes). The languages were purposefully chosen to cover the maximum proportion of the project population and cover as many of the project's regions as feasible across the Formal and non-Formal tracks. Note, there is an overlap in languages between the Formal and non-Formal tracks, with six languages used across both samples. Choosing the languages with a larger proportion of the project population ensured a larger sample from each subgroup, which increases statistical power of each subgroup, and simplifies the design and analysis of the reading scores to fewer languages.

Project participants who speak languages not in the sampling design and records with no region and language information were excluded from baseline sample selection. To ensure it would be possible to collect data from eight or more girls in each community, communities with 15 or fewer girls were excluded. Randomised community selection was stratified by region-language pairing according to Table 3.

[30] Girls, Boys, Caregivers, Teachers, Headteachers, Local Leaders (Traditional and Religious), and Local Authority Members.
[31] See Annex 16 for further details on sampling.

Alternate communities were selected randomly within each language-region pairing if for any reason one of the selected communities cannot be part of the sample. They are ordered on the list to ensure that they are not chosen out of convenience. When required, and after discussion with DSPs at baseline, alternate communities were used as substitutes.

The proportions of the sample communities differ only slightly from project population, due to rounding.

The sample is comprised of Project participants interviewed at previous evaluation points to ensure comparability. Girls not from previous cohorts were only interviewed when previous respondents were unavailable or did not consent to being interviewed. Quantitative analysis makes use of pre-post comparison gains in learning and improvement over time between the baseline and tracer data to identify significant levels of improvement over time.

Student Selection: At baseline, within each sample community, eight girls were randomly selected. While eight girls from each community were identified as the intended sample, an additional eight girls were randomly selected and added to an alternates list. If a respondent was unavailable or refused to take part in the baseline evaluation, an alternate respondent will be selected, in the order that they are listed on the alternate list. Of those interviewed for the non-Formal track tracer sample, 63.1% were also interviewed at baseline. In cases where girls could not be found or refused to participate, alternates were selected from pre-populated, randomised lists of alternates in the same community.

Quantitative sample sizes and representativeness

The agreed reduced sample for non-Formal cohort 2 is 400, designed to be proportionally representative of seven language-region groups. The actual sample size is 407. Distribution of the sample by region and language is as follows:

Table 3 – Quantitative sample sizes by region and language

Language	Region	non-Formal track cohort 2 Girls		Designed Sample		Actual Sample		Difference	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Sample									
Akuapim Twi	Eastern	354	10.93%	40	10.00%	48	11.79%	+8	+1.79%
Akuapim Twi	Oti	532	16.43%	66	16.50%	65	15.97%	-1	-0.53%
Dagaare	Upper West	365	11.27%	40	10.00%	48	11.79%	+8	+1.79%
Fante	Central	674	20.82%	80	20.00%	86	21.13%	+6	+1.13%
Kasem	Upper East	281	8.68%	40	10.00%	32	7.86%	-8	-2.14%
Likpakpaal n	Northern	671	20.72%	88	22.00%	80	19.66%	-8	-2.34%
Likpakpaal n	Oti	361	11.15%	46	11.50%	48	11.79%	+2	+0.29%
All		**3,238**	**100%**	**400**	**100%**	**407**	**100%**	**+7**	
Out of sample (excluded from baseline sample selection)									
Dagbani	Northern	303							
Gurune	Upper East	167							
Mampruli	North East	N/A[32]							
N/A	N/A	5							
All (In/Out of sample)		**3,714**							

Note: Participants estimates were based on data available during baseline sample design. They may not reflect actual girl numbers.

Representativeness of the sample by language-region and age

The actual sample largely reflects the designed sample. The difference in observations ("Difference" column in Table 3) does not skew the sample to underrepresent Likpakpaaln speakers in Northern region and Kasem speakers in Upper East. The differences in the age profile of the sample and the girls' samples as recorded are primarily due the time that has progressed between the time of the data being collected and the sample collection: the average age increased from 17.3 at baseline to 18.5 at tracer, reflecting that a little over a year had passed. While it is surprising that a small number (11 girls) reported an age of 14 or less, the number is small enough to consider outliers or measurement error.

Table 4 - Sample breakdown by age and region

Subgroup	Overall	Eastern Akuapim Twi	Oti Akuapim Twi	Upper West Dagaare	Central Fante	Upper East Kasem	Northern Likpakpaaln	Oti Likpakpaaln
Age 17 and under	30.2%	18.8%	26.2%	43.8%	19.8%	15.6%	48.8%	31.3%
Age 18 to 19	41.0%	43.8%	40.0%	12.5%	41.9%	21.9%	47.5%	68.8%
Age 20 and over	28.7%	37.5%	33.8%	43.8%	38.4%	62.5%	3.8%	0.0%
Source: Evaluation Surveys (N = 407)								

Table 5 - Average age of mothers and non-mothers

	Mean Age
Is Mother	19.5
Not Mother	17.3
Source: Evaluation Surveys (N = 407)	

Due to data availability at the time of baseline design, the sample was not stratified to be proportionally representative of age. Slight variations between the age reported in the original girls lists and the age in the designed sample are observed (Table 39 in Annex 15). The variation is small (around 5%). At the time of the baseline evaluation, the average age of the evaluation sample was 17.2, reflecting the average age and the region/language group make-up of the non-Formal track cohort 2 girls. At the time of this tracer data collection, the average age of the sample was 18.5. The composition of the evaluation sample is slightly older than the age makeup of non-Formal track cohort 2 girls: at baseline, 53.2% of girls in the sample were aged 18 – 19 against 51.6% of all participant girls. At tracer, 41% of the sample was aged 18-19, about 30% of girls were over 19, and about 30% younger than 18 years old.

At tracer, the majority of older girls (20+) are by far in Upper East (Kasem, 62.5%) and in Upper West (43.8%). Whilst a higher prevalence of younger girls (17 and under) is found in the Northern region (LIkpakpaaln, 48.8% significant) (Table 5 above). Further, Table 6 shows how on average mothers are over two years older than non-mothers.

Child functioning

According to the 2010 Census, which did not include anxiety or depression as categories of disability, 3% of Ghanaians have a disability (in physical or socio-cognitive domains)[33]. The 2021 Census[34] reported 8% of Ghanaians over 5 years have varying degrees of difficulty in performing an activity (higher for females at 8.8%). However, when considering severe disability, prevalence is much lower, at 1.8% for the overall population, and 2% for female.

At tracer, caregivers were asked a shortened version of the Washington Group Extended Set on Functioning (WG-ES)[35] by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics (WG). The set of questions intended for use in censuses and surveys, using the World Health Organization's International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health as a conceptual framework. The set reflects an attempt to break away from the medicalisation of disability, focusing on limitations to functioning in "basic universal actions (capabilities) that, in an unaccommodating environment would

[33] Available at: https://www.disabilitydataportal.com/explore-by-country/country/Ghana [accessed 6th April 2021].
[34] Statistical Service Ghana (2021). Ghana 2021 Population and Housing Census. General Report Volume 3F. Difficulty in Performing Activities. Available at: https://statsghana.gov.gh/gssmain/fileUpload/pressrelease/2021%20PHC%20General%20Report%20Vol%203F_Difficulty%20in%20Performing%20Activities_final_161221.pdf
[35] Washington Group on Disability Statistics (2022). The Washington Group Extended Set on Functioning (11 October 2022). https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/fileadmin/uploads/wg/Washington_Group_Questionnaire 2_-_WG_Extended_Set_on_Functioning October_2022_.pdf

place an individual at risk of restricted social participation". While the questions seek to record standardised data on disability, they are not diagnostic, and should not be considered a definitive qualification of who has or does not have a disability. The report refers to 'girls with a functional difficulty' or 'girls with a disability'.

The caregivers were asked about their child's difficulty to complete the following everyday tasks and activities: seeing (even if wearing glasses); hearing (even if using a hearing aid); walking or climbing steps; remembering or concentrating; self-care (such as washing all over or dressing); communicating (for example, understanding or being understood); accepting changes in a child's routine; controlling behaviour; making friends. The caregivers were also asked about the girls' frequency of feeling of anxiety and depression (daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, yearly). Responses were used to determine the girls' level of functioning in a given domain.[36] Girls could qualify as having a disability in one or more domains. As per the WG questions, the questionnaire enquired disability severity in four levels: no difficulty in performing a task, some difficulty, a lot of difficulty or not being able to do a task at all). If a girl had a great deal of difficulty or could not do something at all (the highest two levels) or they experienced daily feelings of anxiety and depression, they met the qualification of having a functional difficulty for the purposes of this evaluation and hence were counted as having a disability in that domain in Table 7.[37,38] Table, 40 in Annex 15 reports the breakdown of disability by level of severity.

Table 6 - Sample breakdown by disability, baseline and tracer

Domain of difficulty	Sample proportion of intervention group (%) – Baseline	Sample proportion of intervention group (%) – Tracer
Tool used to assess child's functioning	**WG-ES**	**Shortened version of the WG-ES**
Seeing	0.8%	0.5%
Hearing	0.8%	0.0%
Walking	0.6%	0.0%
Self-care	0.3%	0.0%
Communication	0.3%	0.0%
Learning	0.5%	0.0%
Remembering	0.3%	
Concentrating	0.3%	
Remembering and Concentrating	0.3%	0.0%
Accepting Change	0.5%	0.0%
Controlling Behaviour	1.1%	0.3%
Making Friends	1.1%	0.0%
Anxiety	2.8%	2.0%
Depression	2.5%	1.3%
One disability domain (A)	**5.5%**	**3.5%**
Multiple disability domains (B)	**2.5%**	**0.3%**

[36] At baseline and midline, the Washington Group Extended Set of Functioning questions provided by the FM were asked. At endline, a reduced 17-item set was asked instead. It was not the Short Set of six questions by the Washington Group but covered the same range of functions in fewer items than the Extended Set used at baseline and midline. For example, instead of asking "Do you wear glasses? Do you have difficulty seeing?" (as in the Extended Set) the question" Even if you wear glasses, do you have difficulty seeing?" would be asked (as in the Short Set). Both items resulted in only students who struggle with seeing as having a visual impairment. The list of Washington Group questions used are available in Annex 10.

[37] Depression and anxiety were defined as "feeling very sad or depressed" or "feeling very anxious, nervous, or worried" daily.

[38] Prevalence of disability is calculated by the percent of the sample that has one or more disability: those with multiple disabilities are

not double counted.

Domain of difficulty	Sample proportion of intervention group (%) – Baseline	Sample proportion of intervention group (%) – Tracer
Girls with disabilities overall (A+B)	**8.0%**	**3.8%**
Source: Analytical Dataset, Caregiver Survey N =	639	399

The rate of girls with a functional difficulty (cannot do at all or a lot of difficulty in performing a task) at tracer is 3.8% (15 girls), an increase from 8.0% at baseline. This comprises girls with one and multiple disability domains, severe physical or socio-cognitive disabilities, and girls with daily feelings of anxiety and depression.[39] Only 0.7% of girls (three girls) have a disability other than anxiety or depression – as reported by their caregivers; this is down from 3.9% (or 25 girls) observed at baseline (Table 7). By disability domain, there were two reports of girls having difficulties seeing; one report of a difficulty in controlling behaviour; and 12 reports of frequent (daily or weekly) feelings of anxiety and/or depression. Given that relatively few girls met the criteria for having a disability at baseline, the lower incidence at tracer might be due to the reduced survey sample not detecting all girls with a disability.[40]

Table 7 - Sample breakdown of disability by region, baseline (BL) and tracer (TR)

Characteristic		Overall	Akuapim Twi (Eastern)	Akuapim Twi (Oti)	Dagaare (Upper West)	Fante (Central)	Kasem (Upper East)	Likpakpaaln (Northern)	Likpakpaaln (Oti)
Has a disability (any)	BL	8.0%	1.4%	5.8%	1.4%	6.3%	16.1%	9.8%	16.7%
	TR	3.8%	2.1%	7.9%	8.3%	3.7%	3.1%	1.3%	0.0%
Source: Analytical Dataset, Caregiver Survey N = BL = 639; TR = 399									

Table 8 - Sample breakdown by frequency of anxiety and depression, baseline (BL) and tracer (TR)

			Daily	Weekly	Monthly	A few times a Year	Never	N
23	How often does the [girl] seem very anxious, nervous or worried?	**TR**	2.0%	7.0%	9.8%	73.4%	7.8%	399
		BL	2.01%	4.5%	30.2%	39.9%	22.5%	639
24	How often does the [girl] seem very sad or depressed?	**TR**	1.2%	4.5%	9.3%	77.0%	8.0%	399
		BL	2.5%	4.4%	33.0%	39.0%	21.1%	639

Overall, 3.0% are reported to suffer daily from mental health disabilities (down from 4.1% at baseline), specifically 2% anxiety and 1.2% depression (Table 0). Not all girls that experience anxiety also experience depression, and vice versa. The breakdown by frequency shows a change since baseline: on one side, a reduction in the percentage of girls reported to experience these feelings monthly (from around 30-33% to around 9-10% for both anxiety and depression), but rather few times a year; on the other, the percentage of girls that were reported never to experience these feelings have decreased (from around 20% to around 8% for both anxiety and depression).

[39] When considering milder disability categories (having 'some' difficulty in performing a task), 4.8% of caregivers reported girls as having some difficulty with accepting change, 4.0% with controlling behaviour, 3.5% with learning things, 3.0% with remembering or concentrating. Further, 1.8% with seeing (down from 5.7% at baseline); and 1.5% with hearing (down from 2.8% at baseline). See Annex 13 for a detailed breakdown..

[40] In addition, the prevalence of disability is based on asking questions about difficulty completing tasks in their daily life. While this method has utility for describing individual challenges, it does not effectively track permanent forms of disability. For example, a girl who has difficulty seeing but received glasses between baseline and tracer ceases to meet the criteria of having a disability; a girl whose anxiety is allayed by the support she receives during the project would not qualify as having a disability while enrolled.

The highest prevalence of reported child functional difficulties is in Upper West (Daagare) and Oti (Akuapim Twi), with 8.3% and 7.9% (Table 41).

Qualitative sample selection and sample sizes

The endline qualitative data collection followed a similar strategy to baseline, and three communities, one in each of the sampled regions, were selected for the data collection. At tracer, the EE selected the same three communities at baseline, which coved a range of regions, DSPs and languages. The reasoning behind selecting these communities at tracer remains the same: (1) enough girls in the community to ensure no overlaps with the girls being surveyed through the quantitative data (20-25 girls per community was deemed an appropriate number); and (2) enough girls from marginalised backgrounds were selected (looking at the communities with the greatest combination of girls with disabilities, mothers and married at the non-Formal cohort 1 baseline). From this, the EE was able to select three proposed communities, with two alternate communities in each region (Table 10).

Table 9 - Qualitative sampled communities for non-Formal cohort 2 tracer

Region	District	Community	Partner	Language
Oti	Nkwanta South	Gekorong	Prolink	Akuapem Twi
Eastern	Akuapem South	Obodan	ICDP	Akuapem Twi
Northern	Kpandai	Chakoli	RAINS	Likpakpaaln

As with baseline, the respondents in these communities were not randomly chosen, due to not wanting to overburden girls who were also participating in the quantitative data collection. As such, the EE chose girls and alternate girls from the end of the quantitative alternate lists, whilst still capturing a good proportion of girls from within the marginalised sub-groups. As with baseline, the caregivers of the girls sampled were also interviewed. Unlike baseline, the tracer data collection did not include boys nor local authorities as respondents and did not conduct focus group discussions with girls, a consequence of a reduced evaluation scope to meet changed budget limitations. However, a broader range of stakeholders compared to baseline was interviewed: local leaders (religious and traditional), DSPs (new), ALP facilitators (new), MCPs (new), District Social Welfare Officers (DSWOs) from each of the sampled locations (new) as well as two national actors from the CEA (new), and T-VET Ghana (new). The reasoning for including the new stakeholders at the programme's end was to delve deeply into the mechanisms and factors behind observed programme results, as well as to explore sustainability and gather lessons learned. This was a successful approach. The EE notes that in Northern region, there was no religious leader so two traditional leaders were interviewed. The sampling approach was effective in the field and the range of girls were interviewed as planned, as detailed in Table 11.

Table 10 - Qualitative sample sizes for non-Formal cohort 2 tracer

Stakeholder Group	Tracer Sample Size	NF2 Baseline Sample Size	Reduction from NF2 Baseline	Reasoning Given	Sample Achieved
KII Girls	12 girls (4 girls per 3 communities)	12 girls (4 girls per 3 communities)	0	No reduction needed	100%
FGD Girls	0	3 FGDs (1 in each of 3 communities). Each FGD should aim for 5 girls	3 FGDs	Removed FGDs from endline samples	N/A (15 girls total)

KII Caregivers	9 caregivers (3 per 3 communities)	9 caregivers (3 per 3 communities)	0	No reduction needed	100%
KII Local Leaders	6 (1 religious leader and 1 traditional leader from each of the 3 communities)	6 (1 religious leader and 1 traditional leader from each of the 3 communities)	0	No reduction needed	100% (Although in Northern region there were two traditional leaders as there is no religious leader in the community)
KII MCP	3 (1 in each of the 3 communities)	0	0	New	100%
KII ALP Facilitator	3 (1 in each of the 3 communities)	0	0	New	100%
KII District Social Welfare Officers (DSWO)	3 (1 in each of the 3 communities)	0	0	New	100%
KII National Actors	2 (from different organisations)	0	0	New	100% (one from CEA and one from T-VET)

2.4 Evaluation ethics

The evaluation ethical approach is grounded in principles based on FCDO's ethics guidance and principles, WEI's policies and procedures and local laws for the states we operate in. A core principle is prioritising the best interest of the child and doing no harm.

Recruitment and selection

The EE's partner data collection firm in Ghana, JEAVCO/PAB, have experience of working with children, including experience with high risk, vulnerable and/or marginalised girls. JEAVCO/PAB conducted pre-appointment checks for each of the 25 enumerators engaged for the STAGE non-Formal tracer data collection.

Training and data collection

In preparation for STAGE data collection, enumerators received training on ethics and child protection. Specific content of training included the priority of safeguarding and a child's wellbeing being paramount, the importance of gaining consent (of girls and adults), how to ask for consent, how to ensure the consent is informed in relation to questions asked and use of information, respecting respondents' right to decline/stop interviews, respectful behaviour during data collection (non-judgemental tone and body language), not taking photos, keeping data confidential, password protecting data collection devices, avoidance of raising expectations, what a safeguarding issue is and how to report a safeguarding issue. In addition, training included how data collection processes should be adapted in line with social distancing and other COVID-19 control measures.

All the tools were developed to ensure that questions are framed sensitively and are appropriate to the age, gender, and ability of respondents to minimise distress to children or other vulnerable adults.

No **ethical issues** were reported in relation to the enumerators during the tracer data collection.

However, there were a small number of reports of physical and verbal abuse by girls' families/husbands, which were reported and addressed by DSPs. There were no reports of abuse t in the schools, ALPs or VT centres. It was only in Oti that there were reports that girls were being beaten by their husband's, which was mentioned by both the DSP and one of the local leaders. The DSP said, "*we did receive report on abuse by some of the girls beaten by their husbands".* The local leader and the DSP said it was dealt with by the community elders.

Forced labour was estimated by asking girls whether they are working to pay off a debt. Of those not working for money during the year, four girls reported working to pay off a debt (6.7%, N=60). The evaluation also enquired about excessive work and child work.[41] According to responses, there were concerning rates of working excessive hours on a frequent basis. Whilst these findings are very concerning, they should be read in conjunction with the findings (responses to other survey questions) that only 9% of girls reported working between 40 and 49 hours per week, and 1.4% working between 50 and 59 hours per week. This large disparity might simply be due to the fact that girls find it difficult to estimate time spent on activities in terms of number of hours.

2.5 Challenges in endline data collection and limitations of the evaluation design

As a general protocol, the supervisor would report any local issue to the DSP. In case the issue was not resolved locally, the supervisor and JEAVCO/PAB national office would intervene.

During data collection there were four key challenges: i) field work in the Central Region (Fante Twi area) started a week later than scheduled as the DSP were notable to mobilise the girls for data collection sooner. When the exercise got under way, in Dago community several girls had migrated. However, they were reached via telephone provided by their caregivers to respond to the interviews; ii) in the Nawdoli and Yunyoo District areas the girls interviewed for the qualitative data collection were from the replacement lists due to a confusion with the sample sheet; iii) there were a couple of instances of identification challenges due to the girls having different names in the sample sheet and transcript but the data collection team verified the identity of the two girls; iv) as at midline, the timing of the caregiver interviews was a considerable challenge, due to clashes between the caregivers' working schedules and the safeguarding protocols established. The data collection team followed the previously established protocol (approved by DSPs and WEI) that interviews could continue beyond the stipulated time provided it was at the convenience of the caregiver.

There were no particular challenges relating to reluctance to answer questions, the girls have developed familiarity with the survey. The challenge of the length of the caregiver questionnaire was resolved by arranging interviews at the respondents' convenience; it is to be noted that the caregivers' questionnaire was shortened for this final round of data collection which reduced respondent burden.

In terms of COVID-19 protocols, all COVID-19 restrictions have been removed at the national level however the enumerators wore nose masks and were provided with masks to give to respondents who requested them.

The qualitative tracer sample only collected data from three communities: one in each sampled region, which is a limitation on how representative these findings are.

[41] As per ILO definition, if a person is under 17 years old, working over 43 hours per week is considered as child labour; if a person is 17 years old or older, working over 48 hours per week is considered as excessive work.

3. Key Results

The following sections summarise key results from the evaluation. Section 3.1 examines the prevalence of key marginalisation characteristics and barriers to education among the STAGE girls surveyed at tracer, as well as the intersection between such characteristics and the barriers experienced. Section 3.2 presents a snapshot of results by STAGE logframe indicators at outcome and intermediate outcome level. In section 4, these results are examined in more detail and reference evidence from the evaluation and logframe indicators as appropriate.

Unless otherwise specified, findings refer to data collected at endline. All results are disaggregated by disability, marginalisation characteristics and barriers as appropriate,[42] and where possible.[43] When information provided comes from monitoring data or STAGE programme/WEI, this is specified.

3.1 Key characteristic subgroups and barriers of midline sample

Educational marginalisation

A list of subgroup characteristics to report on by the EE was determined at baseline (in 2020) for both the Formal and non-Formal tracks, with little variation between them. To streamline the analysis and focus reporting on the most significant results, the Project and FM agreed a reduced number of subgroups for the tracer evaluation (see Table 12 below and Methodology section and Annex 2 for further detail).[44,45]

Table 11 – Characteristic subgroups, non-Formal track, baseline and tracer

Characteristic	Proportion of sample with this characteristic – Baseline	Proportion of sample with this characteristic – Tracer
Is a mother	50.7%	56.6%
Married	21.1%	24.1%
Lives with neither parent	21.3%	24.3%
HH unable to meet basic needs[46]	7.8%	10.8%
High Chore Burden (Half a day or more)	33.1%	31.9%
Has a disability	8.0%	3.8%
Source: Analytical Dataset Caregiver Survey N =	639	399

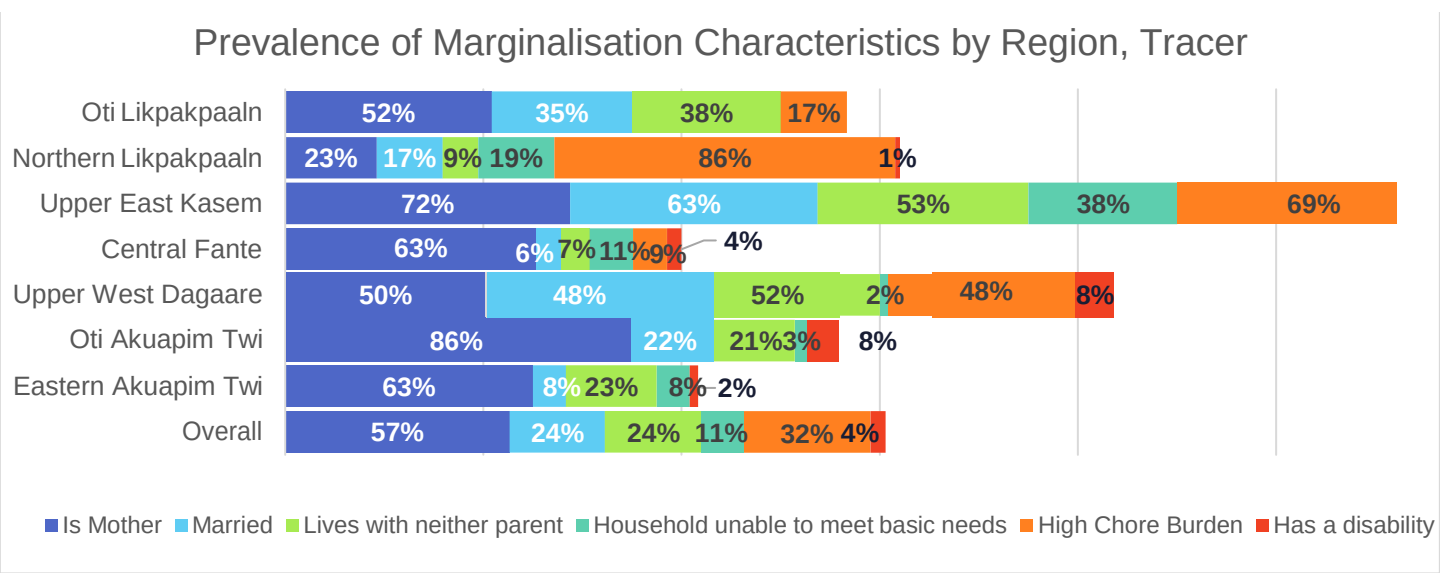
Marginalisation prevalence observed at tracer is in line with observations at baseline. Some subgroups such as married or mother have slightly increased, this is to be expected as girls grow older. The most common characteristic reported by households under the non-Formal cohort 2 is being a mother (56.6% of the total sample), as it was at baseline, high chore burden (31.9%, slightly lower than at baseline), being married (24.1%) and not living with either

[42] As agreed with STAGE, the EE has revisited STAGE subgroups for recording, analysing and reporting in an effort to streamline the analysis and allow the flexibility to focus reporting on interesting and insightful results. Subgroups have been reduced from 38 to 32.
[43] To ensure individual respondents cannot be identified through the report, no reporting is done on subgroups comprised of fewe r than 10 respondents; we are unable to provide more detailed subgroup reporting while respecting confidentiality.
[44] For non-Formal, while marital status and work status (<15) was collected, it has not been analysed. Distance to primary/secondary school is not reported on, as this is of limited relevance for non-Formal girls. Finally, while employment was a subgroup for understanding context at baseline, it is a key project outcome and - as such – subject to a separate and thorough analysis in this tracer evaluation
[45] It should be kept in mind that girls referred to as 'with a disability' are based on their caregivers' responses to Washington Group questions on child functioning focused on physical, socio-cognitive and mental health domains. The Washington Group questions are not intended to be a medical diagnostic of disability prevalence among girls, though for brevity, the report refers to girls with a disability.
[46] Defined as answering Household Survey question 'PCG_5econ Please tell me which of the following phrases best suits your household situation' with '[_] 1 unable to meet basic needs without charity'

parent (24.3%). Whilst still relatively low, the share of households unable to meet basic needs has slightly increased (from 7.8% to 10.8%, Table 12). At baseline, cohort 2 marginalisation prevalence appeared to be lower than for cohort 1 for all subgroups except those living in remote areas. Lower levels of poverty and chore burdens among cohort 2 girls may be due to differences in targeting or enrolment choices by those in this second cohort.

Considering the intersectionality of characteristics, it is notable that 60.5% of girls from households unable to meet basic needs are also mothers and experience high chore burden (55.8%, significant); whilst as expected, there is high intersectionality among girls that are married and mothers (95.8% of those married are mothers), and those living with neither parent (87.6% are mothers, nor 75.3% are married, significant). For full details on intersectionality see Table 43 in Annex 15. As mentioned in Section 1, factors contributing to educational exclusion are multifaceted and intersectional and children suffering multiple disadvantages are considered most at risk.

Figure 2 - Prevalence of marginalisation characteristics by region, tracer (% per total girls per region)



Marginalisation levels vary by region/language subgroup (Figure 2 and Table 41 in Annex 15 for a comparison with baseline values by region). Overall, regions/language groups compare to each other in a similar way at tracer as at baseline, except for Upper East (Kasem), where all marginalisation characteristics have become far more prevalent than elsewhere. Central (Fante), and Eastern and Oti regions (Akuapim Twi language) show overall lower levels of marginalisation than others, with no reported levels of high chore burden and low levels of household impoverishment for Akuapim Twi speakers.

However, there have been changes since baseline in some regions when considering specific characteristics.

Oti region (Akuapim Twi speakers) still has the highest prevalence of mothers of all region/language groups (86%, from 75% at baseline). Other notable demographic changes in the sample include a much higher proportion of mothers than at baseline in Eastern (Akuapim Twi, 62.5%) and Oti (Likpakpaaln, 85.7%, significant). Apart for Kasem (Upper East), the proportion of married girls has changed to a lesser extent than mothers, though it varies considerably across region/language groups - from 6% in Central (Fante) to 63% in Upper East (Kasem).

The fact that some regions show a substantial decrease in prevalence of mothers in the sample indicates that either the reduced tracer sample has not captured mothers, or that some mothers in these regions have dropped out of the programme.

The highest prevalence of girls affected by impoverishment is in Upper East (Kasem) and increased from 14% at baseline to 38% at tracer. Here, girls affected by high chore burden have also gone from 29% to 69% of the sample.

Notably, prevalence of girls with high chore burden and households unable to meet basic needs has substantially decreased in Oti region (Likpakpaaln speakers), from 87% to 17% for the former subgroup, and from 10% to none reported for the latter. There is not much evidence in the qualitative data to explain this decrease, however, it was only in Oti region that the four sampled girls said they are currently making a profit from their work, which could mean they are focusing more on their business than on household chores. It could also mean they, through their businesses, are more able to provide for the basic needs of the family more than girls in other regions.

Lastly, disability prevalence at tracer is lower in Likpakpaaln speaker regions, Upper East (Kasem) and Central (Fante), whilst is higher in Upper West (Dagaare).

Barriers to transition by key characteristic subgroups

The caregiver-reported reasons for not enrolling in school were added after the original baseline design for both the Formal and non-Formal track, as the Project required reporting on subgroup characteristics (discussed above) and barriers. During baselines, caregivers reported subgroup characteristics as reasons girls were not enrolled in traditional education, combining them into six categories of barriers.[47] The intended STAGE transition paths for non-Formal track girls are employment/self-employment or enrolment in further non-formal education. As such, the use of the original barrier categories and their interpretation as 'barriers to formal education' would not be meaningful for assessing the non-Formal track intervention at its end life. At tracer, a mixture of new questions and already used questions has been used to identify whether these are serving as barriers to successful transition.[48] These are analysed below (baseline values are presented for reference in Table 42 in Annex 15, though these and tracer values are not comparable).

Table 12 - Barriers to education among non-Formal track cohort 2 girls, tracer

Barrier	Tracer
Economic (Chores or Poverty)	35.4%
Travel or Work Safety	14.7%
Disability-related	3.9%
Social Norms (Disinterest by Parent/Girl; lack of community support)	6.1%
Vocational Skills Training (VST) safety	1.5%
Demographic (Age/Pregnant/Parent/Married)	58.5%
STAGE VST Delivery (dissatisfied with one or more aspects of STAGE VST)	20.9%
Source: Analytical Dataset Caregiver Survey: Unenrolled students: Girls no longer in school (Baseline); All girls (Tracer) N	407

At tracer, the most felt barrier to transition is **demographic** (cited by 58.5% of the sample), referring to being mothers/pregnant/married as potential factors impacting on girls' aspirations and/or opportunities for economic empowerment and further education. Baseline findings noted that for subgroups such as mothers, married, girls with a disability their situation was practically harder to navigate because their responsibilities and disabilities are unlikely

[47] The 28 reasons were combined into six categories of barriers: Economic (Work or Costs), Travel (Safety or Distance from primary school) Disability (School cannot meet disability-related needs), Social Norms (Disinterest by Parent/Girl), School (Unsafe/Teacher Mistreats/Refused Entry), and Demographic (Age/Pregnant/Parent/Married).

[48] 1) Economic (Work or Costs) include: poverty status (household ability to meet basic needs); and high chore burden preventing work. 2) Travel include: "Girl does not feel safe at work or in community" and outcome variables measuring workplace safety; 3) Disability refers to the disability status analysed as characteristic as well as the caregiver reporting a disability prevents or limits the girl's ability to work; 4) Social Norms refers to low community support for girls' economic empowerment and further education; VST Safety (replacing School barriers) relates to safety and treatment by VST craftsperson; 6) Demographic refers to age, pregnancy status, parental status, and marital status; 7) STAGE VST delivery refers to dissatisfaction experienced by girls with aspects of the MCP teaching style or language of instruction.

to be fully alleviated by any intervention. This was noted in the qualitative data on why girls had dropped out of school prior to the STAGE programme, particularly those who were married or mothers. For example, in Northern, one girl said "***especially for those of us who are mothers, we are subjected to ridicule and name-calling ("old lady schoolgirl")"*** which resulted in some girls dropping out. STAGE tried to alleviate issues relating to social norms (i.e., the role of married girls) by for example encouraging families/husbands to be supportive of girls' education. At tracer, it was noted that mothers and pregnant girls still face more challenges than others to attend the ALPs and VSTs due to factors such as lower concentration or care responsibilities. This is explored more in EQ2.

Second, **economic-related barriers** (household unable to meet basic needs, and household chores preventing work) are prevalent among 35.4% of girls. Whilst tracer and baseline values here are not directly comparable, economic barriers have been reported consistently across evaluation points, tracks and cohorts as the most prevalent barriers, overall and by subgroups. At baseline, the qualitative data found that caregivers and girls could not afford vocational training fees, even if it has been acknowledged that non-formal education could equip girls for transition into employment. Specific reasons for citing economic barriers related not only to lack of resources to pay for education, but also to the need for working/helping with household chores whilst simultaneously attending classes, and lack of resources to continue business.

Relatively less prevalent barriers are **STAGE VST delivery**[49] (20.9%) and those related to **travel and work safety** (14.7%). STAGE VST delivery barriers refer to the girl finding one or more issues with the way VST was delivered by STAGE (in terms of gender sensitive and inclusive teaching, or appropriateness of equipment/duration of the VST). Quality of teaching is explored further in EQ4. Regarding Travel barriers, it was noted at baseline that it would be important for STAGE to help facilitate travel to the ALP/VST to maximise the chances of continued attendance and, later on, successful transition, particularly for girls living in remote areas, as well as mothers and married – which were the subgroups most affected. At endline, the barrier refers to the girl not feeling safe travelling to/from work, or at work. The qualitative data was in line with the quantitative findings, in that travel and work safety were not frequently mentioned issues. The EE considers the lack of prevalence of these in the responses to indicate that they are not a considered to be a major barrier. EQ1, Transition will explore issues of work safety in more detail.

Social norms barriers are felt by 6.1% of the sample. Baseline findings associated the presence of these barriers to the potential belief that household work is more important than education, or that education is not worthwhile for a girl that lives far away from school or has a disability. It was noted that the need to prioritise housework over other activities might have represented a challenge for STAGE to consider if transition to further vocational training and/or transition to safe and decent employment. At tracer, social norms barriers were estimated quantitatively as lack of community support (as perceived by girls), as well as enquiring qualitatively support in the family/household. The qualitative data highlighted that girls in all three sampled regions still feel these social barriers, however there is some evidence that these have decreased. As noted in EQ2, there was some variation on how girls and caregivers saw household chores as a remaining barrier. While some, like one girl in Northern said "***sometimes I was exempted from farm work to allow me attend the classes and I think it was the same for some of my friends as well***", other girls felt as though they still had the responsibility for household chores, and this would take the priority over education/working outside home. Despite this, there were not qualitative findings to suggest that household chores were a reason for not transitioning but may have remained a barrier to girls having full attendance or may mean girls are working alongside training.

A small percentage of girls (**VST safety** = 1.5%) reported feeling unsafe with the assigned MCP during the VST provided by STAGE. This was not reported by any of the girls in the qualitative sample.

[49] Disagreed with at least one of the following (from IO2): I could easily understand the language of instruction of the VST; I have received individual support/encouragement from the MCP; I had the opportunity to practice skills learnt at the end of each VST session; The materials/equipment were adequate; There was flexibility in setting up classes at a time/frequency suitable with my schedule; The duration of the VST was sufficient; I felt safe with the MCP I was assigned to.

Table 13 - Barriers to education by characteristic subgroups and region/language, tracer

Characteristic, region/language	Barriers						
	Economic	Travel or work safety	Disability	Social Norms	VST Safety	Demographic	STAGE VST delivery
Overall	**35.4%**	**14.7%**	**3.9%**	**6.1%**	**1.5%**	**58.5%**	**20.9%**
Mother	27.9%	14.2%	5.3%	7.5%	1.3%	100.0%	21.7%
Married	40.6%	24.0%	4.2%	3.1%	4.2%	99.0%	37.5%
Lives with neither parent	32.0%	21.6%	3.1%	3.1%	4.1%	100.0%	36.1%
HH unable to meet basic needs	100.0%	2.3%	2.3%	4.7%	0.0%	60.5%	18.6%
High Chore Burden (Half a day or more)	100.0%	16.8%	2.4%	1.6%	0.8%	42.4%	26.4%
Has a disability	26.7%	13.3%	100.0%	0.0%	6.7%	73.3%	26.7%
Eastern Akuapim Twi	8.3%	0.0%	2.1%	8.3%	2.1%	66.7%	4.2%
Oti Akuapim Twi	3.1%	0.0%	7.7%	1.5%	0.0%	84.6%	0.0%
Upper West Dagaare	43.8%	8.3%	10.4%	6.3%	8.3%	60.4%	41.7%
Central Fante	19.8%	1.2%	3.7%	19.8%	0.0%	65.4%	6.2%
Upper East Kasem	71.9%	3.1%	3.1%	0.0%	0.0%	71.9%	12.5%
Northern Likpakpaaln	87.5%	12.5%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	22.5%	23.8%
Oti Likpakpaaln	16.7%	91.7%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%	56.3%	72.9%
Source: Analytical Dataset Caregiver Survey N = 397							
_ results are significant							

The intersection between barriers and marginalisation characteristics sheds a light on which subgroups seem to be most affected by certain types of barriers. However, the definition of some barriers includes everyone who possesses a certain characteristic. For example, being a mother is one of the criteria for facing a demographic barrier to formal education. Therefore, this report will focus on results by marginalisation subgroups where it does not add value to report also by barriers.

Married girls and girls living with neither parent (the two groups largely overlap) were more likely than average to experience different types of barriers, namely demographic barriers (99%, significant, vs 58.5%, although this is due to how the barriers prevalence is calculated); dissatisfaction with one or more aspects of their experience in STAGE VST ('STAGE VST delivery' barrier, 37.5%, significant, vs. 20.9% overall); economic-related (40.6% vs 35.5% overall) and travel-related.

Beyond the demographic barriers, **mothers** were slightly more likely to feel the social norms-related (7.5% vs 6.1% overall) and disability-related (5.3% vs 3.9%) barriers. On the other hand, mothers are less likely to feel economic barriers than the overall sample. This probably refers to the fact that not all girls with high chore burden are mothers (as seen under intersectionality of characteristics).

All **girls with a high chore burden and from poor households** are categorised as feeling economic-related barriers to undertaking work and education endeavours outside of home.[50] Fewer girls with high chore burden than the overall average reported feeling demographic barriers (42.4% - significant, vs 58.5% overall). Analysis of the intersectionality of characteristics (Table 43, Annex 15) helps clarify this finding. Whilst there is an overlap between married, mothers and girls with high chore burden, household chores do not affect only married and mothers, but a consistent part of the overall sample (31.9%); conversely, not all girls who are married and mothers necessarily reported being engaged in significant housework. Girls with high chores are also more likely to experience any VST-related barriers (26.4% vs 20.9%). Apart from economic and demographic-related, girls from poor households are less likely to feel other barriers. When considering this demographic, it should be remembered that a majority of girls from poor households are mothers.

In terms of regional trends, the prevalence of mothers and married (configuring demographic barriers), girls with functional difficulties (disability barrier) and girls from poor households/high chore burden (economic-related) in some regions has been discussed under marginalisation characteristics. Here, it is worth highlighting the following:

- The prevalence of the Travel and Work safety barrier (14.7% overall) is almost entirely configured by results in Oti (Likpakpaaln, 91.7% of the sample). See EQ1 for details.
- Social norm-related barriers are mostly felt in Central (Fante), 19.8% of the sample in this region/language group vs. 6.1% overall. See EQ2 for details.
- Issues related to VST safety are reported by and large in Upper West (Dagaare, 8.3% vs 1.5% overall). See EQ4 for details.
- Prevalence of other VST-related issues is driven by Oti (Likpakpaaln) and Upper West (Dagaare), at 72.9% and 41.7% respectively vs 20.9% overall. See EQ4 for details.

[50] The girl spending at least half a day in household chores is used to define the high chore burden subgroup, as well as being one of the two criteria for 'qualifying' as experiencing economic related barriers (the other being related to household poverty).

3.2 Summary of results by indicator

Table 14 – Summary of results by indicator

Indicator #	Measure	Baseline level	Endline target	Tracer level	Summary of results/comment	EQ
Outcomes						
1. Learning						
Life skills					See Intermediate Outcome 3	
2. Transition						
O2.1 % of girls completing an "appropriate" transition: decent employment/self-employment and/or additional training	Caregiver survey Endline: N = 400	N/A (no girl transitioned)	80% (end of project for NFT cohort 2: October 2021)	84.4% (Tracer, 10 months after end of project)	84.4% of non-Formal track cohort 2 girls have successfully transitioned. This is beyond the target for end of the project in the logframe (80%), and considering this tracer is happening 10 months since the end of project, is even more remarkable. Overall, 88.8% of girls that are working currently qualify as having safe conditions and fair pay; 18.9% of the girls are engaged in further VST following STAGE VST; 2.2% are currently enrolled in formal school and 1.2% have partially transitioned, meaning they transitioned after the end of the ALP/VST, but this was not sustained to date. Girls affected by social norms-related barriers and/or from poor households (unable to meet basic needs) have lower transition rates than the overall average, at 76% and 78% respectively for the two groups, vs 84.4% overall. These two subgroups have also lower than average rates of girls with safe and fair working conditions (very or somewhat). Mothers, married girls and girls living with neither parent have slightly lower than average transition rates (83.6%, 82.3% and 81.4% respectively).	1

Indicator #	Measure	Baseline level	Endline target	Tracer level	Summary of results/comment	EQ
					girls with a disability and with high chore burden have higher transition rates than the overall average (86.7% and 89.6%). Higher variation among subgroups undertaking additional VST following STAGE VST: over half of girls affected by social norms barriers are undertaking additional VST (52% vs 18.9% for the overall sample, significant), as well as 33.3% of girls with a disability, or disability-related barriers (31.3%), and older girls (25.0%). Most successful in terms of transition: Likpakpaaln speakers (in Oti and Northern regions). Upper West (Dagaare) and Upper East (Kasem) have the lowest transition rates (66.7% and 75% respectively), and higher than average rates of additional VST as well as temporary/seasonal work. Lack of economic support, lack of community support, and care responsibilities were the most commonly mentioned as reasons for preventing transition. Consistent shares of girls reported being engaged in seasonal and/or temporary work (32.5% and 40% respectively). Girls affected by social norms barriers were less likely to work overall (84.0%), but they were more likely to do temporary work (44.0%) than those not reporting social norms barriers. Almost the totality of girls is self-employed, either running an IGA on their own (79.3%), or with a business partner/family member (15%). The most prevalent sector of work is agriculture/livestock/forestry/fishing for selling produce (38.3%), then sales and service workers (23.5%) and artisan, craft and trade workers (23.2%). High regional variation in terms of industry of work.	

Indicator #	Measure	Baseline level	Endline target	Tracer level	Summary of results/comment	EQ
					On profitability, a majority of those who have costs for running a business/work (86.7%) manages to cover the costs through earning/income made always or most of the time. High cost of materials an issue for sustainability. Almost all girls agree they feel safe in the community and at work, though 15% does not feel safe with equipment/machinery at work. A majority of girls (77.6%) are able to spend all or most of the income earned of their own free will. However, over 30% of girls can only spend some (23.7%) or none (6%).	
3. Sustainability						
Community						
O3.1.b % of parents/caregivers of marginalised girls who actively[51] support girls' education/employment opportunities	Caregiver survey Scoring: 0 - 4	2 (49.3% of parents actively supporting girls' education)	N/A	2 (56.6% of parents actively supporting girls' education)	At Tracer, there was an improvement in both basic support among caregivers (89.1%) and active support among caregivers (56.6%) from the baseline levels. The economic-related barriers remain across regions, particularly in Upper West and Northern, and there is an indication that high chore burden continues to be a risk for further education and transition. STAGE Logframe: Score 2: At least 40% of parents are actively supporting girls' education/employment - behaviour (e.g., allowing more flexibility in girl child's household routine to ensure school attendance, advocating to others the importance of girl child's education)	3

[51] Active support is defined as meeting all of the following conditions: i) key knowledge, understanding, and a basic level of supportive attitude towards girl's education (measured through positive responses to the following survey questions: 1. Do you think [GIRL] has a right to education even though she is not in school?; 2. To what extent do you agree that "even when funds are limited it is worth investing in a girl's education?; 3.To what extent do you agree "a girl is just as likely to use her education as a boy?); ii) Active support: 1. Caregivers did not say any of the following were acceptable reasons for a child not to attend school: child needs to work, child needs to help at home, child is married, child is too old, child unable to learn, education is too costly, child is a mother; 2. When asked, girls stated that chores, work supporting home economic activities, or working in a family business were not a reason keeping her from enrolling in school or a vocational education programme

Indicator #	Measure	Baseline level	Endline target	Tracer level	Summary of results/comment	EQ
O3.2.b Extent that key community leaders and power holders support girls' education/employment (see IO indicator 4.2)[52]	Modified indicator KII with DSWOs, head teachers, leaders, teacher Scoring: 0 – 4	0	N/A	2	Since baseline, there have been positive changes in terms of both speaking out more in favour of girls' education and employment (33% did so at least quarterly, as stated by caregivers), and taking action, mostly in the form of motivation and community education. There were some views among community leaders that they did not see this as their role. STAGE Logframe: Score 2: Community leaders are showing improved practices/behaviours towards girls' education	3
O3.3.b Extent of communities with functional structures to support inclusive girls' education[53]		1	N/A	1	Across all three locations there were some mentions of initiatives that were taken to support girls with a disability, which mostly included health checks. Overall, however, there were limited examples of functional structures that were in place, and those that were mentioned did not have a clear indication of how these would be continued beyond STAGE project completion. In addition, some felt this was the role of the central government, which suggests there are still not institutional structures to support this at district level. There are reports from STAGE regarding initiatives that are being streamlined at national level, however the qualitative data collected by the EE did not show evidence of this, which means it may need more time to be evident at community level.	3

[52] For example, advocating to others the importance of girl child's education, collaborating with others to create functional structures to promote girls' education.

[53] Referring to the following revised indicators in sustainability plan: # of communities with functional structures to support inclusive girls' VST and employment (e.g., establishment of a community-based support scheme for girls' education, platforms for knowledge sharing and brainstorming, establishment of catch-up classes, mentoring and coaching support, availability and unrestricted access to services for PWDs).

Indicator #	Measure	Baseline level	Endline target	Tracer level	Summary of results/comment	EQ
					STAGE Logframe: Score 1: Parents report being able to access services for their children with disabilities some of the time; some indication of functional community structures	
System						
Extent of district assemblies with functional structures to support inclusive girls' VST and employment[54]	Modified indicator KII with DSWOs, head teachers, leaders, teachers KII DSWOs/CEA and T-VET New indicator	1	N/A	2	At baseline, indication that whilst supporting vocally the project, districts lacked the capacity and policies/structures to act for girls' VST and employment. At tracer, demonstrated support at district level across all three sampled locations. The structures in place mentioned at Tracer were largely in the form of partnerships or collaborations to strengthen the systems for marginalised girls. However, one area that could be improved is increased funding or systems that would allow girls to continue their vocational training, which was mentioned as one of the biggest barriers girls still face due to lack of financial resources. There is limited indication of support being systematised, institutionalised across districts, and there is no evidence of for example scaling up of public resource allocation to districts for VST and supporting girls' employment, or integrated plans in this sense. The STAGE reports suggest in some locations the GEA is supporting girls access additional funds, however none of the respondents in the KIIs mentioned these. STAGE Logframe: Score 2: District assembly demonstrate support to the project and have improved capacity to support girls' education/employment through their existing functions and adopting new approaches.	3

[54] Referring to the following revised indicators in sustainability plan: # of districts with functional structures to support inclusive girls' VST and employment (e.g. establishment of scholarship scheme, platforms for knowledge sharing and brainstorming, establishment of catch-up classes, mentoring and coaching support, availability, and unrestricted access to services for PWDs, functional child protection and safeguarding policies, availability of functional Girls Education officers and Social Welfare Officers).

Indicator #	Measure	Baseline level	Endline target	Tracer level	Summary of results/comment	EQ
Extent of TVET institutions with practices that promote girls' vocation skills training in project districts[55]		N/A	N/A	N/A	The STAGE monitoring report highlights that "*actual processes are ongoing for CEA to adopt portions of the STAGE model for scale up. Joint monitoring has been scheduled and in some of the DSPs actual collaboration have begun*". The qualitative data found evidence in each of the three communities. At tracer, there was clear indication across all three sampled communities that there is support for IGSE. The qualitative data suggests that on a district level, some efforts are being made to promote IGSE vocational training and skills in the community. It is however unclear in each community what efforts are being implemented to get tangible results.	3
Extent that NFED/MoE adopts the STAGE curriculum for ALPs to support non-formal education programming in Ghana	Interview with CEA and T-VET Ghana.	N/A	N/A	N/A	At National level, the qualitative data suggests that there is a good level of awareness of the STAGE programme, and that both the CEA and T-VET Ghana would like to continue the partnerships already established, as well as build on elements of STAGE they saw as successful. While there was clear support from national actors on the benefits of STAGE, which was especially seen from the STAGE reports of collaboration in designing policies, strategies and activities, there was little evidence of what had already been adopted.	3
Intermediate outcomes						
IO1 Attendance						
IO1.1 Attendance rates of girls (% of girls that reported attending	Girls Survey, Self-reported attendance	N/A	N/A	85.3%	The almost totality of girls (99.3%, N = 403) reported having completed the ALP (only three did not). On attendance rates, 86.1% of girls stated having attended the ALP either always (60.8%) or	2

[55] Referring to two revised sustainability indicators in this area: "# and % of TVET institutions with practices that promote girls' vocation skills training in project districts"; and "Extent that MoE/G-TVET adopts parts of STAGE VST model to support CBT programming in Ghana". For example, platforms for knowledge sharing and brainstorming, dedicated officer of Unit for Inclusive education, Functional and trained SEAH structures/officers, functional child protection and safeguarding policies.

Indicator #	Measure	Baseline level	Endline target	Tracer level	Summary of results/comment	EQ
all or most of the classes)					most of the times (57.3%). Attendance issues were reported in relation to mothers (from the qualitative sample).	
IO1.2 Extent that girls, caregivers, teachers and school leaders feel the support received helped reduce the barriers to regular attendance	Qualitative data from girls, caregivers, teachers, leaders.	N/A	N/A	N/A	There are good indications that STAGE contributed to reducing economic barriers by providing transition support (materials and start up fund) which allowed to start businesses/work. A large majority of girls said they are better off in terms of working conditions as well as income, as a result of STAGE. However, financial barriers remain, and high costs of materials are mentioned often as a reason for not transitioning/sustaining transition as well as the start-up fund not being enough. Not only economic ones are risks to transition: other recurrent reasons were not receiving enough support from family/household and high chore burden. There were indications unsupportive social norms improved, though also that this is related to higher respect for the girl contributing financially at home through work; and findings point to a persistence of chore burden for girls, notwithstanding higher awareness of gendered roles at home and some limited examples of the distribution of household chores being more equal than before. Home visits and community animation sessions also contributed to improve unsupportive social norms towards girls' education, thus indirectly favouring attendance.	2
IO2 Quality of teaching						

Indicator #	Measure	Baseline level	Endline target	Tracer level	Summary of results/comment	EQ
2.1 % of Girls that agree that their master craft person was effective at the learning centre	Girls Survey[56]	N/A	75%	93.4%	93.3% of girls agreed that MCPs were effective in the application of child centred practices (percentage of girls that agreed or strongly agreed to all four statements (out of the seven on experience at VST overall) on IGSE: i) receiving individual support/encouragement from the MCP; ii) opportunity to practice skills learned at each session; iii) flexibility in setting up classes; iv) feeling safe with the MCP). Qualitative data found that most girls said the teaching quality was good and that child-centred practices were being used.	4
2.2 Extent that master craft persons apply inclusive gender-sensitive education (% of marginalised girls that agree their master craft person was effective at the learning centre/school)	Girls Survey[57] KIIs girls/teachers/facilitators	N/A	75%	92.5%	Overall, 92.5% agreed or strongly agreed to all four questions in the second table (N=345).'However, it's worth noting that 100% of those who did not meet any barriers agreed or strongly agreed to all four questions (N=46). The qualitative data noted how it was difficult for some subgroups like mothers, to fully participate to the ALPs/VST. Across all three regions it stood out that while the classes were designed or modified for the girls to learn at the level and rate that was appropriate for them, it is the behaviour, attitudes, and demeanour of the facilitator which helped allow the girls to engage and continue with the programme.	4

[56] Seven questions (HHG_IO2.a – IO2.g) were inserted in the survey to assess girls' experience at STAGE VST. These were adapted based on questions to assess IO2.1 GESI practices at ALP and in school used for the Formal track, adapted from STAGE class observation tool. For the non-Formal track, four of these questions are used to calculate the indicator, specifically where they refer to effectiveness of the MCP. The four questions referred to practices including: i) providing individual support/encouragement to pupils; ii) providing the opportunity to practice skills learnt; flexibility in setting up classes to adapt to girls' commitments; feeling safe with the MCP. The overall result for this indicator is calculated as the prevalence of girls that strongly agreed or agreed to all four questions.

[57] The value reported from the EE quantitative data calculates the prevalence of marginalised girls (under any of the marginalised sub-groups) that strongly agreed or agreed to all four questions to assess effectiveness of MCPs at the VST. As per STAGE logframe, gender sensitive education is defined as: Marginalised girls, girls and boys get equal level of attention, interaction, praise/criticism, roles, classroom resources; are encouraged to engage with each other in class/seating; are encouraged/facilitated; gender and inclusive discriminative language is challenged and explained. The EE considers that HH survey questions cover key gender sensitive teaching practices, except for that relating to challenging and explaining discriminative language and obviously not capturing boys' perspectives.

Indicator #	Measure	Baseline level	Endline target	Tracer level	Summary of results/comment	EQ
2.3 % of facilitators who demonstrate effective literacy/numeracy instruction	WEI classroom observation summary KIIs girls/teachers/facilitators	N/A	60%	88.9%	Girls generally found the teaching quality in the VSTs and ALPs to be good. While almost all girls in all three regions said that they found the ALPs/VST clear and easy to understand, learning in the local language was only mentioned by two girls. The qualitative data suggests that when girls discussed what they learnt in the ALPs programme prior to joining the VST, girls mentioned the life skills training more often than literacy and numeracy.	4
IO3 Life skills						
3.1 Life skills index score	Same sampling as Learning Test and HH Survey	56	75	74.6	The Life Skills Index score improved by 8 percentage points since baseline, from 66.6 to 74.6 at tracer (significant at 90% confidence level, but not 95%). Life Skills subcategory scores all increased over baseline scores. Nearly all average scores all increased meaningfully, and exceeded the targets recommended at baseline.	1
3.2 Extent that caregivers perceive positive changes in girls' Life skills (% of caregivers who agree or strongly agree with positive changes in life skills)	Same sampling as Learning Test and HH Survey	61.3	Positive trend	91.2	At baseline, caregivers have high levels of confidence in their girl child's life skills in all areas and in relation to all sub-groups (overall 77.3) notwithstanding the high starting point, the Caregiver's Assessment still increased statistically significantly since baseline (91.2). Concerning, the SRHR section scores remained low.	1
IO4 Increased community and district support for inclusive girls' education						
4.1 % of caregivers who feel it is equally viable to invest in a	Same sampling as Household Survey	80.3%	85%	95.7%	Substantial improvement compared to baseline (95.7% vs. 80.3%), well beyond the endline target of 85% of caregivers agreeing with the statement.	2

Indicator #	Measure	Baseline level	Endline target	Tracer level	Summary of results/comment	EQ
girl's education as a boy's education even when funds are limited	Question PCG_32g (Strongly agree or agree)				Most caregivers also responded that they think a girl is just as likely to use her education as a boy (62.7% strongly agreed with the statement, and 30.6% agreed). Though mixed findings on increased household chores for girls. Also, possible concerns over how economically empowered the girls are, as often the caregivers' perspective was linked to the contribution of the girls to the household income.	
4.2 Extent that religious and traditional leaders actively mobilise households to support excluded girls into education (% of leaders that speak at least quarterly in support of girls' education).	Same sampling as Household Survey Question PCG_34g2[58]	10.9%	N/A	33%	Asked whether leaders have spoken out in favour of girls' education, a much higher share of caregivers responded affirmatively at tracer than at baseline: 49.9% vs 19.2%, a change of over 30 percentage point. Those that speak at least quarterly (indicator 4.2) have increased from 10.9% to 33%. Caregivers also reported leaders have acted for girls working outside home (40.4%).	2
4.3 Extent that NFED/MoE adopts the STAGE curriculum for ALPs to support non-formal education programming in Ghana	KIIs with national actors, DSWOs, community leaders	0	2	2 NFED/MoE is convinced by performance and results from STAGE curriculum changes	See Outcome 3, Sustainability System indicator 1.	2

[58] Responses to question: PCG_34g2: How often (have leaders in your community spoken out in support of girls education? Quarterly or more frequently (monthly, weekly).

4. Key findings

This section presents key findings by evaluation question. In doing so, it also refers to key results against outcome and IO indicators from the STAGE logframe. Reporting attempts to avoid repetition across EQs, to the extent possible, by cross-referencing findings across EQs. Conceptually, EQ1 reviews STAGE outcome results (Outcome 2, Transition, and Intermediate Outcome 3, life skills);[59] EQ2 focuses on the STAGE contribution to reducing barriers to attendance and transition (Intermediate Outcome 1, Attendance, and 4, Support to education); EQ3 assesses sustainability aspects of the intervention (Outcome 3); EQ4 analyses the STAGE training model and what worked to support learning (Intermediate Outcome 2, Quality of teaching) and encourage transition; and EQ5 considers the Value for Money of the intervention.

4.1 EQ1. What impact did the STAGE project have on the transition of highly marginalised girls into education/learning/training or work opportunities?

EQ1 assesses key results for the non-Formal track at outcome level, focusing on transition to decent[60] employment, self-employment and/or vocational training, and learning on life skills. Transition and learning are also examined by subgroup and geographic location/language group to identify outliers.

STAGE's contribution to these results is examined at the end of the section. Evidence on the extent to which the project overcame barriers and was effective are examined in EQ2 and EQ4 particularly.

Transition

EQ1.a To what extent does the STAGE ALP/VST prepare beneficiaries for transition to livelihoods opportunities?

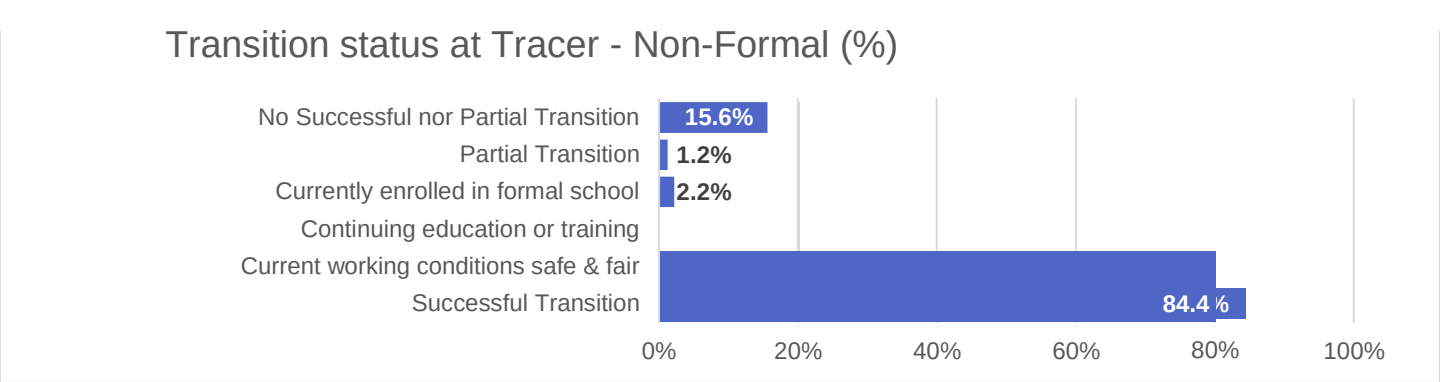
Following graduation from the ALPs and VSTs, non-Formal track girls were supported to transition to their intended pathways through a range of means. Results reported were observed at approximately 10 months post-graduation. Successful transition for the non-Formal track is assessed in terms of girls that i) gain employment or self-employment/IGAs with safe and fair working conditions; and/or ii) pursue additional vocational training. Further, the percentage of girls that temporarily transitioned is also considered, as well as transition to formal school, even though this was not an intended outcome for the non-Formal track. Employment and IGAs were examined building on ILO's definitions and dimensions of decent work in Sub Saharan Africa. Characteristics of current employment and self-employment, working conditions, fair pay, profitability of IGAs, overall economic position and empowerment are analysed, as well as other aspects of decent work such as underemployment and work that should be abolished (see Annex 5). The focus is on the employment/self-employment girls are engaged in currently, however if girls are not working or attending VST at present, previous work since graduation is considered in the analysis. Where possible, subgroup analysis is used to shed light on possible outliers in relation to results achieved.

[59] As a result of the reduced scope of the evaluation, non-Formal track results under Outcome 1, Learning (literacy and numeracy) are not available.

[60] As per applicable International Labour Organisation definition, 'decent' in this context refers to fair wage and safe working conditions. Whilst only fair pay and safety were considered in estimating the extent of 'successful transition', the girls' survey enquired a range of aspects of decent work: fair pay, safety at work and/or travelling to work, excessive working hours at young age/child labour, modern slavery/working to pay off a debt, underemployment, as well as profitability of IGAs, overall earning position and economic empowerment. ILO (2012). Decent Work Indicators in Africa. A first assessment based on national sources. Available at: Microsoft Word - Decent Work Indicators for Africa_Final Draft_24_05_12.doc (ilo.org)

Overall transition outcomes

Figure 3 - Transition status at tracer, non-Formal cohort 2 (% of girls)



Source: Evaluation Surveys (N = 403)
Note: Some respondents meet more than one criterion for successful transition. Rates of criteria do not sum to total successful transition rate.

At around 10 months since graduation, the tracer observed an 84.4% rate of successful transition. While 91% of girls reported working, 81.2% of all girls work under fair and safe conditions, and just under 10 percent work under unsafe and/or unfair conditions. The other path to successful transition, continuing education or training, was taken by 18.9% of beneficiaries, including 2.2% who are in formal school. Some respondents meet both criteria for successful transition. A small subset (1.2%) partially transitioned: they had work or continued VST after STAGE, but no longer met either criterion.[61] Eighteen percent of girls also reported being engaged in a secondary IGA. As of July 2022, the project monitoring data reported a 90.5% successful transition rate for non-Formal track cohorts 1 and 2 together (5697 out of 6295 graduated girls).[62]

Table 15 – Transition status at tracer by subgroup characteristic, non-Formal (%)

	Successful Transition			No Successful/Partial Transition
	Overall	Currently working and under safe & fair conditions	Continuing education or training	
Overall	84.4%	81.2%	18.9%	15.6%
Disability Overall	86.7%	80.0%	33.3%	13.3%
Is Mother	83.6%	80.8%	19.1%	16.4%
Married	82.3%	77.2%	15.6%	17.7%
Household unable to meet basic needs	78.0%	73.9%	4.9%	22.0%
High Chore Burden	89.6%	83.9%	15.2%	10.4%
Lives with neither parent	81.4%	77.5%	14.4%	18.6%
Economic (Chores or Poverty)	88.7%	85.2%	14.8%	11.3%

[61] In addition, 8.2% of girls stated that they have not worked since graduation and 0.7% (three girls) stated that they worked for a period but are not working any longer.
[62] STAGE logframe, final.

	Successful Transition			No Successful/Partial Transition
	Overall	Currently working and under safe & fair conditions	Continuing education or training	
Travel or Work Safety	96.7%	96.7%	13.3%	3.3%
Disability-Related	81.3%	75.0%	31.3%	18.8%
Social Norms	76.0%	70.8%	52.0%	24.0%
VST Safety	N/A	50.0%	N/A	N/A
Demographic	83.1%	80.1%	19.8%	16.9%
STAGE VST delivery	81.2%	75.3%	11.8%	18.8%
Age 17 and under	84.6%	81.1%	16.3%	15.4%
Age 18 to 19	86.6%	84.6%	16.5%	13.4%
Age 20 and over	81.0%	76.5%	25.0%	19.0%
Source: Evaluation Surveys (N = 403)				
Note: Results for those currently enrolled (N=9) and those who partially transitioned (N=5) excluded due to small samples. Partial transition included in not transitioned *Note: Additional VST and currently working under safe and fair working conditions do not add up to Overall successful transition, as Overall successful transition includes both these categories, and a percentage of respondents are engaged both in safe and fair work and additional training.*				

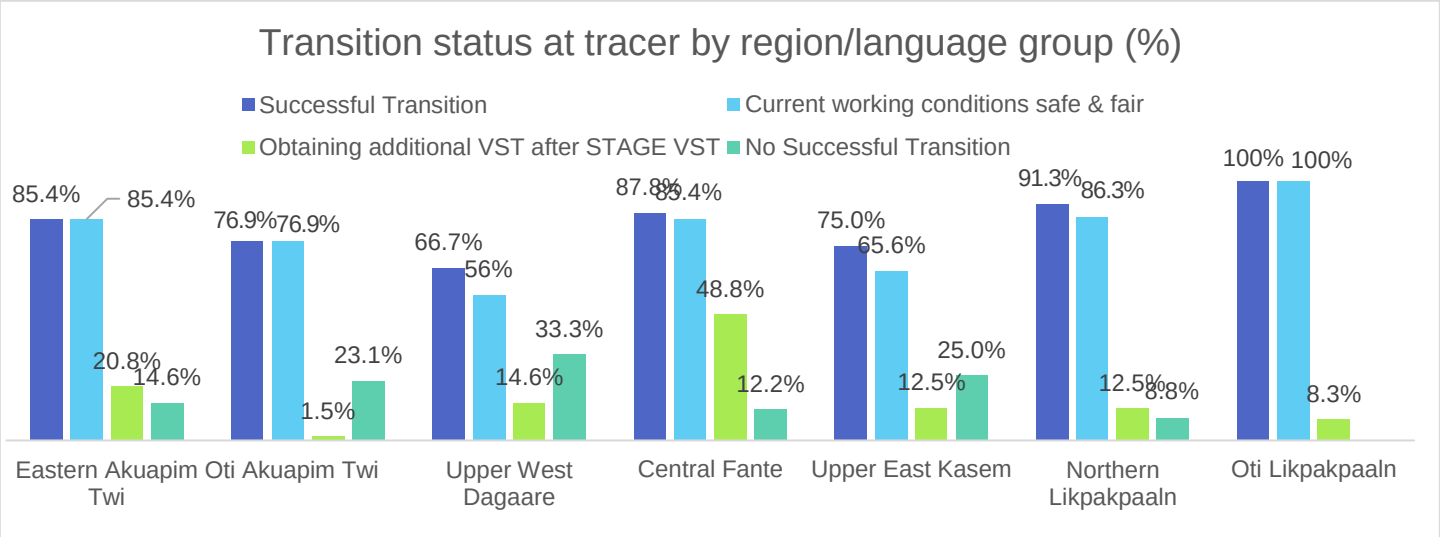
Looking at the results by subgroup characteristics, barriers and age range, almost all subgroups of interest have average or higher than average transition rates. Encouragingly, girls with a disability and with high chore burden have higher transition rates than the overall average (86.7% and 89.6%).

Two subgroups had lower than average transition rates: those affected by social barriers and those from poor households (unable to meet basic needs) at 76% and 78% respectively, compared to 84.4% overall. This is likely due to less girls from these subgroups qualifying as having decent employment/self-employment (very or somewhat safe and fair working conditions). Mothers, married girls and girls living with neither parent have slightly lower than average transition rates (83.6%, 82.3% and 81.4% respectively). By age, the older group (20+) has lower transition rates (81%).

There is much more variation among subgroups in terms of undertaking additional vocational training[63] following the STAGE VST (the overall average is 18.9%). Over half of girls affected by social norms barriers are undertaking additional VST (52%, significant vs 18.9% for the overall sample), as well as 33.3% of girls with a disability, or disability-related barriers (31.3%), and older girls (25.0%).

[63] The type of training – whether formal Technical and Vocational Education Training, non-formal vocational training and/or traditional apprenticeship - is not known.

Figure 4 – Transition status at tracer by region/language group, non-Formal (% of girls per region/language)



At baseline, Likpakpaaln speakers (in Oti and Northern regions) were notable outliers, recording the highest percentage of girls that had never been to school (91.7% and 86.6%, significant, compared to 53.4% overall), a large majority of girls affected by high chore burden (87.3% and 86.1%), and lower learning scores than other region/language subgroups (in Oti). At tracer, these two region/language groups are the most successful in terms of transition: all the girls in Oti (Likpakpaaln) and 91.3% of those from Northern region (Likpakpaaln) have transitioned, with a relatively small percentage (compared to the average) of girls attending further VST. Upper West (Dagaare) and Upper East (Kasem) have the lowest transition rates (66.7% and 75% respectively), and higher than average rates of additional VST. Whilst these two region/language groups had high prevalence of marginalisation characteristics, correlates between marginalisation characteristics and successful transition by region/language were not significant, suggesting other factors might account for differences in transition outcomes.

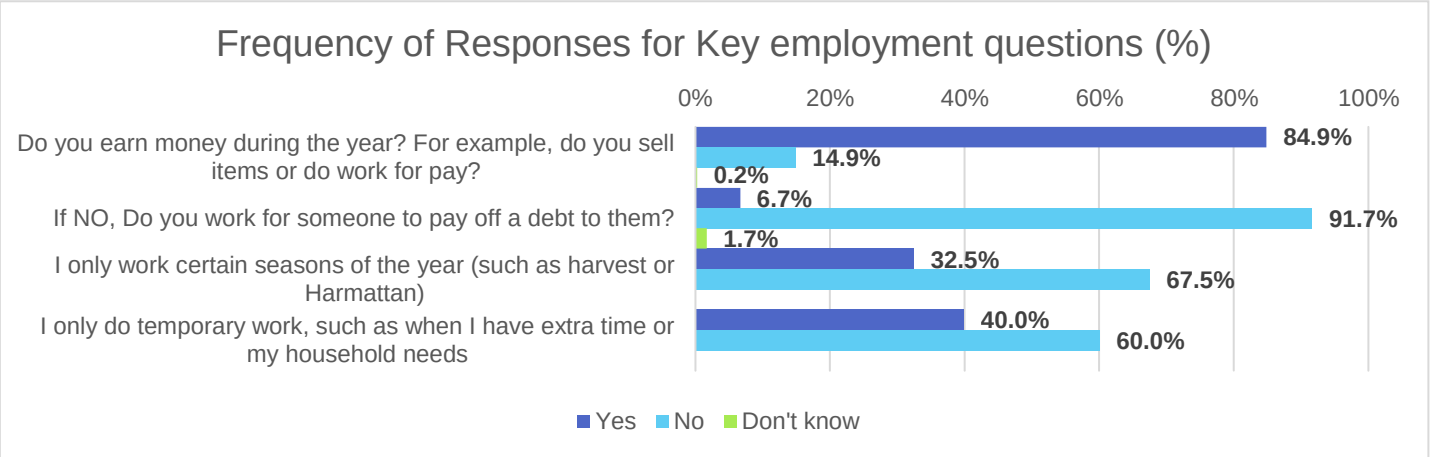
The qualitative data found that almost all caregivers, facilitators and girls said that girls who took part in the ALPS/VST have been able to transition into employment or self-employment. In Eastern (Akuapem South) the facilitator said, "***29 girls completed the ALP classes and, further vocational training and transitioned****",* and the MCP confirmed this, as well as noting that two girls had travelled during the training, but were able to return, complete, and transition. In Northern (Kpandai), the MCP said that all girls were able to transition, and in Oti (Nkwanta South) the MCP said that most girls transitioned and are now self-employed, while the facilitator said that "***since some of girls didn't take active part in the classes, they were prevented from transitioning***". When looking at the marginalisation characteristics that may have prevented some from transitioning, lack of economic support, lack of community support, and care responsibilities were the most commonly mentioned. In terms of care responsibilities, it was only in Northern (Kpandai) where the DSP said that pregnant girls or mothers were not able to start their business, and some got married so were not able to transition.

Of those that work, a significant majority responded that they have safe and fair working conditions (more details on safety and pay below), though results in Upper East (Kasem) and Oti (Akuapim Twi) were lower than the average (72.4% and 82.0%). All the girls in Oti (Likpakpaaln) responded positively to questions on safe and fair conditions.

Decent work, employment and self-employment

Primary income generating activity: main work characteristics

Figure 5 - Frequency of responses for key employment questions (%)



Source: Girls survey N=403 for questions 1, 3 and 4. N = 60 for working to pay off a debt (% of those who stated they are not working for money during the year)

In the surveys, girls were asked about key work characteristics such as whether it is paid work, time, seasonality, working hours, sector, and type of work. Girls that reported not working for money (nor engaged in VST) were not counted as successfully transitioned (15.6% of the overall sample). The qualitative data found similar results to the quantitative. In the qualitative data, all girls who participated in the KIIs reported that they transitioned but two said they are now either self-employed or in paid employment. Only two of the girls interviewed across all three regions were not currently working for money. One in Eastern (Akuapem South) said she was not able to get work for pay, while one in Northern (Kpandai) said that after graduating she ran out of materials and could not access more so now, she works on the farm.

When asked directly, relatively large shares of girls reported being engaged in seasonal and/or temporary work (32.5% and 40% respectively, N=403). When asked about how many months and how many hours per week they work, a large majority of girls does not seem to work full time or most of the months of the year. Overall, 63.2% of girls stated working six months or less per year; and 51.2% mentioned working between zero and nine hours per week (N=367, see Tables 46, Annex 15). A large majority of STAGE girls could also be considered underemployed: 87.2% responded affirmatively that 'if there was more work available to earn more money, I would work longer hours; 12.8% reported that even if they wanted to, given their other responsibilities, they would not be able to (see Annex 16, on Underemployment). In the KIIs with the girls, two in Northern Region (Kpandai) said the work was seasonal. The pastries maker said the work is seasonal, "***as and when people make orders, I prepare for them. I'm solely responsible and operate from my home***", the other is a dressmaker and said "***I work, but the work is not very regular. People only bring their dresses for sewing occasionally like Christmas, Sallah and other times so I'm not always busy. It is when new school academic term begins that I get quite busy***". There were no reports of seasonal work in the other regions however other challenges such as lack of resources or transportation costs were mentioned. In relation to the duration of current employment, girls reported on average this started 7.7 months before the tracer was conducted; in Upper East (Kasem), Central (Fante) and Oti (Likpakpaaln) current work duration is slightly longer (9.4 months, significant for Upper East, and 8 months for the other two areas) (see Table 45, Annex 15).

Table 16 – Working patterns by subgroups (% of overall sample)

	Works	Does Temporary Work	Does Seasonal Work
Overall	91.1%	40.0%	32.5%
Disability Overall	93.3%	46.7%	46.7%
Is Mother	91.1%	33.8%	28.9%
Married	87.5%	37.5%	30.2%
Household unable to meet basic needs	95.1%	36.6%	34.1%
High Chore Burden	99.2%	60.8%	60.0%
Lives with neither parent	84.5%	29.9%	24.7%
1+ hours to secondary school	N/A	N/A	N/A
Economic (Chores or Poverty)	97.9%	57.7%	54.2%
Travel or Work Safety	100.0%	36.7%	25.0%
Disability-Related	87.5%	43.8%	43.8%
Social Norms	84.0%	44.0%	16.0%
VST Safety	N/A	N/A	N/A
Demographic	89.9%	33.3%	27.8%
STAGE VST delivery	83.5%	42.4%	29.4%
Eastern Akuapim Twi	91.7%	29.2%	16.7%
Oti Akuapim Twi	93.8%	23.1%	15.4%
Upper West Dagaare	62.5%	60.4%	56.3%
Central Fante	92.7%	40.2%	29.3%
Upper East Kasem	90.6%	37.5%	46.9%
Northern Likpakpaaln	98.8%	52.5%	55.0%
Oti Likpakpaaln	100.0%	33.3%	6.3%
Age 17 and under	91.9%	42.3%	39.0%
Age 18 to 19	92.7%	42.1%	28.0%
Age 20 and over	87.9%	34.5%	31.9%

Source: Evaluation Surveys (N = 403)
Note: 'Works' category includes all girls that stated working for money. Values are higher than 'currently working and under safe & fair working conditions' (which is a criterion for successful transition) as 'Works' category includes also those that are not working under safe and fair working conditions.

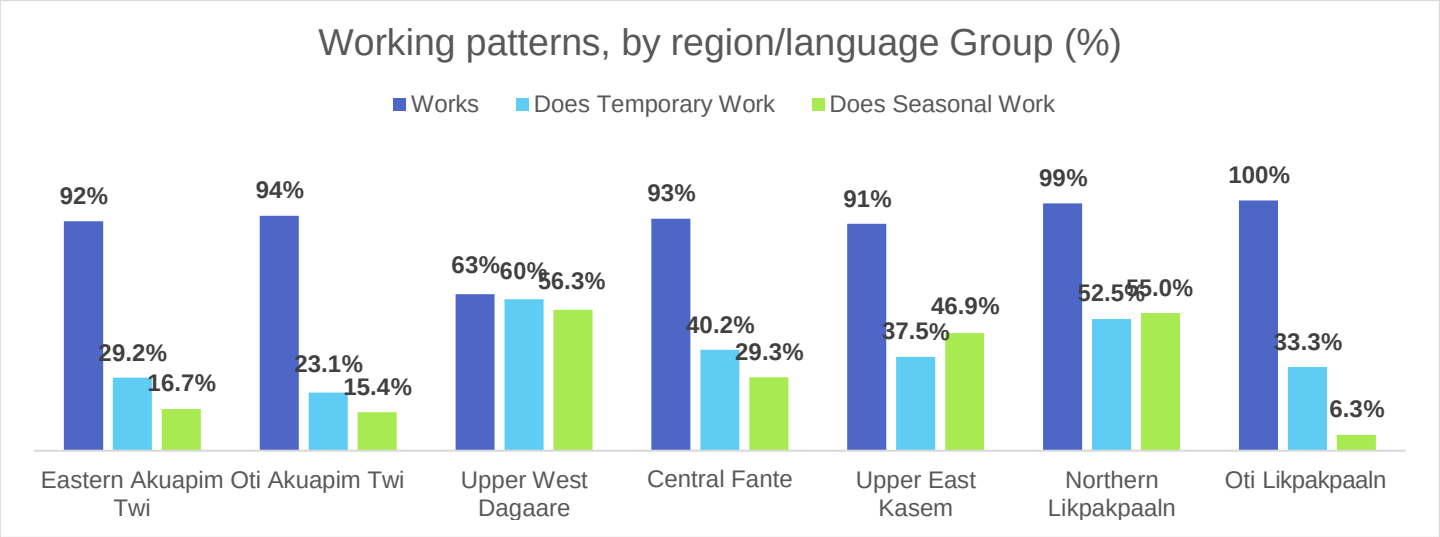
In terms of outliers by working patterns (Table 17), nearly all girls with high chore burden (99.2%, significant) and from poor households (95.1%) reported working (permanently, temporarily, and/or seasonally). This is higher than the overall sample average (91.1%). However, a smaller percentage was categorised as in decent employment in terms of pay and safe working conditions. Further, a majority of girls with high chore burden reported doing temporary or seasonal work: 60.8% and 60.0%, significant, compared to 40.0% and 32.5% for the sample overall. Lastly, girls with high chore burden and girls from poor households were the only subgroups significantly more likely to state they would not be able to work longer hours, even if they wanted to (23.4% and 33.3%, significant) (see Annex 16, underemployment). While girls were asked different questions about working for pay and household chores, it is possible that the high overlap between work and chore burden is due to the unclear distinction of family business activity. The qualitative data supports the quantitative findings; the chore barrier is mentioned by several girls and caregivers as a barrier to working and attending ALPs and VST. This is linked to gendered expectations in the community with girls having more household management and chore related responsibilities than boys (as explored in EQ2.a).

There is qualitative evidence that girls are still engaged in seasonal work either alongside or instead of putting into practice the skills learnt at VSTs. All of the girls in the qualitative sample are currently working in the industry they

trained in, however other respondents mentioned challenges for other girls in the community who were involved in the VST programme. For example, one local leader in Northern noted "***because those who are trained in making products don't get materials to produce some for sale, so now that it is farming season, the girls venture into farming and stop vocational business***". This is linked to the high cost of materials, elaborated on in EQ2.a.

Girls affected by social norms-related barriers were less likely to work overall (84.0% vs 91% of the sample overall, this includes all work including not fair or safe) but they were more likely to do temporary work (44.0% vs. 40% overall) than those not reporting social norms barriers. Because of the way the 'working' category is calculated vis-à-vis temporary and seasonal work, these findings suggest that fewer girls affected by these barriers are working for money than average, whilst they tend to be more engaged in occasional, irregular work that is not necessarily paid. Regarding girls facing demographic barriers, the DSP in Northern suggested that despite being able to complete the training, pregnant girls were less able to transition to employment.

Figure 6 - Working patterns, by region/language group (%), non-Formal tracer



As mentioned above, Upper West (Dagaare) and Upper East (Kasem) showed the lowest successful transition rates among region/language groups. These findings are reflected in the type of work prevalent among girls surveyed in these two areas. For example, in Upper West the prevalence of girls working, doing temporary work and seasonal work are similar (63.0%, 60% and 56.3%), suggesting that i) less girls here than in other regions reported working; ii) of those who work, larger percentages than elsewhere are not working for money, or are engaged in irregular, occasional work, potentially with either unsafe and/or unfair conditions (Figure 6). Upper East has higher than average seasonal work reported (46.9%). In Northern (Likpakpaaln) a majority of girls are engaged in seasonal and/or temporary work but working conditions might be different than in Upper West and Upper East (see detailed findings below).

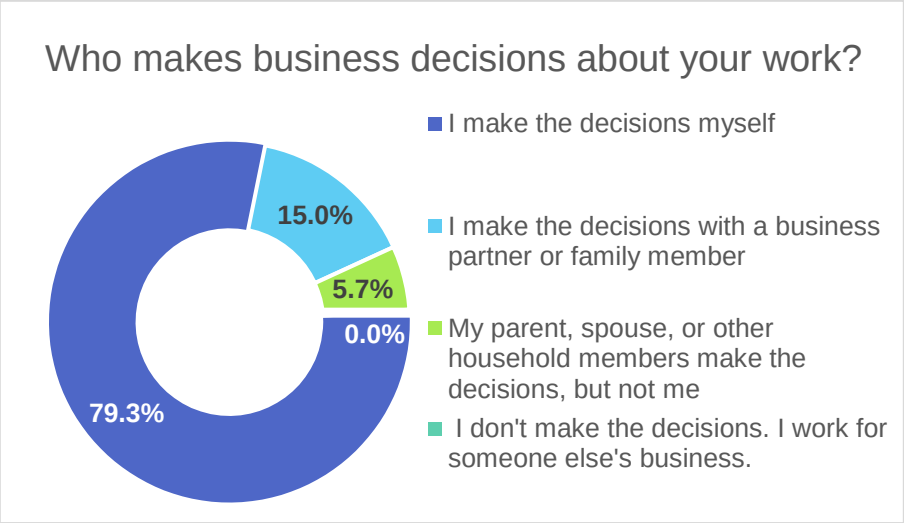
Primary income generating activity: employment/self-employment and industry of work

To understand whether girls are employed or self-employed as their main type of work/activity, the survey enquired who makes business decisions about their work which affect income (for example what, when and at what price an item is sold). If a girl responded they make decisions themselves or together with a business partner/family member, the girl was categorised as self-employed or as running an IGA (on her own or with a partner). A girl was considered

in employment if she responded that other people make business decisions: parents, spouse, or other household member (employment in household's IGAs), or people outside the household.[64]

Almost the totality of girls are self-employed, either running an IGA on their own (79.3%), or with a business partner/family member (15%). A small percentage (5.7%) reported being employed in household IGAs. None of the girls stated being employed/working for someone else's business. These findings are similar to baseline findings and confirmed by the tracer's qualitative data, in which the girls interviewed gave similar responses. In Northern (Kpandai) and Oti (Nkwanta South) all eight girls said they were self-employed, and in Eastern (Akuapem South) one girl said she was self-employed, and it was not clear from their response if the others were working for someone else. Additionally, in Northern (Kpandai) and Oti (Nkwanta South) the facilitators and MCP interviewed confirmed that most girls who transitioned have started their own business.

Figure 7 - Type of work. Employment and self-employment



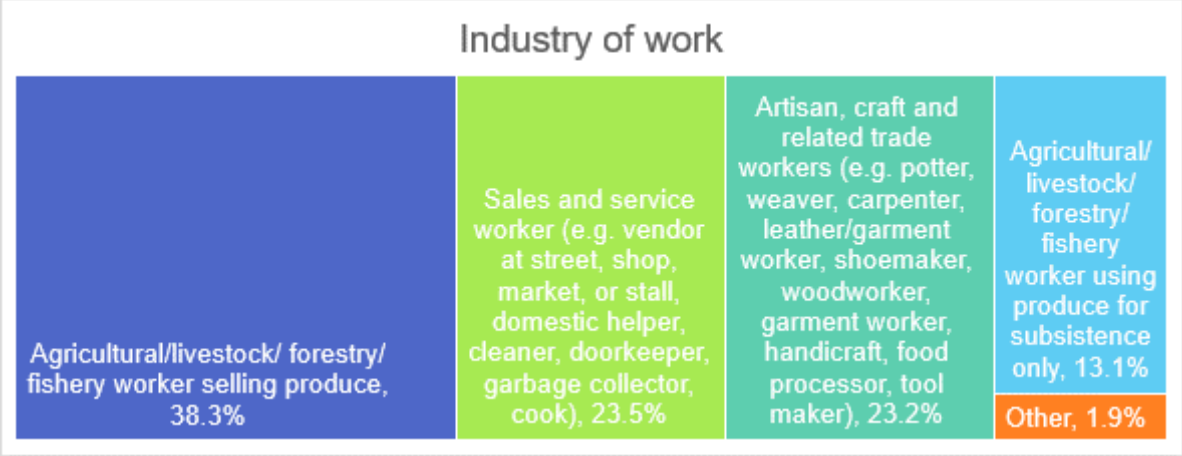
Girls were asked about the area/industry of their current primary work/activity (Figure 8). International Labour Organization (ILO)'s categories aggregated to reflect the labour market context in STAGE communities have been used.[65] The most prevalent sector of work is agriculture/livestock/forestry/fishing (38.3%), followed by an equal share of sales and service workers (23.5%) and artisan, craft and trade workers (23.2%). Further, 13.1% is working in subsistence agriculture and related sectors. Hence, the survey data would seem to indicate that the primary IGA for girls is not in a vocational field covered by STAGE non-Formal track cohort 2 VST for a majority of girls, that they instead work in agriculture and related activities.[66] Many respondents, and particularly those working in agriculture, had secondary IGAs; 26.3% of those primarily working in agriculture had secondary IGAs compared to only 9.5% of respondents primarily working in other fields. In most cases, secondary IGAs were in the same field as their primary work; among those working in agriculture with secondary IGAs, 85.7% of their secondary IGAs were also in agriculture (see Annex 16 for further details on secondary IGAs). It is worth noting that among the entire sample, 87.1% said that if there were more work available, they would take it.

In the period data collection took place coinciding with harvesting season – especially in Northern and Oti regions – might have had an impact on the high rates of girls working in agriculture found by the EE. The qualitative data suggests girls are engaged in both agricultural and crafts, trade and services sectors. In Eastern (Akuapem South), when talking about the types of employment most girls in the community are engaged in, one local leader said that both girls and boys would work on pineapple farms. In Oti (Nkwanta South) one local leader said, "***almost all the girls have engaged in gari production. They are paid little and there are other girls who do not work at all***". However, the respondents all mentioned that since STAGE, girls are engaged in other activities such as hairdressing, dress and

[64] In previous rounds of data collection questions on the nature of work used more a more formal categorisation of types of work (e.g., formal employment, self-employed on own account, informal employment), however most girls responded they did not know. As such, the questions were revised at tracer to better reflect the reality of the ground and ensure they are understandable by respondents.
[65] ILO (2012). International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08). Structure, group definitions and correspondence tables https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/@publ/documents/publication/wcms_172572.pdf
[66] The Project initially included agriculture as a vocational area they covered i.e., in the non-Formal track, cohort 1; however, it did not consider feasible to continue offering training in this area for the non-Formal track, cohort 2, due to the high costs associated, and the limited government support. Besides, the land tenure system and brevity of the training period were also considered. Many women do not own farming lands and are not in full control to make certain financial decisions for themselves.

sandal making, catering and pastry businesses. Thus, several data sources seem to suggest that girls are engaged in a range of activities in different sectors, at different times of the year and for varying periods of time. This diversification of activities and income sources likely responds to fluctuations in the market and the need to continue seasonal farming as the main activity for a majority of households across all communities. It would also explain the apparent contradiction between a majority of girls stating their primary and secondary IGAs are in agriculture-related sectors and three quarters of girls stating they found work in the area of the VST they trained in through STAGE.

Figure 8 – Primary Industry of work (% of overall working, N=366)



There is variation in the distribution of industry of work by subgroup (see Table 47 in Annex 15).

A large majority (76.2%, significant) of girls affected by social norms are engaged in farming, forestry, livestock and fishing activities for selling produce, as are 40.4% of girls affected by demographic barriers (as seen in Section 3.1, there is a degree of overlap between mothers and married and demographic barriers). This differs for married girls, girls from poor households, girls with a disability and girls affected by economic and disability-related barriers who are less likely to work in this sector.

Regarding sales and service workers (vendor at street, shop, market or stall, domestic helper, cook…), there is less pronounced variation by marginalisation subgroups than for other sectors, though it is noted that only 10.3% of impoverished girls and 14.6% of high chore burden girls work in this sector (against 23.5% overall). A large majority of girls affected by travel and work safety (78.3%, significant), and any VST barriers (62%) work in this sector. The link with travel and work safety might be related to the nature (in contact with the public) and location of these type of occupations. There was some evidence in the qualitative data to suggest that travel is still a barrier for some girls however this was less about safety and more about travel distance to markets to sell their products.[67]

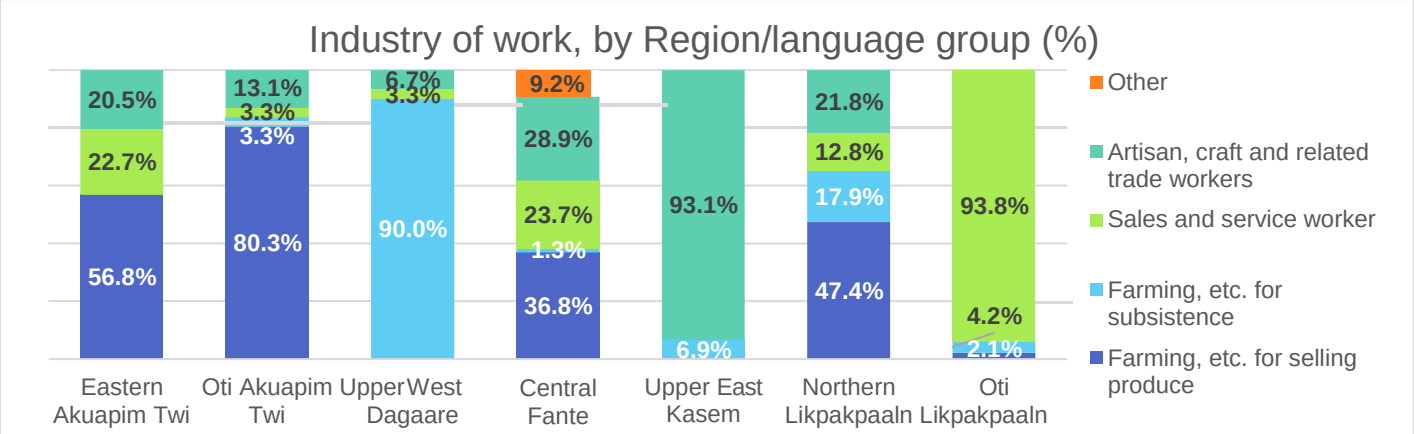
Crafts are the main sector of work for girls from poor households (38.5%). This might be because fewer poor households own agriculture/farming land than average (the other predominant sector).

Girls with high chore burden (27.6%, significant), affected by economic barriers (25.4%), married (20.2%), living with neither parent (18.3%) and younger girls (17 and under, 20.5%) are the subgroups most engaged in subsistence farming activities. These findings confirm that a consistent share of girls with high chore burden tend to be engaged in temporary and seasonal work helping in the household or family business activity. This was confirmed in the qualitative data, which indicated that girls are still responsible for a large amount of the household chores and were

[67] For example, one girl in Oti mentioned "*it's quite challenging since the means of transport is difficult to come by so it has slowed business*", and one local leader in Northern mentioned "*the labour market challenge is how to get to the Kumdi market*". These comments suggest that the distance to the market remains a barrier which prevents the girls from making use of their skills. There was only one mention of where travel may be related to safety issues (see under Safety).

still engaged in work on the family farm. For example, one girl in Northern highlighted "***I make beads for sale in addition to our farm work. I do it on part-time basis***". Overall, the girls in the qualitative sample were not engaged in household chores or farm work on a full-time basis but were engaged in these activities in addition to their craft or trade. Almost a third of high chore burden girls (30.9%) work in crafting and trading for example pottery, weaving, leather, carpentry.

Figure 9 – Industry of work by region/language group (%)



Regional variation in industry of work is evident, as shown in Figure 9. Of note, in Upper West (Dagaare) the large majority work in farming for subsistence only (90%), whilst 93.1% of girls in Upper East (Kasem) reported engaging in craftsmanship. These are the two region/language groups with lower transition rates. The almost totality of girls in Oti (Likpakpaaln) reported working in sales and services (which is also where the travel & work safety barriers were prevalent amongst over 90% of the sample). Whilst in other regions the most prevalent activity is farming for selling produce, with smaller percentages working in the other sectors as well. The only region/language with 'other' reported jobs is Central Fante, which has the highest percentages of mothers (mothers were also the subgroup who most reported work in this category).[68]

Primary income generating activity: business profitability, earnings and economic empowerment

The evaluation enquired about the profitability of IGAs and fair pay/earnings of girls that mentioned working for money, and/or in temporary or seasonal work (N=367). Together with safety, perceptions on fairness of pay/earning were used as criteria to calculate rates of successful transition, as per ILO characterisation of 'decent work'.

A majority (65.6%) of respondents that are self-employed (N=346) considered that they make more money in this way than if they were working for someone else, always (35.8%) or at least most of the times (29.8%). Only 1.2% reported this is never the case. The qualitative data somewhat supports this, as girls generally felt like they are able to make enough money. Only one girl (Northern, Kpanadi) directly reported she was able to make more money now by saying "***what I get from the sales is not bad; at least I get more from it than the farm work***". While there were other comments from girls and caregivers that they are earning now, it was not clear if this was more or less than if they had been working for someone else.

[68] The qualitative data did not show as much variation on which sector marginalised girls work in, compared to the quantitative data, however there were some bigger regional differences. In Northern (Kpandai) all four girls interviewed said they are working in a pastry business, which was only mentioned by one girl in Oti (Nkwanta South) and none in Eastern (Akuapem South). However, in Eastern (Akuapem South), two girls said they were in the catering industry, which was not mentioned in the other regions. In Northern (Kpandai), three girls were involved in craft work including dress making, sandal/shoe making, beads, and hairdressing. In Northern (Kpandai), both local leaders also mentioned girls were in the industry of soap making.

Figure 10 – Perceived business profitability, fairness of pay, type of pay (% of total girls working, N=367)

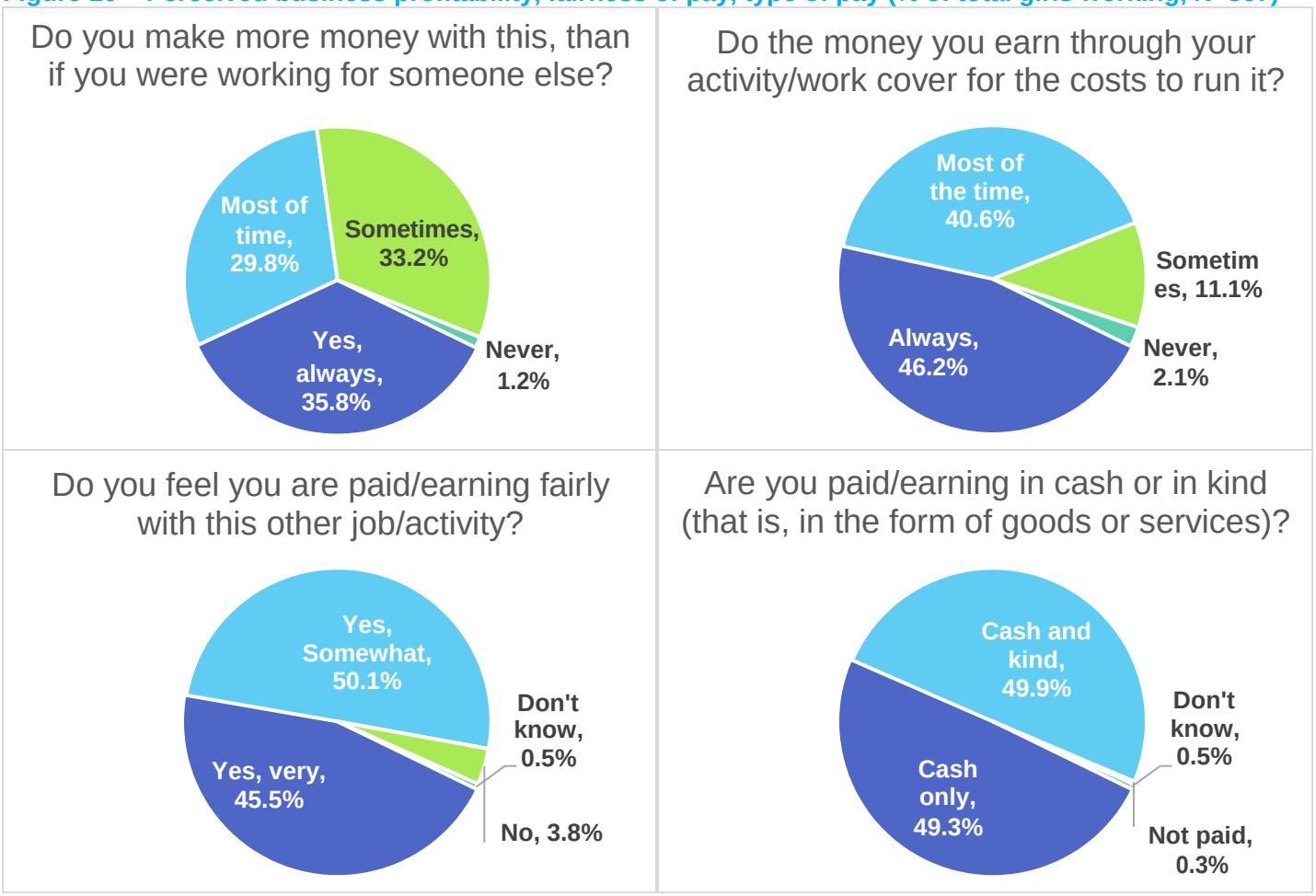
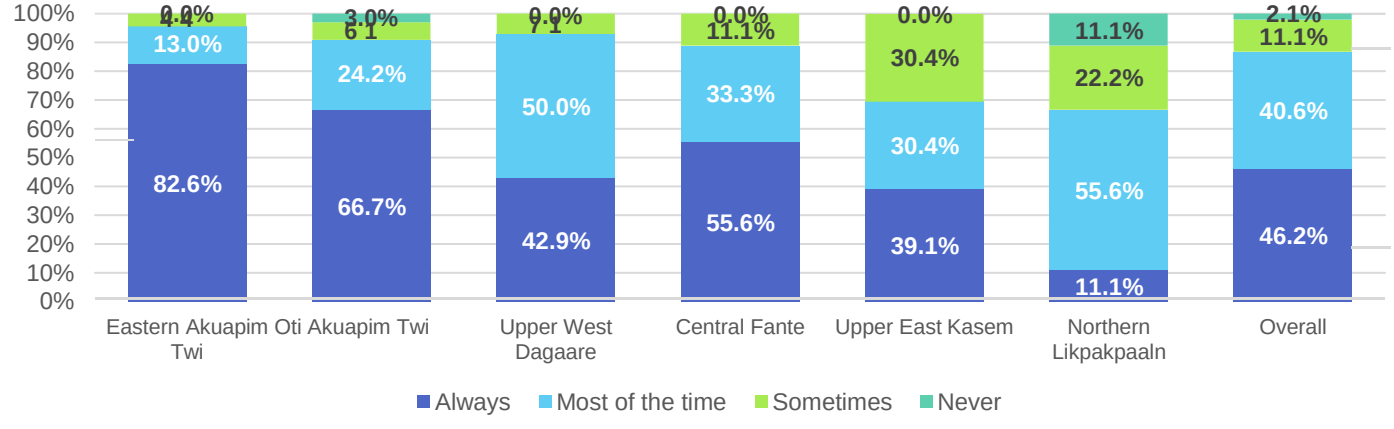


Figure 11 - Profitability of businesses/work (% of girls that work and reported having costs)



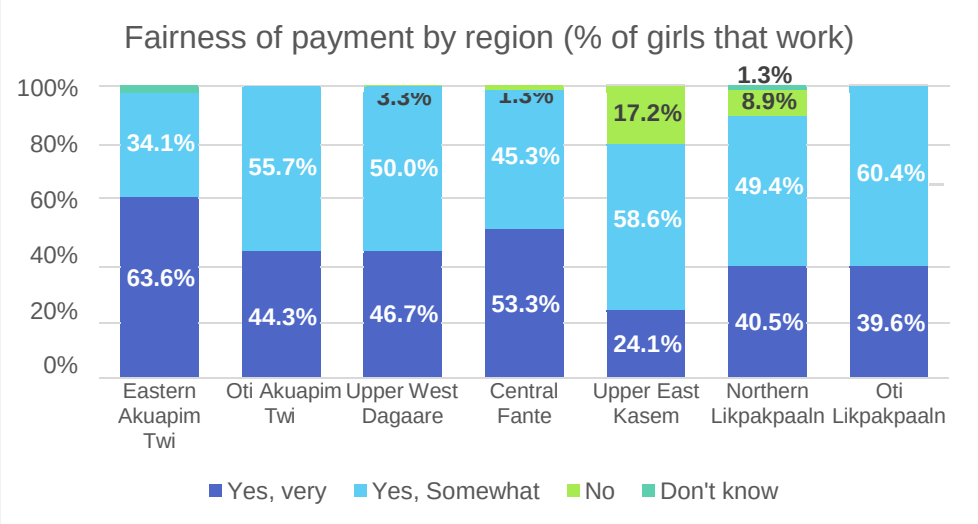
Profitability of business/employment has been estimated by asking whether the costs of running an activity are more than compensated by the earnings/income gained through that activity. Among all that work (N=367), 63.8% responded they have costs to run their work/activity, for example buying inputs/materials. A majority (86.4%) manage to cover the costs of running the activity/work through earning/income made always or most of the time. However, 13.2% of girls mentioned they covered their costs only sometimes or never. Those least likely to cover their costs are concentrated in Northern (Likpakpaaln) and Upper East (Kasem). In interviews, the high price of materials was mentioned frequently as a barrier. The qualitative data also suggests that there are high costs associated with their work and it was mentioned as the biggest barrier to profitability and pay by girls, caregivers, and other respondents. In Eastern (Akuapem South) the MCP said that "***the most challenging thing to deliver if you consider cost is the cost of materials for production and to sustain it***". While in Oti (Nkwanta) one caregiver and the DSP said the high cost of materials is making the production costs very high. For example, the caregiver said, "***within the last year and half, most of the girls have started working, just that the high cost of materials is making their work quite difficult***". In Northern (Kpandai), one girl also mentioned the thing that would help most would be the materials available at a low cost so they can purchase them. The cost of materials and production was seen across a few of the sectors the girls work in, particularly in the sandals and catering industries. It is not clear from the evaluation what factors are behind the widespread perception of costs of materials being too high: whether costs have increased and/or whether girls are not able to sell products/services at higher prices to offset increased costs of materials. However, the STAGE logframe for May – July 2022 reported that "***Compared to the previous quarter, the current numbers for the FT and NFT represent 0.9% and 0.5% drop outs respectively. Further due to the current economic challenges which has made cost of inputs expensive, monitoring data revealed that about 15% of the IGAs started are inactive***", which could explain respondents' views on the matter. WEI have further verified that there has been a deteriorating economic situation in Ghana, with high inflation rates proving to be a challenge for the non-Formal track girls. It was noted by WEI that had this not been the case, the IGA grant would have benefitted the girls a lot more. This does however also suggest that in future programming, inflation rates need to be taken into consideration in project budgets, so any grants are proportionate to cost of materials.

In addition, the qualitative responses on girls' perceptions on labour market opportunities, as well as the perceptions from local leaders (see EQ2) indicates in some locations there is a saturated labour market where, even where opportunities exist, they are concentrated in a limited number of sectors/industries which negatively impacts the price girls are able to charge for their products/services.

In terms of sufficiency of pay/income, 45.5% of respondents considered they are paid very fairly and 50.1% somewhat fairly. A minority said they are not paid fairly (3.8%). Additionally, 0.3% mentioned they are not receiving any pay at all, whilst there is almost an equal split between payment in cash only, and cash and in kind (see Figure 11).

By region, of note is that i) girls in Eastern (Akuapim Twi), and Central (Fante) were more likely to consider they are paid very fairly than elsewhere; ii) Upper East (Kasem) is the region/language group driving negative views on fairness of payment. This also explains the lower transition outcomes for Upper East, where also 93.1% of girls stated the industry of work for their primary IGA is craftsmanship and related trade professions. On the other hand, Eastern and Central had relatively high rates of girls working in agriculture and related sectors, for selling produce.

Figure 12 - Fairness of payment by region (% of girls that work)



The qualitative data also suggests there was regional split in how profitable girls found their work to be. In Oti (Nkwanta), all four girls said they have been able to save a bit of money from their own business, and one girl commented "***it's not bad because that is what put food on our tables. The little we get us profit has cleared a lot of debts and shame***". One reason for this regional difference could be that all girls who responded to these KIIs in this region were working in the pastries business. In other two regions, more challenges were associated with the profitability of the work and this was linked to the cost of materials. For example, in Eastern (Akuapem South) two girls said they are able to earn money, but the earnings are too small: as one girl in the catering business said that she works but her earnings are small. In Northern (Kpandai), a few girls mentioned the lack of profitability, usually due to the nature of acquiring materials, one girl commented "***I always work but the resource is not enough to keep me engaged at work always. The means of acquiring the material is a big problem now***". Despite these challenges, most girls and caregivers do speak of earning more money than previously.

Safety at work and in the community

Figure 1 – Job and community safety (N=345)

Safety at work is a key component of decent employment/self-employment. As such, beyond fair pay, successful transition has been assessed in terms of safety. Girls were asked a series of questions on work, travel to/from work and community safety. Whenever respondents disagreed a lot or a little with the statement, they were categorised as affected by travel and work safety barriers.

Almost all girls agree a lot or at least a little to feeling safe when out in the community (70.7% and 27.8% respectively), as well as when working to earn money (78.6% and 21.2% respectively). Only a small percentage (1.4%) reported not feeling safe when travelling to and from work or vocational training. There was only one mention of safety and travel from the DSP in Eastern who said, "***we have arranged that those staying at far places, they will move in pairs or groups so that their safety will be guaranteed***". This suggests that the STAGE ambition to facilitate girls feeling safe travelling to and from work was addressed in Eastern by suggesting girls to travel together however there is little information from the girls on whether this is successful.

Approximately 15% of girls stated the equipment/machinery they use at work is at risk of harming them. Even more concerning is that around one fifth of girls disagreed a lot or a little with the statement that all the work/activities they do are voluntary; and around one quarter of respondents disagreed a lot or a little that they could change their current job for another, better one, without penalty. As seen in the sub-section industry of work, a large majority of girls affected by travel and work safety barriers (78.3%, significant) work in the sales and service sector.

Travel and work safety barriers were almost entirely prevalent in Oti (Likpakpaaln) only (over 90% of the sample). In the qualitative interviews, issues related to physical safety were not often mentioned, and if they were, all girls responded that they feel safe, or they do not face any threats.

Further vocational training

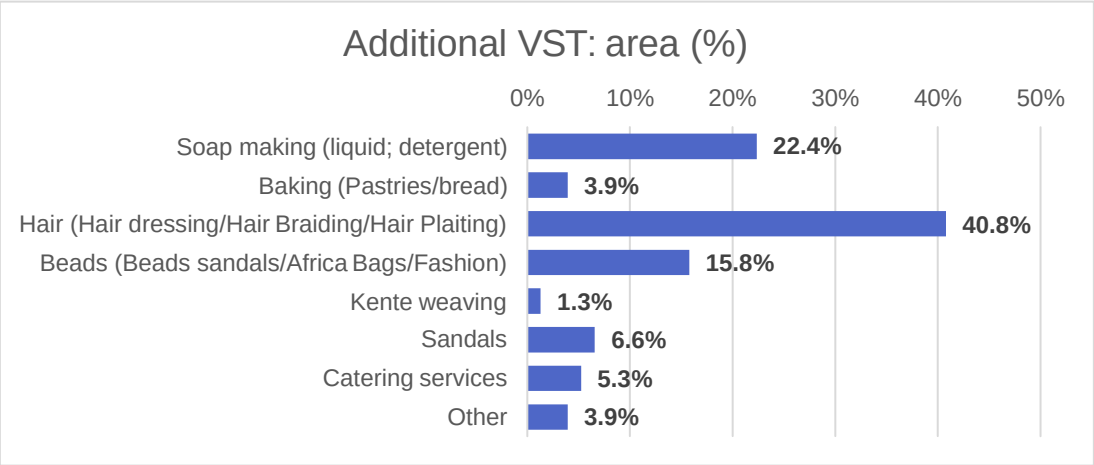
Pursuing further vocational training was a second pathway to successful transition.

Table 1 – Continuation of VST

	Yes	No
Are you currently attending Vocational Skills Training?	18.9%	81.1%
Since the ALP/VST programme with [_DSP] ended, did you attend additional VST?	25.6%	74.4%
Source: Evaluation Surveys (N = 403)		
Note: Seven respondents (1.7%) claimed that they were currently attending VST but had not continued VST since finishing ALP. It's unclear if they are enrolled but haven't yet begun, or they misunderstood a question.		

Almost one fifth of girls (18.9%) responded they are currently attending VST. On average, girls have been attending for between five and six months. Some girls are working as well as attending further VST. Around one quarter of girls attended additional VST at some point following STAGE graduation. The qualitative data suggests that more girls entered into self-employment than further training. One girl in Eastern (Akuapem South) highlighted "***at this moment it can't be possible for me to continue vocational training because of financial problems, but I have decided to sell the product I have to make some money to further in future***". Which suggests that there are still financial barriers to attending further training for some girls, and earning an income is more viable. However, in each location the MCP or the facilitator said they were aware of some girls who went on to further training.

Figure 13 - Area of additional VST (% of currently attending VST, N=76)



In terms of sector, the most prevalent VST pursued is in hair dressing and related occupations (40.8% of the current VST sample) and soap making (22.4%). To a lesser extent beads (15.8%), sandal/shoe making (6.6%) and catering services (5.3%).

Economic empowerment

The evaluation enquired aspects of non-Formal cohort 2 girls' economic empowerment, including to what extent they are able to use the income they earn through their work, perception on their economic situation considering personal income and basic needs, whether they ever did some activities related to spending money for themselves, or had to provide for their families in response to some events. Girls were also asked about future plans for income generation.

Figure Error! Unknown switch argument. **– Girl's economic situation (N = 367)**

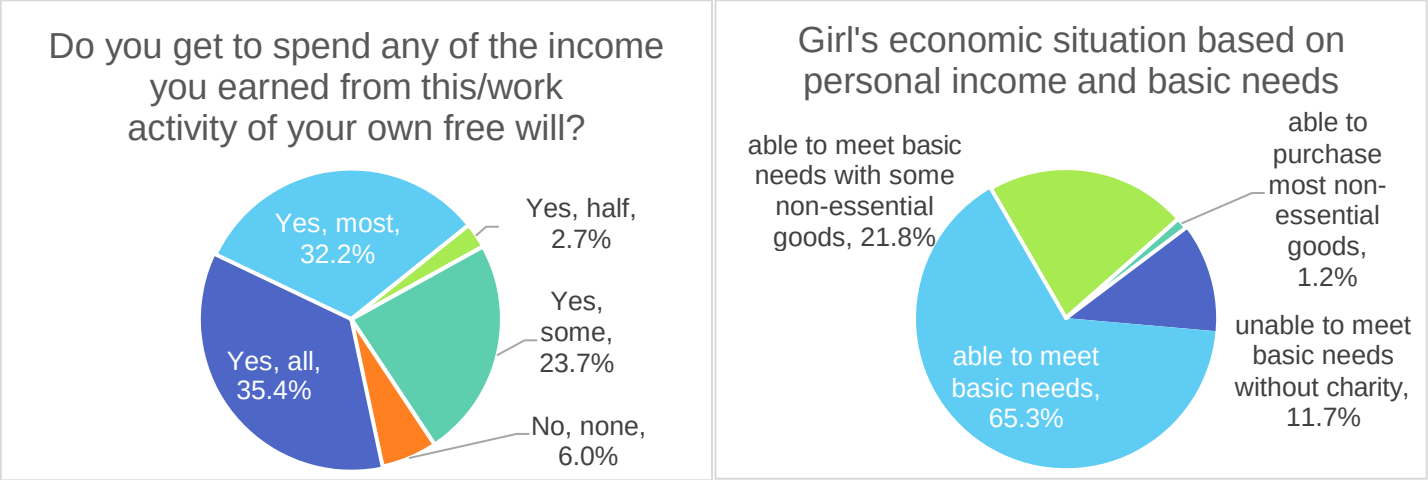


Figure 16 shows that a majority of girls (77.6%) are able to spend all or most of the income earned of their own free will. However, over 30% of girls can only spend some (23.7%) or none (6%). Most of the girls would rate their personal economic situation as 'able to meet basic needs' (65.3%), or, in addition to this, being able to be some non-essential goods (21.8%).

It is relatively common, though not prevalent, among girls to their earned income to contribute to their family expenses (27.5%), whilst a smaller percentage of girls found themselves having to provide for their family in response to an accident or death (9.4%). Only 39.7% of respondents said they ever had some of their own money for them to spend, which suggests that their income earning is not necessarily tied to having the opportunity to decide how it is spent. This could be due to a sense of scarce household resources or to a girl's lack of control over her own finances (See Table 48 in Annex 15).

The qualitative data from both girls and caregivers also suggests that girls have been using their income to support their families, and that this was a motivating factor for supporting girls' education and training. For example, one caregiver in Nkwanta said "***I'm very happy that my daughter is working now. She even supports her younger sister with some money***". Similarly, one girl in Akuapem commented that now she is working she has enough money to support herself and her family members, which she was not able to do previously. While there could be concerns over whether this means the girls do not have full economic empowerment, there were a number of comments that girls being able to support their families have also contributed to a change in family attitudes. For example, one girl in Oti said "***there has been a massive change in how they treat women in this community. It was believed the girls position is the kitchen but with this teaching from STAGE, we contribute to the upkeep in the family so they have seen the importance of a trained woman in our community***".

Girls were asked if they are planning to start an IGA in the next five years, and 43.67% responded affirmatively. Of the 176 girls that responded, most do not plan to start an IGA in agriculture but would like it to be in artisan/crafts/trade professions, or sales and service workers.[69]

[69] Further, when asked what they would like to do in the next five years, responses were almost equally spread between going to vocational training (33%), working and helping in the household (32.5%) and working/finding a job outside home (31.8%). Very few girls stated being interested into formal education, which is unsurprising given their age. Interest in continuing vocational training varied significantly between regional groups: Northern and Oti (Likpakpaaln speaking) girls wanted to obtain more vocational training at much higher rates: 95.8% and 57.5% respectively, whereas fewer than 10% of girls in Eastern, Central, and Akuapim Twi speakers in Oti wanted to obtain more vocational training. This desire for more VST appears unrelated to any particular industry or sector.

Learning – Life Skills

EQ1.b To what extent have STAGE beneficiaries improved learning outcomes? Who, if any, are the outliers (individuals and communities) in terms of learning outcomes identified in different regions, lessons from who may be adopted for scale across Ghana to improve the intervention?

At tracer, the evaluation assessed non-Formal learning results for key[70] life skills: Self-efficacy, gender based violence (GBV) and SRHR by calculating an aggregate girls' Life Index Score based on girls' responses to the life skills questionnaire (Indicator IO3.1). The evaluation also assessed perceptions of caregivers on girls' life skills on all the original life skills areas (environment, money management, water and sanitation hygiene, SRHR confidence and self-esteem) (Indicator IO3.2). Indicators are calculated as a score out of 100.

Table 2 – IO indicators 3.1 and 3.2 Life Skills

Number of marginalised girls supported by GEC with improved life skills (non-Formal track)	3.1 Life skills index score	Same sampling as HH Survey	EE	66.6	65.0	74.6
	3.2 Extent that caregivers perceive positive changes in girls' life skills			77.3	N/A	91.2

The Life Skills Index score improved by 8 percentage points since baseline, from 66.6 to 74.6 at tracer (significant at 90% confidence level, but not 95%). Life skills subcategory scores all increased over baseline scores. Nearly all average scores all increased meaningfully, and exceeded the targets recommended at baseline. The Caregiver's Assessment increased statistically significantly since baseline.

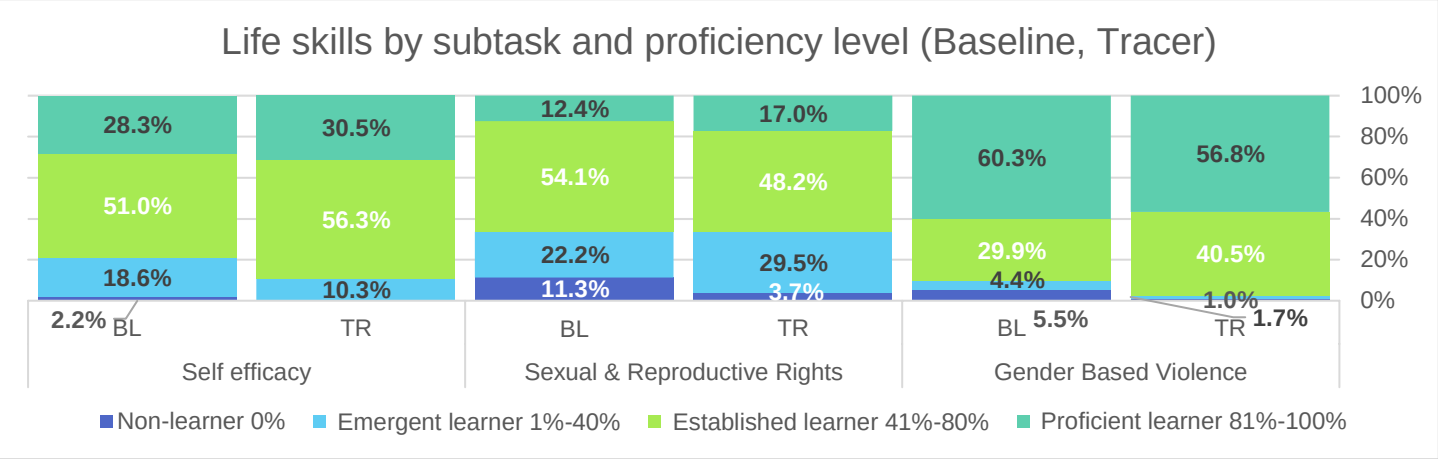
Table 17 – Life skills results, baseline and tracer

Categories	BL	TR	Change
Overall	66.6	74.6	+8.0
Self-Efficacy	62.4	70.9	+8.5
GBV	77.4	79.7	+2.3
SRHR	49.3	57.7'+8.4	
Caregiver's Assessment	77.3	91.2	
Sources: Girls' Survey	639	399	

[70] As part of streamlining the evaluation and given focus on transition for non-Formal, we have analysed findings from previous evaluation point, examining variation/interesting results, ceiling effects, redundancy, burden on respondent (over 50 questions for Money management). Only few sections retained, the most useful/with high variability among subgroups. SRR, GBV, self-efficacy. It was not possible to cut questions from sections, as the index would not be comparable anymore.

The section of the life skills result showing lowest improvement since baseline is the section on GBV. However, this may be the result of ceiling effects: 57.9% scored 12 or more out of 14 points on the section. Concerning, the SRHR section scores remained low: only 37.8 percent of respondents said that they knew what contraception was, even if other synonymous terms were used. Only one out of five girls could name two or more effective types of contraception or family planning methods.[71]

Figure 14 - Life skills by subtask and proficiency level, baseline and tracer



Girls' knowledge of sexual and reproductive health has improved since baseline, but some knowledge gaps remain. It should be noted that the SRHR section was constructed from LNGB standardized questions, and not STAGE materials, which did not focus heavily on the topic. Just under one third of girls (33.2%) scored 40% or lower on the SRHR section, qualifying them as Non-learners or Emergent learners. Figure 14 above shows that whilst the percentage of girls in lower proficiency bands decreased in all three subtasks (especially in SRHR), changes from Established learners (between 41 and 80% of right responses) to Proficient learners (81%+ of right responses) were less marked. Some questions related to sexual and reproductive health showed more progress than others: at baseline, 74.2% could identify a place to obtain family planning services; at tracer, it increased to 99.4%; at baseline, 23.6% believed you could contract HIV by touching someone with it at tracer, 3.0% did: at baseline, 40% of girls weren't sure or active believed you could get pregnant from kissing: at tracer, 20% didn't know or actively believed you could. This suggests some meaningful progress on the topic.

Caregivers' perceptions of changes in girls' life skills improved by 13.9 percentage points (significant at 95% CI), going from 77.3 to 91.2 (Table 19).

Table 18 – Indicators 3.1 Life Skills Index score by subtask, and 3.2 Caregiver's assessment score, tracer

	Life Skills Index				Caregiver's Assessment
	Overall	Self-efficacy	GBV	SRH	
Overall	74.6%	70.9%	79.7%	57.7%	91.2%
Disability Overall	68.4%	55.3%	76.2%	51.7%	90.2%
Is Mother	77.9%	73.6%	80.8%	66.2%	91.4%
Married	76.6%	67.4%	79.5%	67.8%	91.8%

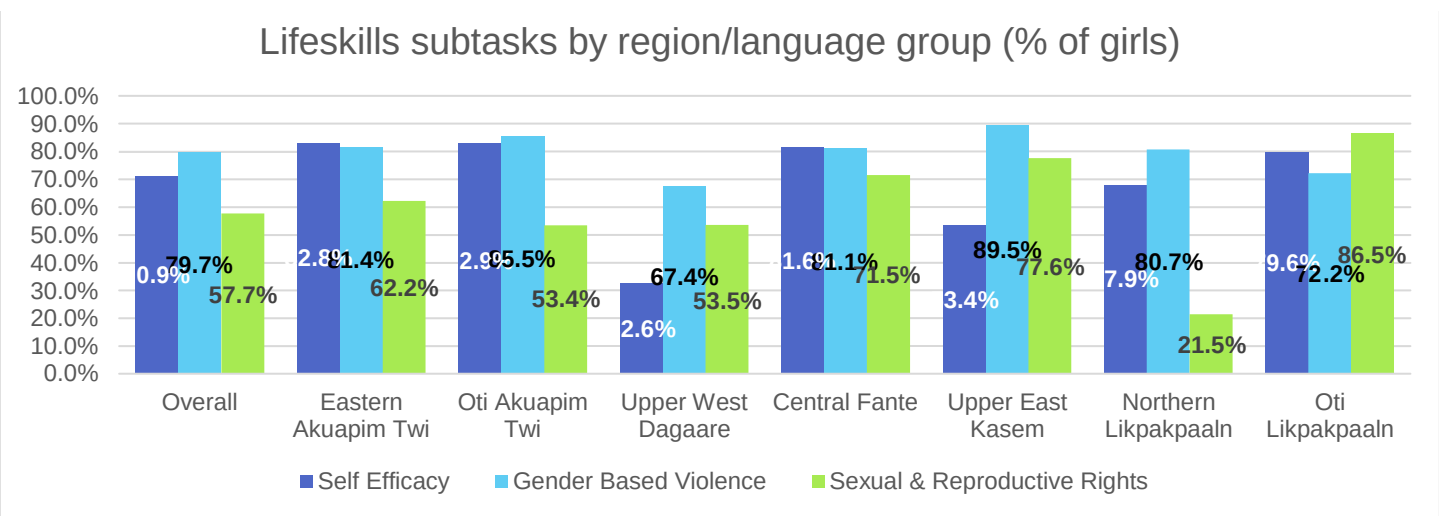
[71] Effective types of contraception include options such as condoms, intrauterine devices, and emergency contraception, but exclude forms unreliable forms such as withdrawal or lactational amenorrhea. Informal terms for these methods were accepted (e.g., foot-sock, ring, etc.).

	Life Skills Index				Caregiver's Assessment
	Overall	Self-efficacy	GBV	SRH	
Household unable to meet basic needs	70.6%	59.6%	81.4%	53.2%	89.3%
High Chore Burden	68.5%	59.5%	77.9%	43.5%	93.3%
Lives with neither parent	76.9%	67.6%	79.1%	69.2%	91.7%
1+ hours to secondary school	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Economic (Chores or Poverty)	68.5%	59.8%	77.5%	44.7%	92.4%
Travel or Work Safety	78.1%	73.5%	71.2%	77.1%	90.8%
Disability-Related	68.0%	56.5%	76.8%	49.9%	88.9%
Social Norms	82.9%	88.0%	87.1%	61.1%	95.2%
VST Safety	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Demographic	77.7%	73.4%	81.0%	65.5%	91.1%
STAGE VST delivery	75.6%	67.9%	74.5%	70.9%	89.2%
Eastern Akuapim Twi	79.8%	82.8%	81.4%	62.2%	92.9%
Oti Akuapim Twi	76.3%	82.9%	85.5%	53.4%	84.1%
Upper West Dagaare	59.6%	32.6%	67.4%	53.5%	85.0%
Central Fante	81.4%	81.6%	81.1%	71.5%	96.4%
Upper East Kasem	79.4%	53.4%	89.5%	77.6%	97.2%
Northern Likpakpaaln	65.1%	67.9%	80.7%	21.5%	91.9%
Oti Likpakpaaln	82.3%	79.6%	72.2%	86.5%	90.9%
Age 17 and under	71.0%	67.7%	79.1%	47.7%	89.9%
Age 18 to 19	76.0%	74.1%	78.9%	61.4%	91.7%
Age 20 and over	76.4%	69.7%	81.6%	63.0%	91.8%
Source: Evaluation Surveys	407				399

Analysis by subgroup reveals that girls with disabilities or facing disability-related barriers scored lower than average on self-efficacy (55.3 and 56.5 vs 70.9 overall). Those facing high chore burden and from poor households had a lower sense of self-efficacy (59.5 and 59.6 vs 70.9) and lower knowledge on SRHR (43.5 and 53.2). Younger girls scored lower on SRHR (47.7 vs 57.7).

Some subgroups scored higher than others. Curiously, those affected by social norms scored higher in life skills, especially in self-efficacy (88 vs 70.9) and GBV (87.1 vs 79.7). This may be related to the fact that two-thirds of those facing social norms barriers are in Central region, where girls scored were higher on average than any other region. Mothers and married girls scored higher on SRHR (66.2 and 67.8 vs 57.7). At baseline similar trends were noted, though better scores of mothers were associated to these being older on average than the rest of the sample, and older girls at baseline had performed better on these topics.

Figure 15 – Life skills subtasks by region/language group (% of girls)



Regionally, Upper West (Dagaare) scored the lowest in Self-Efficacy, GBV, and below average on SRHR. Upper East (Kasem) – where high prevalence of mothers and married girls was found – scored low in Self-Efficacy, but higher than average on GBV and SRH. At baseline, Likpakpaaln speakers in both regions (Oti and Northern) reported the lowers scores on SRHR and GBV. At tracer, Likpakpaaln speakers in Northern's improvement was negligible and they are still scoring the lowest on SRHR (21.5) by far, with the next lowest score 53.1 and average score 58. On the other hand, Oti saw a substantial improvement on SRHR from 30.8 to 86.6.

There is not so much subgroup variation in caregivers' assessments, except that Oti (Akuapim Twi) and Upper West (Dagaare) have lower than average scores (84.1 and 85 vs 91.2 overall).

Findings on usefulness and application of life skills to economic empowerment can be found in EQ4, What works. The overall perception of the life skills training by both caregivers and the girls in the qualitative sample was that it was the most useful aspect of the ALPs/VSTs beyond learning a skill or trade. This was captured by one girl in Eastern who said, "***I leant so many things, but what remains most useful to me was the training in the life skills***". Among the girls, the three main areas where girls found life skills most useful were in financial management, improved self-confidence, and increased knowledge of their bodies and the environment. Among the caregivers, many noted their girls have an increase in confidence or more awareness of gendered issues, for example one caregiver in Oti commented "***now she is very confident and can share her views on things which she has ideas or her displeasure on issues when it arises***". However, it was also evident that among the caregivers in all regions, one of the key aspects of the life skills that they viewed as most important were home management skills. For example, one caregiver in Oti mentioned, "***she is now a good baker and now she manages the house very well. She is very decent now***". The qualitative data suggests that caregivers and girls both associated the improvements in life skills more directly to the application in their business and trade, and less directly linked to issues of GBV or SRHR.

4.2 EQ2. How successfully did STAGE reduce barriers to full participation in formal education or vocational education for highly marginalised girls?

At baseline, the intersection between subgroups and barriers had showed that the subgroups most at risk of not achieving positive transition outcomes were married and girls with high chore burden, these subgroups being affected by social norms and travel barriers, as well as disability-related (for married girls particularly), and economic and demographic (for girls with high chore burden). Girls with high chore burden had also largely never been to school (86.6%* vs 53.4% for the overall sample). It had been recommended to target specifically girls living in remote areas, married girls, their husbands/husbands' families, and girls' caregivers in the work around changing social norms, given the prevalence of these barriers among these sub-groups and the potential challenge represented by girls' needs to prioritise housework over other activities or family (including unpaid) work. Given the prevalence of economic barriers, and the labour market context, the baseline evaluation had also recommended to i) ensure adequate support (including material) to transition to decent and fair employment, or sustainable self-employment, beyond the development of skills through the ALP and VST; and ii) monitor the availability of income generation and employment opportunities, and linking girls to existing opportunities, as a key assumption to the ToC.

Overall, STAGE implemented a range of interventions and activities intended to reduce barriers to non-formal education and transition across subgroups acting on multiple fronts. First, by making the learning environment more inclusive and conducive to learning in ALPs and VSTs, both physically, in terms of adequacy of STAGE learning centres; and from a pedagogical/psychological point of view, by encouraging the use of inclusive pedagogy by facilitators and MCPs, and flexible approaches to delivery to cater to the girls' needs (Intermediate Outcome 1 – Attendance, and 2 – Quality of Teaching). Second, by supporting the process of transitioning to employment/self-employment (Outcome 2), through provision of material/financial support, as well as in terms of counselling, mentoring and advice. Third, STAGE acted at the district, community and family levels, in an attempt to influence the socio-cultural norms, perceptions and attitudes that perpetuate gender inequality and social exclusion and negatively impact on girls' education and economic empowerment (Intermediate Outcome 4 – Increased community and district support for inclusive girls' education).

STAGE contribution to reducing barriers to non-Formal education and transition to employment/self-employment education can be examined from a double perspective: i) STAGE's efforts to foster attendance during the ALPs and VSTs, and ensure girls develop the skills to help them transition; and ii) support to transition. These are both presented below, whilst also referencing results for Intermediate Outcome 1 and 4 (see EQ4 for findings for Intermediate Outcome 2 on STAGE training model).

STAGE contribution to reducing barriers to girls' non-Formal education and transition

Attendance to ALPs and VST

Findings on ALP and VST attendance and on VST skill areas are detailed in Annex 16. They include findings on STAGE flexible ALP and VST delivery approach and the provision of a free-of-cost, six-month long VST for non-Formal track girls. Both factors were found by the EE to have contributed to high attendance and completion rates among girls, ultimately facilitating transition. Pregnant girls and mothers were one subgroup which found attendance more challenging, as highlighted by some facilitators and DSPs interviewed. Thus, while provisions such as afternoon classes were a help, those with additional care responsibilties still struggled to attened or fully partcipate, denoting that demographic factors i.e. having care responsibilities, or the lack of additional support for girls while attending the ALPs/VSTs was a barrier to attendance for some girls.

Support to transition

Figure 16 - Plans for after VST (% of girls who attended VST, N = 395)

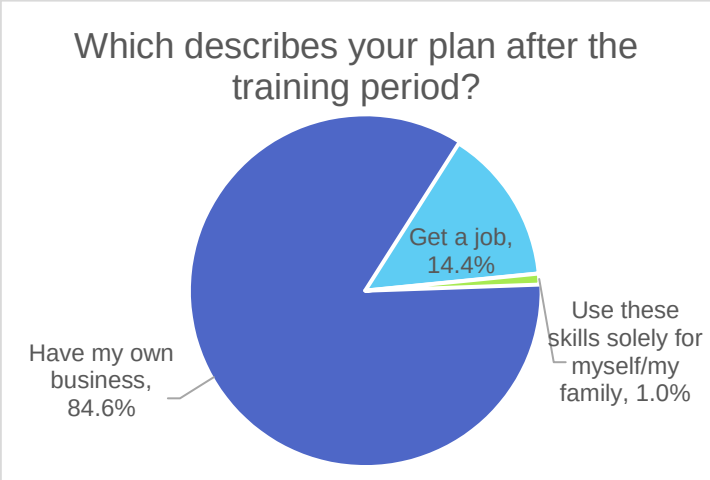
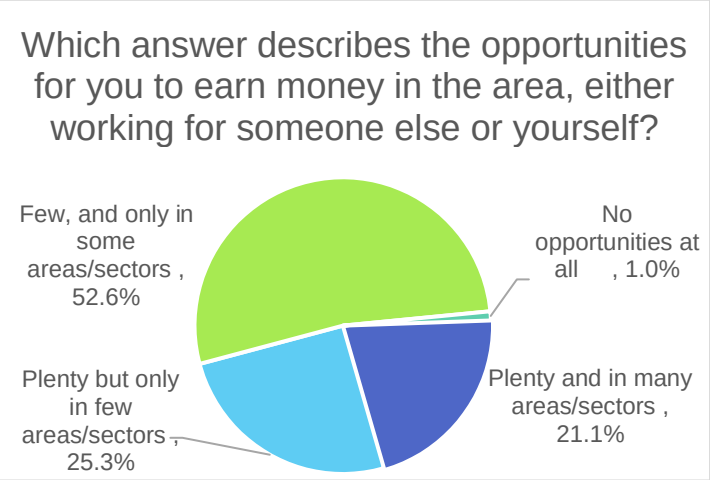


Figure 17 - Labour market situation (% of girls, N = 403)



In terms of aspirations for after attending the VST, almost 85% of the girls aspired to have their own business, and only 14.4% to have a job working for someone else (Figure 16). Asked on the availability of labour market opportunities in their area (Figure 17), a majority of girls (52.6%) perceive there are few opportunities and only in some areas/sectors. Positively, a substantial percentage of girls also think that there are plenty opportunities, however, only 21.1% think these are in several area/sectors. Findings from the KIIs reveal that in most regions, the girls felt their job was secure because there was a good market for their products. As mentioned, the presence of job opportunities is one of the key assumptions to successful transition for non-Formal track girls. Thus, whilst the large majority of girls have transitioned (84% to decent employment/self-employment), overall, survey responses seem to confirm the perception of a labour market with a limited variety of work options. And, where there is market saturation, this might affect girls' business profitability or pay/income. Findings on the industry of work (EQ1) revealed that in effect most girls work either in agriculture and related sectors, or sales and services, or crafts, with mixed reports on profitability and pay/income. Whilst reports are mostly on the positive side, there are substantial shares of girls that reported being

Figure 19 - Change in working conditions as a result of STAGE (% of girls, N = 403)

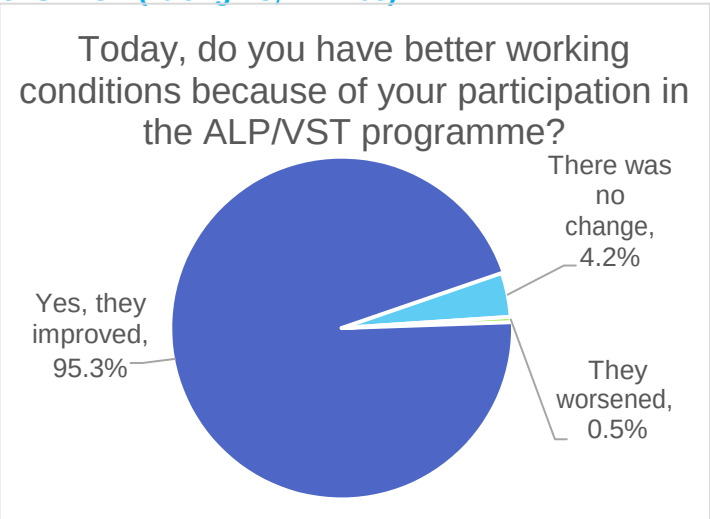
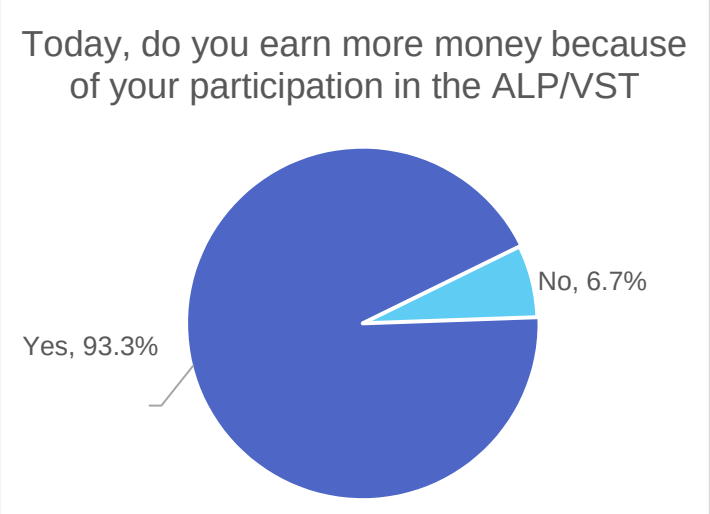


Figure 18 - Change in income levels as a result of STAGE (% of girls, N = 403)

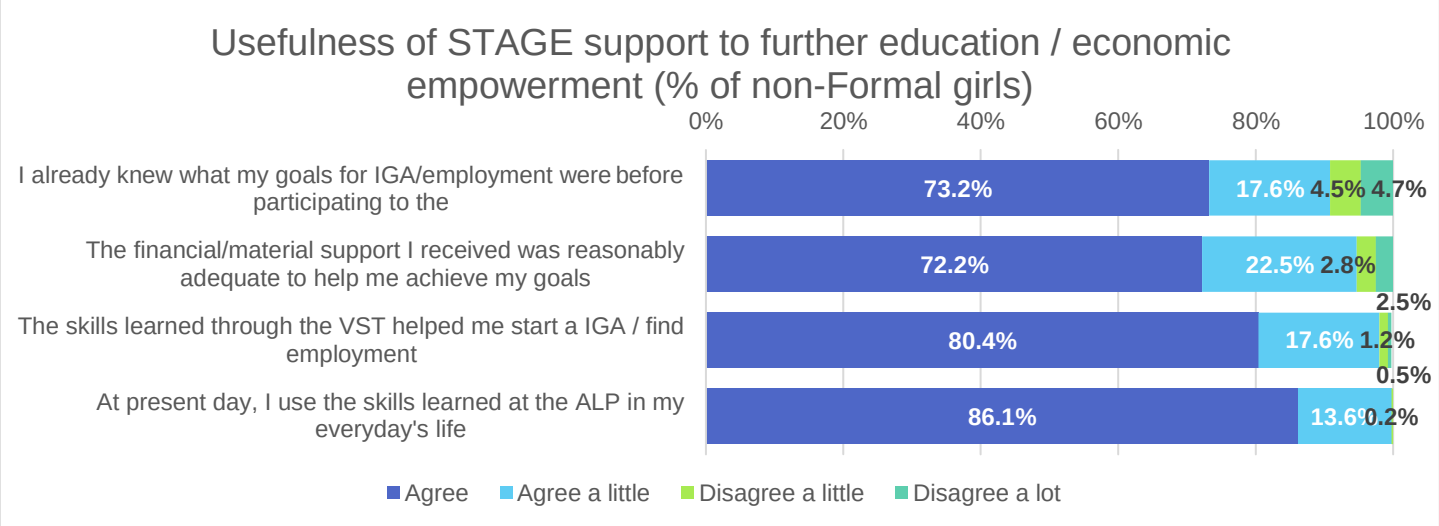


paid ‘somewhat fairly’ (as opposed to ‘very’), or that their businesses are able to cover costs ‘most of the times’ or ‘sometimes’ (as opposed to ‘always’).

Nevertheless, evaluation findings clearly point to an improvement across the board for girls’ situation because of participating to the ALP/VST: over 95% of girls stated having improved working conditions, and over 93% of girls reported having more money as a result of STAGE. This is also in line with qualitative findings (reported under EQ1, Transition). Overall, 86% of girls considered that after the VST they obtained work using the skills acquired at the training, even though a lower percentage reported currently working in the area in which they obtained skills through the VST (75.7%). As seen under EQ1, half of the girls stated they work in agricultural related sectors, which is not a vocational area covered by non-Formal track cohort 2; and only 4.3% have a secondary job outside of agriculture. A central assumption of STAGE at baseline was for the Project to be able to link girls to appropriate market opportunities and to make the best use of the grants for IGAs; it is not clear to what extent STAGE was able to link girls to available market opportunities. The Project reported that efforts were made to promote the girls’ work in weaving to people in Southern Ghana and market assessments were conducted to identify appropriate VST areas and work opportunities, though no other information on linking girls to opportunities across sectors emerged from the evaluation evidence.

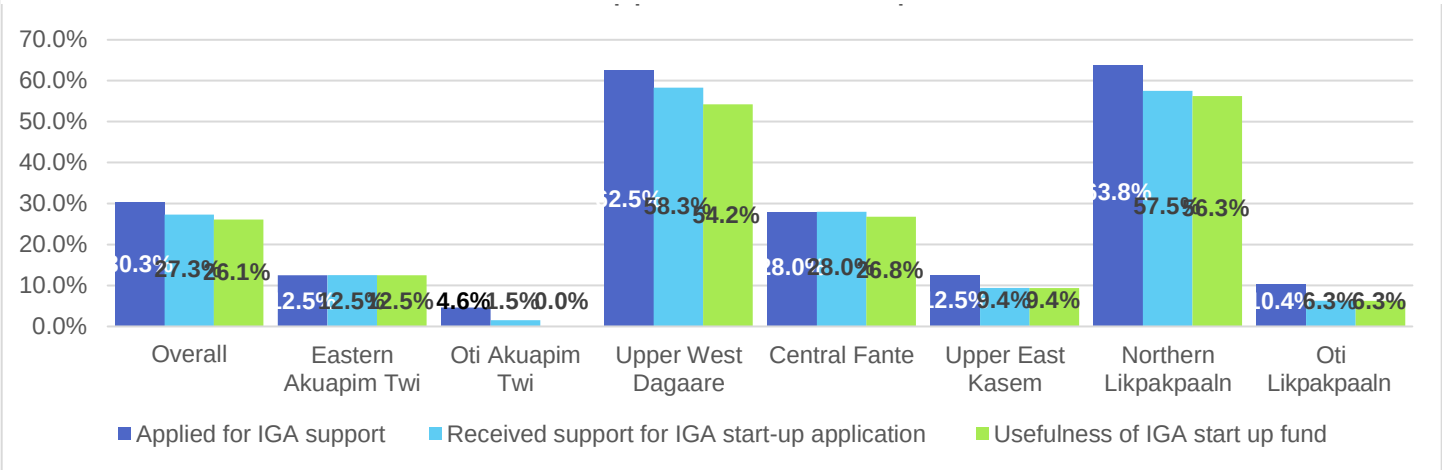
With regards to market assessments, the qualitative data confirmed that in all three locations a market assessment was made to check the viability of the markets, including an updated assessment following COVID-19. In Oti, the DSP said, “***we did a survey and visited market centres to assess the patronage of items after produce and also link them to some institutions for further training***”. Based on the qualitative data that girls, particularly in Eastern and Northern regions found their jobs to be less profitable due to the high costs of production, it could be the case that the market opportunities are available, but girls are not able to access the materials or produce enough on scale to make a profit, and thus work in other sectors. The Project also highlighted distance to central markets in some communities as another potential hinderance to profitability of trading businesses. More research is needed to understand why a majority of girls were not able to fully enter the markets or sectors in which they trained.

Figure 20 – Usefulness of STAGE support to further education/economic empowerment (% of non-Formal girls, N = 403)



Positive results on better working and earning conditions are corroborated by girls’ responses on the usefulness of STAGE support to further education/economic empowerment. When asked specifically about their views on such matters, most girls strongly agreed that the skills and financial/material support received helped them to achieve their goals with regards to IGAs/employment. Also, 86.1% of girls strongly agreed that they use the skills learned at the ALP in their every day’s life. Only around 5% of girls disagreed that the financial/material support received was reasonably adequate to help them achieve their girls (Figure 20 above). Further insights on which activities girls found most helpful are presented under EQ4, what works and EQ5, VfM.

Figure 21 – STAGE support/IGA start up fund



With regards to financial/material support to transition, a large majority of non-Formal track girls stated having received a start-up fund (82.6%), and 89.1% reported having received materials and equipment. The qualitative data suggests that almost all girls in the qualitative sample received either start-up materials or a start-up fund. This material input was seen as one on the main factors that supported in transition from girls, MCPs and DSPs. In Northern (Kpandai), two girls as well as the DSP, DSWO, and MCP all mentioned the start-up fund as being as useful in supporting transition as it helped them to purchase the equipment to start their own businesses. The DSP in Northern specifically said "***it helped them because after graduation we gave those materials and start-up fund to help them start their own business, and some also says they want to further training***". In Eastern (Akuapem South) and Oti (Nkwanta South), the girls mentioned the start-up materials they were given which helped.

However, the qualitative data suggests that financial/economic constraints still remain one of the biggest barriers to employment/income generation and/or pursuing additional training in all three communities. While both girls and caregivers said they have been grateful to receive either the start-up funds or the materials, for some girls and respondents in the qualitative sample these were not enough to sustain the business or make a profit, primarily due to the high cost of materials to start or sustain a business. This issue emerged in all three communities in the qualitative sample, and should be considered in the context of the worsening economic situation in Ghana characterised by high and rapidly accelerating inflation rates.[72] For example, one girl in Northern said, "***the provision of support to purchase equipment was very helpful in starting to operate on my own, even though it was not enough to cover all that I needed***". One local leader in Oti highlighted "***based on the training the girls had, after receiving their set-up capital they started producing and started doing very well. Their products had good market, but now they are faced with high cost of materials for them to keep on producing***". A local leader in Eastern echoed similar views by saying the main challenge to girls transitioning to paid employment or further training is the cost of materials, and that the start-up materials were not enough which has been a challenge for all girls, including marginalised girls and girls with a disability. One girl in Eastern (Akuapem South), highlighted how she will try to use save from her business to be able to continue the training "***the truth is that I don't have anybody to help or support me to further vocational training but now that I can do something for myself, I will save money to further my vocational training***".

These findings were echoed by girls' survey responses on the reasons preventing girls from starting'/maintaining an IGA, though economic factors are not the only ones. The most recurrent reasons mentioned were i) not receiving

[72] Ghana's annual inflation rate quickened for the 18th straight month to 50.3% in November of 2022, up from 40.4% in the prior month. Trading Economics (2022). Ghana inflation rate. Available at: https://tradingeconomics.com/ghana/inflation-cpi. In June 2022, it was around 30%. DW (2022). Ghana's high inflation worsens living conditions. Available at: https://www.dw.com/en/ghanas-high-inflation-worsens-living-conditions/a-62529912

enough support from family/household (29%, see EQ2.b); ii) having to spend funds on something else, such as an emergency (22.7%); iii) not receiving enough start-up funds (20%); and iv) other demands on girls' time and resources (13.3%).

The second most often mentioned for of support in transition was verbal encouragement, which was mentioned by most girls and the DSPs, MCPs and facilitators. The DSP in Eastern noted "***every month we visit them to see how they are doing things and find out their problems, encourage them to have solutions for it***". This also suggests that the DSP in Eastern is also involved in following up on the girls post transition. Some of the girls echoed the importance of verbal support, for example one girl in Northern said, "***the facilitator was also very supportive and encouraged us during the sessions***". As noted in EQ4, girls had very positive views towards the ALPs and VSTs, and generally felt the support from the STAGE stakeholders to be a motivating factor in transitioning.[73]

In conclusion, the evaluation evidence suggests that STAGE support has contributed to reducing financial barriers for girls to attend ALPs and VSTs, and to transitioning/achieving IGA and employment goals, as evidenced by girls' high transition and attendance rates. This is true also for those subgroups found most at risk at baseline, such as girls with high chore burden and girls that at baseline were engaged in unpaid family work. Girls' views that they are better off because of STAGE ALP/VST both in terms of working condition and earnings were widespread. The very fact that the VST was at no cost was a big contribution to advancing girls' skills and opening up new pathways for IGAs. On the other hand, the qualitative evidence consistently points to the costs of materials being too high once STAGE-provided material supplies have run out. This might indicate a risk for the sustainability of businesses in a worsening economic environment.

STAGE contribution to positively effect social change

EQ2.a To what extent have STAGE interventions at various levels (district, community and school) been able to positively influence the socio-cultural norms, perceptions and attitudes that perpetuate gender inequality and social exclusion?

STAGE work with girls' families, communities and stakeholders such as teachers, leaders, Community Oversight Committees (CoCs), former facilitators and district actors aimed at changing socio-cultural norms, perceptions and attitudes which hinder girls' participation to education. These include, for example, that education is not worth for girls as it is for boys, that some groups (e.g., girls with a disability) should be excluded by education, or gendered roles of girls/women mainly as housewives, helping with family work and household chores. Whilst there are important economic and practical factors as to why many girls are excluded from education – poverty and the need to contribute to family livelihoods, or mothers' duty to care for their children -, it is often because of socio-cultural norms that girls are disproportionately affected by such factors, compared to boys/men. Indeed, midline findings had suggested that STAGE should continue working on ways to reduce barriers particularly on girls' chore burdens.

STAGE work included community mobilisation, primarily through regular community animation sessions, monitoring and home visits to families to sensitise on the importance of girls' education and encourage enrolment into and attendance to school, including for marginalised girls. The following paragraphs delve into STAGE effect on social change is examined in terms of caregivers/families' support, community support, effectiveness of community animation sessions, and changes in awareness of the challenges of marginalised girls in STAGE communities.

Support among caregivers/families

Caregivers and families support for girls' education was measured quantitatively and qualitatively, as well as characterising the support as either 'basic' or 'active', both presented in the following paragraphs.

[73] The evaluation found no evidence in the qualitative or quantitative data for support such as dissemination of useful information such as on farming subsidies available, however STAGE reported they had been working with DSPs on this. On travel barriers, whilst there were only a couple of instances of difficulties to go to work (distance to markets) mentioned in the qualitative data, though there was no information from the evaluation on STAGE support to reducing these barriers.

Table 19 – IO indicator 4.1 Family support for girls' education, baseline and tracer

IO indicator	Sampling and measuring technique	Who collected the data?	Baseline level	Target for endline	Endline level
4.1 % of caregivers who feel it is equally viable to invest in a girl's education as a boy's education even when funds are limited	Same sampling as Household Survey Question PCG_32g (Strongly agree or agree)	EE	80.3%	EE: 85%	95.7%

STAGE logframe IO indicator 4.1 measures the prevalence of caregivers who feel it is equally viable to invest in a girl's education as a boy's education even when funds are limited (Table 20 above), considered as a basic form of support. Tracer survey data shows a substantial improvement compared to baseline (95.7% vs. 80.3%), well beyond the endline target of 85% of caregivers agreeing with the statement. Most caregivers also responded that they think a girl is just as likely to use her education as a boy (62.7% strongly agreed with the statement, and 30.6% agreed). The qualitative data supports the finding of increased support for girls' work outside of the home. One girl in Northern highlighted "***at first, there was hardly any encouragement for girls to be educated here in our community. Girls were only considered for marriage and farm work. But now it is common to hear the elders and community members saying that 'nowadays girls can also get income for the family and not only men can do it***". However, as noted in EQ1, this support could be linked to the contribution of the girls to the household income, and not their own income generation.

Figure 22 - Caregiver's support to girl's education by marginalisation subgroup (% of caregivers)

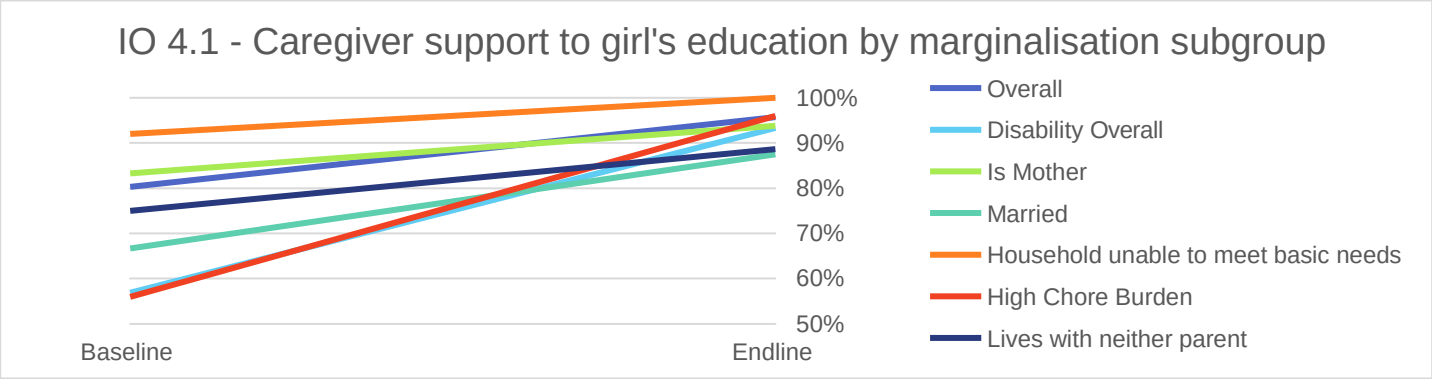
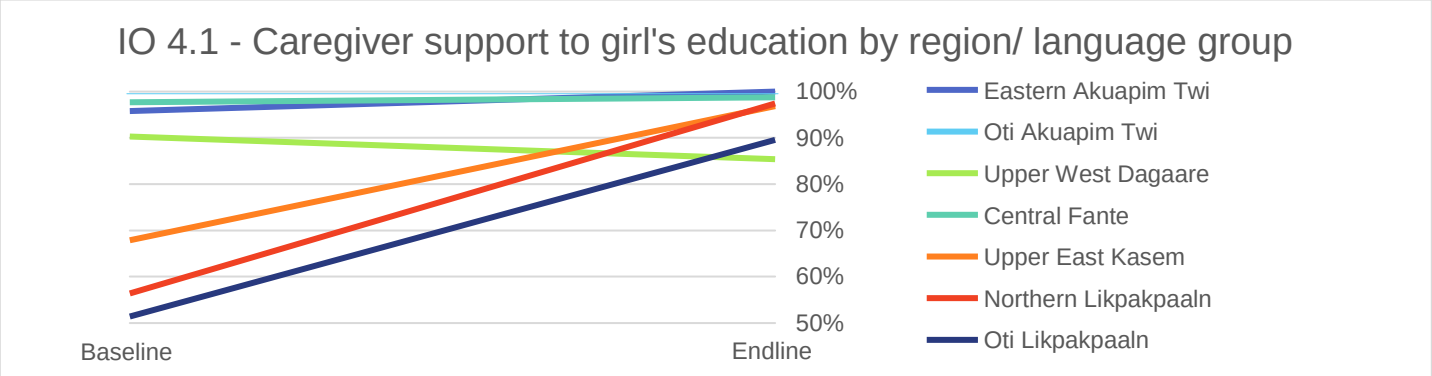


Figure 23 - Caregiver's support to girl's education by region/language (% of caregivers)



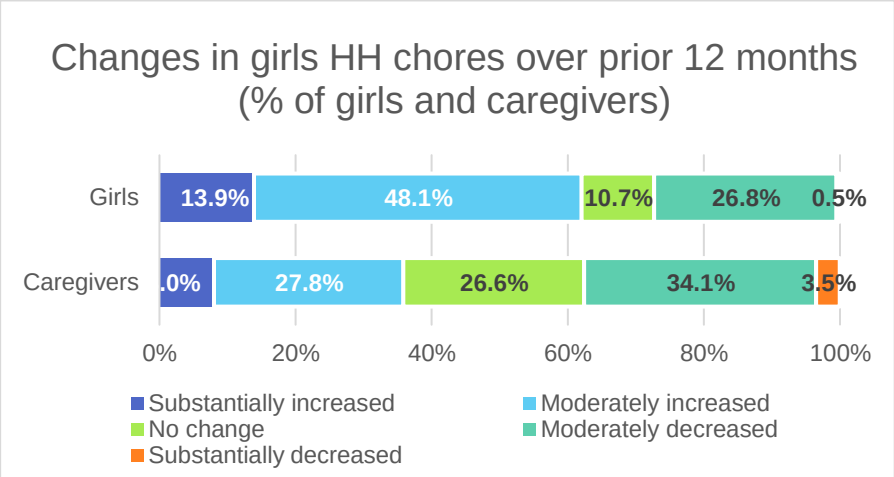
An improvement in this indicator since baseline is noted across all marginalisation subgroups where data is available (Figure 22). The increase in support is more pronounced for caregivers of girls with high chore burden (from 56% to 96%), and of girls with a disability (56.9% to 93.3%), which started from the lowest levels at baseline. However, caregivers of married girls and girls living with neither parent were less likely to agree with this statement

than the overall average. Regionally, an improvement in the indicator IO 4.1 is recorded everywhere except for Upper West (Dagaare), where the percentage of caregivers feeling it is equally viable to invest in a girls' education as a boy went from 90.3% at baseline to 85.4% at tracer. To note, Upper West is the region/language group with the lowest transition rate (66.7% vs 84.4% overall).

These results support what found by STAGE monitoring and a recent NFT internal rapid assessment, which found a convergence of views among girls, caregivers, teachers and school leaders with regards to support for girls' education/economic empowerment; and caregivers' commitment to investing in both girls' and boys' education. Indeed, girls across all three regions highlighted how since STAGE there has been a change in attitudes to the role of women in the home and in the community, and this has largely been attributed to the community training sessions. One girl in Oti highlighted this by saying "***there has been a massive change in how they treat women in this community. It was believed the girls position is the kitchen but with this teaching from STAGE, we contribute to the upkeep in the family so they have seen the importance of a trained woman in our community***". One girl in Northern also said now her parents speak positively about girls going to school, and feels that if the programme had existed sooner, her parents would have supported her through formal school. On girls facing demographic barriers, the qualitative data suggests there has been some change, however some challenges remain. Only one of the girls (in Northern) mentioned having a husband when talking about family support: ***"my husband has also been very supportive of the work and encourages me to continue working hard***". Despite some other girls mentioned being married, there were not similar mentions of supportive partners. There is an indication that across the regions, perceptions of girls' roles are changing. However, there were few to no examples of actions that were being taken to support girls' education or employment beyond verbal encouragement, as evidenced also by the results below on household chores.

The increased vocal family support for girls' education was not matched by a corresponding decrease in household chores for girls as reported by themselves (Figure 24). When asked whether the level of chores for girls changed over the 12 months prior to the survey, over 60% of girls said it had substantially increased (13.9%) or moderately increased (48.1%). Whilst, for caregivers the perception is different to girls, with a majority stating chore levels for girls either did not change (26.6%) or moderately decreased (34.1%). It should be noted that for 29% of caregivers there was an overall increase of chores in the household, for 28.3% there was no change, and for 42.6% there was a decrease over the previous year. Overall, all these findings suggest there has not been an improvement, rather no change, or a worsening, in the level of chores girls are responsible for. The qualitative data suggests that household chores remained a barrier to girls attending ALPs and VSTs through the STAGE programme. From the qualitative sample, five girls mentioned that their household chores have increased, echoed by one local leader in Oti. In the Northern and Oti regions, the girls were still needing to balance household chores or farm work with VST/ALPs, which was illustrated by the DSP in Oti: ***"the problem faced was some of the parents find it difficult to accept to the conditions because most of the areas are farming communities and needed the girls to support the home. They wanted them to spend much of their time on the farm***"; and the ALP facilitator confirmed there were challenges in the farming communities because the girls aged 17-18 had been farmers before the programme, which meant many often went to the farm before class as well as doing household chores which made them late. One girl in Northern also highlighted that despite her siblings being in school, she still had household chores "***I do house chores since all my elder brothers and sisters are in school, all the responsibilities in the house is under my***

Figure 24 - Changes in girls household chores over previous 12 months (% of girls, N = 403, and caregivers, N = 399).



care". In addition, across the three regions, caregivers mentioned that some of the most useful skills girls were learning in the ALPs were contributing to the home. For example, one caregiver in Eastern noted "***there has been a change, because all the girls have become more useful in home management***". This suggests that in some cases, girls may be engaged in more work in the house than they were previously and potential unintended effects of the training and life skills learning.

Changes in the distribution of chores seem to have affected some groups much more than others. Increases in chores higher than average are noted for girls with high chore burden (for 34.4% they substantially increased, and for 51.2% they moderately increased) – through positive transition results for this subgroup are noted (EQ1); girls from poor households (for 26.8% they substantially increased, and for 53.7%, chores moderately increased); and girls with a disability (for 26.7% substantial increase, and 46.7% moderate increase).

The qualitative data was consistent across communities and showed that the majority of caregivers of girls who took part in the ALPs/VST programme are now supportive of their own girls, though gendered differences on the roles of boys and girls remain including on household chores. Changed attitudes were confirmed by most girls and other respondents such as community leaders, however these were usually associated with girls having more money and being able to contribute more to the family.[74]

In Akuapem and Nkwanta, there were some examples of girls and caregivers suggesting that girls now have more respect within the family and family dynamics have changed, also as a result of their contributions to household income through work. For example, in Akuapem, two girls spoke about changes in how she is treated in the family, one girl said her family now respects her point of view by asking ""***what do you think about this* or that?**" **which didn't use to be like that**". There were examples that changed dynamics can turn into outright reliance on the girl for income: in Nkwanta, one caregiver said, "***I am happy because she is not depending on the family and now the family depends on her***". Here, one local leader also said that the expectation of parents was for girls to engage in income generating activities to support the family as well as the community. This expectation could raise question on whether the girls have become economically empowered if the expectation is still largely around girls being able to provide for the family, however, there is still a shift away from expectations of girls working on the farm or in the home, to engage in IGAs outside of the home. There were also positive views on vocational training and empowerment and their effect on girls in all three locations, and evidence that the STAGE programme did help to change the perspective of families for girls to participate in employment or training.

However, there was one incident in Nkwanta that suggested that some families were still not giving girls respect or freedom, when the MCP said, "***there was an incident at Brewaniase when one of the girl's husbands angrily came in to question why I am teaching his wife without his consent. The church elders intervened else things would have gone wrong way***".[75]

Ultimately, the evaluation evidence does suggest that caregivers and families are supportive of girls vocational training and employment, and there have been changes as a result of the STAGE programme. What is unclear is if the changes seen are because families would like the girls to contribute financially to the family, or if they feel that it is

[74] In all three communities, there were mentions of caregivers having the same support for girls and boys, especially in in Akuapem (Eastern) (all four girls and all three caregivers). However, all three caregivers did relate this to the 'usefulness' of girls in the home. In Kpandai (Northern), one girl mentioned that girls and boys are now treated the same, but also mentioned that "*I don't see much change in the way boys and girls are treated. Girls do all the house chores*", which may suggest that there are still different expectations for girls and boys. In Kpandai, all three caregivers said they now have the same expectations for girls and boys. In Nkawanta (Oti), one girl said that parents now treat girls and boys the same, and caregivers also talked about equal treatment. In Nkwanta, one caregiver also recognised there had been gendered differences in the ways girls and boys had been treated, saying "*girls have more challenges than boys since they grew up to take care of the house*", however there was not much mention in whether this will be changing going forward. In Eastern a girl highlighted "*expectations are different now as through education girls are now doing as well as boys and responsibilities are shared*". This is no indication of how these chores are split though.

[75] Concerning, there were also some instances of child protection incidents in the qualitative data, with issues ranging from physical to verbal abuse, between husbands and wives or within the families, rather than in schools or ALP/VST centres. In each location, there were instances where other forms of abuse were mentioned. Whilst all of this was reported and dealt with (through the elderly in the community intervening, or the DSPs), it is indicative of GBV at home still being a concerning reality for some of the girls.

because girls have the right to the same opportunities as boys. Further, examples of active support for girls' education and economic empowerment (such as reducing chore burden for girls so to free some of their time up or mobilising funds) were not widespread (see EQ3, Community for further details). There might be other contributing factors to take into consideration, such as the family or community financial situation that may prevent actions being taken to support these activities. This, considered together with the fact that household chores seem to have increased for girls, is a reminder of how gendered roles in households are deeply rooted and complex to change, especially in situations of widespread poverty.

Community support

STAGE work with communities was two-folded. First, it aimed at changing social norms around girls' education and economic empowerment at a general community level, so that: girls would feel supported in developing their skills/attain economic empowerment; and stigma around continuous education and economic empowerment for affecting marginalised subgroups would be reduced (girls with a disability, mothers, married girls among others). Activities included community animation sessions as an avenue to conduct sensitisation on the importance of inclusive girls' education (see subsection below). Second, the project engaged with religious and traditional leaders to leverage the respect/trust they enjoy in their respective communities and encourage them to actively mobilise girls' families in support of their education.[76] As such, assessment of community leaders' involvement in supporting girls' education looked at both speaking up about it in communities, as well as actively mobilising households for this cause.

Table 20 - IO indicator 4.2 Community support to girls' education, baseline and tracer

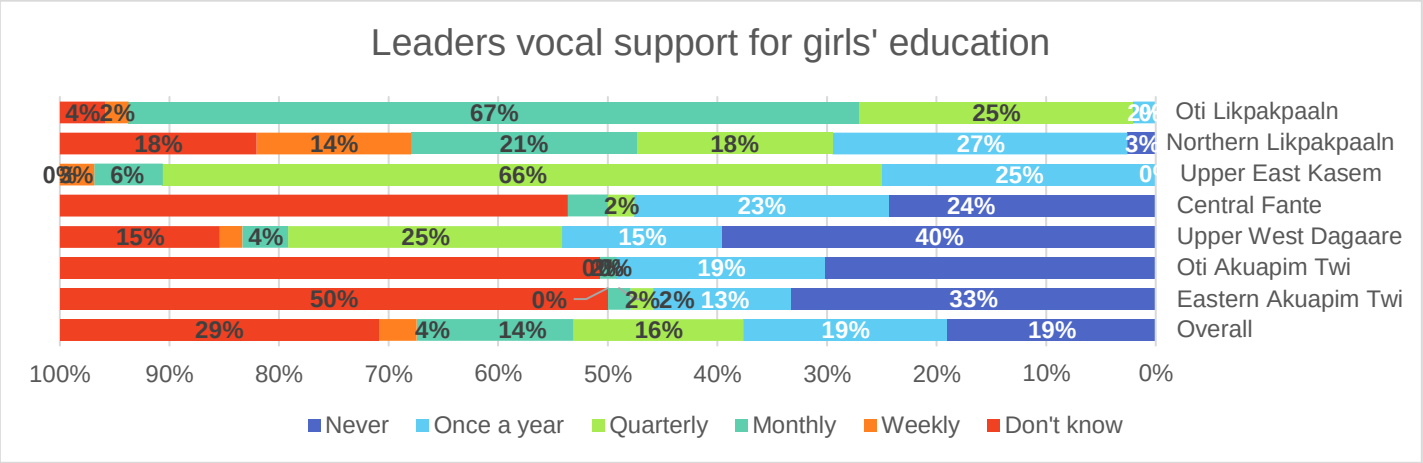
IO indicator	Sampling and measuring technique used	Who collected the data?	Baseline level	Target for end of Project	Tracer level
4.2 Extent that religious and traditional leaders actively mobilise households to support excluded girls into education.	Same sampling as Household Survey Question PCG_34g2[77]	EE	10.9%	20%	33%

Caregivers were asked several questions on the type and frequency of support shown by community leaders (Table 51 in Annex 15). Asked whether leaders have spoken out in favour of girls' education, a much higher share of caregivers responded affirmatively at tracer than at baseline: 49.9% vs 19.2%, a change of over 30 percentage points. By region, Upper East (Kasem) and Northern (Likpakpaaln) had by far the highest prevalence of affirmative responses to leaders speaking out (96.9% and 84.6%), whilst Upper West and Oti (Akuapim Twi) the highest prevalence of negative responses (47.9% and 39.7%). Leaders are also said to speak in favour of girls' education and economic empowerment more frequently: about a third of leaders speak at least quarterly, from 11% only at baseline. Over 40% of caregivers said leaders also spoke as well as took action in support of women earning their own money. Of the 45 survey open responses, several caregivers stated that leaders support girls' education by talking/advising/counselling/encouraging them and educating parents; very few mentioned material support provided by leaders (financial support in one case, and help building classrooms for students in two); and few specifically mentioned home visits and routine monitoring/check-ups. On the other hand, there were no reports from caregivers in the qualitative data from the communities sampled that local leaders have been supportive or vocal in promoting girls' education or economic empowerment in the community, and some caregivers mentioned that there is no support for girls' economic empowerment skills development in the community.

[76] This included regular home visits, and ad hoc communications/interventions when a girl would be at risk of reduced attendance to or dropping out of ALPs and VST.

[77] Responses to question: PCG_34g2: How often (have leaders in your community spoken out in support of girls education? Quarterly or more frequently (monthly, weekly).

Figure 25 - Frequency of leaders speaking in favour of girls' education (% of caregivers, N = 397)

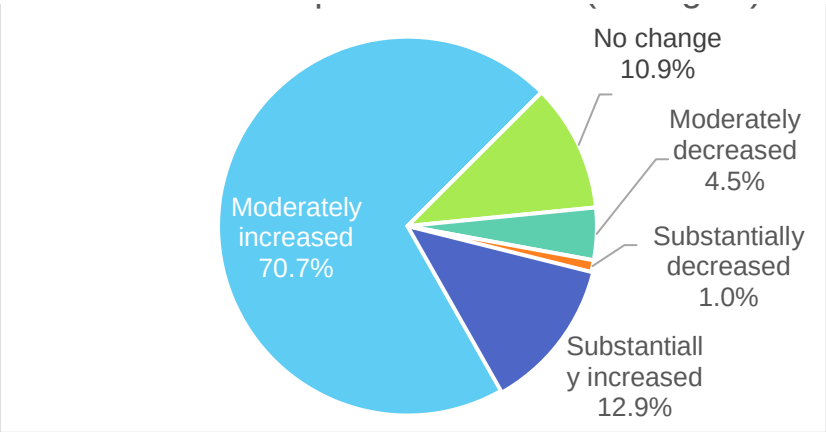


These views are to an extent corroborated by local leaders' views on their support for girls' education and economic empowerment. According to these, there has been an increase in community leaders providing vocal support for girls' education/employment and the STAGE project, as well as some indication of where community leaders have taken action to support girls' education though not widespread. In each region, at least one local leader took an active role in STAGE, for example, in Oti, one local leader said, "***I always visit them when they are in their classes. And also ask them of any problems they are facing***". In general, most local leaders interviewed saw their role as advisors or mentors to the girls (mentioned by the traditional local leader in Oti, one traditional local leader in Northern, and both the traditional and religious leaders in Eastern). As reflected by what the traditional local leader in Northern said: "***the support I have for them is advise as to how to help them go through the vocational training to acquire knowledge in that job which will go a long way to benefit them one day to come"***. In Northern, one local leader said they were involved in the community sensitisation sessions, which worked well in the community. The other said they have been acting as a counsellor and as a member of the Community Oversight Committee (COC).

However, there were some reports from local leaders who felt they did not have an active role to play in STAGE or the promotion of the project. The religious leader in Oti said they have not received any training on support for girl's vocational training or economic empowerment and said, "***my only activity is just to join occasional gathering***". They also said they did not feel as though supporting STAGE fell under their responsibilities as a local leader, however, did say that they will support it to help sustain STAGE and other programmes in the future. One recommendation that this particular local leader gave was "***I and other religious leaders are involved in the programme effectively from scratch***". Which could suggest their less active role is linked to them not feeling fully involved in the STAGE project.

Girls were also asked about their perceptions on community support: the survey found that girls were twice more likely to feel supported by their community at tracer than at baseline (Table 50 in Annex 15). Overall, almost 90% of girls reported feeling very supported (21.6%) or at least a little supported (67.7%), from 8.1% and 38.8% at baseline. These findings are corroborated by girls' perceptions on changes in community support over the 12 months prior to data collection: for a large majority of girls support moderately (70.7%) or substantially (12.9%) increased (Figure 31).

Figure 26 – Changes in perceived community support to education over prior 12 months (% of girls, N = 403)



There is variation in perceptions of community support for education among subgroups. Notably, girls with high chores, from poor households, and affected by economic and travel & work safety related barriers reported higher feelings of being supported (above 90%); girls with a disability also stated feeling supported more often than the overall average (86.7% vs 83.6%), as well as married girls (87.5%). On the other hand, girls affected by social norms-related barriers were much more likely than the overall average and other groups to feel support did not change over the 12-month period (68%), or moderately decreased (16%). Whilst girls affected by demographic barriers were about as likely as the overall sample to feel supported. This points to the fact that being a mother or married does not necessarily equate to experiencing gendered socio-cultural norms, perceptions and attitudes hindering education and/or economic empowerment, though as seen there are practical challenges in attending VST and achieving successful transition for these subgroups especially mothers (see Table 41 in Annex 15 for full disaggregation by subgroups and region/language groups).

The qualitative data also point at examples from the girls of changed perceptions in communities. Girls interviewed highlighted that after seeing STAGE effect on participating girls, others in the community would have wanted to be a part of it. One girl in Northern highlighted "***when we started the vocation training classes, people said we will not go far but we said we only want to be educated up to whatever basic level we can, but after completion and started working others regretted for not being part of it, because we have benefited from it a lot of which they wish to be part as they always ask us concerning our working conditions and equipment***". This suggests two key aspects, the first that girls were confident to remain in the programme, despite initial scepticism from the community. And second, that those in the community became more interested in girls' education and training when they saw the financial or employment results, as opposed to believing in the girl's rights to employment or education.

Quantitative and qualitative findings from caregivers, girls and local leaders point to an increase in support by leaders, both vocal and active, though evidence is more mixed for caregivers. Findings suggest that in each location, at least the traditional local leaders have taken an active role in supporting the girls to achieve transition into employment. The roles of local leaders are mainly directly to encourage them in their participation and transition. There is also some evidence of changed support from the communities in general.

Changes in girls' attitudes and perceptions to education

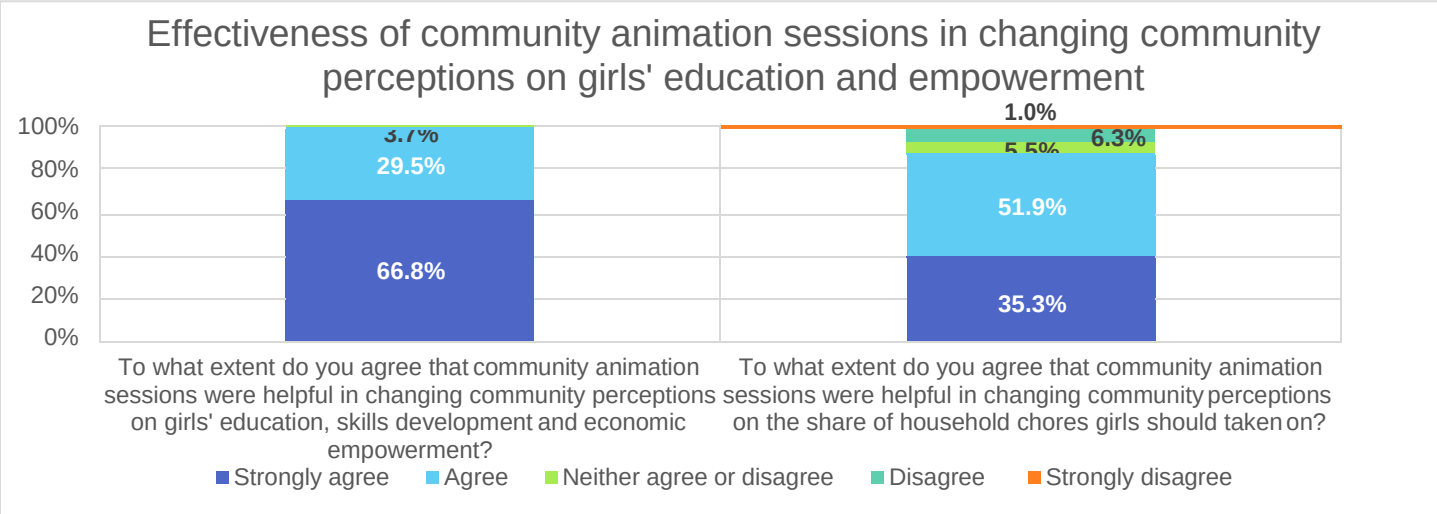
The qualitative data indicates that girls' own attitudes towards education and employment have improved, and they general perceive there to be an increase in family and community support for girls' education and employment. All four girls in each location completed the VST and ALPs, and all three caregivers in each location confirmed their girl completed the STAGE programme. While this is evidence that the girls saw the benefits of remaining in the programme, some girls also spoke about how their views have changed. This was seen in the Northern region, where two girls expressed a growing interest in girls wanting to attend school, one said "***now I see that many girls who at first wouldn't go to school are keen to go to school. I think it is because of this programme***". Overall, across all three locations, girls were very happy with the training they received, and saw it as a positive step to their goals. There is evidence that the life skills, motivation from facilitators or MCP, and the support from STAGE were the driving force behind girls believing in the programme to be able to see the results for themselves, and thus helped them to have a positive outlook on their own training and future employment (see EQ4, What works). None of the girls who participated and were sampled for the qualitative data collection indicated any negative perceptions of girls' education or employment.

Community animation sessions

EQ2.a.1 What role did community animation sessions and engagements have in promoting GESI at the community and district levels?

As mentioned, community animation and sensitisation sessions were one of key STAGE activities implemented intended to raise awareness on the importance of inclusive girls' education, issues of gender equality, safeguarding and GBV, and equality between girls and boys in class. Quantitative and qualitative findings point to the effectiveness of this activity in increasing support for girls' education from families and communities, and knowledge of the challenges marginalised girls face. STAGE community animation sessions were familiar to 61.2% of caregivers. Out of these, 91.8% participated to them.

Figure 27 – Effectiveness of community animation sessions in changing community perceptions on girls' education and empowerment



Caregivers were also asked to what extent they thought that community animation sessions were helpful in effecting social change in the community (Figure 32). The almost totality of caregivers (96.3%) strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that community animation sessions were helpful in changing community perceptions on girls' education, skills development and economic empowerment, with two thirds (66.8%) strongly agreeing with it. No caregiver disagreed. To a lesser extent, there is also widespread agreement on the helpfulness of this STAGE activity in changing views around girls' household chores (87.2%), though a small percentage did state there had been no change or a negative change. This finding should be considered together with the contrasting views of caregivers and girls on changes in the share of household chores over the last 12 months, with caregivers thinking that overall, they had moderately decreased or had been left unchanged, as opposed to girls.

Qualitative evidence corroborates survey findings and suggests that community animation sessions were a commonly mentioned activity that contributed to the community supporting girls' attendance, changing their perception to girls' vocational training, and to some extent the transition. The community animation sessions seemed to have played two key roles: i) changing overall perceptions of girls' education within the community, and ii) changing behaviours towards girls more broadly in the community.

On the first point, there is data from each region that the community animation sessions did play a role in promoting GESI at a household level. In Oti, one caregiver highlighted how "***the activities have changed my perception on girl's vocational education and economic empowerment because it has brought life to them***", which suggests that the animation sessions worked in illustrating what the programme was doing, as opposed to seeing the impact through their girls. Another caregiver, despite saying the sessions were useful said, ***"it does not challenge the***

***perception on girls' vocational education*"**. In Eastern, two caregivers also said the animation sessions were helping in highlighting the results of the STAGE project.

Second, there were various examples of community animation sessions changing behaviours on GESI by members of the community in all regions, though mostly from the Northern region. Here, one local leader highlighted that as a result of the sessions, one husband now travels with his wife to help buy the materials in case it is not safe for her to travel alone. One girl in Northern also said that the girls in the community now have more freedom or flexibility as a result of these sessions, "***sometimes I was exempted from farm work to allow me attend the classes and I think it was the same for some of my friends as well***".

The way community animation was effective in promoting social change is by bringing in all community leaders and other key community members, and ultimately using this as a leverage to reach out to the whole community. For example, in Eastern region, the facilitator said, "***the community and the leaders were all involved in the decision taking and educating the community and this made animation sessions a success***". Similarly, in Eastern, one local leader said they were involved in the community sensitisation session said this was effective because "***I am educationist so was much involved in the sensitisation session as a result went down well with all the people"***. Local leaders were also able to bring in the Church to host the sessions in the Oti region, which helped to facilitate attendance from the community and create a sustainable environment for these to be continued.

There was limited evidence of district level change as a result of community animation sessions. There are some other references of how the community has supported in promoting GESI on a district level. For example, in Oti, the DSP said that "***the churches gave up their platform to any of the actors to educate the community or it they have any announcements to be made. The Church and the chiefs follow up anytime there is ALP class to find out how they are faring and if there are concerns to addressed***".

STAGE contribution to increased knowledge of the challenges faced by marginalised girls

EQ2.b To what extent have the initiatives implemented by the STAGE program contributed to increased knowledge of the challenges marginalised girls face in Ghanaian communities?

The qualitative data suggest that there has been increased awareness and knowledge of the challenges marginalised girls face in the communities in which the STAGE programme was implemented. This can largely be attributed to the Gender Sensitive and Inclusive Training (GSIT) that the facilitators, MCPs and local leader undertook. However, some of the challenges the girls face became evident later on, during the implementation of the programme.

Girls with a disability

The knowledge of challenges faced by girls with a disability were known to the communities, as they had previously not had the same opportunities afforded to them as girls without a disability. No girls in the qualitative sample identified as having a disability, and no caregivers stated their girl has a disability. However, the caregivers in three regions were particularly supportive of girls with a disability to be included in education or vocational training. For example, one caregiver in Eastern said "***disability is not inability, and physically challenged also have the right to education***". In Kpandai, one caregiver said that girls with a disability should be involved in vocational training as it will end their financial problems. In Nkwanta, two caregivers also said that girls with a disability should go to school and do vocational training, with similar reasoning to in Kpandai, one said "***she should be able to go vocational training. They are the people that needs vocational training most***". The project reported behaviour change campaigns were run alongside the community animation sessions on this topic, and while not mentioned by the respondents in the KIIs, could have had an impact on this positive change in support.

In addition to the increase in verbal support for girls with a disability to participate in vocational training, there is also evidence of increased material support for girls with a disability. For example, in Northern, the DSP said, "***we have special support for girls with disability sometime we take them to hospital to check on their condition***". The DSWO in Northern also mentioned that the schools have now been made accessible by wheelchair. There were not

examples of physical structures in place for disabled girls in the other two regions, however all facilitators and MCPs in all three regions said they were including girls with a disability in their classes and there is no discrimination.

Pregnant girls and girls with care responsibilities

Girls with a high chore burden and care responsibilities, especially girls with children was one of the major marginalisation factors that meant the girls who participated in STAGE were previously out of school. As a result of participating in the STAGE programme, this barrier became more apparent to the facilitators, MCP, and DSPs. It was recognised that girls that fell into these categories were often late or less able to participate in class. For example, the DSP in Northern said that pregnant girls face more challenges in the class as they are unable to sit until the end of the ALPs/VST sessions. As a result of these observations, the MCP in Eastern said "***what worked less was the regular lateness is classes and paying less attention when the kids were present. I think the children of the girls should be consider in the near future***". Thus, qualitative findings and lower than average transition findings for mothers would seem to suggest support for teenage mothers in negotiating for caretakers during lessons (mentioned in STAGE Mid Term Review) was not as effective as support for other groups. There were however no mentions of previsions that were made for these girls at present in the project.

Girls with a high chore burden

There were reports in all locations that there was greater recognition of how the high chore burden of the girls was impacting on the ability of girls to attend VST, ALPs or school. One local leader in Northern highlighted this when they said, "***some of their parents' behaviour has been changed as well, previously normally in the evening parents give many responsibilities to their children whilst they in the same house and room, and they will do all household chores. Because of the respect they have for their parents the responsibilities are now reduced to allow them attend vocational training***". In each location girls mentioned their chore burden has reduced as a result of the community awareness or other trainings. Also, it would seem that girls still bear a larger burden in household manager, as also observed by girls themselves and the traditional local leader in Oti. And the survey data point at chores increasing for a number of girls across regions. This suggests that while there is increased awareness of these issues, including among the girls, it has not created behaviour change in all locations.

Safeguarding, GBV, abuse, and early marriage

In the STAGE project, WEI define safeguarding as protecting staff, beneficiaries and members of community from harm perpetrated by STAGE staff and volunteers, and protection as protecting project beneficiaries (direct and indirect) from harm perpetrated by the State and fellow community members which includes GBV cases.

Issues of safeguarding, abuse and early marriage gained greater awareness through the community animation sessions and GSIT. In each location there were reports that there is greater awareness of the mechanisms by which to report abuse, for example in Eastern region there are partnerships which include the police. In Eastern region, one local leader said there are now by-laws to prevent any kind of violence at home and in the community. In Oti, there is evidence of ongoing awareness raising on these issues. The DSWO said, "***there is sometimes education on child abuse and how to report cases of such nature to appropriate quarters in local Radio Stations and education at the local meetings****".* This suggests that there was increased awareness. Girls also noted they learnt more about their rights, including how to stand up for themselves and that they cannot be pressured into marriage.

However as noted there are still some protection issues remaining in the communities at household/family level, though in all locations, these were reported and dealt with. For example, in Eastern, the DSP described two cases where a girl was having her freedoms restricted, but interventions were able to help support the girl. They said,

> "***One of the girls reported to us that the husband intentionally schedules all the house work at the time she wants to attend the class. Upon all explanations, he didn't understand her, so we called the husband and talked to him to make peace at home for the girl to continue her school. Also, another girl brought to us about how the family want to take her child from her and myself,***

together with social welfare resolved the issues for the girl to have peace to continue her training".

This suggests that there is a greater understanding of what safeguarding and protection means, and it is not just protecting the physical welfare of the girls. It also suggests that in some cases, the safeguarding and protection structures in place are supporting the girls to claim their rights.

District support

See findings under EQ3, Sustainability at System level.

4.3 EQ3. How sustainable were the STAGE activities funded by the GEC and was the programme successful in leveraging additional interest, investment, and policy change?

This section assesses to what extent project implementation approaches and interventions have built the capacities of existing structures at school, community and system levels, and created the platform for continuity of activity interventions beyond the project's life. Through monitoring data and research, STAGE found that: "***the primary motivation of Out of School Girls between 15-19 to enrol in the program, is the prospect of economic empowerment and independence***". (STAGE Sustainability Plan, May 2022). To support this, STAGE identified the following interventions/areas as key to strengthening the Apprenticeship Vocational Skills Training Model: i) a collaboration with the National Vocational Training Institute (NVTI) (T-VET) in curriculum development and inclusion of gender sensitive pedagogy; ii) Research on youth employability and learning opportunities in project communities to identify local job or entrepreneurship opportunities and link training content to these, whilst also maintaining a flexible and focused VST approach targeted to the needs of marginalised subgroups (e.g. mothers); and iii) engaging NVTI (T-VET) in its Training Approach to include IGSE in its approach to be applied by MCPs and community support systems, given that the majority of youth in apprenticeship programmes is from marginalised/rural areas.

In addressing this EQ, the EE refers to the STAGE Sustainability Plan, revised sustainability indicators and sustainability scorecard as appropriate.

Table 21 – Sustainability indicators, tracer

	System	Community
Indicator 1:	Extent of district assemblies with functional structures to support inclusive girls' VST and employment Baseline status = 0 Tracer = 2	% % of parents of marginalised girls who support girls' education/employment opportunities Baseline status = 2 Tracer status = 3
Indicator 2:	Extent of TVET institutions with practices that promote girls' vocation skills training in project districts Baseline status = N/A Tracer status = N/A	Extent that key community leaders and power holders support girls' education/employment (see IO indicator 4.2) Baseline status = 0 Tracer status = 2
Indicator 3:	Extent that NFED/MoE adopts the STAGE curriculum for ALPs to support non-Formal education programming in Ghana Baseline status = N/A Endline status = N/A	Extent of communities with functional structures to support inclusive girls' education Baseline status = 1 Endline status = 1

	System	Community
Baseline Sustainability Score (0-4)	0	1
Tracer Sustainability Score (0-4)	2	2
Overall Sustainability Score (0-4, average of the three level scores)	2	

Community level

Indicator 1: % of parents of marginalised girls who support girls' education/employment opportunities

Baseline status = 2
Endline status = 2

As seen in EQ2, whilst vocal support from families for girls' education and empowerment is prevalent, this does not translate automatically into families taking actions in this sense, for example by allowing more flexibility in girl child's household routine to ensure education attendance or time for other commitments. The baseline data found that 67.1% of the sampled caregivers showed key knowledge, understanding, and a basic level of supportive attitude towards girl's education. This had been echoed in the qualitative data as all caregivers interviewed across the three communities wanted their girls to gain education and employment and saw vocational training as a pathway towards secure employment. Further, it had been found that 49.3% are *actively* supporting girl's education.[78] Therefore, a score of 2 had been given as per sustainability scorecard. At tracer, the basic level of support was found among 89.1% of caregivers surveyed, and active support among 56.6% of caregivers. This denotes an improvement in both types of support, though not as large for active, in line also with Project reporting.[79] In reality, results are almost entirely driven by no active support at all (in Upper West) or very low active support (In Northern/Likpakpaaln, 7.9%) detected among caregivers. Active support was particularly low also for girls whose caregivers reported economic-related barriers (9.1%, and no support at all for high chore burden girls), whilst it was higher than average for girls in households with unsupportive social norms. Together with findings on household chores, these results suggest that chore burden maybe a risk for further vocational education and transition for this subgroup, especially in a context of poverty and unsupportive social norms by families and communities. As explained by a local leader in Akuapem: "***the main challenge to transition and the retention of girls into paid employment or further training is lack of family support, community attitudes and support***".

A score of 2 is maintained for this indicator (at least 40% of parents are actively supporting girls' education/employment.

[78] Active support is defined as meeting all of the following conditions: i) key knowledge, understanding, and a basic level of supportive attitude towards girl's education (measured through positive responses to the following survey questions: 1. Do you think [GIRL] has a right to education even though she is not in school?; 2. To what extent do you agree that "even when funds are limited it is worth investing in a girl's education?; 3.To what extent do you agree "a girl is just as likely to use her education as a boy?); ii) Active support: 1. Caregivers did not say any of the following were acceptable reasons for a child not to attend school: child needs to work, child needs to help at home, child is married, child is too old, child unable to learn, education is too costly, child is a mother; 2. When asked, girls stated that chores, work supporting home economic activities, or working in a family business were not a reason keeping her from enrolling in school or a vocational education programme

[79] According to project reporting (STAGE logframe, Q2-Q3 2022), there has been major shifts in the expressed support, among stakeholders, for girls' education, which would be reflected in a reduction in chore burdens and the high attendance of girls at the VST centres and school. There is however more to be done to turn this expression to demonstrated support for girls' education especially under the prevailing economic challenge.

Indicator 2: Extent that key community leaders power holders support girls' education/employment opportunities

Baseline status = 0
Endline status = 2

At baseline, the score for this indicator was 0 because evidence in the EE survey suggested that community leaders showed no/very limited support for the project approach or may even reject it (19.2% were reported speaking in support of girls' education, and 10.9% quarterly). As seen under EQ2, at tracer there were positive changes in terms of both speaking out more frequently in favours of girls' education (33% did so at least quarterly, as stated by caregivers), as well as taking action – primarily encouraging girls to continue vocational training and educating parents on the importance of doing so. As such, a score of 2 is given (Community leaders are showing improved practices/behaviours towards girls' education as per sustainability scorecard) even though in some locations/regions findings on increased active support are clearer than others. As mentioned previously, community animation sessions were an effective tool to bring local leaders into the STAGE process.

Important findings which could point to a sustainability risk in terms of community support is that some caregivers did not consider there is any community-wide support for girls' skills development, and that some leaders do not see girls' education and empowerment support as part of their responsibilities. Limited involvement of leaders by STAGE was also mentioned in few cases.

Indicator 3: Extent of communities with functional structures to support inclusive girls' education[80]

Baseline status = N/A
Endline status = 1

In each location, there was some mention of initiatives in place for girls with a disability, either in terms of direct support in learning or VST, or more broadly. For example, in Northern, the DSP mentioned how here is health support for girls with a disability "***we have special support for girls with disability sometime we take them to hospital to check on their condition***". However, in other locations there was a perception in the community that there are no such services for girls with a disability. For example, in Eastern, one local leader said, "***community is depending on the central government to provide that facility***". Which suggests that more could be done in communicating the needs at the district level to the national government, or that more partnerships need to be created to systematise this support.

In all three locations, the facilitators and MCPs noted that the curriculum was designed to include girls with a disability as well as other marginalised groups. However, there are no mentions of additional support systems or mechanisms being put in place, such as l catch-up classes, trade associations, or service providers for girls with a disability. While those who were directly involved in the STAGE programme such as the DSPs, facilitators and MCP have an increased awareness of the needs of girls with a disability, the DSWO in Eastern highlighted that there is still a general lack of support for girls with a disability in the education system, and that STAGE is doing more for them, "***the central Government need to pay more attention to the plight of marginalised girls and disabled people through education and train them more in vocational training as STAGE has taken such initiatives***". This suggests that there is a positive view of the STAGE programme in being inclusive of girls with a disability, and points to a lack of more structural or collaborative changes to allow better access of parents of girls with a disability to services.

Beyond disability, there were mentions in the qualitative data regarding how girls from other marginalised sub-groups have been supported. For example, in Northern, the facilitator mentioned "***my support was advise to them, and***

[80] In assessing progress against this indicator, the following aspects were considered, as per STAGE Revised Sustainability indicators: *communities with functional structures to support inclusive girls' education (e.g., establishment of a community-based support scheme for girls' education, platforms for knowledge sharing and brainstorming, establishment of catch-up classes, mentoring and coaching support, availability and unrestricted access to services for PWDs etc).*

(DSP) too were also used to support them by providing medical check-ups for those marginalised girls". The respondents, however, did not provide evidence of how this support will be continued beyond the STAGE project completion and thus does not provide evidence of a sustainable support structure. In Northern, one girl mentioned, "***they have formed a union that they used to support the students from poor home***". It is unclear who runs this union, or how they get their funding to support the girls, so it remains unclear how sustainable this initiative is.

There is some evidence in all three locations that efforts are being made to form functional structures to support inclusive girls' education, with these largely focusing on health checks for marginalised girls. However, it is unclear how this support will be sustained after the end of the projects. There was an indication that the communities rely on the central government to be providing this service, but at present, they perceive this to be lacking. Due to the limited evidence on initiatives that have started and the lack of clarity on how those ongoing will be sustained, a score of 1 is given to this indicator.

System level

Indicator 1 – Extent of district assemblies with functional structures to support inclusive girls' VST and employment[81]

Baseline status = 1
Tracer status = 2

This is a revised system level indicator compared to baseline, covering a range of areas which could be indicative of district support including: the establishment of scholarship schemes for VST, mentoring and coaching support, availability and unrestricted access to services for PWDs, functional child protection and safeguarding policies, and the availability of functional Girls Education officers and Social Welfare Officers. At baseline, the qualitative data indicated that Local Authority Members vocally supported education, vocational training and decent employment for girls; however, there was indication that whilst vocally supporting the project, they lacked the capacity and policies/structures to act for girls' VST and employment (a score of 1 as per sustainability scorecard had been given).

At tracer, there were a number of examples of where the district assemblies in each community have been making efforts to improve the structures, and this was generally seen in the form of partnerships or collaborations to strengthen systems that can support marginalised girls. For example, in Oti, the DSWO said they are working with various collaborators, including Ghana Education Service, NGOs, Christian council of churches, the Konkomba Worker's association, and the media, to form the Integrated Social Services. This network helps with all the social work issues that need to be done in the community. The inclusion of GES also suggests national level cooperation with the initiatives put in place at district level.

In Northern and Eastern, the DSWO also mentioned partnerships with other agencies which have been supporting marginalised girls. In Northern, the DSWO said the district assembly is working with social welfare to support persons with a disability, and some have been included in the LEAP programme which is one of the new initiatives for inclusive practices for marginalised girls to enter into VSTs and employments. Additionally, in Northern the DSP highlighted other partnerships to connect marginalised girls to services, including with other NGOs like Camfed. In Eastern, the DSWO also highlighted partnerships to support girls: "***the police, NCCE***[82] ***and other sectors to help in the development of the non-formal education***".[83] These examples highlight a number of areas where district

[81] Districts with functional structures to support inclusive girls' VST and employment (e.g., Tax exemptions, affirmative action policies, funded VST trainings, scholarship schemes, mentoring and coaching support, availability and unrestricted access to services for PWDs, functional child protection and safeguarding policies, systems etc).
[82] NCCE is the National Commission for Civic Education in Ghana. They are an independent, non-partisan governance institution, with a focus on education on civic responsibilities and rights. For more details see: https://www.nccegh.org/page/about-us
[83] The inclusion of the police in Eastern also suggests a form of safeguarding and child protection measure put in place (see EQ2.b). In Eastern, three of the four girls also highlighted that they knew to report any abuses to the police.

assemblies are putting structures in place to support marginalised girls, in the form of welfare support, support for further training, and support in seeking employment opportunities.

While it was not mentioned in the qualitative data collected by the EE, STAGE reports that they have been working closely with GEA to register girls on their portal to enable them access loans. However, as per EQ2, girls said they are still unable to access financial resources to support their business or gain further training.

A score of 2 is given for this indicator, as these examples indicate demonstrated support at district level for the project and adoption of new approaches; there are also indications of plans to upscale resources beyond the life of the project from the limited qualitative sample (three districts). However, there is no indication of support being systematised or institutionalised across districts, and there is no evidence of scaling up of public resource allocation to districts for VST and supporting girls' employment, or integrated plans in this sense. One area which could be improved, as it was highlighted as a barrier to girls, would be more funding for further vocational training.

Indicator 2 – Extent of TVET institutions with practices that promote girls' vocation skills training in project districts

Baseline status = N/A
Endline status = N/A

The revised indicators at system level do not have a logframe target or score. This revised indicator 2 covers, (i) the extent that the district assembly support inclusive gender sensitive education (IGSE), and (ii) the extent that IGSE is being promoted in the district.

The STAGE monitoring report highlights that "*actual processes are ongoing for CEA to adopt portions of the STAGE model for scale up. Joint monitoring has been scheduled and in some of the DSPs actual collaboration have begun*". The qualitative data found evidence in each of the three communities. In Eastern, the DSWO said, "***since the introduction of STAGE I think yes, there is changes to improve the support system and structure for inclusive and gender sensitive education***". They went on to say the biggest change will be the continuous monitoring of the projects. In Oti, the DSWO gave more tangible examples of what has been happening to support IGSE by highlighting that the Ghana Education Service has been involved in the community through the girl-child coordinator. However, they also said that to the best of their knowledge they have not been using materials or tools to promote STAGE.

The DSP in Northern showed a broader knowledge of gender sensitive education by saying "***sometimes we have some aspect where we bring in boys to also support, this is the peer educator. We are funding this group to educate them on reproductive health, and child abuse***". This is positive as the baseline evaluation had also recommended on the need to include boys and men in order to advance GESI. In the other two communities, the focus was more on girls and marginalised girls only.

The qualitative data suggests that on a district level, some efforts are being made to promote IGSE vocational training and skills in the community. It is however unclear in each community what efforts are being implemented to get tangible results (see EQ4, What works on the implementation of IGST in STAGE ALPs and VST).

Indicator 3: Extent that NFED/MoE adopts the STAGE curriculum for ALPs to support non-Formal education programming in Ghana

Baseline status = N/A
Endline Status = N/A

At baseline, it was noted that whilst the STAGE curriculum including formative assessment structure, inclusive pedagogy and reading reinforcement approach) had been shared with the CBE Steering Committee (SC) for their inputs and further discussions, feedback had not been received at the time of finalising the evaluation report. WEI noted that the CBE SC had not met since late 2019, partly due to a change in Director's and perhaps due to the Government of Ghana's inability to fund the programme consistently. If this remained to be the case, and considering

COVID-19 disruptions, it would seem unlikely that the CBE SC would adopt the STAGE curriculum before the tracer data collection. At tracer, this assumption is confirmed as there is limited evidence of the extent to which MoE/G-TVET has adopted parts of the STAGE model: there are indications of interest by key stakeholders and mention of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) currently in place between the national government and STAGE, as explained below.

The KIIs with national actors in the VST sector (T-VET and CEA) provided useful insights into what areas of the STAGE programme were seen as most effective and the progress on adoption of some of these areas by the government.

The interview with T-VET Ghana mentioned the three-year MOU that is currently in place[84] and said one of the key learning and elements of STAGE they wish to take forward is the ALPs prior to the vocational training. They also mentioned areas of the safeguarding policy that have been integrated with the Ghana T-VET polices, saying "***STAGE have rules and regulations on that so right from day one before a master trainer is engaged. Understand before you come aboard***", which they viewed as a very positive aspect. In terms of areas where STAGE and T-VET Ghana could collaborate more, the respondent listed development of the curriculum, and training of MCPs, which suggests that the STAGE model is seen as effective, and they wish to continue this collaboration. Further, involvement of MCPs already posted to communities to deliver STAGE VST has been largely successful (see EQ4), including in the application of IGSE by MCPs.

In the interview with the representative from CEA, they viewed the programme in a very positive light. One key area they highlighted was looking at how to get those who have graduated from STAGE with technical or vocational skills into other CBE programmes to improve their adult learning skills. The main drawback the respondent saw of STAGE was the limited time frame of six months, they felt a longer time period was needed to help the girls grow their business or skills to be able to develop at scale.

The EE qualitative data was based on a small sample size at national level, and as such, WEI has provided further context at national level. WEI have reported that the Ghana TVET service has reviewed the STAGE curriculum used and modified it to be at similar standards with the national programme. Additionally, CTVET is currently working with Ghana TVET service, STAGE and CEA to ensure that two new vocational training areas (weaving and soap making) are brought to national standard levels and certification will also be recognised at national level.

At district level, views on national government adoption of the STAGE model were mixed. In Eastern, the DSWO was positive of the national government promotion of GESI, saying, the MoE and GES promote gender equality in all their doings, and it did not matter whether a man or woman was performing the role. However, they also went on to say that central government should learn from STAGE on the inclusion of marginalised girls and girls with a disability. In Northern, the DSWO also suggested that the central government is not yet doing as much as they could with the adoption or promotion of STAGE by saying, "***the government should adopt these STAGE methods: government need to adopt it, the curriculum materials, assessment structure, inclusive teaching, reading reinforcement approach, home visits, catch-up classes and monitoring of teaching***". Similarly, in Oti, the DSWO highlighted that they do not have a MOU between STAGE and national government. WEI have clarified that STAGE has an MOU at national level with Ghana TVET Services, and many districts had MOUs with STAGE. The lack of clarity for the DSWO suggests that more clarification is needed for some at district level in where partnerships and collaboration lie.

[84] The STAGE Sustainability Plan (May 2022) under key interventions for strengthening the Apprenticeship Vocational Skills Training Model mentions: "*Establish MoU with clear roles and responsibilities between MoE and STAGE […] STAGE has established national and regional relationships from program inception onwards. Material development, training and monitoring has been conducted jointly. This is key in creating awareness and understanding. The involvement of NFED (now CEA) and NVTI has been instrumental and requests from their side for project support indicates their openness to improve the apprenticeship training model or implementation of non-formal education interventions*".

Overall, at a national government level, there does seem to be strong awareness of the STAGE programme, and it is seen as successful. Both CEA and T-VET Ghana spoke about wanting to continue partnerships with STAGE and build on elements that they viewed as successful. Despite this, there was not as much evidence from the districts or the national actors themselves on what parts of STAGE have already been adopted or are being implemented through the KIIs conducted by the EE. WEI have provided further information and context on this, which helps to highlight the plans for sustain progress. The limited awareness of these changes at the district or community levels suggests that more time may be needed for these initiatives to be recognised as system level changes.

4.4 EQ4. What works to facilitate transition of highly marginalised girls into education/training/employment and to increase learning?

As stated under EQ2, one of the areas STAGE leveraged to reduce barriers to education across subgroups and facilitate transition and learning was encouraging an environment more inclusive and conducive to learning both at ALPs (under the project's direct control) and at VSTs, implementing a child-centred pedagogical model. Activities implemented in this sense included IGSE training to both facilitators (during ALPs) and MCPs; as well as training on the CBE curriculum on literacy, numeracy and life skills (including accelerated learning and catch-up classes). In addition, STAGE used monitoring and supervision by a range of actors (CoCs, including traditional leaders; district actors; as well as facilitators to support schools after girls' transition) to i) train and provide support on the implementation of IGSE and CBE curriculum to facilitators and MCPs; and ii) monitor implementation of these practices, and mitigate issues detected through monitoring, especially in case of risk of girls dropping out of education. Conceptually, these activities fall under Intermediate Outcome 2, Quality of Teaching in STAGE ToC which is the focus of this EQ. Further, other elements that were leveraged to encourage attendance were a flexible approach to delivery of ALP/VST and making the learning centres conducive to learning.

Effectiveness of STAGE training model and pedagogical approach

EQ4.1 Which elements of the training model contribute most to the effectiveness of the facilitators (and in turn the learning outcomes and transition of the girls)? Which pedagogical approaches have been identified as most effective in contributing to the quality teaching and learning in the ALPs and VSTs?

Evaluation findings (quantitative and qualitative) suggest that implementation of IGSE practices, safeguarding, the VST and ALP/CBE curriculum all contributed to girls' learning and transition. Further, monitoring and supervision have enabled gains in learning and transition, through ensuring the effective implementation of the CBE curriculum and IGSE/safeguarding and accompanying the girls through sustained transition. The qualitative data did not suggest that the monitoring and supervision led to increased support from parents or caregivers, however the community engagement did play a role, which included local leaders and DSPs engaging with parents. IGSE, safeguarding and monitoring/supervision are examined here, whilst VST and ALP/CBE curriculum in EQ4.b.

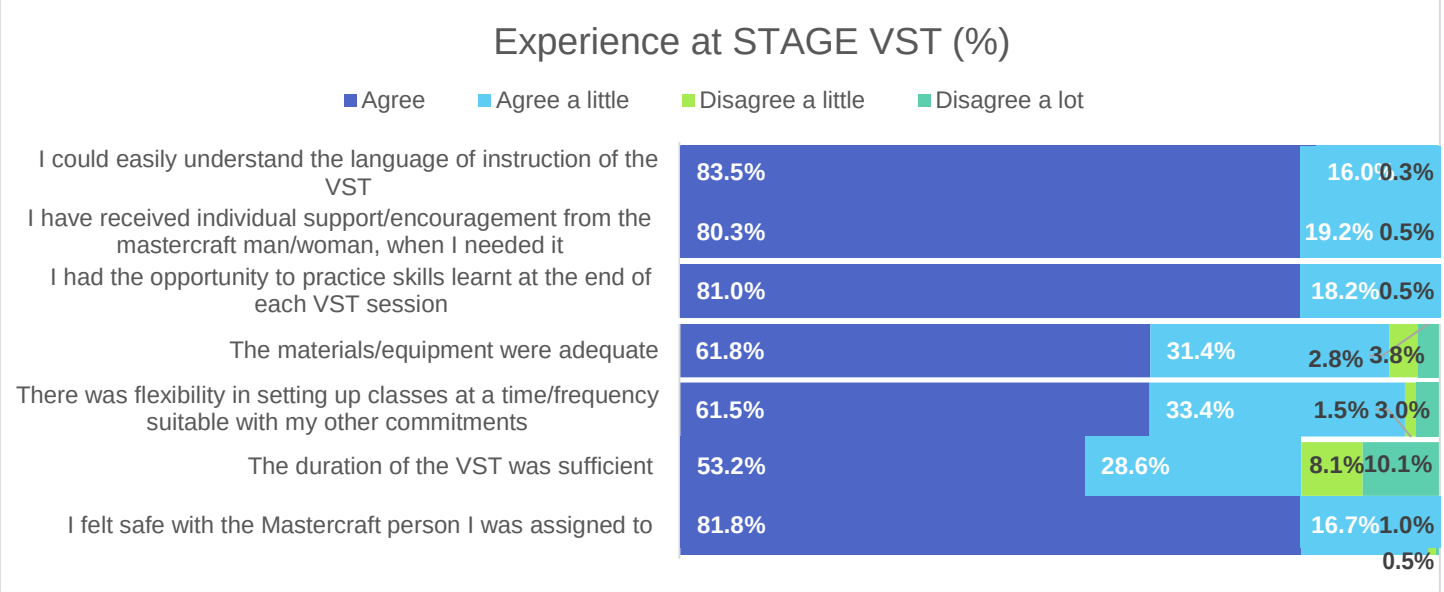
Table 22 – IO indicator 2 Quality of teaching

IO indicator	Sampling and measuring technique used	Who collected the data?	Baseline level	Target for next evaluation point	Tracer
2.1 % of Girls that agree that their MCP was effective at the VST	Survey[85]	EE		75%	93.4%

[85] Seven questions (HHG_IO2.a – IO2.g) were inserted in the survey to assess girls' experience at STAGE VST. These were adapted based on questions to assess IO2.1 GESI practices at ALP and in school used for the Formal track, adapted from STAGE class observation tool. For the non-Formal track, four of these questions are used to calculate the indicator, specifically where they refer to

2.2 Extent that MCP/facilitators apply inclusive gender-sensitive education	Survey[86]	EE/WEI	Not measured at baseline	75%	92.5%

Figure 28 – Experience at STAGE VST (% of girls)



Girls were asked seven questions about their experience at the VST, covering from the assessment of master craft persons teaching style (providing individual support/encouragement, providing the opportunity to practice skills learnt at the end of each VST session), to the adequacy of the VST modality (course duration, materials and equipment). Further, it was enquired whether the language of instruction could be easily understood; and girls' feelings of safety with their MCPs.

Quantitative data reveals that girls' experience at the VST offered by STAGE was overall very positive. Girls strongly agreed or agreed with all seven statements (Figure 26), in particular the teaching style of MCPs were assessed overwhelmingly positively. Girls also agreed that the duration of the VST was sufficient, however, almost one fifth (18.2%) of girls disagreed with this statement. These girls were concentrated in the sales and services sectors. According to the Project, the optimal skill building and VST duration varies across areas. Around 6.5% also disagreed that the materials/equipment were adequate; and 4.5% disagreed that there was flexibility in setting up classes at a time/frequency suitable with other commitments.

Teaching style and training model: views of girls

In terms of MCPs being effective in the application of child centred practices (Indicator 2.1), the evaluation considered the percentage of girls that agreed or strongly agreed to all four statements (out of the seven on experience at VST overall) on IGSE: i) receiving individual support/encouragement from the MCP; ii) opportunity to practice skills learned at each session; iii) flexibility in setting up classes; iv) feeling safe with the MCP. An overwhelming majority (93.3%) of girls responded positively. This finding which is in line with STAGE monitoring for the overall project, according to

effectiveness of the MCP. The four questions referred to practices including: i) providing individual support/encouragement to pupils; ii) providing the opportunity to practice skills learnt; flexibility in setting up classes to adapt to girls' commitments; feeling safe with the MCP. The overall result for this indicator is calculated as the prevalence of girls that strongly agreed or agreed to all four questions.

[86] The value reported from the EE quantitative data calculates the prevalence of marginalised girls (under any of the marginalised sub-groups) that strongly agreed or agreed to all four questions to assess effectiveness of MCPs at the VST.

which "*8 in 10 of girls in both tracks through informal engagements during monitoring visits confirm that their teachers, facilitators and MCPs have been very effective in class and in the delivery of the content of both the VST and ALP contents*". The qualitative data found that most girls said the teaching quality was good, however most also said that more time would have been preferred for them to learn more or master the trade (all four girls in Oti, three girls in Northern, and two girls in Eastern) a view that also reflects the quantitative data. One girl in Northern (Nkwanta South) said "***there wasn't enough time but they managed to get a lot done in the time they had; they should extend the duration to 2 years***".

Further, on Indicator 2.2, the evaluation also assessed this quantitatively by looking at the percentage of girls reporting any barrier that agreed to all questions on MCP effectiveness. Overall, 92.5% agreed or strongly agreed to all four questions in the second table (N=345). However, it's worth noting that 100% of those who did not meet any barriers agreed or strongly agreed to all four questions (N=46).

Most girls revealed being happy with the support that was provided for them by the facilitators and MCPs. Most girls felt supported by their teachers and felt cared for. For example, in Oti (Nkwanta South), one girl highlighted "***they had time to teach us considering our situation. They saw the good in us and were patient in dealing with us***". This was echoed by three girls in Eastern (Akuapem South), for example one said "***I liked them, as compared to my previous schooling experience all answers were acceptable in class and the freedom of expression methods used were also perfect***". This suggests that the child-centred practices were being used.

Whilst low in prevalence overall, it is concerning that six girls (out of 395) felt unsafe or very unsafe with their MCPs (see below on safeguarding).

Teaching style and training model: views of other stakeholders

Overall, the qualitative data suggested that the MCP and Facilitators in all three locations felt the training model was effective, in line with what girls also felt. Though all respondents said yes, they felt it was a good model, not many examples were given of why it was a good model. In Eastern, the MCP did comment on why the curriculum was successful "***designed to suit the girls, very practical and low to the understanding of slow learners, marginalised, and disabled girls were all considered in the curriculum for the studies***". This echoes the views of the girls that the model was designed in a way that takes into consideration the needs of all the girls.

However, some difficulties in teaching to some subgroups, as well as areas for improvement were noted, for example, the DSP in Northern mentioned that some girls still experienced challenges, especially those with marginalization factors such as a disability, they said, "***I think most of them their challenge is the numeracy because most of did not attend school and the time period was so short to catch up, especially those who were having a hearing problem***". The DSP in Oti mentioned that there were some other challenges in delivering the training to the girls. They said, "***I think the life skills was challenging, the example is the menstrual cycle. At time we had to bring in natives to help due to communication barriers***". These few examples from Northern and Oti do suggest that in future trainings, there can be more consideration given to those with certain disabilities, or the need for facilitators with more knowledge of the local language and community.

As also raised by girls in the survey and qualitative interviews, one area where respondents said the training model could be improved was the length of the VST programme. The qualitative data suggests that the ALPs and VST training model for STAGE was too short, and that girls needed more time to be able to master their skills. This was a view that mentioned by some STAGE project partners, including local leaders, DSPs, and DSWOs. For example, in Northern (Kpandai), the DSWO said "***this project is very short compared to formal training or school"***, and the DSP said, ***"they need more time to know everything by their craft masters***". Additionally, in the KII with the representative from CEA, they noted that six months was not enough time to acquire skills for scale up of a business.

One further recommendation from the MCPs in all regions was either the need for more resources, or the need for more MCPs to help run the VSTs. In Northern the MCP recommended that in the future there should not be two or more communities being trained by one MCP as that creates challenges. Similarly, in Oti, the MCP said "***most challenging issues is the unavailability of the materials needed to provide training to the girls and also the***

transportation to the various Centre's have become a problem for me" (5% of girls in the survey also disagreed materials and equipment at the VST were adequate). Additionally, the MCP in Eastern said "***there were challenges in travelling to the training centres. I trained many communities so always travelling from place, though the fare were catered by the DSP***".

Inclusive and gender sensitive education

There is evidence from the qualitative data that IGSE was understood by the facilitators, MCPs and DSPs in all three locations as going beyond same opportunities for girls and boys, to looking at other marginalisation factors, especially disability. In Northern, beyond just catering for girls with disabilities in classroom learning, it seems as though extra lengths have been taken to ensure more girls can attend the facilities. The DSWO said "***we can talk about the district, they bought the wheelchairs for the disabled, and now building of schools have been made in such a way that disabled friendly***". In Oti, the MCP also mentioned disability when talking about IGST, said there is no discrimination when it comes to training and all girls are trained equally. . While in Eastern, when speaking about the IGST techniques said "***they were used in my lessons. E.g., People with disability and marginalised girls and the normal physically built are given equal treatment and do not look upon the disabled***". This suggests that the IGST was being applied a more holistic way than just gender equality.

Beyond application of IGSE practices with girls in the class, there were also mentions of gender equality more broadly among the MCPs, facilitators and DSPs. For example, in Oti, the facilitator said, "***talking about gender inclusive training, it is between man and woman who can be train to perform any duty whether you are marginalized or not***". This was echoed by the facilitator in Eastern, who described IGST as training which does not discriminate based on gender ". This is a positive outlook to have and could be interpreted as having a wider social effect, as the girls taking part in the ALPs and VSTs were not in mixed gender settings, unlike in formal school. This means a perception of broader gender equality is being fostered in contexts in which girls and boys were not crossing paths and could have the potential to change perceptions beyond the ALP and VST context.

Monitoring

There were reports from all regions that monitoring of the coaches and facilitators, as well as monitoring the transition of the girls was an effective part of the STAGE programme. The monitoring of the coaches and facilitators was mentioned by MCP in Eastern and Oti, the DSP in Oti, Northern and Eastern, the DSWO in Eastern, and the Facilitator in Eastern. The DSP in Northern highlighted "***most cost effective [tool], was monitoring because every time we go round to ensure that everything is going on well, and also materials and facilitators training were cost effective***". The DSWO went on to say that after the programme ends, monitoring will most likely be sustained. The Oti MCP also spoke about monitoring from the DSP "***the DSP were always paying us a visit to our classes and they come without informing us of their coming. They visit the centre's unannounced to know if true-life we are paying much attention to the work***". And in Northern, the DSP also mentioned how monitoring was the most effective tool, and they visit the community to see the progress of the project and ensure its sustainability. These examples show that in each region, the DSP were visible in their monitoring, and had clear intentions of ensuring the project was successful. There were no mentions in the qualitative data of where a facilitator or MCP would have liked or required more monitoring.

Monitoring transition of girls was also highlighted as an important and useful aspect in two of the three regions, in Eastern and Northern, however there was no mention of this in Oti. In each of these mentions, the main purpose of the monitoring seemed to be the support and encouragement of the girls. Monitoring of the transition was only mentioned by one DSP and that was in Eastern, who said they visit every month to see what they are doing, find solutions to problems and encourage them. This was echoed by the Facilitator in Northern, who said "***it [monitoring] was effective, because they feel included into the project. So, they always encourage the girls to take part in the ASP/VST***". Encouragement for attendance and taking part was also mentioned by the MCP in Eastern "***I advised them and encouraged all to attend classes always and the DSP's always visit us during training for monitoring and provide the equipment needed to make their trainings better***". There was one recommendation from the MCP in Northern, who suggested that there should be a committee of the girls for the girls so they could

monitor each other at no extra cost. This suggests they feel another level of monitoring could be included which would be more similar to peer monitoring.

Child protection

One of the key areas of the STAGE curriculum was to teach girls and the community about child protection and behaviour changes to protect girls. In all three locations, girls spoke about now knowing their rights and knowing how to report abuses as a result of the STAGE programme.

The qualitative data confirmed that in all three regions girls received safeguarding training, and training on how to report abuses by anyone in the community. In Eastern, the DSWO said that "***now the girls are educated on how to report abuses, know their rights and responsibilities***", while the facilitator and MCP confirmed that they provided child protection training to the girls. In Oti, the facilitator said they also taught the girls about their rights and how to report abuses "***I taught them about safety by giving them a contact number to call either facilitator or DSP depending on the nature of the attack***". In Northern, the MCP and facilitator said they taught the girls about their safety and how to report abuses. However, in Northern, the DSWO said that there had been ongoing child protection training "***UNICEF have taught the children how to report abuses and for the past three years teachers have stop bullying the children***". Northern region was however the only region where the MCP said that girls had been experiencing some sort of abuse and that they suggested reporting to social welfare. However, they said they had not made a report, and none of the girls claimed to have made a report. It is unclear if these are then historical issues the MCP was discussing, or if there was ongoing abuse that was not reported.

While the qualitative data suggests that the girls have learnt that how to report issues, most of the girls across regions said they either made no report or did not respond. In Eastern all four girls said they had never made a report, in Northern three girls said they had never made a report and one did not answer, and in Oti, two girls said they had never made a report and two girls did not answer. This does not suggest either way if child protection/abuse issues against girls have changed since the STAGE programme started in these communities. Only one girl in Eastern reported knowing to use the hotline, all other girls in the three regions said reports should either go to the safeguarding officer, facilitator, community elders or the police.

Girls reported to have learned more about their rights from the training. For example, one girl in Northern spoke about knowing more about choice, she said, "***I can now confront boys who try to abuse me because of all the things I learnt during the training and I know I can't be forced into marriage***". The facilitator in Northern confirmed that they "***teach them on their safety and their rights***". The MCP in Eastern also said they taught them their rights and how to report abuses. And the MCP in Oti also said, "***I did teach them of their safety and rights and advised them to report any abuse to the right quarters. I also advised them to stay safe with their families being children or wives***". This suggests that the child protection and safeguarding training in the curriculum, either in the ALPs or on the VSTs was largely successful for the girls.

The quantitative data supports findings of high awareness of what child protection is among girls, and that STAGE (through CoC) provided information to girls on how to report harassment and abuse (88% of the girls said so). Further, the almost totality of girls know about the concepts that child protection relates to (see Figure 27), and all girls responded they either strongly agree or agree they know how to report abuse (Table 24). It is also indicative that only five girls had responded to this question at baseline.

Figure 29 – Awareness of CP concepts among girls (%)

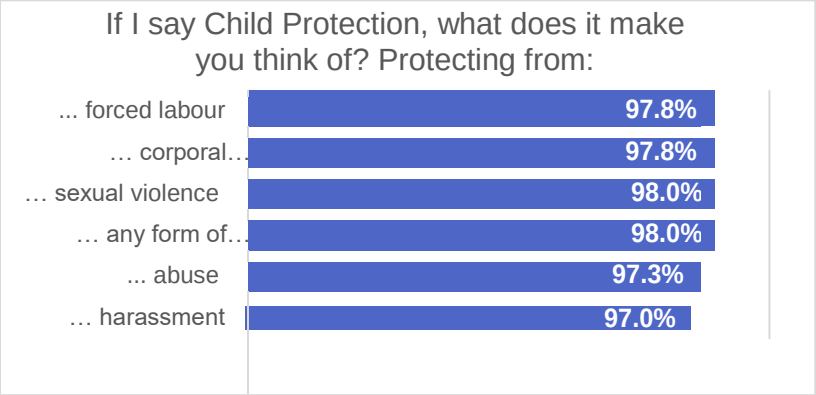


Table 23 – Girls' views on reporting harassment and abuse and feeling safety with facilitators/teachers

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I have learned how and where to report harassment or abuse	**TR**	70.8%	29%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	BL	20%	60%	20%	0%	0%	0%

Source = Analytical dataset, Girl Survey Midline N = 705; Endline N = 399

Most effective activities to increase learning

EQ4.b Which activities have been most effective in raising literacy, numeracy, and life skills levels among STAGE beneficiaries?

For the girls in the non-Formal track, life skills lessons stood out as being the most impactful or considered the most useful by the girls in terms. Whilst the curriculum and content of the ALP were praised, the positive and inclusive attitude of facilitators and MCPs, and to a lesser extent, studying in the local language, were seen as key in raising learning levels among girls. For non-Formal track girls for whom transition is not to formal school, literacy and numeracy were seen as useful, but in the context of helping them with transition, running a business and be better and money management.

Life skills

Most girls across all three communities reported finding the life skills the most useful part of the ALPs and STAGE programme. The three main topics that girls mentioned most frequently with regard to life skills were an increase in confidence, an increase in knowledge of personal hygiene and the environment, and finally money management.

It can be interpreted that the money management skills have been most effective in economic empowerment, as girls feel better able to manage their businesses. One girl in Northern highlighted this by saying "***life skills learning and numeracy has helped us know how to manage our business and savings***". A girl in Oti also confirmed the most useful skill from ALPs they learnt was rights and money management and that "***previously I had no idea about savings but the training has taught me to save and things have changed as compared to earlier***". While one girl in Eastern said " ***I was the type that money couldn't stay in my pocket for a day. But since I took part in the life skills classes, my financial status has changed for the better***". The money management skills that girls learnt was also highlighted by a number of caregivers.

Other key areas of life skills, whilst not directly linked to improving economic empowerment were girls' views on increased confidence and increase knowledge in health and hygiene. One girl in Eastern region expressed this by saying "***I learnt so many things, but what remain most useful to me was the training in the life skills. The personal hygiene and how to keep our environment useful, menstrual and home management***", and went on to say they know how to express themselves when they do not understand issues. One girl in Northern discussed all areas of life skills by saying "***as a girl the life skills lessons were very relevant especially the reproductive health lessons most. I also learned a lot about how to manage business***". Linked to increased confidence and increased awareness of issues they may face, girls often spoke about understanding their rights, which can also be attributed to safeguarding and child protection training.

Teachers and teaching quality

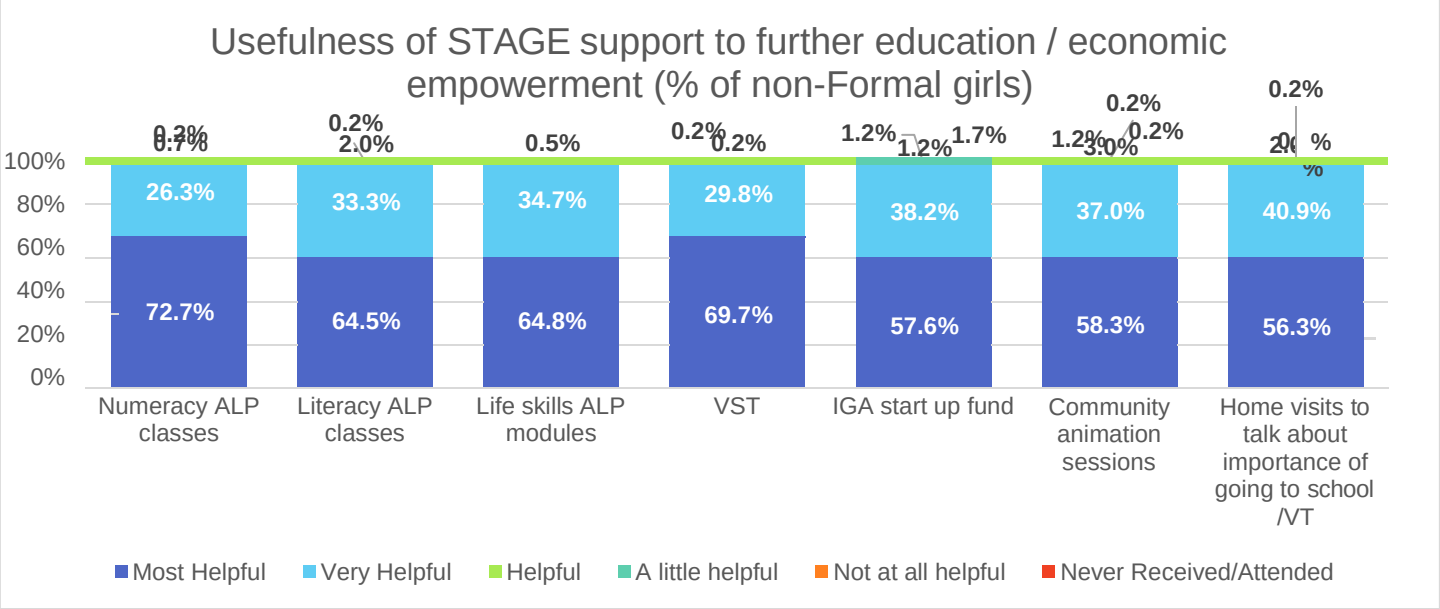
As mentioned in the previous section, girls generally found the teaching quality in the VSTs and ALPs to be good. The three main areas where girls felt the quality of teach was good was the kindness or patience of the facilitators or MCP, the topics being clear and easy to understand, and the consideration taken to girls' different situations. One girl in Northern highlighted this by saying "***they had time for those of us who could not read or write anything at all***". Whilst one girl in Oti described her experience as "***very perfect, both teaching materials, teaching methods used by the facilitators and the atmosphere for the whole program was incomparable***". It is evident across all three regions that while the classes were designed or modified for the girls to learn at the level and rate that was appropriate for them, it is the behaviour, attitudes, and demeanour of the facilitators which helped allow the girls to engage and continue with the programme.

Factors and interventions correlated to positive learning and transition outcomes

EQ4.c Which factors and interventions are most correlated to sustained transition rates and increased learning?

Analysis of tracer results sheds a light on which interventions as well as subgroups are associated to sustained transition and increased learning.

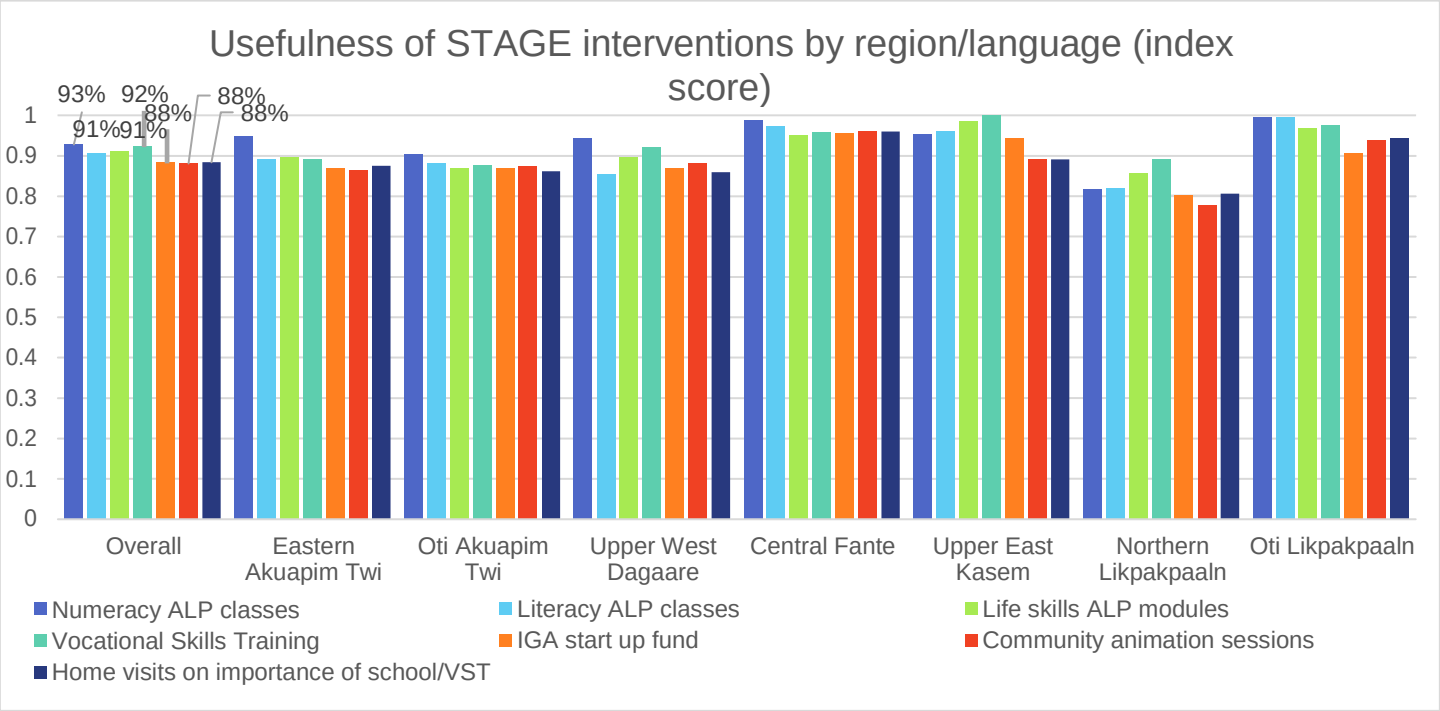
Figure 30- Girls' views on usefulness of key STAGE interventions (% of girls)



Girls were asked to rate how useful key STAGE interventions had been for their sustained transition and learning. Figure 28 show the percentage of girls that rated each intervention as useful of very useful overall. Based on these

responses, Figure 29 shows index values that allow direct comparison of how helpful each type of support was (overall and by region/language group). Overall opinions on usefulness of STAGE activities are very positive without much variation among activities, nor by region. However, it stands out that girls identified numeracy and VST as the two most important forms of support, compared to other activities directed specifically to support transition (IGA start up fund) or increase support for education (home visits and animation sessions). Numeracy and VST are both related to being able to work and running an IGA (vocational skills as well as numeracy skills helping with money management). However, even among those that received the IGA start-up fund, this was not among the top four helpful aspects. As seen, findings on financial/material support to transition (EQ2) were contradictory at times, as whilst over 90% of girls considered it sufficient to achieve goals, the qualitative evidence had also revealed several respondents (not only girls) saying it was not enough to start and scale up a business sustainably (also due to the costs of inputs). Regarding animation sessions and home visits, lower perceived usefulness might be expected as these are activities that indirectly benefit girls by creating an enabling environment for them to participate into the programme.

Figure 31 – Usefulness of STAGE interventions by region/language (Index score based on girls' responses)



Regionally, only Northern has slightly lower prevalence of girls that agree activities were useful, especially for community animation sessions, home visits and IGA start up fund. As seen, Northern (Likpakpaaln) whilst having high rates of transition (91.3%), had also higher than average rates of seasonal and temporary work, worse than average perceptions of fairness of pay, high rates of girls saying they would not be able to work more if they wanted to, given their responsibilities, and lower learning scores (on SRHR). This region also has the highest percentage of girls with high chore burden across regions, by far (86% of the sample).

As mentioned, the factors that may have prevented some from transitioning as mentioned by several respondents and sources refer to lack of family support, financial constraints and care responsibilities. However, transition findings paint a picture where – whilst most girls were found to be in fair and safe work across regions -, the work experience of girls is extremely varied across region/language groups, in terms of industry of work, availability of working opportunities (as perceived by girls) in the local market, prevalence of temporary/seasonal work, prevalence of girls that would wish to work more if they could/are underworked, and prevalence of girls that are working in a vocational skills area they got their skills in, as opposed to working in agricultural related sectors (for produce or for subsistence). Upper East and Upper West – the regions with the lowest transition rates – have high marginalisation levels, including

girls from poor households, married, living with neither parent, mothers, nor girls with high chore burden. Beyond provision of economic support being useful and marginalisation levels, it is not entirely clear what factors most contribute to different transition outcomes, though it would seem like much depends on current labour market conditions as well as non-economic factors such as family support. Whilst some concerns were noted for girls with high chore burden, it would seem that this factor in itself it is not enough to prevent sustained transition, whilst it becomes a risk factor in a context of poverty and unsupportive social norms.

4.5 EQ5. Value for Money Assessment

EQ5. What are the most cost effective and impactful activities implemented through the STAGE intervention which have helped girls to transition to schools and employment opportunities?

EQ5.a What life skills are most valued and useful for girls in the STAGE program?

In line with the workshop 'incorporating the 'Light' and 'Medium' VfM Analyses into GEC evaluations', the EE incorporated a light touch VfM analysis into the endline evaluation reports. This focuses primarily on making use of data collected and specific questions to the Project to gather insights on the cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness of some key interventions**.** The light touch approach is intended to use the data and findings (quantitative and qualitative) on effectiveness, sustainability, relevance, and efficiency, which is collected and compiled in all GEC evaluation reports. All respondents in the evaluation, including girls through the survey and all actors through KIIs were asked specific questions on VfM, specifically whether or not the training model and other activities were cost effective and efficient, and understanding whether the STAGE programme was more resource intensive than other CBE programmes. Those insights are reported here.

Criteria	Finding
Relevance Project is designed to improve participants' lives; stakeholders see value in the project	• Project design based on extensive community mapping at baseline, identification/understanding of barriers and marginalised subgroups • Market assessments conducted at baseline and following COVID-19 on job/business opportunities for girls, and linking to vocational institutions/work opportunities • Targeted strategies put in place to encourage attendance, transition and learning of marginalised subgroups (mothers/pregnant, married, impoverished, high chore burden, girls with a disability) though challenges remain for some (especially mothers/pregnant) • Project builds upon existing community structures to deliver and sustain key interventions and maximise changes of ownership by communities i.e., to build support for girls' education among caregivers/families and community members in general, monitor and supervise attendance to ALP/VST and sustained transition. • Community animation sessions and home visits seen as effective, however, there are some areas where gendered views of the role of girls seem not to have changed so much, or signs of unintended effects (e.g., caregivers appreciating girls because they are better at house management/help). • The life skill most valued by caregivers was money/financial management skills. This may reflect the importance of earning money as a result of STAGE for the caregivers. • Perception project helped marginalised groups particularly girls with a disability • Inclusive gender-sensitive teaching mentioned as an effective tool in all three regions by facilitators, teachers and head teachers
Effectiveness	**Life Skills**

Ways in which project is affecting girls' lives Girls' perceived value of key STAGE activities	• Girls mentioned the life skills training as one of the most useful aspects of the STAGE programme, especially the financial management skills. Girls in the Oti region all reported being able to save money now. **Learning** • There were positive views among the girls on the facilitators and MCPs' style, as it was seen as inclusive and allowed all girls to be included • Indication of increased awareness and practices of hygiene and cleanliness, money management skills, and to a lesser extent, SRHR among girls. • Increased understanding of how to report abuse/harassment • VST seen as useful and relevant, but too short to properly master skills. **Transition and attendance** • Most girls have transitioned, most also mentioned to work in the area they acquired vocational skills in but reported industry of work contradicts this. In fact, over half of the girls are working in agricultural related sectors. • For almost totality of girls, they are in a better situation economically and in terms of working conditions because of STAGE.
Sustainability Extent to which improvements in girls' lives are likely to remain that way after the project's end	**Community** • Instances of unsupportive social norms and signs of increased chore burden. Active caregivers' support increased but still much lower than basic support. Possibility that increased respect for girls is linked to them providing financial support to the family through their work, and increased expectations that girls contribute financially. • Financial barriers still prevalent, undermine the sustainability of transition in the future for girls from poor households. • Establishment of by-laws in some communities to institutionalise child protection. • Increased support shown by community leaders, including taking action towards girls' education. Mixed signs of sustainability, some leaders recognised this is not part of their responsibilities as leaders. **System** • Qualitative findings suggest strong engagement from districts at endline, with all three sampled communities • Districts have examples of partnerships or collaborations to strengthen systems that can support marginalised girls. DSWO in Oti mentioned: partnerships benefitting girls with a disability, e.g., LEAP programme. Northern DSP mentioned linking girls to private sector, or NGOs and the department of business advisory. DSWO in Eastern mentioned partnering with the police, the National Commission for Civic Education and other sectors to help in the development of the non-Formal education • Though, no indication of support being systematised, institutionalised across districts, and there is no evidence of for example scaling up of public resource allocation to districts for VST and supporting girls' employment, or integrated plans in this sense. • Key areas of focus at district level are monitoring and IGSE. DSWO in Eastern said the biggest change will be the continuous monitoring of the projects, DSWO in Oti mentioned involvement of GES girl child coordinator in support of IGSE though no further details given. Results of these activities are not clear. • At national level, there is limited evidence of adoption of STAGE curriculum for ALPs to support non-Formal education from the KIIs. One DSWO highlighted that at national level, they are collecting data from districts on marginalised girls' development (though its use is not clear). However, WEI have provided additional context that STAGE have

	been involved heavily in the development of the revised CBE curriculum to support national level changes in policies, strategies and activities.
Efficiency Perceived benefits of STAGE in relation to inputs	• The DSP in Northern highlighted monitoring as being the most cost-effective tool to sustain project gains, as well as materials and facilitators training. • The qualitative data did not present many suggestions of activities that could be implemented without an additional cost, except in Eastern (Akuapem South), where the MCP and facilitator both said that encouragement is free. The facilitator said, "things that helped in transition which do not require a large monetary investment in STAGE project activities constant educating the community on the need to educate the girl child and giving encouragement when needed." • Other stakeholders said there was nothing that could be done differently at no extra cost. The DSP in Northern (Kpandai) said the cost is already lower than MoE and T-VET, and there could be no more cost savings that would not compromise the quality. • The KIIs with national actors the representative from T-VET Ghana said depending on the trade, they would expect a similar programme to be "at least it should be twice of this" when hearing the cost of STAGE. The representative from CEA also confirmed the cost of STAGE was lower than their programmes, by saying "if we compare to what we have been doing, what our adult literacy program, we wouldn't get anything closer to that". Suggesting that national actors see the STAGE cost as low and efficient. • In each region, there were examples of partnerships with other organisations suggesting methods to share costs. • There was a suggestion from girls, DSPs, and CEA that the VST programme needs to be extended, which would require additional cost. • The DSP of Eastern said the programme is cost effective because everything is provided for the girls. However, the MCP in Eastern and the DSP in Northern said that the cost of the materials is what is driving the cost up.

5. Conclusions

This section presents key conclusions drawn from the evaluation and the Project's monitoring data. In summary, the evidence from the evaluation shows the large majority of girls have successfully transitioned to decent self-employment and/or additional VT at 10 months since graduation. Whilst there are indications of barriers to transition, these are concentrated in some region/language groups. Some transition and learning outcomes might be lower for some subgroups (girls experiencing unsupportive social norms or girls from poor households), though overall results are still impressive and, for the most part, subgroup results are not far from the overall average. As girls aimed to transition to decent IGAs, the worsening of the economic context in Ghana has most likely had an impact on the profitability of some of the businesses. This should be kept in mind when outliers and challenges are discussed in the conclusions below.

5.1 Key characteristic subgroups and barriers faced

1. **Marginalisation prevalence observed at tracer is in line with observations at baseline**. Some subgroups such as married or mother have slightly increased in size, this is to be expected as girls grow older and some of them get married or become pregnant/mothers. The most common characteristics reported by households are being a mother, (56.6%), high chore burden (31.9%, slightly lower than at baseline), being married (24.1%) and not living with either parent (24.3%). Whilst still relatively low, the share of households unable to meet basic needs has slightly increased (from 7.8% to 10.8%). Considering the intersectionality of characteristics, it is worth noting that 60.5% of girls are from households unable to meet basic needs are also mothers, and experience high chore burden (55.8%, significant).

2. **Marginalisation profiles differ meaningfully between language/regional groups**. Overall, region/language groups compare to each other in a similar way at tracer than at baseline, except for Upper East (Kasem) where the participants observed are disproportionately marginalised compared to other areas. Central (Fante), and Eastern and Oti regions (Akuapim Twi language) show overall lower levels of marginalisation. Although Oti/Akuapim communities still have the highest prevalence of mothers (86%). Distribution of mothers regionally has changed substantially: in some regions, the share of mothers in the sample decreased considerably (Northern, Likpakpaaln) which might indicate attrition from either the project or from consenting to being part of the sample, or that the reduced evaluation sample is capturing this subgroup less than before. As for regional variation in other characteristics of interest, the prevalence of girls with high chore burden and households unable to meet basic needs has substantially decreased in Oti region (Likpakpaaln speakers).

3. **Disability prevalence, especially of physical disabilities, has fallen since baseline**. The overall disability prevalence at tracer is 3.8% (15 girls), reduced from 8.0% at baseline. Only 0.7% of girls (three girls) have a disability other than anxiety or depression. Given that relatively few girls met the criteria for having a disability at baseline, the lower incidence at tracer might be due to the reduced survey sample not detecting all girls with a disability. Overall, 3.0% are reported to suffer daily from mental health disabilities (down from 4.1% at baseline).

4. **Forms of marginalisation compound and are related**. At tracer, the most prominent barrier to transition into IGAs was the demographic one (cited by 58.5% of the sample). This might be because girls who are married, pregnant, and/or mothers are disproportionately impacted by the influence that their demographics have on their aspirations, their ability to seek opportunities for economic empowerment and their ability to further their education, as found at baseline. At tracer, mothers and pregnant girls still faced more challenges than others to attend the ALPs and VSTs and transition to decent employment/self-employment, due to factors including lower concentration capacity or household-related care responsibilities. Second, economic-related barriers (i.e., household unable to meet basic needs and household chores preventing work) were prevalent among 35.4% of girls. Married girls and girls living with neither parent (the two groups largely overlap) were more likely than average to experience different types of barriers (beyond demographic), such as related to their experience at STAGE VST ('STAGE VST delivery'), economic- and travel-related. Barriers related to unsupportive social norms and empowerment are mostly prominent in Central/Fante communities, making up 19.8% of the sample in this region/language group vs. 6.1% overall.

5. **Gendered expectations about housework and childbearing remain an obstacle to VST and paid work**. While relatively few girls (6.1%) said that they did not feel supported by their communities to further their education or join the workforce, there are indications that house management is still seen mainly as a responsibility of women. Economic-related obstacles cited by girls related to lack of resources to pay for education, the need for working/helping with household chores whilst simultaneously attending classes, and the lack of resources to continue business.

5.2 Key findings

EQ1. STAGE Outcome results: learning and transition

6. **STAGE has overachieved end of project targets in both key outcomes of learning and transition.** 10 months after graduation from ALP/VSTs, life skills learning and transition to decent employment/self-employment and/or additional VT greatly exceed the project's goals (80% transition target in October 2021). Results vary substantially between regions and are significantly lower for some marginalisation subgroups, although no subgroup is far below the non-Formal track cohort 2 overall average. Overall transition has been successful and sustained for 84.4% of non-Formal track cohort 2 girls (91% of girls reported working for money, though 88.8% of girls qualified as having 'decent' work i.e., safe conditions and fair pay; 18.9% of the girls are engaged in further VST following STAGE VST). Qualitative findings suggest more girls would attend VST if they could, but the cost of training and demands on their time remain obstacles. Others are able to work and attend VST concurrently.

7. **Social norms and poverty remain critical obstacles to successful transition**. Those facing social norms-related barriers or that cannot meet their basic economic needs have significantly lower transition rates (76% and 78% respectively), though at 10 months since graduation, these are still relatively high. These two subgroups have also lower than average rates of girls with safe and fair pay working conditions. In fact, whilst 95% of girls from poor households reported working for money, they were less likely to be engaged in safe and fairly paid employment. Mothers, married girls and girls living with neither parent have slightly lower than average transition rates (83.6%, 82.3% and 81.4% respectively).

8. **A substantial portion of girls continued to obtain additional VST.** Beyond STAGE, over a quarter of girls undertook additional VT (18.9% were undertaking further training at the time of data collection; 8.3% did so at some point after graduation but were no longer in training at the time of the survey). Continuation varies considerably between regions, ranging from under 3% (Oti, Akuapim Twi) to over half (Central, Fante). Some marginalised groups have higher rates of continuation: particularly those affected by social norms, girls with a disability, and older girls.

9. **Some regions with higher marginalisation also had higher rates of successful transition**. Despite having low learning scores and high levels of marginalisation at baseline, Likpakpaaln speakers (in Oti and Northern regions) had the highest levels of successful transition. In fact, all the girls in Oti (Likpakpaaln) and 91.3% of those from Northern region (Likpakpaaln) are transitioned. Upper West (Dagaare) and Upper East (Kasem) have the lowest transition rates overall (66.7% and 75% respectively), with higher than average rates of additional VST but lower rates of girls working for a fair pay and under safe conditions. Despite these two regions also having the highest prevalences of many marginalisation characteristics (including poverty and mothers in Upper East, high chore burden, married girls and girls living with neither parent in both), their transition rates were particularly high.

10. **While most girls work, it is typically temporary, seasonal, or for fewer than 10 hours per week**. Different data points to girls being engaged part-time in multiple activities during the course of the year and having diversified sources of income. When asked, 91.5% of girls in the sample said that they earned money in the past year; of those who do work, over half of them (53%) do either temporary work (40%) and/or seasonal work (32.5%).[87] Combined, 65.4% of girls' primary IGAs are temporary, seasonal, or for fewer than 10 hours per week. Different data points to girls being engaged part-time in multiple activities during the course of the year and having diversified sources of income. Most girls (87.2%) said they would work longer hours if there was more work available to earn more money – though STAGE did not aim to get girls into full-time jobs. Girls with high chore burden, on the other hand, were significantly less likely to be able to work more even if they wanted to and significantly more likely to be engaged in temporary and seasonal work (60%). Girls affected by social norms-related barriers were less likely to work (76% vs 91.5%) and less likely to have successfully transitioned (75% vs 84.4%).

11. **No girl reported being employed outside the family.** Nearly all girls are self-employed, either running an IGA on their own or with a business partner/family member, and 5.7% are doing work for a household economic activity.

12. **Despite reporting that they have work in the field of the VST they received, the main economic activity of most girls remains agriculture**.88 The majority of girls (52.4%) stated they are working in agricultural related sectors as their main activity, rather than in a vocational skill area covered in the STAGE non-Formal cohort 2 VST. Specifically, 38.3% of girls stated their primary IGA is in agriculture and 13.1% in subsistence agriculture or related sectors. However, 75% of girls reported working in the sector they acquired skills in through STAGE, that is, in an area other than agriculture (which was not a VST option under STAGE). This points to girls being engaged in a range of activities. The qualitative data also seems to support this finding, pointing to prevalence of farm work as a primary activity, and – as a result of STAGE – girls being engaged in additional activities such as hairdressing, dress and sandal making,

[87] Some work is both temporary and seasonal.

[88] International Labour Organization (ILO) (2012). International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08). Structure, group definitions and correspondence tables https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/@publ/documents/publication/wcms_172572.pdf

catering and pastry businesses. There is large regional variation in the industry of work, which seemingly links to the availability of market opportunities (as perceived by girls) in some regions and a higher or lower likelihood of working in the VST sector.

13. **Six out of seven girls whose IGAs have costs make a profit most of the time.** Among all girls that work, 63.8% of respondents' IGAs have running costs. Of those with costs, 86.7% earn enough money to cover their costs most of the time or always: 13.3% earn enough to cover costs only sometimes or never. Almost all girls report their earnings or wage are very (45.5%) or at least somewhat (50.1%) fairly paid. The cost of materials and production was seen as a key issue to IGA sustainability. These findings support project reporting which mentioned that the worsening economic context in Ghana has increased the cost of inputs (thus contributing to 15% of the IGAs being inactive).

14. **Girls with less profitable businesses are concentrated in Northern (Likpakpaaln) and Upper East (Kasem)**. Upper East (Kasem) has lower transition rates than elsewhere, higher marginalisation prevalence, and higher percentages of girls that would not be able to work longer hours if they wanted to. Girls in Upper East (Kasem) also have the lowest rate that considered they were being fairly paid. Whilst girls in Eastern (Akuapim Twi), and Central (Fante) were more likely to consider they are paid very fairly than elsewhere; these region/language groups also have high rates of girls working in agriculture.

15. **Almost all girls agree they feel safe in the community and at work**, although 15% do not feel safe with equipment/machinery at work. A large majority of girls affected by travel and work safety barriers work in the sales and service sector and these barriers were almost entirely prevalent in Oti (Likpakpaaln) only.

16. **Over three quarter of girls (77.6%) are able to spend all or most of the income earned of their own free will.** However, over 30% of girls can only spend some or none. As other evidence suggests, this might be because a consistent share of girls tend to contribute to family expenses. This is possibly linked to a sense of scarce household resources or to a girl's lack of control over her own finances.

17. **The Life Skills Index score has improved by 8 percentage points since baseline, exceeding recommended targets** (significant at 90% confidence level, but not 95%). Life skills subcategory scores all increased over baseline scores. At baseline, caregivers have high levels of confidence in their girl child's life skills in all areas and in relation to all sub-groups; notwithstanding the high starting point, the Caregiver's Assessment still increased statistically significantly since baseline (91.2). Concerningly however, the girls' Life Skills assessment SRHR section scores remained low.

EQ2. Stage contribution to reducing barriers to education

18. **The activities that STAGE implemented to reduce economic barriers to attendance and transition were mostly effective**. Results were mixed for girls affected by demographic barriers (for example motherhood and pregnancy) which proved a challenge to attendance, and social norms barriers which proved a challenge for successful transition for girls affected. There are concerns around the sustainability of transition for some, and for all due to external factors/labour market conditions.

19. **Factors hindering transition**. Insufficient economic support, limited community support, and care responsibilities were the most commonly mentioned in the quantitative and the qualitative data.

20. **Completion and attendance rates of ALPs and VSTs were high**. 99.3% of girls stated they have completed the ALP (only three girls did not), and 98% of them participated in the VST. 80.7% attended at least 80% of ALP classes. However, qualitative findings noted how the attendance of nursing mothers had challenges, and that household responsibilities such as going to the farm were an obstacle to attendance. Whilst STAGE has a mechanism to offer alternative arrangements/times to girls if needed, of those that were offered the opportunity to discuss alternative arrangements, only half were able to find suitable options for attending. Other respondents involved in ALP/VST implementation noted how pregnant girls and mothers – even if able to come to class – had difficulty concentrating because of their caring responsibility.

21. **Economic barriers were reduced** by providing free of cost VST for a six-month period, followed by material support to transition in the form of an IGA start-up fund and equipment/material, together with sensitisation on the importance of girls attending vocational education and achieving economic empowerment. Positively, almost all girls stated that their working conditions are better now as a result of participating in STAGE. These results are corroborated by girls' responses on the usefulness of STAGE support to their further education/economic empowerment. When asked specifically about their views on such matters, most girls strongly agreed that the skills and financial/material support received helped them to achieve their goals with regards to IGAs/employment. However, there were some indications that the start-up fund provision was not sufficient or scale up a business, especially considering the high cost of materials. This latter issue was mentioned several times by various respondents in all regions, and project monitoring noted it is being fuelled by challenging external economic circumstances. Indeed, findings of profitability of IGAs found that 13% are never able to cover the costs. Additionally, for those who would like to continue with training, finances remain the biggest barrier. Further, despite there being reports of increased family support for girls' employment (see further below), there are also concerns that girls are using their money to support the family, and as such not able to grow their business.

22. **Regional variation in transition.** Transition findings suggest that, whilst most girls in all regions were found to be in fair and safe work, the work experience of girls is extremely varied across region/language groups, in terms of industry of work, availability of working opportunities (as perceived by girls) in the local market, prevalence of temporary/seasonal work, prevalence of girls that would wish to work more if they could/are underemployed, and prevalence of girls that are working in a vocational skills area they got their skills in, as opposed to working in agricultural related sectors (for produce or for subsistence). Both the determinants of success and what success looks like is unique to each regional subgroup. To some extent, it seems labour market conditions as well as non-economic factors such as family/community support have an impact. The project tracked both these assumptions during the project, though labour market conditions are outside the control of the project. The degree to which the project was able to link girls to market opportunities, where these were available, is not clear. Girls may have preferred to work in agriculture, if this is more profitable, than a vocational area; or have been influenced by their family in this regard.

23. **Increased, basic support for girls' education both at family as well as community level** stood out from a range of sources. However, demonstrable, active support is less prevalent (for example, that a caregiver disagrees that girls should prioritise household chores over vocational education or mobilising funds for this), though a positive trajectory was observed since baseline. Indeed, girls highlighted a change in attitudes to the role of women in the home and in the community, and this has largely been attributed to the community training sessions. Evidence also pointed to the majority of girls' caregivers who took part in the ALPs/VST programme now being supportive of their own girls, though gendered differences on the roles of boys and girls remain, including on household chores.

24. **Changed family expectations of girls.** There were some examples of girls and caregivers suggesting that girls now receive more respect within the family and family dynamics have changed, also as a result of their contributions to household income. This raises questions on whether the girls have become economically empowered if the expectation is still largely around girls being able to provide for the family. There are two concerns here: the first is regarding families becoming financially dependent on girls, which may challenge the girls' agency to use their own profits; the second is the girls' workload, as the data suggested that girls were still responsible for the majority of household chores. Still, there was evidence of persistence of social norms and demographic barriers, especially for chore burden and married/mothers, whereby reasons for not supporting girls' education would include future likely pregnancy, and even stronger evidence from qualitative sources on the need to prioritise household chores and family work.

25. **Limited/no evidence of changes in gender distribution of chores**. There was also limited or contradictory (views of caregivers vs. girls) evidence of changed distribution of household chores which is linked to persistent gendered views of the role of women in the household. In fact, overall, girls' perception was of an increase in household chores in the previous 12 months, though it is in Upper East (Kasem) that prevalence of girls in this subgroup increased substantially from baseline – this is also the region with the second lowest transition results. In terms of other key regional findings, Upper West (Dagaare), is the only region where the percentage of caregivers that feel it is equally viable to invest in a girl's education as a boy's decreased (90.3% at baseline to 85.4% at tracer). However, the fact

the girls with high chore burden overall did well on transition, suggests that this on its own is not a factor for not transitioning. Findings point to a difficult situation for this subgroup of working whilst also contributing to the family financially and in terms of chores.

26. There were also some instances of **safeguarding and child protection incidents** in the qualitative data, with issues ranging from physical to verbal abuse, between husbands and wives or within the family, rather than in schools or ALP/VST centres. Whilst all of this was reported and dealt with (through interventions by community elders or the DSPs), it is indicative of GBV at home still being a concerning reality for some girls.

27. **Family support improved, but gendered norms persist**. Ultimately, the evaluation evidence does suggest that caregivers and families are supportive of girls VT and employment, and there have been changes as a result of STAGE. What is unclear is if the changes seen are because families would like the girls to contribute financially to the family, or because they feel girls have the right to the same opportunities as boys. Further, examples of active support for girls' education and economic empowerment (such as reducing chore burden for girls or mobilising funds) were not widespread. Considered together with the fact that household chores seem to have increased for girls, this is a reminder of how gendered roles in households are deeply rooted and complex to change, especially in situations of widespread poverty.

28. **Community support has largely increased.** Findings from caregivers, girls and local leaders point to an increase in support by leaders, both vocal and active, though evidence is more mixed for caregivers. Whilst quantitative findings pointed to increased reports of leaders speaking in favour of girls' education as well as taking action, it is still only about half of community leaders that speak quarterly in favour of it, and only a third that were said to take action such as providing counsel/encouragement to girls and making home visits to sensitise the family. However, baseline levels of support were low, so an improvement is noted. There were some reports from local leaders who felt they did not have an active role to play in STAGE or the promotion of the project, with one local leader hinting that they and other leaders were not involved from the beginning.

29. **Community animation sessions** contributed to the community supporting girls' attendance, changing their perception towards girls' VT, and to some extent the transition. The sessions seemed to have played two key roles: i) changing overall perceptions of girls' education within the community and promoting GESI at household level, and ii) changing behaviours towards girls more broadly in the community.

30. Findings pointed at **supportive attitudes towards education and inclusion of girls with a disability** in the class, though there is limited evidence of accessibility of structures for girls with a disability or access to services. This can largely be attributed to the GSIT that the facilitators, MCPs and local leader undertook. STAGE was seen as having done much to help girls with a disability.

31. Two of the major marginalisation factors that meant the girls who participated in STAGE were previously out of school were **high chore burden and care responsibilities**, especially girls with children. As a result of participating in STAGE, these challenges in limiting participation to education became more apparent to the facilitators, MCP, and DSPs. Qualitative findings and lower than average transition findings for mothers would seem to suggest support for teenage mothers in arranging carers during lessons (mentioned in STAGE Mid Term Review) was not as effective as support for other groups.

EQ3. Sustainability

32. It is clear in the reports from STAGE that there are strategies in place to ensure the sustainability of STAGE interventions at different levels particularly at district and national levels, with limited examples at community level thus far.

33. Findings which could point to a **sustainability risk in terms of community support** are that most caregivers in the communities where the KIIs were conducted did not consider there is any community-wide support for girls' skills development, and that leaders in these same communities do not see girls' education and empowerment support as part of their responsibilities. Limited involvement of leaders by STAGE was also mentioned in few instances.

34. **Limited evidence of community structures in place to support inclusive girls' VST and employment**. In each location, there was some mention of initiatives that were supporting girls with a disability, either in terms of direct support with learning or VST, or more broadly. In all three locations, the facilitators and MCPs noted how the curriculum was designed to include girls with a disability as well as other marginalised groups. However, there are no mentions of additional support systems or mechanisms being put in place, such as additional catch-up classes, trade associations, or service providers for girls with a disability. Overall, there were limited examples of functional structures in place to support VST and girls' employment and those that were mentioned in the qualitative data did not offer a clear insight into how these would be continued beyond STAGE. In addition, some felt this was the role of the central government, which suggests there are still not functional institutional structures to support this at district level. While further context has been provided by WEI on initiatives that are in place such as linking to existing programmes such as LEAP and agricultural subsidies, a safeguarding focal point, and a CBE facilitator, the lack of awareness of these amongst respondents in the qualitative data suggests it may take more time for initiatives to become systematised at community level. In addition, none of the girls or caregivers in the qualitative sample identified as having a disability, which may contribute to the lack of awareness of these structures.

35. **Evidence of district level support of inclusive girls' VST and employment**. The structures in place mentioned were largely partnerships or collaborations to strengthen the systems for marginalised girls. One area mentioned that could be improved is increased funding or systems that would allow girls to continue their VT. This was mentioned as one of the biggest barriers girls still face a lack of financial resources. There was no indication of support being systematised or institutionalised across districts, and, in the KIIs at community and district level, there is no evidence of, for example scaling up of public resource allocation to districts for VST and supporting girls' employment, or integrated plans in this sense. The STAGE reports suggest that there are strategies in place for girls to have greater access to these resources through partnerships, but they may need more time to become fully functional. For example, none of the respondents were aware of the GEA database for business loans, which they should have access to. The scaling up of public resource allocation to support girls' employment is beyond the scope of the project, however it is important to recognise this as a barrier to sustainability faced by girls face after they graduate from the VST training.

36. **TVET institutions with practices to promote girls' vocational skills training at district level**. The STAGE monitoring report highlights that "actual processes are ongoing for CEA to adopt portions of the STAGE model for scale up. Joint monitoring has been scheduled and in some of the DSPs actual collaboration have begun". The qualitative data suggests that at district level some efforts are being made to promote IGSE VT and skills in the community. It is however unclear in each community what efforts are being implemented to deliver tangible results. While the CEA works with STAGE at a central level, and it is noted there is an ongoing partnership, STAGE have confirmed that CEA have not yet begun implementation of these initiatives. This should explain why evidence from the KIIs suggests that the effects of this work are not yet seen at the community level.

37. **Evidence of steps towards strengthening the vocational apprenticeship training model at national level**. The qualitative data suggests that there is a good level of awareness of the STAGE programme. Both the CEA and T-VET Ghana would like to continue the partnerships already established (there is a three-year MOU between CEA and STAGE in place) and build on the elements of STAGE they view as successful. While there was clear support from national actors for the benefits of STAGE, there was little evidence from the KIIs of what had already been adopted. The STAGE reports confirm that there is strong engagement at national level and provided further context on STAGE

engagement with the Ghana T-VET Service to integrate VST training into the curriculum as well as highlighting the collaboration between STAGE and CEA on the development of new strategies, policies and activities .

EQ4. What works for increased learning and sustained transition

38. Evaluation findings suggest that **implementation of IGSE practices, safeguarding and child protection, the VST and ALP/CBE curriculum all contributed** to girls' learning and transition. Further, monitoring and supervision have enabled gains in learning and transition, through ensuring the effective implementation of the CBE curriculum and IGSE/safeguarding and accompanying the girls through sustained transition.

39. **Quality of teaching and IGSE.** Girls' experiences at the ALP and VST offered by STAGE was, overall, very positive, particularly thanks to the teaching style and child-centred pedagogy applied by facilitators and MCPs. Overall, 93.4% of girls agreed their MCP was effective and applied IGSE. This was also shared by girls reporting any barrier (92.5% agreed). Girls, MCPs and facilitators interviewed agree that the model was designed to take into consideration the needs of all of the girls. It is evident across all three regions that while the classes were designed or modified for the girls to learn at the level and rate that was appropriate for them, it is the behaviour, attitudes, and demeanour of the facilitators which helped the girls to engage and continue with the programme. Some challenges were still mentioned in relation to working with girls with a disability, or teaching SRHR topics.

40. **The life skills were seen as a very useful part of the ALPs.** The three main topics girls mentioned most frequently with regard to life skills were an increase in confidence, an increase in knowledge of personal hygiene and the environment, and money management. It can be interpreted that the money management skills have been most effective in economic empowerment, as girls feel better able to manage their businesses. Girls generally felt that beyond learning financial management, the life skills lessons gave them greater awareness of their own bodies, their rights, and how to be confident in themselves, which, in turn can be seen to enhance their empowerment, economically and socially.

41. **One area of the training model that could be improved** – raised by various respondents and corroborated by quantitative and qualitative findings – **is the length of the VST**. About one fifth of girls felt they need more time to master a skill than the six-month VST. CEA also noted the allotted time is not enough to acquire the skills to scale up a business. This suggests more time would further improve their skills, especially as cost is a barrier to further VST for some. According to the Project, though, the optimal skill building and VST duration varies across areas. Further, MCPs in all three locations suggested that there could be improvements in either the class sizes, the number of MCP, and the location of where the MCPs are in relation to the girls. Despite these reported limitations there are no indications that the duration of the VST is a factor in a majority of girls not having been able to work in the area of their VST, or to sustainability/profitability of IGAs and the project has exceeded targets for girls graduating from VSTs.

42. **Monitoring**. There were reports from all regions that monitoring of the coaches and facilitators, as well as monitoring the transition of the girls was an effective part of the programme. There was a recommendation from the MCP in Northern that there should be a committee of the girls for the girls, saying "with that committees would monitor these girls (each other) at no extra cost". This suggests they feel another level of monitoring could be included, and that it could be some form of peer monitoring.

43. **Safeguarding and Child Protection**. In all three locations girls spoke about knowing their rights and knowing how to report abuses as a result of STAGE. This was likely the result of STAGE training, but also other initiatives (e.g., by UNICEF) on child protection and safe school policies. While the qualitative data suggests that the girls have learnt how to report issues, most of the girls across regions said they either made no report or did not respond to this section of the survey. The quantitative data supports findings of high awareness of what child protection is among girls, and that STAGE (through CoC) provided information to girls on how to report harassment and abuse (reported by 88% of the girls).

44. **Opinions on usefulness of STAGE activities are very positive without much variation among activities, nor by region**. However, it is noteworthy that girls identified numeracy and VST as the two most important forms of

support, compared to other activities directed specifically to support transition (IGA start up fund). Even among those that received the IGA start-up fund, this was not among the top four most helpful interventions.

EQ5. Value for Money

45. Beyond findings on effectiveness and sustainability already presented, the light touch VfM analysis pointed at the **relevance of STAGE interventions**. Namely targeted strategies put in place to encourage attendance, transition and learning of marginalised subgroups and the project building upon existing community structures to deliver interventions.

46. Several respondents pointed to the **cost effectiveness of the VST** and of STAGE in general, especially compared to other government vocational education programmes (though the length of the VST was considered too short by some).

6. Lessons Learned

Area	Lessons learned
Demographics and social norms	The barriers to attendance faced by mothers/pregnant and married and are still prevalent. Even when these girls do participate in skills development, they can be absent because of their caring responsibilities. There are instances of husbands wanting to control their spouses' time and prevent them from participating in education. This would suggest that more could be done to work with husbands, boys and wider families regarding the role of women and social norms around attendance; or to offer practical solutions to encourage attendance, such as organising childcare, or shorter/more targeted VST training (the latter was considered in the STAGE Sustainability Plan).
Economic barriers/girls from poor households	Girls from poor households had lower than average transition rates at 10 months from ALP graduation. Whilst there are suggestions that the increased costs of inputs are an external shock affecting scaling up and survival of IGAs across the board, girls from poor households have a lower resilience to shocks than others, and thus higher risk of not sustaining transition (or not transitioning at all). Additionally, they are prevented from pursuing further vocational skills development as they are not able to pay for education costs. Targeted interventions might include higher material support directed to particularly poor households (though means testing might bring issues of legitimacy and errors in targeting), special attention in linking these girls to work opportunities in 'safe' sectors, longer VST (for those that do not have caring responsibilities and have more flexibility) and technical support on business planning/accompanying administration of funds for longer periods after transition, linking girls to VST opportunities outside of the programme.
Economic and social norms barriers/girls with high chore burden	Girls with high chore burden had higher than average transition rates, though other indicators (e.g., high rates of seasonal and temporary work, lower perceptions of fairness of pay, increased chores in the last 12 months, high rates of girls saying they would not be able to work more if they wanted to, given their responsibilities, and lower learning scores – on SRHR) are less positive. This points to risks of unintended effects for these girls from working in addition to household chores, or not sustaining transition, especially when chore burden is accompanied by unsupportive social norms. More work on changing social norms and gender distribution of chores would help with this, though one approach is to recognise

Area	Lessons learned
	the need for longer programme lifespans to change deeply embedded beliefs on gendered roles.
Social norms intersect with other barriers	Over half of girls affected by social norms barriers are undertaking additional VST, though this subgroup also had lower transition rates (in terms of fair and safe work). As seen, social norms and demographic barriers tend to affect mothers, married, girls living with neither parent more than others, nor the effects of these barriers compound each other. There may be something about the acceptability of undertaking addition VST following STAGE which transcends usual demographic and social norms barriers. It would be of interest to understand how these barriers affect girls' choices to undertake additional VST and what makes this different from other types of transition (work).
Regional variation in transition	As mentioned in the conclusions, girls' experience of work across region/language groups is extremely varied. Both the determinants of success and what success looks like is unique to each regional subgroup in the project. Just as STAGE is a conglomeration of multiple downstream partners working in different regions, the success of the project is linked to the ability to customise the solutions for each region, community, and girl supported by the project. Much seems to be linked to context-specific factors such as availability of market opportunities. There may be justification for in-depth research to understand the reasons for these regional disparities and what facilitates transition in one region (Oti and Northern) but not in another (Upper West and Upper East). Unpacking nuances around economic/labour market context, social norms and other intersecting barriers will be of interest and could lead to more nuanced programming approaches in different regions in future. For example, what facilitated better tailoring of the VST in Likpakpaaln speakers in Oti to the perceived availability of work opportunities in the region as opposed to Akuapim Twi speaking girls (in Oti and Eastern) and Fante speakers in Central? Answering this could provide clarity on how to best tailor VST to existing work/market opportunities.
Market conditions	At around one year since graduation, 75% of girls said they are working in the field of their VST, whilst more than half stated working in agriculture (commercial and subsistence). Overall, survey responses seem to confirm the perception of a labour market with a limited variety of work options, though there is large regional variation. This might affect IGA profitability/income opportunities especially in vocational areas. Start-up fund and the materials and equipment provided by the programme seems to act as a propellant towards economic empowerment. However, the high cost of materials and lack of job opportunities in the market may counter this and remains a barrier for girls to be able to maintain or make profit from their business. This raises the question of sustainability after start-up funds and material supplies are no longer available. Additionally, the distance to market is cited as a barrier by some and is a factor that might be considered in any future preliminary programmes. STAGE carried out two market assessments (one update post-COVID) as it acknowledged the intervention needed to be grounded on the reality of local market opportunities. STAGE was also going to link girls to existing private sector work opportunities and vocational institutions (progress on this activity is not known). However, transition findings would

Area	Lessons learned
	suggest that tailoring of VST based on market opportunities, or linking to these opportunities, worked less well in some regions. It is not known the exact cause of the issue, though challenging external conditions (unexpected) are noted (high costs of materials). Still, findings confirm the importance of a VST design which considers regional differences in market conditions, maximises diversification and avoidance of oversaturation in particular industry/ies and positions girls' businesses well within the existing market context. It may also facilitate IGA opportunities which are more diversified from the usual agricultural and non-vocational areas. However, the issue of start-up materials post-STAGE persists. Further, for programmes which assume to strengthen the linkage between trained girls and market opportunities, it may be necessary to perform more regular market assessments to keep the VST fresh. The frequency of the market assessments may vary depending upon the length of the programme and design of interventions and should consider any market shocks.
Girls with a disability show positive transition	Positively, girls with a disability and with high chore burden have higher transition rates than the overall average (86.7% and 89.6%). Unpacking the approaches that facilitated this change will shed a light on models that might be replicated in future based on specific elements of the STAGE approach to working with girls with a disability in non-Formal education. This is interesting when compared with girls with a disability in the formal education stream of STAGE wherein, at endline data shows that all girls with a disability have successfully transitioned and are still in school (though with lower learning outcomes). While formal and non-Formal transition cannot be compared like for like, it might be of interest to unpack specifically what worked well for girls with a disability to understand what elements might be integrated into future programme design/showcased. That said, there may be more to do to integrate approaches to girls with a disability inclusion in existing education processes and systems. DSWO in Eastern highlighted that there is still a general lack of support for girls with a disability in the education system, and that STAGE is doing more for them.
Community and caregiver Support	Whilst community animation sessions continue to be perceived as effective in affecting social change (attitudes), there is less agreement on the usefulness of animation sessions in changing perceptions on chores and findings suggest that in some locations there are no community initiatives to include marginalised girls and community resistance still exists. This reinforces the need for a long-term outlook to invest in initiatives that begin to shift social norms and perhaps augmenting the community animation sessions with fresh material. Perhaps targeting less non-Formal girls, or cohorts, for a longer time would have made space for deeper changes in social norms.
Persistent barriers to work	Girls affected by social norms and those affected by VST barriers are less likely to work. Social norms again present a major barrier to work in the non-Formal cohort. While it is understood that these barriers take longer to change, perhaps there is a need for more strategies/increased programmatic activities that address these (e.g., more resources towards efforts that aim to shift these social norms).

Area	Lessons learned
Safety	Almost all girls agree a lot or at least a little to feeling safe when out in the community as well as when working to earn money. Only a small percentage reported not feeling safe when travelling to and from work or vocational training. This is positive and approaches to work safety from STAGE might be showcased and shared, though issue of unsafety of equipment and materials for 15% of girls is noted.
The model: Class flexibility, childcare, length of training and transition	Life skills lessons stood out as being the most impactful or considered the most useful by the girls, though concerning SRHR levels of knowledge have remained low (especially in some regions). While provisions such as afternoon classes were a help, those with additional care responsibilities still struggled to attend or fully participate, denoting those demographic factors i.e., having care responsibilities, or the lack of additional support for girls while attending the ALPs/VSTs remain a barrier to attendance for some girls. Thus, the flexibility of the class timing is not sufficient in and of itself to maximising participation for girls with children and other options to share caregiving responsibilities in order to facilitate attendance are worth exploring and piloting. In terms of addressing some of the underpinning issues around mothers and child marriage that leads to the need to provide care, prevention of teenage pregnancy and child marriage, awareness raising activities with caregivers and community need to address the issue 'pregnancy inevitability'. The partial resignation by caregivers/community leaders that girls will get pregnant was reported as influencing the willingness of caregivers to invest in their girl child. Evaluation findings also suggest that the ALPs and VST training model for the STAGE programme was too short, and that girls needed more time to be able to master their skills. Further, MCPs in all three locations suggested that there could be improvements in either the class sizes, the number of MCPs, and the planning of locations of where the MCPs are in relation to the girls. This suggests a need to revise the delivery model to account for these factors.
Economic empowerment	The results vary with regards to economic empowerment. Gauged by the degree to which girls' report having spending power over the wages they earn. Evaluation findings (from both girls and caregivers) suggest that girls have been using their income to support their families, with 6% stating that they do not spend any of the money they earn and 32% reporting that they spend all. There were some examples of girls and caregivers suggesting that girls now have more respect within the family and family dynamics have changed, also as a result of their contributions to household income through work. However, this could raise possible concerns over how economically empowered the girls are, as often the caregivers' perspective was linked to the contribution of the girls to the household income, and not their own income generation. Ultimately, the evaluation evidence does suggest that caregivers and families are supportive of girls vocational training and employment, and there have been changes as a result of STAGE. What is unclear is if the changes seen are because families would like the girls to

Area	Lessons learned
	contribute financially to the family, or if they feel that it is because girls have the right to the same opportunities as boys.
Sustainability	Continue to integrate and streamline STAGE strategies into existing education systems and practice and better demonstration of community initiative is needed. Some community leaders did not feel involved from the start, or do not see the promotion of girls' VST/employment as their role. There was little evidence of support for vocational education and employment institutionalised across districts in the qualitative data collected by the EE, and there is no evidence of for example scaling up of public resource allocation to districts for VST and supporting girls' employment, or integrated plans in this sense. STAGE project reports do provide more information on various strategies in place with CEA and T-VET, including working on recognised certifications of the girls' who graduate. Some mentions of lack of communication on initiatives across government levels, though a positive mention of data on marginalised girls VST and employment being collected at district level is noted. The limited information provided on this from the EE qualitative data collection suggests that while there are ongoing efforts between STAGE and national level actors, the results of these have not yet been actualised at district or community level. The cost of materials and market opportunities in certain location plus, the persistence of social norms barrier all put sustainability of STAGE transition outcomes potentially at risk.
VfM	Given praises of efficiency and cost effectiveness for STAGE VST, it would be important to understand what elements might be integrated into future programme design/showcased. Though obviously, longer VST would increase costs.

7. Recommendations

1. Future programmes that aim to reach marginalised girls should consider long-term targeted interventions for married girls and mothers that tackle the social norms which disproportionately affect them and can take an extended time period to change. For example, by doing more work with husbands, boys and wider families regarding the role of women and social norms around attendance and offering more targeted solutions for mothers such as options to share caregiving responsibilities in order to facilitate attendance, or – as proposed by STAGE – shorter/targeted trainings to facilitate their attendance.

2. For marginalised groups in general, findings on resistance to social change point to a need for a longer programme timespan/vision. In some cases, positive changes in attitudes to girls' working were linked to girls being able to contribute financially to the family, and prevalence of active family support for girls' economic empowerment and education was lower than vocal/basic support. Perhaps the community animation sessions could be revised/strengthened, or targeting fewer participants, or cohorts over longer periods of time could enable deeper changes in social norms.

3. Continued work on changing social norms and gender distribution of chores – including involving men – can reduce potential sustainability risks linked to girls being expected to complete house chores they would normally do, in addition to being engaged in work outside the household.

4. Girls from poor households had lower than average transition rates, lower safety nets and less resilience to shocks. Consider targeted interventions for this subgroup, such as special attention in linking these girls to work opportunities in 'safe' sectors, longer VST (to avoid need for additional VST in the future), technical support on business planning/accompanying administration of funds for longer periods after transition, linking girls to VST opportunities outside of the programme and working to increase government support to ensure that VSTs are reaching hard to reach areas and marginalised girls.

5. STAGE transition findings suggest that tailoring VST to market opportunities, or linking to these opportunities, worked less well in some regions. This confirms the importance, for future programming, of a VST design which considers regional differences in market conditions, maximises diversification and avoidance of oversaturation in any particular industry/ies and positions girls' businesses well within the existing market context.

6. Given positive results, approaches to work safety from STAGE might be showcased and shared, though the issue of unsafe equipment and materials for 15% of girls merits attention in future programmes.

7. In future programme design, the challenges observed in progressing awareness/knowledge and practices of SRHR life skills over the lifespan of STAGE should be considered.

8. While it was noted that the level of skill the girls acquired in six months was impressive, various respondents considered the duration of VST too short to acquire skills of the level needed to scale. However, the EE acknowledges that lengthening the training period would come at an additional cost to the programme and that optimal training duration can vary across areas. Other considerations relate to reducing class sizes under each MCP, taking location of MCPs into account when planning raining, or increasing the numbers of MCPs.

9. Better integration into existing education systems and practice, and better demonstration of community initiative is needed. Consider involving leaders from the outset as they are key to functional structures for VST support being place. Inclusion of strategic activities focused on advocacy and influencing key government actors in non-Formal education and youth employment promotion might promote increased public funding for non-Formal education and the development of integrated plans, supporting VST, at different levels of government/administration.

10. Areas for future research:

    a. Understanding how social norms barriers affect likelihood of undertaking additional VST, and how this compares with other types of transition (work).
    b. Understanding the reasons for regional disparities and what facilitates transition in one region (Oti and Northern) but not in another (Upper West and Upper East) could lead to more nuanced programming approaches. This could include different VST courses more directly linked to regional and community work/market opportunities or varied strategies for linking trained girls to market opportunities.
    c. Exploring specifically what worked well for girls with a disability to understand what elements might be integrated into future programme design/showcased.
    d. Given praises of efficiency and cost effectiveness for STAGE VST, understanding how key elements might be integrated into future programme design/showcased, for example, the IGSE and monitoring of MCPs and facilitators, is important. This is especially salient as some of the limitations of the project, and therefore recommendations for future programmes, such as the need for more MCPs/smaller class sizes, or longer periods of training would likely require additional resources.

8. Annexes

Annex 1 Project Design and Interventions

Annex 2 MEL Framework

Annex 3 Characteristics and barriers

Annex 4 Learning outcome data tables

Annex 5 Logframe and Medium-Term Response Plan Output Monitoring Framework

Annex 6 Beneficiaries tables

Annex 7 External Evaluator's Inception Report

Annex 8 Quantitative and qualitative data collection tools used

Annex 9 Qualitative transcripts

Annex 10 Quantitative datasets, codebooks and programs

Annex 11 External Evaluator declaration

Annex 12 STAGE EE non-Formal Baseline Report

Annex 13 Additional EE Tables

8.1 Annex 1 Project Design and Interventions

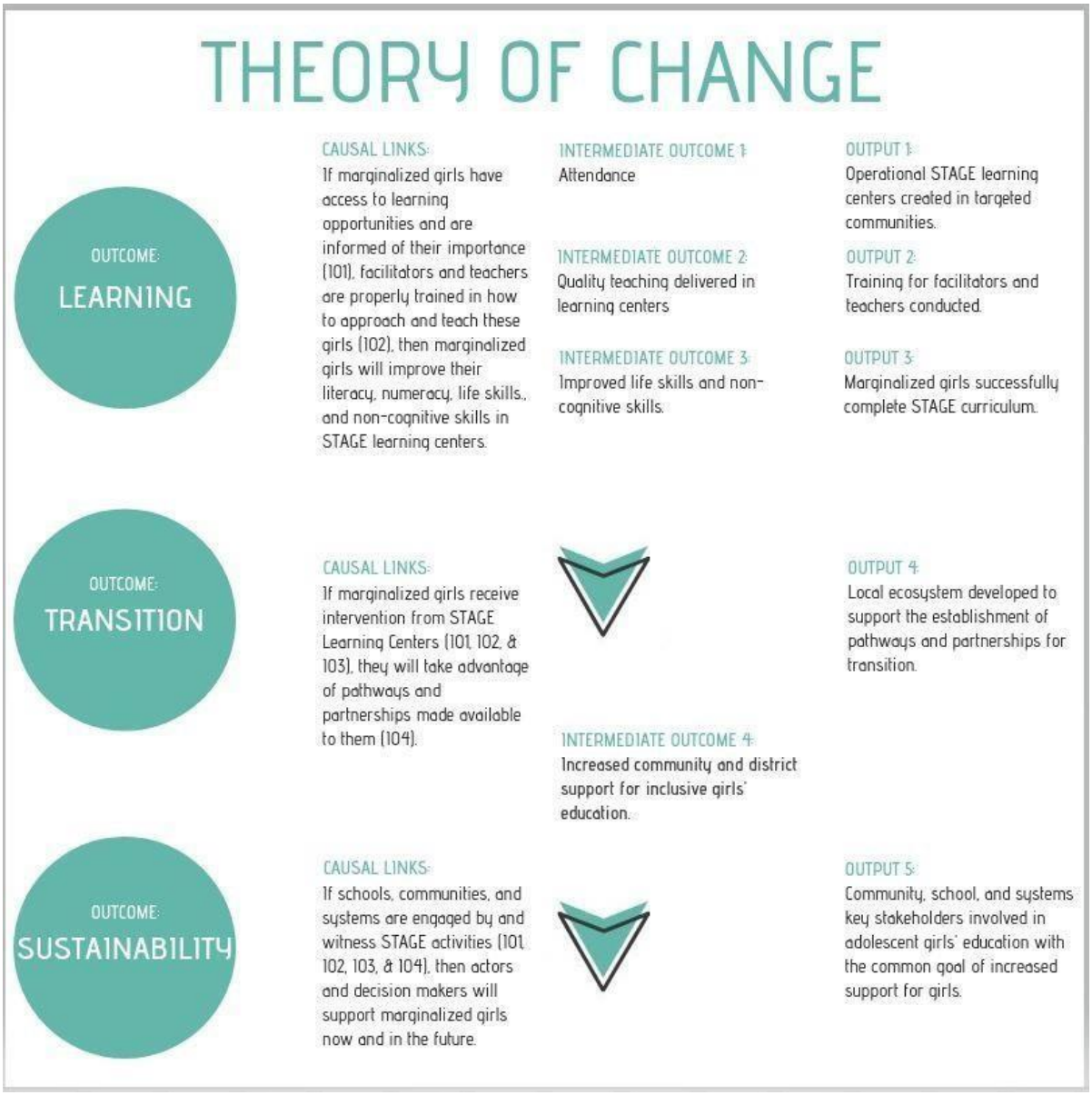


Figure 32 – Theory of Change

8.2 Annex 2 MEL Framework

STAGE MEL Framework.doc

8.3 Annex 3 Summary of changes to methodology

Sampling. A transversal change in approach across Formal and non-Formal tracks is the reduced sample size for both quantitative and qualitative data. For quantitative surveys, the sample was lowered from 640 to 400, due to budget reasons. However, given this is the last evaluation point and attrition would not be an issue to consider for future data collection, the EE is confident the sample size is sufficiently large to detect statistically significant changes and meet minimum power requirements. The original sample was created by randomly selecting a proportional number of communities from each linguistic-regional group. To reduce the sample but maintain representativeness, a subsample of those communities was randomly selected to be included in the tracer. Just as the tracer sample is 62.5% of the baseline, the number of communities visited in each region is 62.5% of baseline. For example, in Central region, of the 16 communities visited at baseline, 10 were visited at tracer. In that community, every effort was made to interview the same girls that were interviewed at baseline. Whilst the qualitative sample has been slightly reduced overall, several new stakeholders have been interviewed as key informants .

Barriers and marginalisation characteristics. The EE understands the Project is required to demonstrate how it has worked with marginalised girls over time to reduce identified barriers to education and transition. In agreement with the Project, the EE revised how barriers, marginalisation and demographic (age) characteristics are detected and reported on, to streamline analysis and reporting, and focus on characteristics which add the highest value to the analysis. Due to the reduced sample size, some of the sub-groups with low prevalence might not be detected by the survey. The EE and the Project discussed and agreed this was acceptable given new budget limitations. All the changes made are described in the "Note accompanying the STAGE endline tools review" details (Annex 10).

Measuring outcomes. Learning. Life skills is a key learning outcome for non-Formal track girls. The life skills assessment has been conducted for this track on a reduced number of areas (SRHR, GBV, and Self-confidence) – which will allow for comparison with baseline results. A reduced number of money management questions have been included in the girl survey, though the full money management section has been eliminated from the life skills questionnaire. A key change is that no assessment of literacy and numeracy has been performed for this track.

Measuring outcomes. Transition. The tracer quantitative and qualitative tools have been adapted to measure transition for the non-Formal, across a range of areas. The assessments explore girls' experience of starting employment/self-employment or further vocational training transition outcomes, gauging perceptions of profitability and sustainability of the various IGAs and various aspects of decent employment (fair pay, safety, working times). This is disaggregated by marginalisation categories as well as the type of the IGAs undertaken. Data should identify the factors that facilitated the transition of girls into employment, self-employment and further studies. Additionally, the EE reports on and contrasts monitoring data communicated by the Project on girls who have undertaken the IGAs, the number who have started their business, the number that are still in operation at 3 months or more after starting their business and the number that are dormant or inactive.

The qualitative interviews also include a small sample of MCPs, facilitators and Down Stream Partners (DSPs) to provide insights on what worked and what not in terms of supporting transition for this track.

Measuring outcomes. Sustainability. This outcome is measured with qualitative and quantitative data at different levels – school, community, and system for the Formal track, community and system for the non-Formal track. Originally, this would be done against a Sustainability Scorecard with 0-4 ranks to be developed representing the extent of desired change. Of the eight original indicators, some were to be reported based on EE's data (qualitative primarily, but also through the survey in some cases), and some based on information provided by the Project. As part of the revised evaluation principles, the FM has recommended projects plan for relevant data to be collected against their updated sustainability plan. The EE has reviewed the May 2022 draft of the Sustainability Plan to inform the evaluation methodology. The following caveats are made:

- The EE has flagged to the Project that, to be reported robustly, the scope and depth of some of the revised indicators require a broader and more in-depth sustainability assessment than that which is in scope of the evaluation. Further, the EE noted that primary data for some of the indicators would be limited to very small

number of qualitative interviews and relies solely on what is reported by selected Key Informants (especially at district level, where stakeholders from a reduced number of districts would be interviewed). As such, triangulation of findings would be very limited. The Project asked the EE to report with the same level of depth and robustness as at midline and advised that the purpose of the revised indicators is to add more detail on what desired change is expected to be seen in terms of sustainability.

- Key sustainability interventions detailed in the May 2022 Sustainability Plan (Strengthening Apprenticeship Vocational Skills Training Model, Support to MoE in the promotion of Gender Equality and Social inclusion in Formal Education and Strengthening CBE policy and practice) span across the sustainability indicators and different intermediate outcomes. The evaluation has enquired about these initiatives through the Key Informants.

Measuring IOs. IO1. Attendance. No change. For the non-Formal track attendance at the end of the ALP, the Project would provide data. STAGE contribution to reducing barriers to attendance was gauged mainly through qualitative data.

Measuring IOs. IO2. Quality of teaching. A short section on quality of teaching for non-Formal was added to the girl survey, to be complemented and corroborated by qualitative data. For non-Formal the indicator should be about facilitators and MCPs mentoring of girls. Effectiveness in teaching literacy and numeracy would not be looked at**.**

Measuring IOs. IO4. Practical Pathways and Partnerships established. This was not assessed in previous evaluation points. At tracer, indicators under this IO were assessed through qualitative data only, and information provided by STAGE in summary form.

Measuring IOs. IO5. Community support for marginalised girls' education. The EE noted one of the indicators was differently worded and included a wider range of actors expressing support. The evaluation framework specifies how the EE would report on this indicator, through quantitative and qualitative data. The approach is unchanged compared to baseline despite the change in wording.

Value for Money assessment. In line with the FM's workshop "incorporating the 'Light' and 'Medium' VfM Analyses into GEC evaluations", the EE has incorporated a light touch VfM analysis into the final evaluation reports – addressing EQ5. This focuses primarily on making use of data monitoring and high-level expenditure data from the Project. Further, girls (direct beneficiaries) as well as indirect beneficiaries were asked to rate different aspects of the programme in terms of perceived usefulness.

8.4 Annex 4 Data collection, quality assurance and analysis protocols

Enumerators and training. The EE's data collection partner, JEAVCO/PAB recruited over 115 data collectors to be involved in the CBE and STAGE projects between 2015 to 2022. JEAVCO/PAB engaged 25 enumerators for this final STAGE evaluation point, covering both the Formal endline and non-Formal tracer. All except two had previously worked with JEAVCO/PAB on STAGE. In selecting enumerators, extra consideration was given to those with qualitative data collection experience. Prior to engaging enumerators for the STAGE assignment, the data collection partner undertook pre-appointment checks including interviews, identification and qualification checks, reference checks and police checks.

Of the 25 enumerators, eight were female and 17 were male. All of the enumerators that undertook the qualitative data collection participated in the STAGE baseline or midline qualitative data collection which gave them prior experience on qualitative data collection, and they were led by those amongst them that also have experience from earlier CBE projects.

Building on the training provided for the pilot, baselines and midline, all data collectors participated in a three-day training programme. The training programme was revised and strengthened in response to data collection challenges experienced at Formal baseline and midline and included an introduction to the STAGE project and Evaluation Design, Data Collection tools and protocols, Quality Assurance processes, and Safeguarding and Ethics. Additionally, simulation exercises were included for data collectors to practice administering each of the tools.

Safeguarding training included definitions, ethical guidelines, respondents with disabilities, accommodations for respondents with disabilities, do no harm principles, anti-slavery and human trafficking, bribery and corruption and reporting concerns. Enumerators provided programme and whistleblowing details to caregivers.

The training was delivered by the JEAVCO/PAB leads, with remote support from the DT-Global Evaluation team. In lieu of attending in person, DT-Global team recorded video presentations for training sessions and joined remotely to answer questions.

The training on quantitative data collection tools involved the following:

Life Skills Assessment:

- Introduction to Life Skills questionnaire.
- Explanation of the types of questions and how to administer them using the survey software.
- Enumerator practice session
- Feedback from training team on accuracy of enumerators' recording of practice questions.
- Piloting new questions on quantitative instruments

Quantitative Household Survey:

- Introduction to Household Survey and modules
- Explanation of the types of questions and how to administer them using the survey software.

The training on qualitative data collection tools involved the following:

- Purpose of qualitative data collection.
- Good practice in qualitative data collection.
- Introduction to each tool.
- Enumerator practice session.
- Use of cohort lists for identifying girls in sample, and procedures for selecting alternates

Data Quality Assurance. Processes were reviewed and strengthened following baseline data collection and were maintained for this tracer data collection.

While in the field, data collectors reported any inconsistencies with the sample and tools via their assigned coordinator to the JEAVCO/PAB headquarters team. The team, including DT-Global, also used a mobile platform, WhatsApp, to communicate daily and raise concerns. By raising minor concerns and responses via a shared platform, the team was able to respond to immediate concerns while also sharing knowledge with all data collectors, who may be in a similar situation or may face it later.

Quantitative data collected was submitted to the JEAVCO/PAB I.T Department on a daily basis. On receipt, the data was checked for completeness and relevance (response recorded as expected), and clarifications were sought from any data collectors, as needed. Supervisors checked progress daily, specifically, the required number of persons interviewed, and a sample of the data entered. Where the database administrator had queries on specific data points they communicated with supervisors, who then worked with enumerators to identify if there was an error and, where appropriate, submit corrections.

Additionally, the uploaded data was downloaded by the EE Quantitative expert periodically to identify any systemic issues with the data. This also helped to identify which teams were and were not promptly submitting data onto the secure servers.

Qualitative data collected was transcribed by enumerators and audited by groups of enumerators with the requisite language skills before submission to JEAVCO/PAB headquarters. Data Collectors were requested to share their first transcription with Supervisors and EE within a few days of it being collected. This was so quality could be monitored and so the EE could provide timely feedback and guidance to data collectors, as needed. Subsequent transcripts were audited by enumerators and quality assured by the JEAVCO/PAB headquarters team before being submitted to DT Global for analysis. Clarifications were sought from enumerators via JEAVCO/PAB, as needed.

Data collection. The data was collected through three sources: (1) the learning assessments using Tangerine software, (2) the survey and life skills data through a Survey Solutions tool; (3) registering school attendance through the Survey Solutions tool in a sub-sample of selected schools.

Quantitative data collection for both Learning Tests and Household Survey took place between 02nd and 10th August 2022. Qualitative data was planned to be collected during the same time, however there were some delays due to the process involved in transcribing the interviews (first by hand, then electronically). The enumerators were assigned to areas based on their language skills. There were further delays in submitting all transcripts to DT Global, all qualitative data collection transcriptions were completed by 2nd September 2022.

Data cleaning and storage. Once enumerators entered data into their tablets, data was uploaded to secure servers when the tablet could access a mobile cellular network. Learning data, which was collected using the software Tangerine, were stored separately from household surveys, which were collected using Survey Solutions. The enumerator teams and the Quantitative expert undertook an iterative process of cross-checking and cleaning. Once data collection was completed, final datasets were securely downloaded and stored as encrypted files on a password-protected hard drive. Both the household survey and the learning assessments were standardised and encoded. For each participant in the sample, the household survey and the learning data were matched together using their unique identification numbers. Analytical files were de-identified and names and confidential information were stored separately. In addition, the survey data were matched to the original participants' lists used to populate the sample to ensure fidelity. When identification numbers did not match, enumerators and the data collection team were contacted for corrections.

Qualitative data was recorded using the audio record function of data collectors' phones. The data collectors worked in pairs, one recording the interview and the other administering the questions. Notes were taken where appropriate by the data collector administering the questionnaire. The data collectors then transcribed and translated the data within word documents. Enumerators audited transcriptions which were then quality assured by JEAVCO/PAB headquarters team before submission to the EE.

Data analysis. All statistical analysis was completed using the software package Stata/IC 16. Several sets of variables have specific calculation criteria described in the Leave No Girl Behind (LNGB) documentation, including how the

Washington Group questions are used to create a binary definition of disability for each disability domain,[89] and how learning assessments are to be calculated (especially treatment of correct words per minute). All requirements were followed as per the LNGB Guidelines. Key results, including EGRA overall and subtask scores, EGMA overall and subtask scores, and life skills overall and subtask scores are reported as the average percentage correct. The only exception to this are the EGRA Oral Reading Fluency scores, which are reported as the average correct words per minute, with over 100 correct words per minute rounded down to 100.

Qualitative transcripts were coded by the EE using Excel. Codes were based on EQs and Logframe Indicators, this allowed data to be sorted and findings identified in a way to complement the quantitative data. The EE found most of the transcripts to be of good quality, with sufficiently detailed responses. The incidence of transcripts with short responses of insufficient detail was significantly reduced compared to baseline data collection.

Adaptations for girls with disability. To reduce barriers related to disabilities, only large-print materials were used for the assessments. In addition, enumerators were given instruction to repeat (and reword on repetition) instructions as necessary and as often as needed to ensure clarity. Breaks were offered to respondents at multiple points during the interviews. To minimise burden on test-takers, skip logic was used such that students who could not complete the simpler version of a subtask were not asked to complete a more complex version.

[89] It should be noted for this evaluation point a shortened version of the Washington Group disability questions was used, eliminating the binary definition of disability.

8.5 Annex 5 Characteristics and Barriers

Not applicable.

8.6 Annex 6 Learning Outcome Data Tables

Not applicable

8.7 Annex 7 Logframe and Medium-Term Response Plan Output Monitoring Framework

ABBAligned Logframe-NFT.xls

8.8 Annex 8 Beneficiaries Tables

Direct Beneficiaries

Non-Formal track: 15-19-year-old out of school teenage mothers and other marginalised girls living in the Central, Volta, and Eastern regions. 10.9% of girls in the Volta region have never attended school and the region also has the highest proportion of girls aged 15-19 with disabilities. Identified districts are rural with subsistence agricultural activities, resulting in limited economic opportunities and employable skills for girls. The proportion of girls aged 15-19 who are mothers is highest in the Central (21.3%) and Volta regions (22.1%) with Eastern region at 16.8%. 8-12% in these regions are married.

Selection: In collaboration with the district authorities, STAGE visited communities to conduct initial entry and animation exercises to gather a broad base of support for project implementation. Consultations were held with traditional leadership and opinion leaders to outline key objectives and other implementation arrangements. Working with District Assembly girls' education and gender officers, initial community-wide sensitisation on girls' education was organised to lay the groundwork for the identification and selection of girls.

STAGE held planning meetings with key stakeholders to set up, review, and agree on the specific criteria for the selection of the girls using a targeted approach. Key criteria for selection included the following:

- age (10-19 years),
- educational level,
- parental income/livelihood measures,
- marital status,
- girls who are pregnant or teen mothers,
- girls with any form of disability, and
- fostered girls.

Community-level meetings provided a forum for the initial identification of girls that meet these criteria and local systems of communication were used to ensure that the beneficial opportunity for participation in this programme was made widely known within the selected communities. Once identified, STAGE conducted home visits to verify cases, better understand the needs of girls, and begin training families and girls to gain momentum for programme entrance.[90]

Table 24 – Summary of direct Project participants

Direct beneficiary numbers	Total figures
Total number of girls reached in cohort 2	3890 girls in cohort 2 (NF), an average of 27 per community
Total number of girls expected to reach by end of project	8769 NF girls
Education level	**Proportion of total direct beneficiaries (%)**
Never been to school	2723
Been to school but dropped out	1128
Could not answer directly	39
Age banding (The age bandings used should be appropriate to the ToC)	**Proportion of total direct beneficiaries (%)**

[90] See Annex 5 for External Evaluator comment on selection process.

15 to 19	3890

Table 25 – Indirect beneficiary groups

Group	Interventions received	Total number reached for cohort 1
Boys	• Peer education training • Information on Behavioral Change Campaign (BCC) • Training in communication skills (gender, self-esteem, safeguarding)	396 (3 boys per community x 132 NF communities)
ALP Facilitators	• Gender, Inclusive pedagogy, Safeguarding and Inclusion, life skills, ASER assessment training • 6 – 9-month continuous professional support from supervisors and WEI teaching and learning team	132 ALP facilitators
Community members	• Public BCC campaigns on gender issues and safeguarding	90,000

8.9 Annex 9 External Evaluator's Inception Report


Annex 7.pdf

8.10 Annex 10 Quantitative and Qualitative Data Collection Tools

With a view to reducing evaluation costs and keeping information collected relevant, the data collection tools will undergo a review and will be approved by STAGE/FM prior to launching the data collection. The following table presents the tools administered to each track, and a summary of anticipated changes.

Table 26 – Quantitative and Qualitative data collection tools

	Tool	Formal	non-Formal	Anticipated changes/review
Quant Tools	Literacy Assessment (EGRA) (Girls)	✔		N/A
	Mathematics Assessment (EGMA) (Girls)	✔		N/A
	Life Skills Tool (Girls)		✔	N/A
	Girls' Survey	✔	✔	Streamlining/deleting some sections. Delete: - COVID-19 - Employment for Formal - Reduce/edit quality of teaching for non-Formal Add: - Transition questions for non-Formal on IGAs - rating activities (for VfM)
	Primary Caregiver Survey	✔	✔	Streamline/deleting some sections Delete: - STAGE contribution to reducing barriers section - Life Skill's assessment for Formal girls - COVID-19
	Household Head Survey	✔	✔	Streamline
Qual Tools	Overall			- Tailor tools more towards endline and 'what worked' - Add further sustainability questioning
	Girl KII	✔	✔	- Streamline and improve life skills questions - Add sensitive questions around school safety (incl. corporal punishment prevalence)
	Girl FGD			Deleted
	Boys KII			Deleted
	Caregiver KII	✔	✔	- Streamline and improve life skills questions
	Teacher KII	✔		- Add questions around school safety (incl. corporal punishment prevalence)
	Head Teacher KII	✔		- Add questions around school safety (incl. corporal punishment prevalence)
	Facilitators KII	✔	✔	New tool
	MCPs KII		✔	New tool
	Local Leaders	✔	✔	
	Local Authority Members			Deleted
	DSWOss[1]/District Actors KII	✔	✔	New tool
	National Actors KII (NVTI, CEA/NFED, & MoE tbc)	✔	✔	New tool

	Downstream Partner KII	✔	✔	New tool

Learning Tests

No changes have been made to the tests or administration modality compared to baseline. No modifications were made for girls with disabilities.

Enumerators administered all quantitative tools orally and recorded responses electronically. All instructions and items were given in the language of preference of the respondent (typically their mother tongue), with the exception of the listening comprehension and dictation sentences of the literacy assessment which were always given in the language of assessment (the language that will be used in ALPs training in that location). The learning assessments included paper supplements for test-takers to interact with (such as passages to read or lists of numbers). This section provides an overview of the quantitative tools for this midline.

Languages: Both learning assessments were translated into the language of instruction used by the STAGE programme in their community (which is presumably the same as language spoken in the home of the girl).[91] The languages included in the midline were: Dagaare, Kasem, Kusal, and Likpakpaaln. All assessments were designed in English, and then translated to the six languages. As mentioned above, instructions and items were given in the language of preference of the respondent (typically their mother tongue). The items in the EGRA were all written in the language of assessment, and accommodations made for differences in alphabets, letter, and word frequency. This resulted in slight differences in length of the oral reading passages: however, because scoring is calculated as correct words per minute, the different number of items does not affect the calculation of scores.

Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA): The EGRA was based on the standardised international assessment and modified slightly to ensure appropriateness for the respondent population. It consists of five sections:

Table 27 – EGRA subtasks

Subtask		Timed
1.	Letter Sound Identification	60 sec.
2.	Familiar Word Reading	60 sec.
3.	Oral Reading Passage	60 sec.
4.	Reading Comprehension	Untimed
5.	Dictation	Untimed

The Letter Sound Identification and Familiar Word Reading subtasks consist of grids of letters and words, and test-takers were asked to read as many of them as they could in a minute. For the Oral Reading Passage, test-takers were given a short narrative passage to read and asked to read aloud to the end. After 60 seconds had elapsed, the enumerator marked how many words were correctly read in that period. Test-takers could finish reading the story. Reading Comprehension asked five questions about the Oral Reading Passage story. Finally, the enumerator read a sentence slowly aloud, and asked the test-taker to write it down. The timed subtasks are scored according to the number of items correct per minute.[92] The untimed subtasks are scored as a percentage of the total number of items. Translation resulted in slightly different word counts of the passages and dictation, depending on the language of assessment. Because scoring is completed as correct words per minute or percentages, this increases comparability of scores.

Skip Logic. Each subtask is progressively more difficult than the previous, so if a test-taker is unable to complete ability on one subtask they do not need to continue to the successive tasks. Each subtask had a minimum standard

[91] Because differences in language are inherently tied to different social, geographical differences, it is not possible to untie them strictly with the baseline data. For example, it is not possible to untangle differences in learning assessments between Kusaal and Dagaare speakers based on where they live, what language they speak, what their language of instructions are or the social and economic differences between their communities live. It should be noted that there were only 8 cases in the Formal interviews and 10 cases in the non-Formal interviews where languages of instruction and spoken at home were different which doesn't imply a significant gap in the quantitative data collected by the evaluation, but few outliers compared with the overall sample.

[92] Per the FM template guidelines, all subtasks excluding oral reading fluency were calculated as percentages of the total items. Oral Reading Fluency was calculated as correct words per minute, which includes measuring the total number of correct answers divided by the amount of time tested, according to the Tangerine software. For example, if a student read 25 correct answers and completed the exercise in 20 seconds, their ORF score would be 75cwpm. In cases where students read more than 100 cwpm, their scores were rounded to 100, to ensure the entire range of scores spanned from 0 to 100.

required to continue to the next subtask. This minimises the burden on test-takers struggling to complete the assessment. For example, test-takers who could not read any of the first 10 letters on Subtask 1 were not asked to continue with the assessment. Within each subtask, students were encouraged to continue to the next item if they could not read a letter or word within 3 seconds.

Table 28 – EGRA untimed subtasks

Subtask		Minimum Proficiency to Continue
1.	Letter Sound Identification	Read 1 or more letter on the first line (10 items)
2.	Familiar Word Reading	Read 1 or more words correctly on the first line (10 items)
3.	Oral Reading Passage	Read 1 or more words correctly on the first line (5 items)
4.	Reading Comprehension	Read 1 or more words correctly in first sentence (9-12 items, depending on language)
5.	Dictation	Final subtask: no minimum needed.

Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA). The EGMA consisted of 7 subtasks.

Table 29 – EGMA subtasks

Subtask		Timed
1.	Number Identification	60 Sec.
2.	Missing Number	Untimed
3A.	Addition: Level 1	60 Sec.
3B.	Addition: Level 2	Untimed
4A.	Subtraction: Level 1	60 Sec.
4B.	Subtraction: Level 2	Untimed
5	Word Problems	Untimed

The Number Identification subtask followed a similar design as the first two subtasks in the EGRA. The Missing Number subtask showed a succession of numbers following a pattern, and asked students to fill in a missing number in the pattern. In the Level 1 Addition and Level 1 Subtraction subtasks, test-takers were given 60 seconds to correctly complete up to 20 questions of addition or subtraction of two one-digit or two-digit numbers. If students correctly completed at least one Level 1 question, they continued to the Level 2 questions, which included addition of up to four-digit numbers. Responses were not timed on Level 2 questions. On the Word Problem subtask, students were slowly read six-word problems of increasing difficulty, from simple addition to multiplication and division.

Skip Logic: Students were not asked the Level 2 questions if they could not complete any of the Level 1 questions, but there were no other cases where subtasks were skipped. Within each subtask, if a child stopped on an item for five or more seconds, they were asked to continue to the next item.

Modifications for girls with disabilities: No modifications were made for girls with disabilities.

Caregivers' life skills assessment

Caregivers' perceptions of girls' acquisition and utilisation of life skills is an average score of caregivers' opinions on to what extent the girl:

- knows how to look after the environment and keep it clean
- knows how to spend money sensibly
- knows about the dangers of violence that women face

- knows good water and sanitation hygiene – how to wash her hands before eating and after the toilet, to only drink clean water
- knows about women's menstruation, use and cleaning of sanitary pads
- knows about how women get pregnant and how to avoid getting pregnant
- knows about sexually transmitted diseases and how to avoid sexually transmitted diseases
- feels she has good personal qualities and is a person of value
- is confident expressing her feelings and opinions and talking in front of others

Each response was marked on a five-point Likert Scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. If a caregiver opted to not respond or said they did not know, those questions were omitted from calculating the average. It is reported as the mean of all items responded to by the caregiver, and is calculated on a 0 to 100 score, where 100 would mean caregivers responded Strongly Agree to all questions.

The relative frequency of each response is shown in the tables, along with the mean score for each question, where Strongly Agree (SA) is scored as 5, and Strongly Disagree (SD) is scored as 1 (with D=Disagree, N=Neither Agree/Disagree, A=Agree).

Note accompanying STAGE quantitative tool review – Formal endline and non-Formal tracer

As the external evaluation of STAGE has changed in scope, and as we are at the final evaluation point in the project, STAGE survey tools have been reviewed considerably. As a general principle, we have streamlined the questionnaires and only kept necessary information to report on evaluation questions, on agreed indicators and where necessary to make comparisons with previous evaluation points. Further, we have attempted to keep questions in the girls' survey tool, removing any duplicate information from the caregivers', unless needed/appropriate. We have added considerably on sections/areas important to explore at endline/tracer.

As mentioned during scoping discussions, another aspect of the review comprised revisiting STAGE subgroups for recording, analysing and reporting. This note presents a summary of changes and our proposal for STAGE subgroups for this evaluation point.

Table 30 – Summary of changes

Section	Formal	non-Formal
Head of Household survey	Deleted – redundant. Very few questions moved into (and adapted) the caregiver's survey	Deleted – redundant. Very few questions moved into (and adapted) the caregiver's survey
Caregiver survey	Pre-survey added from HoH Deleted – as agreed – **STAGE contribution to reducing barriers** and questions on financial support from STAGE (see specific comment on tool). (Original barriers questions kept for Formal). Deleted girl's **employment section** from caregiver's **Caregiver's support to girls' education:** no change from midline **Community support to girls' education/empowerment**. No change added some questions on animation sessions. **Life skills.** Deleted as agreed **HH Economic situation**. No change **Child functioning**: No change. See section below on disability questions' concerns and recommendation to use Washington Group short version **Covid-19: deleted.** Not relevant any longer- other sections are priority, considering FM eval principles **Recontact:** deleted questions not relevant any longer	Pre-survey added from HoH Deleted specific questions on school enrolment/attendance Deleted **barriers** as all about school – Info on barriers to vocational education/economic empowerment obtained from other questions (see Section on Subgroups below). Deleted – as agreed – STAGE contribution to reducing barriers. Deleted **employment section**. Inserted comprehensive transition section in girls' survey. **Caregiver's support to girls' education**: a couple of questions were removed as not relevant to non-Formal **STAGE SUPPORT to girls' education/empowerment**: added section, to understand caregiver's view on STAGE support **Community support to girls' education/empowerment.** No change on questions on support to education; new questions added on support to girls' empowerment, and community animation sessions. **Life skills**: No change **HH Economic situation**. No change **Child functioning**: Only 3 questions added at the end relating to disability and work. However, see section below on disability questions'

Section	Formal	non-Formal
		concerns and recommendation to use Washington Group short version **Covid-19: deleted.** Not relevant any longer- other sections are priority, considering FM eval principles **Recontact:** deleted questions not relevant any longer
Girls' survey	**Participation to programme**. Questions added on attendance to the ALP and VST, including the dates of ALP **Transition.** Questions added to capture 'transitioned but not sustained'. Request project to review carefully, also considering end of academic year and start of new one. Is enrolled transitioned, even if not attending? **View of education** questions. No change **Employment**. Deleted as agreed – not a focus of evaluation and reasons for not being enrolled. Only kept three questions to detect subgroup. Also included employment in question asking for reasons for not being enrolled. **Girl's experience at SCHOOL.** Quality of teaching questions not changed. Two questions added. Reference to ALP deleted and only left school. **Programme support received.** Questions added on transition pack, usefulness of ALP/STAGE components (VfM – included if using life skills), other support received. **Community support to girls' education/empowerment**. No change, but two questions added on Household chores. **Covid-19: deleted.** Not relevant any longer- other sections are priority, considering FM eval principles **Recontact:** deleted questions not relevant any longer	**Participation to programme**. Questions added on attendance to the ALP and VST, including the dates of both ALP and VST, the area, and 4 questions asked about motivation/goal for attending ALP/VST. Deleted questions on views on schooling, never used before/not priority here. **Transition**. Main section added to non-Formal tracer. The section includes: current work/IGA and characteristics (based on applicable ILO decent employment); whether there are other concurrent IGAs/work (less detailed); if no current work/IGAs, whether they worked after end of ALP/VST; safety section; whether they are attending further VST; overall earning position/economic empowerment. **Programme support received**. Questions added on IGAs support, usefulness of ALP/VST/STAGE components (VfM), other support received. **Community support to girls' education/empowerment**. two questions added on Household chores + 4 questions on money management. **Recontact:** deleted questions not relevant any longer

Section	Formal	non-Formal
Life skills, girl's questionnaire	Deleted – as agreed.	As part of streamlining and given focus on transition for non-Formal, we have analysed findings from previous evaluation point, examining variation/interesting results, ceiling effects, redundancy, burden on respondent (over 50 questions for Money management). Only few sections retained, the most useful/with high variability among subgroups. SRR, GBV, self-efficacy It is not possible to cut questions from sections, as the index would not be comparable anymore.

STAGE Subgroups for endline and tracer evaluation

Previous STAGE Evaluation non-Formal track evaluations, outcomes were required to be analysed for 38 different subgroups. To streamline the analysis and allow the flexibility to focus reporting on interesting and insightful results, the 2022 evaluations will reduce the number of subgroups of study. The plan below outlines 32 subgroups and characteristics for analysis. Previous subgroups will either be analysed and included as part of the mandatory subgroups for reporting, recorded in the survey but their results will only be reported if interesting results are found, or removed from data collection tools and no longer be included in the report.

Both Tracks, language and region

The language and regional makeup cannot be modified for the final evaluation, because doing so would render results incomparable to previous evaluation points. Analysis by region and language has proven important at previous STAGE evaluation points.

Table 31 – Region-language pairings

Language	Region	Baseline (%)	non-Formal Endline/Tracer
Akuapim Twi	Eastern	11.3%	Analyse
Akuapim Twi	Oti	16.3%	Analyse
Dagaare	Upper West	11.3%	Analyse
Fante	Central	20.0%	Analyse
Kasem	Upper East	8.8%	Analyse
Likpakpaaln	Northern	20.8%	Analyse
Likpakpaaln	Oti	11.3%	Analyse

Both Tracks, disability

There have been considerable challenges and concerns about the validity of STAGE evaluation disability data. The results of the Washington Group questions have not been internally consistent: among the Formal cohort, of the 78 girls who were identified as having a disability at baseline in 2019, 73 of them did not qualify as having a disability when asked same Washington Group questions at in 2021.[93] While this partially can be explained by the way Washington Group questions are translated from four levels of difficulty into a binary definition of disability, the results were also identified as out of step with STAGE's intentional recruitment of beneficiaries with disabilities from the beginning. Further, the 24-question Washington Group long form (comprised of 51 sub questions) is a burden on caregivers. However, due to reporting interests from the FM, these questions will remain in the final version of the tool. However, the **external evaluator recommends that the short version of the Washington Group questions is used to reduce response burdens** and to potentially get results that are more consistent with rates found by the Project.

Table 32 – Disability subgroups

Domain of difficulty	NF cohort 2 Baseline 2021 (%)
Seeing	0.8%
Hearing	0.8%
Walking	0.6%
Self-care	0.3%
Communication[94]	0.3%
Learning[2]	0.5%
Remembering[2]	0.3%
Concentrating [2]	0.3%
Accepting Change[2]	0.5%
Controlling Behaviour[2]	1.1%
Making Friends[2]	1.1%
Anxiety	2.8%
Depression	2.5%
One disability domain (A)	5.5%
Multiple disability domains (B)	2.5%
Girls with disabilities overall (A+B)	**8.0%**

Both Tracks, characteristics and barriers

The original characteristics list was determined at the original 2020 baseline for both the formal and non-Formal tracks, with little variation between the two tracks. Per request, those who were married and under 15 were treated as a separate reporting group from those married overall; similarly, those employed and under 15 were analysed at previous points separately. However, even at the 2021 evaluation point, there were only three Formal track girls who were married and under 15, and only one non-Formal track girl who was married and under 15.

[93] Because the 2019 and 2021 evaluations studied different non-Formal track cohorts, no similar comparison can be made.
[94] As set forth in the original FM templates, Learning, Remembering, and Concentrating disability domains will be aggregated for outcome reporting. Accepting Change, Controlling Behaviour and Making Friends will also be aggregated into a single group.

For non-Formal, while marital status, and work status (<15) will still be collected, they will not be analysed. For the non-Formal, while employment was a subgroup for understanding context at baseline, it is an outcome and will be subject to a separate and more thorough subject analysis for endline.

For the Formal, non-enrolled girls will be asked though if they are not enrolled because of work, and few very basic questions retained to detect employment (the original agreement during scoping discussions was to delete the whole employment section altogether). Similarly, marital status, and work status (<15) will be collected but not analysed.

The tables below present a summary of how characteristics would be treated at this evaluation point.

Table 33 – non-Formal characteristics

Characteristic	NF cohort 2 Baseline 2021 (%)	non-Formal Endline/Tracer
Is a Mother	50.7%	Analyse
Married	21.1%	Analyse
HH unable to meet basic needs[95]	7.8%	Analyse
High Chore Burden (Half a day or more)	33.1%	Analyse
Currently employed	1.4%	Transition Outcome, not subgroup
Married under 15	0.16%	Record
Lives with neither parent	21.3%	Record
Employed and under 15	0.16%	Record
1+ hours to primary school	5.2%	Remove

Table 34 – Formal characteristics

Characteristic	Formal baseline 2020 (%)	Formal midline 2021 (%)	Formal Endline
Is a Mother	1.6%	1%	Analyse
Married	0.9	1%	Analyse
HH unable to meet basic needs[96]	35.6%	24.2%	Analyse
High Chore Burden (Half a day or more)	40.8%	4.5%	Analyse
Currently employed	8%	4.3%	Analyse
Married under 15	0.9%	1%	Record
Lives with neither parent	3.4%	3.3%	Record (at midline, little variability of this subgroup)
Employed and under 15	7.7%	3.6%	Record
1+ hours to primary (secondary at endline) school	13.6%	14.5%	Record/reported if interesting results. Already captured by travel barrier.

Non-Formal, caregiver-reported reasons for not enrolling in Formal education

The caregiver-reported reasons for not enrolling were added after the original baseline design, as the original template required reporting on both characteristics (discussed above) and barriers. During baselines, caregivers reported them as reasons girls were not enrolled in traditional education. These 28 reasons were combined into six categories of barriers: Economic (Work or Costs), Travel (Safety or Distance from primary school) Disability (School cannot meet disability-related needs), Social Norms (Disinterest by Parent/Girl), School (Unsafe/Teacher Mistreats/Refused Entry),

and Demographic (Age/Pregnant/Parent/Married). A mixture of new questions and already used questions will be used to identify if these are serving as barriers to successful transition.

Table 35 – Barrier changes for non-Formal

Barrier	Measurement
Economic (Work or Costs)	• Poverty Status (household ability to meet basic needs) • High Chore Burden preventing work
Travel (Safety or Distance from primary school)	• Girl does not feel safe at work or in community • Outcome Variables measuring workplace safety
Disability (School cannot meet disability-related needs)	• Disability status analysed as characteristic • Caregiver reports a disability prevents or limits ability to work
Social Norms (Disinterest by Parent/Girl)	• Low Community Support (based on caregiver questions about community) • Low Caregiver Support (if not own caregiver)
School (Unsafe/Teacher Mistreats/Refused Entry)	• Safety and treatment by VST craftsperson
Demographic (Age/Pregnant/Parent/Married)	• Age, pregnancy status, parental status, and marital status

Formal, caregiver-reported reasons for not enrolling in Formal education

As the barriers relate to school enrolment/attendance, we will keep them as they are. Further we have introduced a question asking to non-enrolled girls what prevented them for being enrolled.

Non-Formal, age

The 2021 baseline evaluation reported separately on girls aged 12 to 15 and those age 16 to 19. The mean age of those surveyed at baseline was 17.3. Given that data will be collected 18 months after baseline data and that the age of majority in Ghana is 18, we recommend reporting on those under 18 and those 18 or older. Based on 2021 data, approximately 40 percent of girls will be under 18 and 60 percent will be 18 or older.

Table 36 – Age, non-Formal

Age (in February 2021)	NF cohort 2 Baseline 2021 (%)
Age 10 (%)	0.2%
Aged 12 (%)	0.3%
Aged 13 (%)	0.6%
Aged 14 (%)	3.6%
Aged 15 (%)	11.9%

Aged 16 (%)	13.9%
Aged 17 (%)	13.3%
Aged 18 (%)	33.8%
Aged 19 (%)	19.4%
Aged 20 (%)	1.4%

Formal, age

The 2021 midline evaluation reported separately on girls aged 8 to 11, 12 to 15 and those age 16 to 19. The mean age of those surveyed at baseline was 11.6. Given that data will be collected 30 months after baseline data, we recommend reporting on those 8 to 13, 14 to 17 and > 18 (smaller group). Based on 2020 and 2021 data, between 25 and 35% will be 13 or under, around 60-65% between 14 and 17, and the rest >18. Alternatively, the older group could be incorporated into the one 14 – 17.

Table 37 – Age, non-Formal

Age	Formal February 2020	Formal February 2021 (%)
Age 8 (%)	2.6%	0.9%
Age 9 (%)	3.5%	2.3%
Age 10 (%)	29.1%	7.9%
Aged 12 (%)	12.3%	14.8%
Aged 13 (%)	19.1%	19.6%
Aged 14 (%)	17.9%	20.6%
Aged 15 (%)	12.8%	15%
Aged 16 (%)	1.7%	12.7%
Aged 17 (%)	0.4%	3.6%
Aged 18 (%)		1.9%
Aged 19 (%)		0.6%
Aged 20 (%)		0.1%

Census questions on disability endorsed by the Washington Group

1. Do you have difficulty seeing, even if wearing glasses? A. No – no difficulty b. Yes – some difficulty c. Yes – a lot of difficulty d. Cannot do at all

2. Do you have difficulty hearing, even if using a hearing aid? A. No- no difficulty b. Yes – some difficulty c. Yes – a lot of difficulty d. Cannot do at all

3. Do you have difficulty walking or climbing steps? A. No- no difficulty b. Yes – some difficulty c. Yes – a lot of difficulty d. Cannot do at all

4. Do you have difficulty remembering or concentrating? A. No – no difficulty b. Yes – some difficulty c. Yes – a lot of difficulty d. Cannot do at all

5. Do you have difficulty (with self-care such as) washing all over or dressing? A. No – no difficulty b. Yes – some difficulty c. Yes – a lot of difficulty d. Cannot do at all

6. Using your usual (customary) language, do you have difficulty communicating, for example understanding or being understood? A. No – no difficulty b. Yes – some difficulty c. Yes – a lot of difficulty d. Cannot do at al

8.11 Annex 11 Qualitative transcripts

Interview Tool for: Girls aged 15-19, non-Formal track (Endline) Girl 1

Key details

File record (please fill in as much information as possible before the interview)	
Region ID:	NORTHERN
Community ID:	REDACTED
Household ID:	REDACTED
Rural Without School? (Y/N):	Yes
Disability? (Y/N):	No
Interview details:	
Interviewer ID:	REDACTED
Date (dd/mm/year) of interview:	01/08/2022
Location:	KPANDAI
Language:	LIKPAKPALN

NOTE: THE WRITINGS IN BLUE ARE THE RESPONSES FROM THE RESPONDENT

A.

Basic information:

- How old were you at your last birthday? I was 19 on my last birthday years
- Are you married? Yes/No

No

- Do you have any children? Yes/No [If yes, how many?

No

- Did you complete both ALP and the VST? If so, when?

Yes. I completed about six months ago

EQ1: Experiences of ALPs/VST Classes (Note: The girls may know it as 'Afternoon Classes' and 'Vocational Training')

1. Before the current ALPS (afternoon classes) and your current vocational training, had you ever attended formal school and/or vocational training in the past?

No

a. **If yes,** when and why did you stop? [prompts > *what/who made it hard to continue? Possible barriers to ask about > course finished / school not enjoyable, teachers not nice, transport to difficult /parents wanted you to do something else, school and training not important for me/girls, school for others, too expensive, had to / wanted to do something else myself]*

b. **If no,** you've never attended school, why not? [*prompts on likely barriers i.e.,*

transport too difficult /parents wanted you to do something else, school not important for me/girls, school for others, too expensive, had to / wanted to do something else myself / no trainings offered locally]

Financial difficulties. My parents couldn't afford to send me to school, so they tell me, because of poverty.

2. ***ENUMERATOR: IF GIRL COMPLETED ALP, or ALP and VST:*** Think back to your ALPs classes and VST training. How often were you able to attend ALP classes and VST training? *[every class / some classes /* hardly *any classes / none at all]*

Every class. I never missed a class

a. Think about the times you did not go to class or training, what stopped you? *[prompts on likely barriers i.e., transport too difficult / too expensive / impact on own life / household responsibilities / safety / community attitudes]*

b. Did you notice any particular challenges being experienced for marginalised girls? Who and how/why? *[Prompt for: girls from poor families, girls with disabilities, girls who are pregnant / mothers?]*

Not that I can think of.

c. Was anything done to help you and other girls with attending ALP and VST? *[prompt, if you weren't able to attend in the past what has changed that means you are now able to attend?]*

i. **If yes,** what and was it helpful? Why / why not? *[Prompt for which they felt helped them most: facilitator support / support from STAGE/ / bike banks / bursaries / common funds / learning to make sanitary pads / catch-up classes / household visits]*

3. ***ENUMERATOR: IF GIRL did NOT complete ALP/VST:*** Why were you not able to complete the ALP and/or VST? What could have helped you continue of the support received?

EQ3: Transition to Further Vocational Training, Employment, or Self-Employment

4. Are you currently working for pay or have you worked for pay at some point in the last 12 months? (*Clarify to respondent that paid employment includes A) paid-for work (inc. permanent, temporary, seasonal)*
B) Self-employment in income generating activity (activity for which the girl is the main responsible person, e.g., owning a small shop, sewing, etc) C) Work in household income-generating activities, e.g., work on the household farm)

no

a. **If no,** have you attended further vocational training?

Yes, I have attended but the material they gave us finished and we aren't able to get it anyway. I now go to farm

i. **If yes,** in what area? For how long? What is your goal for when you finish?

I went to learn Sandal's decoration, and a bit more of hairdressing for three months. I wish to be able to make and sell sandals during market days and perhaps open a shop where I can add hairdressing to the selling of sandals.

b. **If no,** why do you think it has not been possible to transition to work / further vocational training? *[prompts on likely barriers i.e., transport too difficult / parents wanted you to do something else / employment not important for me / too expensive / none offered or available]*

i. Is there anything that would have helped you gain employment or further training? **If yes**, what?

Yes, the availability of materials with a low cost so that we can buy them.

c. **If you are not working currently, but have worked at some point in the last 12 months**, could you describe what work it was, for how long you had it, and why did you stop?

d. **If yes, you are working currently,** what kind of work is it? Are you the main responsible for your business or do you work for someone else? *[prompt for type of job / location / permanent or temporary / hours]*

i. How and what are you paid / do you gain? ii. Do you feel this pay is fair? Why / why not iii. Do you feel safe?

5. **IF THEY COMPLETED ALP/VST (WARM UP Q 5):** How did you find the process of transitioning from ALP/VST to work/further vocational training? How long did it take? What support did you receive, for how long? *Prompt: business coaching/mentoring / linking to market/income opportunities / Income generating activity start up fund / purchase of equipment*

After completion they gave us a starter pack and also helped to purchase equipment to enable us work with the skills acquired.

a. To what extent was this support helpful? What, and why / why not? Very helpful, particularly purchase of equipment to enable us work with the skills acquired.

b. Were there any other factors that helped outside of STAGE? Our parents assisted us by giving us permission and time to participate.

c. If you are not working/training or have stopped working/training, what could have been done to help you continue?

6. **IF THEY COMPLETED ALP/VST (WARM UP Q 5):** Is the work you gained after the ALP/VST different from any other work you had before?

It helps

a. I had never worked before ALP/VST

No

b. If so, how? Better/worse/the same: Think about: area, type of job, conditions of pay, safety, satisfaction?

7. **ALL GIRLS:** What is the situation with the labour market and income opportunities in your area? Please provide examples of the types of opportunities. *[probe for whether the market is over-crowded / dominated by men / different opportunities than what she is trained in]*

During market days many people come to Nkwanta and so there is good opportunity to sell some of the local sandals which we make and which is more affordable than the foss (second-hand) shoes which dominate the market presently

a. Are these opportunities equally accessible to both men and women?

Yes, it is an open market men and women can sell their wares without hindrance

b. **If no**, in what ways and why

EQ2: Learning Experience at ALPs and VST (including Life Skills and Training Methods)

8. How did you feel about the ALPS classes you attended? [*Did you like it or not? Why / why not? How was it different to your previous experiences of schooling? Prompts on teaching style / subjects / language of instruction / classmates / lack of corporal punishment]*

Yes, we like it because of the life skills learning, literacy and numeracy which have assisted most of us to able to read and write in our local language and with the life skills learning, we are now able to work with the acquired knowledge to earn some level of income for our living.

a. Where the topics delivered by the facilitator clear and detailed?

Yes

b. What was the most useful thing that you learnt? *[Prompt for: literacy / numeracy / English / life skills]*

Life skills learning and numeracy

c. What could have been improved to make ALPS classes more useful? *[Prompt for: teaching style / subjects / support to get to ALPS classes / support with transitioning to employment/training]*

Support to get ALPs classes and support with transitioning to employment as well as training

9. **ONLY THOSE WHO COMPLETED ALPS:** Following ALPs, did you complete vocational training [VST] with a master craftsperson? **If yes, h**ow did you feel about the training? [*Did you like it or not? Why / why not? How was it different to your previous experiences of schooling/training? Prompts on teaching style / topics / language of instruction / trainees]*

Yes, myself and colleagues all felt emotionally satisfied and very impressed.
The difference was very clear because of the practicalities she used as compare to the training to underwent.

a. Were the topics delivered by the master craftsperson clear and detailed?

Yes

b. Did the course and equipment allow for sufficient practice of the craft?

No

c. What could have been improved to make the training more useful / easier to understand? They should have provided more materials and extended the period of teaching a bit because the life skills acquisition needs time in order to sufficiently adopt the acquired knowledge.

10. Were any of the ALP life skills classes useful outside of school? Which ones, why /why not? *[prompts for classes on environmental issues; disabilities; child and adult rights; money management; GBV; personal hygiene; SPRH; career counselling; self-esteem and self-confidence]*

Yes, we had training on personal hygiene which is helps us to keep the environment clean and also *money management.*

11. Have you noticed any changes in your financial and money management skills since attending the life skills classes? Can you give me examples?

Life skills learning and numeracy has help us know how to management our business and savings.

12. Have you noticed any changes in your confidence? How so?

Yes, with the support of life skills and numeracy I have the confidence to read and write the local language.

13. What steps would you take if you, or someone you know needed to report abuse or corporal punishment from a facilitator or master craftsperson? *[WEI / government reporting mechanisms / hotline]*

I will advise her to report it to the superior officer or to the Assemblyman and further to the chief if it is not dealt with to her satisfaction.

a. How did you learn how to report this? They taught us during the afternoon classes.

14. 14.

a. Have you ever made a report? [*probe for detail if they are comfortable]*

No, because nothing like that has happened to me.

EQ1 and 4: Support for Vocational Training, Employment or Self Employment

15. Since you started the ALP, have the expectations/views of your community changed around girls' economic empowerment, vocational training, and employment? how? *[importance of a job vs family and household responsibilities / type of job / conditions /payment / locations]*

When we started the vocation training classes, people said we will not go far but we said we only want to be educated up to whatever basic level we can, but after completion and started working others regretted for not being part of it, because we have benefited from it a lot of which they wish to be part as they always ask us concerning our working conditions and equipment. We can produce or manufacture all that we were taught in training.

a. How does this compare to the expectations of boys? *[in terms of household work, education, marriage and children]*

b. What helped change these views? *[probe for STAGE community meetings / home visits / exposure to more girls training]*

Life skills learning and numeracy also Support we get from ALPs classes and support with transitioning to employment.

16. Are there any examples of community initiatives to support girls' education, vocational training, or employment?

If yes, what? *[probe for examples: What do the following groups do to support: community leaders / local authorities / religious leaders / traditional leaders / district agencies? Types of possible support to check – financial, training, internships, transport]*

a. How helpful is this support? Is there anything more that could be done?

17. Have your family's views / support on vocational training/economic empowerment changed since you started going to ALPS classes or your new school? how so? *[probe for examples]*

ye s

a. Do they support your brothers/sisters the same, more / less? How? Why do you think this is?

b. If yes, how, and why do you think that is?

c. If no, why?

Future Hopes

18. **FOR THOSE NOT CURRENTLY IN EMPLOYMENT/BUSINESS:** How confident are you that you will have access to income opportunities in the future?

Now if I get work and operate my business continually and have enough money with me, I can save the profit to support myself and family members

a. **If confident,** what has helped this? ALP training and vocational trainings that received.

b. **If not confident**, what more could have been done to support you accessing income opportunities?

19. **FOR THOSE CURRENTLY IN EMPLOYMENT/BUSINESS:** How confident are you that your business or employment will continue in the future? I**f yes,** why?

a. Are there any risks or challenges that you foresee may harm your success?

No, but just the materials shortage might be a hindrance

i. I**f yes,** what and why?

ii. Do you have any ideas of how you could face these challenges or prevent the risks from happening? **If yes,** what?

I may have to go to Hohoe or even to Accra to buy the material when they are in short supply in our area.

Anything else?

Thank you for your time. Do you have any questions about the interview process or anything else to share? No, what I will say is thank you for time you had for us.

End of interview

8.12 Annex 12 Quantitative Datasets, Codebooks and Programs

Submitted separately.

8.13 Annex 13 External Evaluator Declaration

External Evaluator Declaration

Name of project: Strategic Approaches to Girls' Education External Evaluation
Non Formal Tracer

Name of External evaluator and contact information:

DT Global International Development UK LTD

Email: ruth.mcpake@dt-global.com
Address: 64-68 London Road Redhill, Surrey RH1 1LG, United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0)1737 231400
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Names of all members of the evaluation team:

Elena de Besi, DT Global
Katrina Will, DT Global
Sophie Collins, Independent
Andrew Trembley, Independent

_____ (Fazlun Fazlee) certify that the independent evaluation has been conducted in line with the Terms of Reference and other requirements received.

Specifically:

All of the quantitative data was collected independently (Initials: _FF___).

All data analysis was conducted independently and provides a fair and consistent representation of progress (Initials: __FF__).

Data quality assurance and verification mechanisms agreed in the terms of reference with the project have been soundly followed (Initials: _FF___).

The recipient has not fundamentally altered or misrepresented the nature of the analysis originally provided by JEAVCO / PAB (Company) (Initials: _FF___).

All child protection protocols and guidance have been followed (initials: _FF___).

Data has been anonymised, treated confidentially and stored safely, in line with the GEC data protection and ethics protocols (Initials: __FF__).

Fazlun Fazlee

Senior Technical Director, Africa and the Caribbean, DT Global International Development UK LTD

10 November 2022

8.14 Annex 14 STAGE EE non-Formal Cohort 2 Baseline Report

Submitted separately.

8.15 Annex 15 Additional External Evaluation Tables

Quantitative sampling

Table 38 - Sample breakdown by age, baseline and tracer

Age (adapt as required)	Participant girls (baseline)	Actual sample (baseline)	Sample design (tracer)	Actual sample (tracer)
No Age provided (%)	0.3%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%
Aged 12 (%)	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.5%
Aged 13 (%)	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	1.5%
Aged 14 (%)	0.3%	3.6%	0.3%	0.7%
Aged 15 (%)	16.2%	11.9%	0.0%	6.9%
Aged 16 (%)	13.5%	13.9%	0.0%	6.6%
Aged 17 (%)	18.0%	13.3%	10.0%	14.0%
Aged 18 (%)	37.7%	33.8%	11.5%	22.1%
Aged 19 (%)	13.7%	19.4%	16.8%	18.9%
Aged 20 (%)	0.0%	1.4%	39.0%	17.2%
Aged 21 (%)			22.3%	3.9%
Aged 22 (%)				1.5%
Aged 23 (%)				1.0%
Aged 24 (%)				2.2%
Aged 25 (%)				0.2%
Aged 26 (%)				0.7%
Aged 27 (%)				0.2%
Aged 28 (%)				1.7%
Source: Analytical Dataset, N =	**3,238**	**639**	**400**	**407**

Marginalisation characteristics and barriers

Table 39 - Breakdown of disability by severity

	No difficulty	Some difficulty	A lot of difficulty	Cannot do at all	Don't know
Seeing	97.7%	1.8%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Hearing	98.5%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Walking	99.5%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Self-care	98.7%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Communication	97.7%	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Learning	96.5%	3.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Remembering and concentrating	97.0%	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Accepting Change	95.2%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Controlling Behaviour	95.7%	4.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Making Friends	96.0%	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
Source: Evaluation Surveys (N = 399)					

Table 40 - Characteristic subgroup by region, Formal track, baseline and tracer

Characteristic	Akuapim Twi (Eastern)		Akuapim Twi (Oti)		Dagaare (Upper West)		Fante (Central)		Kasem (Upper East)		Likpakpaaln (Northern)		Likpakpaaln (Oti)	
	BN	TR	BN	TR	BN	TR	BN	TR	BN	TR	BN	TR	BN	TR
Mother	37.5 %	62.5 %	75.0 %	85.7 %	50.0 %	50.0 %	70.3 %	63.4 %	41.1 %	71.9 %	31.6 %	23.1 %	38.9 %	52.1 %
Married	9.7 %	8.3 %	13.5 %	22.2 %	51.4 %	47.9 %	3.1 %	6.1 %	42.9 %	62.5 %	24.1 %	16.7 %	23.6 %	35.4 %
Lives with neither parent	29.2 %	22.9 %	11.5 %	20.6 %	41.7 %	52.1 %	17.2 %	7.3 %	32.1 %	53.1 %	18.0 %	9.0 %	12.5 %	37.5 %
HH unable to meet basic needs	0.0 %	8.3 %	0.0 %	3.2 %	5.6 %	2.1 %	10.2 %	11.0 %	14.3 %	37.5 %	13.5 %	19.2 %	9.7 %	0.0 %
High Chore Burden (Half a day or more)	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	42.9 %	47.7 %	2.3 %	8.5 %	28.6 %	68.8 %	86.1 %	85.9 %	87.3 %	16.7 %
Has a disability	1.4 %	2.1 %	5.8 %	7.9 %	1.4 %	8.3 %	6.3 %	3.7 %	16.1 %	3.1 %	9.8 %	1.3 %	16.7 %	0.0 %
Source: Analytical Dataset Caregiver Survey N =	72	48	104	65	73	48	128	86	56	32	134	80	72	48

Table 41 - Barriers to education among non-Formal track cohort 2 girls, baseline

Barrier	Proportion of sample affected by this barrier – Baseline
Economic (Chores or Poverty)	96.2%
Travel or Work Safety	7.7%
Disability-related	16.2%
Social Norms (Disinterest by Parent/Girl)	10.6%
Vocational Skills Training (VST) safety	-
Demographic (Age/Pregnant/Parent/Married)	6.0%
STAGE VST delivery (dissatisfied with one or more aspects of STAGE VST)[97]	-

97 Disagreed with at least one of the following (from Intermediate Outcome Indicator 2): I could easily understand the language of instruction of the VST; I have received individual support/encouragement from the MCP; I had the opportunity to practice skills learnt at

Barrier	Proportion of sample affected by this barrier – Baseline
Source: Analytical Dataset Caregiver Survey: Unenrolled students: Girls no longer in school (Baseline); N	281

Table 42 - Intersectionality of characteristics

Subgroup	Is Mother	Married	Household unable to meet basic needs	High Chore Burden	Lives with neither parent	1+ hours to secondary school
Is Mother	100.0%	95.8%	60.5%	42.4%	87.6%	N/A
Married	40.7%	100.0%	27.9%	31.2%	75.3%	N/A
Household unable to meet basic needs	11.5%	12.5%	100.0%	19.2%	9.3%	N/A
High Chore Burden	24.0%	41.5%	55.8%	100.0%	33.0%	N/A
Lives with neither parent	37.6%	76.0%	20.9%	24.8%	100.0%	N/A
1+ hours to secondary school	0.9%	1.0%	2.3%	2.4%	0.0%	N/A
Source: Evaluation Surveys (N = 399)						
Note: Cells represent proportion of column group that has row characteristic						

Table 43 - Intersectionality of barriers

Subgroup		Is Mother	Married	Household unable to meet basic needs	High Chore Burden	Lives with neither parent	1+ hours to secondary school
Overall		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	N/A
Economic (Chores or Poverty)		27.9%	40.6%	100.0%	100.0%	32.0%	N/A
Travel or Work Safety		14.2%	24.0%	2.3%	16.8%	21.6%	N/A
Disability-Related		5.3%	4.2%	2.3%	2.4%	3.1%	N/A
Social Norms		7.5%	3.1%	4.7%	1.6%	3.1%	N/A
VST Safety		1.3%	4.2%	0.0%	0.8%	4.1%	N/A
Demographic		100.0%	99.0%	60.5%	42.4%	100.0%	N/A
STAGE VST delivery		21.7%	37.5%	18.6%	26.4%	36.1%	N/A
Source: Evaluation Surveys (N = 407)							
Note: Cells represent proportion of column group that has row characteristic							

Transition

Table 44 – Number of months per year and hours per week in which girls work

How many months did you do this work/activity in the past 12 months?	
Response	Percent
2	0.82%

the end of each VST session; The materials/equipment were adequate; There was flexibility in setting up classes at a time/frequency suitable with my schedule; The duration of the VST was sufficient; I felt safe with the MCP I was assigned to.

3	11.44%
4	3.27%
5	8.17%
6	39.51%
7	9.54%
8	17.44%
9	4.90%
10	3.54%
11	1.09%
12	0.27%
When doing this activity, roughly how many hours did you work per week?	
Response	**Percent**
0 - 9 hours	51.23%
10 - 19	12.26%
20 - 29	3.00%
30 - 39	16.62%
40 - 49	8.99%
50 - 59	1.36%
Don't know	6.54%

Table 45 - Duration of current work, by region/language and age

	Months since started this work/activity
Overall	7.7
Eastern Akuapim Twi	7.6
Oti Akuapim Twi	7.5
Upper West Dagaare	7.4
Central Fante	8.0
Upper East Kasem	9.4
Northern Likpakpaaln	7.0
Oti Likpakpaaln	8.0
Age 17 and under	7.4
Age 18 to 19	7.8
Age 20 and over	8.0
Source: Evaluation Surveys (N = 302)	

Table 46 – Primary industry of work by subgroup

	Agricultural/livestock/forestry/fishery worker selling produce	Agricultural/livestock/forestry/fishery worker using produce for subsistence on	Sales and service worker e.g., vendor at street, shop, market, or stall, domestic	Artisan, craft and related trade workers e.g., potter, weaver, carpenter, leather	Other
Overall	38.3%	13.1%	23.5%	23.2%	1.9%
Disability Overall	28.6%	14.3%	28.6%	28.6%	0.0%
Is Mother	39.5%	11.2%	22.4%	23.9%	2.9%
Married	29.8%	20.2%	27.4%	22.6%	0.0%

	Agricultural/livestock/forestry/fishery worker selling produce	Agricultural/livestock/forestry/fishery worker using produce for subsistence on	Sales and service worker e.g., vendor at street, shop, market, or stall, domestic	Artisan, craft and related trade workers e.g., potter, weaver, carpenter, leather	Other
Household unable to meet basic needs	28.2%	12.8%	10.3%	38.5%	10.3%
High Chore Burden	26.8%	27.6%	14.6%	30.9%	0.0%
Lives with neither parent	31.7%	18.3%	29.3%	20.7%	0.0%
1+ hours to secondary school	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Economic (Chores or Poverty)	26.1%	25.4%	15.2%	30.4%	2.9%
Travel or Work Safety	5.0%	11.7%	78.3%	5.0%	0.0%
Disability-Related	28.6%	14.3%	28.6%	28.6%	0.0%
Social Norms	76.2%	0.0%	0.0%	19.0%	4.8%
VST Safety	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Demographic	40.4%	11.3%	22.5%	23.0%	2.8%
STAGE VST delivery	9.9%	16.9%	62.0%	9.9%	1.4%
Eastern Akuapim Twi	56.8%	0.0%	22.7%	20.5%	0.0%
Oti Akuapim Twi	80.3%	3.3%	3.3%	13.1%	0.0%
Upper West Dagaare	0.0%	90.0%	3.3%	6.7%	0.0%
Central Fante	36.8%	1.3%	23.7%	28.9%	9.2%
Upper East Kasem	0.0%	6.9%	0.0%	93.1%	0.0%
Northern Likpakpaaln	47.4%	17.9%	12.8%	21.8%	0.0%
Oti Likpakpaaln	2.1%	4.2%	93.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Age 17 and under	36.6%	20.5%	21.4%	20.5%	0.9%
Age 18 to 19	38.2%	7.2%	34.2%	18.4%	2.0%
Age 20 and over	40.2%	13.7%	9.8%	33.3%	2.9%
Source: Evaluation Surveys (N = 366)					

Table 47 - Girls' views on fairness of payment (% of girls that work)

	Yes, very	Yes, somewhat	No	Don't know
Overall	45.6%	50.0%	3.8%	0.5%
Disability Overall	64.3%	35.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Is Mother	44.1%	52.9%	2.5%	0.5%
Married	33.3%	61.9%	4.8%	0.0%
Household unable to meet basic needs	30.8%	56.4%	12.8%	0.0%
High Chore Burden	40.3%	52.4%	6.5%	0.8%
Lives with neither parent	34.1%	62.2%	2.4%	1.2%
1+ hours to secondary school	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Economic (Chores or Poverty)	41.7%	51.1%	6.5%	0.7%
Travel or Work Safety	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Disability-Related	64.3%	35.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Social Norms	50.0%	45.0%	0.0%	5.0%
VST Safety	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Demographic	44.3%	52.8%	2.4%	0.5%
STAGE VST delivery	40.8%	54.9%	2.8%	1.4%
Eastern Akuapim Twi	63.6%	34.1%	0.0%	2.3%
Oti Akuapim Twi	44.3%	55.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Upper West Dagaare	46.7%	50.0%	3.3%	0.0%
Central Fante	53.3%	45.3%	1.3%	0.0%
Upper East Kasem	24.1%	58.6%	17.2%	0.0%
Northern Likpakpaaln	40.5%	49.4%	8.9%	1.3%
Oti Likpakpaaln	39.6%	60.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Age 17 and under	47.8%	47.8%	4.4%	0.0%
Age 18 to 19	43.4%	52.0%	3.9%	0.7%
Age 20 and over	46.5%	49.5%	3.0%	1.0%
Source: Evaluation Surveys (N=366)				

Table 48 – Economic empowerment (% of girls)

Did you do any of these activities:	Yes	No
To provide for the family in response to a death	9.4%	90.6%
To provide for the family in response to an accident	9.4%	90.6%
To generate the income for me to be able to get married/ raising money for my dowry	8.7%	91.3%
To have some of my own money for me to spend	39.7%	60.3%
To provide for my family expenses in general	27.5%	72.5%
Source: Evaluation Surveys (N = 403)		

Table 49 – Community support for girls' education, baseline and endline

Question	N	Responses					
Have leaders in your community spoken out in support of girls' education?		Yes	No	Don't Know			
Tracer	399	50.0%	34.9%	15.5%			
Baseline	639	19.2%	35.2%	45.6%			
How often?		Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Once a year	Never	Don't know
Tracer	399	3.3%	13.6%	15.2%	16.4%	34.9%	16.7%
Baseline	639	1.6%	5.0%	4.4%	2.7%	40.9%	45.5%
On which occasions have they spoken out in support of girls' education?		During religious/community meetings	At home visits	Both	Don't know		
Tracer	399	42.1%	2.3%	7.3%	48.4%		
Baseline	639	17.7%	1.1%	0.3%	80.9%		

Have they taken action to support girls to remain in school?		Yes	No	Don't Know			
Tracer	397	11.3%	38.6%	50.1%			
Baseline	639	4.2%	30.4%	65.4%			
Have leaders in your community spoken in support of women working outside home?		**Yes**	**No**	**Don't Know**			
Tracer	399	40.4%	26.1%	33.6%			
How often?		**Weekly**	**Monthly**	**Quarterly**	**Once a year**	**Never**	**Don't know**
Tracer	399	4.3%	11%	13.5%	15.5%	15.3%	40.3%
Have leaders in your community spoken in support of women earning their own money?		**Yes**	**No**	**Don't Know**			
Tracer	399	42.4%	22%	35.6%			
Do you feel supported by your community in your education?		**Yes, very much**	**Yes, a little**	**No**	**Don't Know**		
Tracer	399	21.6%	67.7%	6.2%	4.5%		
Baseline	639	8.1%	38.8%	13.8%	39.3%		
Source: Analytical Dataset Caregiver survey Girl Survey							

Table 50 – Awareness and participation to STAGE community animation sessions (% of caregiver')

	N	Yes	No	Don't know
Were you aware of community animation sessions that took place as part of the STAGE programme?	399	61.2%	14.0%	24.8%
Did you attend the community animation sessions that took place as part of the STAGE programme?	244	91.8%	7%	1.2%

8.16 Annex 16 Additional Findings

1. Attendance and delivery of ALPs and VSTs

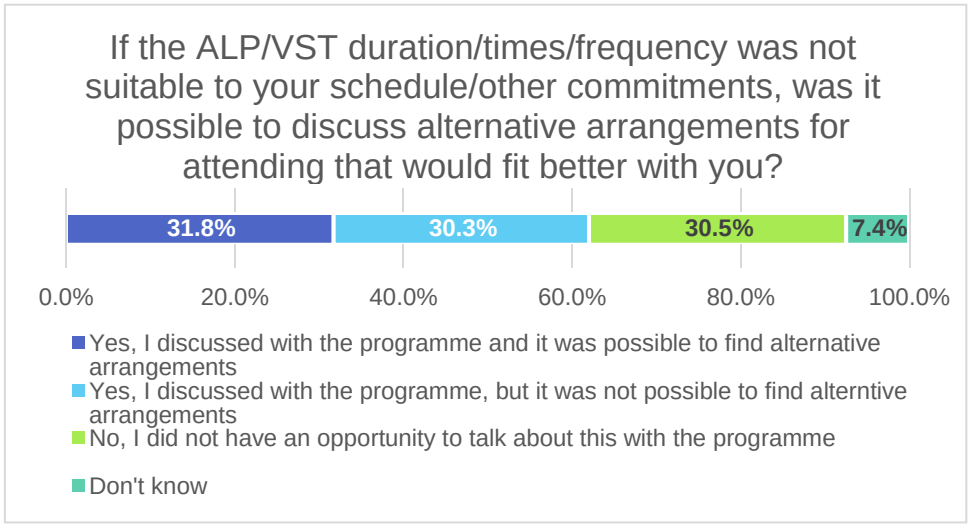
Table 51 – IO indicator 1.1 Attendance

IO indicator	Sampling and measuring technique used	Who collected the data?	Baseline level	Target for endline	Self-reported attendance
1.1 Attendance rates of girls	100% of sample Measured by ALPS register	STAGE/DSPs	N/A	85%	85.3%
Main qualitative findings					
No qualitative findings collected at baseline for this indicator Note: Girls' self-reported attendance was measured by the EE at tracer, though it refers to ALP attendance.					

The almost totality of girls (99.3%, N = 403) reported having completed the ALP (only three did not). On attendance rates, 86.1% of girls stated having attended the ALP either always (60.8%) or most of the times (57.3%). The large majority of girls attended the ALPs for 6 months (72.2%). Following the ALP, the almost totality of girls reported participating to the VST (98%), with only eight girls not doing so. Of those that participated, the almost totality attended for up to six months, in particular, 24% for 3 months, and 59% for six months. Only six girls attended VST for 8 or more months. The attendance rate to the VST is relatively high: a large majority (85.3%) stated they attended all (58%) or most (27.3%) classes. The qualitative data supported this, with almost all girls across all three regions saying they attended most or all of the classed. However, in Eastern (Akuapem South), one Local Leader said that "***the attendance of the girls was very poor due to most of them been nursing mothers***", and one girl said that she was not able to attend sometimes as she had household responsibilities like going to the farm. In Northern (Kpandai), another girl mentioned going to the farm as a reason for not attending.

Adaptation of the intervention to girls' needs started with STAGE community mapping –conducted at the inception of project activities for each track and cohort. At the project start, community mapping identified different marginalisation subgroups, and based on their specific constraints and barriers to education, developed a tailored approach to address their needs so to foster attendance. One key element of adapting to girls' needs has been the flexible approach to delivery of ALPs/VSTs to allow for girls to attend household chores, work, or other family and life commitments that they might have, through offering of different time slots to attend ALP/VST classes or offering catch up classes. At tracer, the girls were asked whether STAGE offered the possibility to discuss alternative arrangements for attending that would fit better girls' needs, if the ALP/VST duration/times/frequency were not suitable to girls' schedule/other commitments (Figure 31). Overall, 60% of girls were offered the opportunity to discuss alternative arrangements, However, only half of these girls were able to find suitable options for attending (and 31.8% for the overall sample). It is not possible to know how many of the girls that did not discuss alternative arrangements, did not do so as there was no need for it. The qualitative data suggests that while some provision in flexibilty was made, those with caring responsibilties still found attendance or participantion a challenge. This was highlighted by

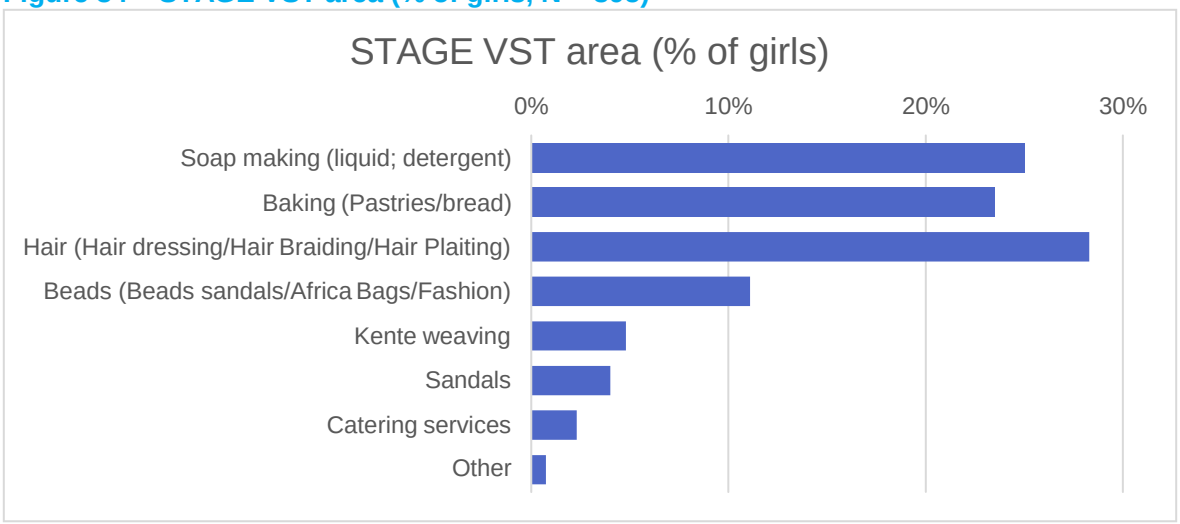
Figure 33 - Girls' views on flexible approach to ALP delivery (% of Formal girls, N = 395



the MCP in Eastern (Akuapem South), who said "***some of the girls were nursing mothers and need to take care of their wards before coming so they may come but late and at times absent***". Additionally, the ALP Facilitator in Eastern (Akuapem South) noted the lack of support for mothers and suggested "***the kids of the mothers are considered when planning for any project of that sought. If something is provided to support the children to avoid the children disturbing during contact hours***". In Northen (Kpandai), both the ALP Facilitator and the DSP highlighted how pregnant girls found attendance difficult as it was harder to concentrate in class, and in Oti (Nkwanta South), both the ALP Facilitator and the DSP highlighted how pregnant girls had other responsibilities and found attendance more challenging. Thus, while provisions such as afternoon classes were a help, those with additional care responsibilties still struggled to attened or fully partcipate, denoting that demographic factors i.e. having care responsibilities, or the lack of additional support for girls while attending the ALPs/VSTs remain a barrier to attendance for some girls.

Girls attended VST in a range of areas, the majority in one of the following three areas: hair (hair dressing, breading, 28.3%), soap making (25%), and baking (pastries/bread, 23.5%). Whilst about 34.7% of girls had already some skills in the chosen area of the VST, two thirds did not (65.3%).

Figure 34 – STAGE VST area (% of girls, N = 395)



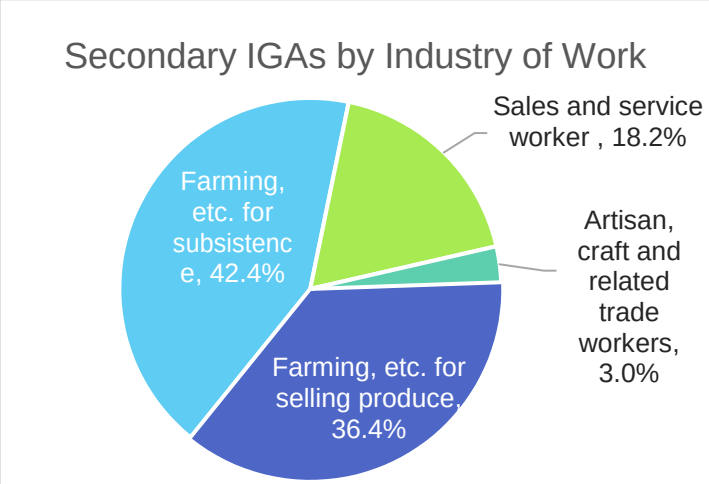
Finally, the very fact that the VST was at no cost was a big contribution to advancing girls' skills and opening up new pathways for IGAs. In Eastern, one caregiver highlighted for the STAGE programme having no cost was the reason their girls could attend. This was echoed by the DSP in Northern. In Oti, the DSP, one caregiver, and one girl said the ASLPs/VST having no cost was the reason the financial barriers were reduced. This is a key finding, as it suggests that once the cost of the training or attendance is reduced, it is more encouraging and desirable to attend, despite some of the other social, cultural or demographic barriers that may also be in place.

2. Transition

Secondary income generating activity: employment/self-employment and Industry

Eighteen percent of girls responded that, beyond their main one, they are currently involved in other work/IGAs. Most secondary IGAs are in farming, livestock, forestry and fishing, mostly for subsistence (42.4%), but also for selling produce (36.4%). Further, all secondary IGAs were reported in two regions: Upper West (Daagare), almost three activities on average reported in addition to the main one; and Northern (Likpakpaaln), almost two on average in addition to the main one.

Figure 35 - Secondary IGAs by Industry of Work (% of girls who have secondary IGA)



For secondary IGAs, less girls perceive to be paid fairly than for main ones: only 28.8% reported 'yes, very', the majority considered themselves to be 'somewhat' (56.1%) and 13.6% considered to be not fairly paid. Further, a greater percentage than for primary IGAs stated they are paid both in cash and in kind (62.1%), and that they are not paid (6.1%).

These findings suggest that i) a share of girls is engaged as family workers in the family or husband's farming activities, in addition to having their own IGA; ii) on average, pay/earning conditions in such cases are less favourable than when they are running their own IGA; and iii) as found under Primary IGA, most girls reported working in agriculture and related sectors. One of the girls interviewed mentioned working in two jobs (in Northern, Kpandai): "***I went to learn Sandal's decoration, and a bit more of hairdressing for three months. I wish to be able to make and sell sandals during market days and perhaps open a shop where I can add hairdressing to the selling of sandals***". There were no mentions however of girls working on the farm to supplement income, and rather, girls have been able to work less on the farm to continue their business.

Other aspects of decent labour

Underemployment

Increasingly, beyond employment and unemployment, the underemployment rate is also considered when assessing labour market outcomes. Indeed, ILO's assessment of 'decent work' indicators in Africa has a section on 'underemployment' which reflects an 'unsatisfying situation whereby people don't work as much as they would like to allow them to reach an adequate level of earnings.[98]

Table 52 – Girls that are underemployed

	Given my other responsibilities, I could not work more hours if I wanted to	If there was more work available to earn more money, I would work longer hours
Overall	12.8%	87.2%
Overall	12.8%	87.2%
Disability Overall	14.3%	85.7%
Is Mother	9.3%	90.7%
Married	16.7%	83.3%
Household unable to meet basic needs	33.3%	66.7%

[98] ILO (2012). Decent Work Indicators in Africa. A first assessment based on national sources.

High Chore Burden	23.4%	76.6%
Lives with neither parent	13.4%	86.6%
1+ hours to secondary school	N/A	N/A
Economic (Chores or Poverty)	23.0%	77.0%
Travel or Work Safety	11.7%	88.3%
Disability-Related	14.3%	85.7%
Social Norms	0.0%	100.0%
VST Safety	N/A	N/A
Demographic	8.9%	91.1%
STAGE VST delivery	14.1%	85.9%
Eastern Akuapim Twi	6.8%	93.2%
Oti Akuapim Twi	0.0%	100.0%
Upper West Dagaare	16.7%	83.3%
Central Fante	1.3%	98.7%
Upper East Kasem	37.9%	62.1%
Northern Likpakpaaln	30.4%	69.6%
Oti Likpakpaaln	6.3%	93.8%
Age 17 and under	15.0%	85.0%
Age 18 to 19	11.8%	88.2%
Age 20 and over	11.8%	88.2%
Source: Evaluation Surveys (N = 367)		

Table 53 shows that a large majority of STAGE girls could be considered underemployed: 87.2% responded affirmatively that 'if there was more work available to earn more money, I would work longer hours; 12.8% reported that even if they wanted to, given their other responsibilities, they would not be able to work longer hours. No girl reported that, given the option, they would work fewer hours for less pay.

The analysis of underemployment by subgroup corroborates some of the earlier findings: a much larger percentage of girls from poor households (33.3%, significant) and with high chore burden (23.4%, significant) would not be able to work longer hours, given their other responsibilities, compared to the overall average. Upper East (Kasem) and Northern (Likpakpaaln) are the region/language groups with the largest percentage of girls who reported this (37.9% and 30.4% respectively, both significant differences). These two regions also have the greatest prevalence of girls with high chore burden and impoverishment, and a majority of girls working in the crafts (93.1% in Upper East, 21.8% in Northern) or in farming for selling produce.

It is not surprising that a large majority of girls would want to work longer hours if given the option: as mentioned earlier, a majority of girls only work between zero and nine hours per week, and two thirds of girls work under 29 hours per week. Their work experiences, however, vary by region: Akuapim Twi speaking girls (in Oti and Eastern) are mostly engaged in agriculture for produce. Notably, 56.7% and 54.6% respectively work in the area that they obtained VST skills. Relatedly, 98.4% and 81.3% respectively report there are few opportunities for work in their communities.

Likpakpaaln speakers in Oti are almost all working in the area of their VST training (95.8%), primarily in the service and sales sectors. Ninety percent (90.0%) of them reported there were plenty of work opportunities in their community and almost all reported wanting to work more if there was the opportunity. Likpakpaaln speakers in Northern region had more diversified sectors of work and reported fewer opportunities to work (only 31.3% stated there was plenty of work). They largely worked in the area of their VST (96.2%), and significantly fewer (69.6%) stated that they would work more hours if they could.

Fante speakers in Central would nearly all work more if they could (98.7%). Similar to Akuapim Twi speaking communities, a much lower proportion of girls work in the area of their VST (53.3% in Central). This doesn't appear

to be due to a lack of training options: in all communities, interviewed girls named at least two different areas of training, and in 76.0% of communities, interviewed girls named 3 or more VST areas of training.

Work that should be abolished

According to ILO, work that should be abolished can be categorised as Forced labour and Child labour. Further, for children older than 17, decent work also includes not working an excessive number of hours per week. The EE estimated Forced labour by asking girls whether they are working to pay off a debt. Of those not working for money during the year, four girls reported working to pay off a debt (6.7%, N=60). When asked how many hours they work per week, less than 8% replied that they worked 40 hours or more and less than 2% reported working 50 or more hours for their primary IGA. However, when girls were asked explicitly if they worked over 43 hours (if under 18) or 48 hours (if 18 or older) in a week, 40.0% stated that they did. This may be that they are including non income-generating activities, such as housework. While concerns of excessive labour should be taken seriously, it may be that, as noted in relation to other survey questions, respondents provide unreliable answers when asked to estimate the number of hours they spend undertaking activities.

3. Support to transition

In this case as well, there is variation across regions, as well as, to a lesser extent, marginalisation subgroups (Table 54). However, it would seem that the variation relates mostly to the type of support received (either funds or materials/equipment), rather than a case where some subgroups have received substantially different levels of support than the sample overall.

Table 53 – Material support for transition received (% of girls)

	Did you receive a start-up fund for your IGA?	Did you receive materials/equipment needed to start up your IGA? E.g., loom for sewing
Overall	82.6%	89.1%
Disability Overall	80.0%	86.7%
Is Mother	81.8%	90.7%
Married	95.8%	83.3%
Household unable to meet basic needs	68.3%	97.6%
High Chore Burden	91.2%	92.8%
Lives with neither parent	96.9%	84.5%
1+ hours to secondary school	N/A	N/A
Economic (Chores or Poverty)	85.9%	93.0%
Travel or Work Safety	96.7%	76.7%
Disability-Related	81.3%	81.3%
Social Norms	92.0%	88.0%
VST Safety	N/A	N/A
Demographic	82.7%	90.3%
STAGE VST delivery	87.1%	69.4%
Eastern Akuapim Twi	62.5%	97.9%
Oti Akuapim Twi	95.4%	100.0%
Upper West Dagaare	100.0%	58.3%
Central Fante	54.9%	96.3%
Upper East Kasem	90.6%	90.6%
Northern Likpakpaaln	88.8%	96.3%
Oti Likpakpaaln	100.0%	70.8%

	Did you receive a start-up fund for your IGA?	Did you receive materials/equipment needed to start up your IGA? E.g., loom for sewing
Age 17 and under	87.0%	89.4%
Age 18 to 19	79.9%	88.4%
Age 20 and over	81.9%	89.7%
Source: Evaluation Surveys (N = 403)		

Specifically, more marginalised girls than the overall average received an IGA start-up, with the exception made for girls from poor households, where only 68.3% stated receiving it. On the other hand, the almost totality of girls from poor households stated receiving materials/equipment, higher than the overall average (97.6%). The opposite trend is observed for married girls. Slightly less girls with a disability than the overall average reported receiving an IGA start up fund and/or support in the form of materials/equipment (80% vs 82.6% overall, and 86.7% vs 89.1% overall respectively).

Regionally, data suggests that girls in Eastern (Akuapim Twi) and Central (Fante) regions tended to receive IGA support in the form of materials/equipment, rather than funds (only 62.5% and 54.9% from these regions received funds, against 82.6% overall). In contrast with a previous finding, all girls from Oti (Akuapim Twi) received some kind of support, and the large majority received both kinds (100% declared receiving materials/equipment, and 95.4% funds). Higher prevalence of girls receiving both kinds of support are also observed in Upper East (Kasem) and Northern (Likpakpaaln).

Girls were also asked whether they received funds as a group or as one person, 59% declared they received it as a group. Almost 20% of girls also stated they are expected to repay the funds received, the majority of these are in Eastern (Akuapim Twi, 56.7%) and Central (Fante, 51.1%) regions. Whilst no girl declared having to do so in Upper East (Kasem) and Oti (Likpakpaaln). The reason for these disparities is not known. There was also no indication in the qualitative data that any of these will need to be repaid in any of the regions. In addition, the qualitative data implied that the girls received the funds or materials individually and not as a group, however there was no probing to clarify this.

What is the project's response to the conclusions and recommendations in the report?

The TOC of the project targets changes at three levels: community, school and system level. It runs on the assumption that if highly marginalized adolescent girls who have dropped out or have never been to school are provided with tailored and inclusive learning, and life skills, and if this is combined with family and individual level financial education and resource support, community wide behavioural change interventions, and institutional support mechanisms, then the girls will be able to successfully pursue educational and vocational pathways or use their acquired skills and set themselves on a path to self or paid employment.

The evidence from the tracer study largely confirms the project's own monitoring data. The study concluded that economic barriers and social norms are still pervasive in the project communities and pose a significant risk to the sustenance of project gains. It recommended that future programmes should consider long-term, targeted interventions for married girls and mothers to tackle social norms which disproportionately affect them. The project agrees with this recommendation. The project notes the pervasiveness of social norms in the project communities. While there is evidence in the communities to suggest there is a growing acceptance of new norms, this process will take a while before it fully matures. Nonetheless through regular monitoring, the project observed that having the key influencers of the choices girls make will go a long way in speeding up this process of change. To that end, the project will have at the centre of future programming husbands, boys and wider families. These actors will be trained to appreciate the role of women and social norms around VST attendance, and offer caregiving solutions for mothers in order to facilitate attendance. Community animation sessions would be strengthened with more targeted participants to make space for deeper changes in social norms.

What is the project's response to the key findings in the report?

Ten months after transition, the tracer study found that 84.4% of the project beneficiaries have successfully transitioned and in business. Across all the project communities, the study found that Social norms and poverty remain critical obstacles to successful transition while Mothers, married girls and girls living with neither parent have slightly lower than average transition rates (83.6%, 82.3% and 81.4% respectively). This is not surprising considering the demands and the pervasiveness of gender roles and responsibilities. While the project has made great strides in changing the status quo, a lot still remain and may take a while before change completely happens which may be beyond the project. Notwithstanding, the project as part of the project close out and its sustainability efforts continue to engage relevant local structures and agencies/departments at the local level to continue the community education post the project to encourage the key influencers of female decision making to provide the necessary support for their social and economic empowerment.

The tracer also noted the rising cost of inputs and highlighted as a risk to the sustainability of the IGAs. This concern is equally shared by the project. In a little over a year, inflation in Ghana has increased by 4 folds putting a considerable strain on SMEs including beneficiaries on the project. Through collaboration with the Ghana Enterprise Agency, the project is exploring addition financial and in-kind support to beneficiaries running their own business. Almost all the IGAs in operation have been registered with the respective local assembly. This provides room for girls running these IGAs to access government and other donor funds disbursed through the GEA. In addition, the GEA has been providing business development services to these IGAs and that may have accounted for the high transition rates recorded.

The tracer study also found that the Life Skills Index score improved by 8 percentage points since baseline, exceeding recommended targets (significant at 90% confidence level, but not 95%). Life Skills subcategory scores all increased over baseline scores. At baseline, caregivers had high levels of confidence in their girl child's Life Skills in all areas and in relation to all sub-groups; notwithstanding the high starting point, the Caregiver's Assessment still increased statistically significantly since baseline (91.2). These findings align with the project's monitoring data. Anecdotal evidence gleaned from field monitoring suggests girls are practising most of all the topics treated under the life skills component of the ALP. Personal hygiene as attested to by majority of caregivers have seen improvements. Concerning, the Sexual & Reproductive Health & Rights (SRHR) the tracer found that scores remained low. The project's own internal assessment of this cohort also confirmed this. The assessment further noted that the uptake of SRHR was situated within a complex web of socio-cultural which makes it difficult for beneficiaries to drop the old norms in place of new norms. To address this, the project is now collaborating with the Ghana Health Service to support the delivery of the SRHR content.

What changes to the log frame will be proposed to FCDO and the Fund Manager? (If applicable)

The evidence from the tracer study report largely reinforces and validates the assumptions, indicators and targets in the log frame. Even though the context for the project implementation has considerably over the past year, the evidence from the tracer reveals that the project managed to meet the targets for most of the indicators and only missed the remaining slightly. Retargeting recommended by the EE after the baseline helped in this regard.

The project's observation over the past five years shows that behaviour change in the project communities happens at a slow pace due to their pervasiveness and interrelatedness with other barriers. Were there to be a phase 2 or a continuation of the project, the project would have been very informed and revised some of its sustainability targets to reflect the reality on the ground. Supported by evidence, the project has sown the seeds of sustainability at all the levels: community, school, system. Through the community animation sessions in the project communities have exposed community leaders, caregivers and beneficiaries to the importance of girls' education and skills acquisition. In addition, community support for the IGAs have been courted which will bode well for its sustenance. Lastly, there is significant evidence that supports the fact that the collaboration with relevant district and local level entities has ensured that majority of the IGAs is negotiating the teething challenges of start-ups commendably. Considering the fact that all these improvements may be offset by persisting social norms, increasing economic challenges and the cost of inputs, it would only be fair and reasonable to modify some of the sustainability targets to reflect the reality.