Global Affairs Canada

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Evaluation of Women and Girls' Education in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States, 2018-19 to 2022-23

Evaluation Report

Prepared by the Evaluation Division (RRA)

Global Affairs Canada

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Canada

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Acronyms and symbols

APP	Authorized Programming Process	**MGG**	Violence Prevention, Education and Youth-at-Risk Division
CAFS	Conflict-Affected and Fragile States	**NGM**	Americas Branch
CPI	Complementary Performance Indicator	**RRA**	Evaluation Division
EGM	Europe, Arctic, Middle East & Maghreb Branch	**OGM**	Indo Pacific Branch
FCAS	Fragile and conflict affected states	**SDG**	Sustainable Development Goal
FIAP	Feminist International Assistance Policy	**SROI**	Social Return on Investment
G7	Group of Seven	**STEM**	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
GAC	Global Affairs Canada	**TVET**	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
GBA Plus	Gender-Based Analysis Plus	**UN**	United Nations
IFM	International Security Branch	**WASH**	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
KFM	International Development Partnerships and Operations Branch	**WGM**	Sub-Saharan Africa Branch
MFM	Global Issues and Development Branch		

Executive summary

The thematic evaluation of education programming for women and girls in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS) covered the period from 2018 to 2023. The evaluation focused on education commitments and programming funded and managed by Global Affairs Canada under the Charlevoix Declaration, a commitment made by G7 countries to prioritize investments in quality education for girls, adolescent girls and women in FCAS.

Conflict and fragility are increasingly prevalent globally, with violent conflict increasing since 2010 in many regions, extreme weather events becoming more frequent and intense, and the COVID-19 pandemic causing severe impacts on many countries' economies. The main objectives of the evaluation were to determine if the department's Charlevoix Education Initiative supported a responsive and sustainable approach to education in FCAS and to identify lessons learned for designing and implementing effective education programming in these contexts.

The evaluation found that the Initiative aligned with international consensus on the importance of inclusive, equitable and quality education for girls and women, particularly in FCAS. However, the timelines of the Initiative were insufficient to design an approach tailored to FCAS. While some essential components were integrated into the Initiative design, including education programming best practices and Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) considerations, a lack of departmental standards and guidance for partners meant that the department could not ensure consistent implementation of those components across projects. Other essential practices were not systematically required or integrated, such as conflict-sensitive project design, triple nexus considerations and disaster risk reduction practices for climate change-affected regions. Inclusion of these components was dependent on the capacity and knowledge of the implementing partners.

The Initiative led to positive outcomes for education in FCAS. Results included increased access to education by addressing the main barriers faced by women and girls; improved quality of education, including increasing teacher capacity and learner proficiency in key learning areas; and additional positive social outcomes beyond the expected project outcomes including improved personal development and well-being, health and safety, social and family dynamics, economic and personal empowerment, and community cohesion and conflict resolution. Creative and innovative approaches to education applied by partners were a success factor in enabling project participants to learn in disruptive and sometimes traumatizing environments.

Lessons learned from previous departmental activities and recommendations from past evaluations were not applied in the design and implementation of the Initiative. Despite a history of delivering successful programming in FCAS contexts, the department did not consider the need for flexibility in funding mechanisms in complex environments. When designing new programming, evidence-informed decision-making was hampered by a lack of accountability for performance measurement and reporting throughout the Initiative's implementation and by the inability of Global Affairs Canada to communicate the Charlevoix Initiative results story.

Summary of recommendations

Recommendations for ongoing education programming in FCAS:

1. Ensure GAC project leads and implementing partners working on education programming in FCAS are knowledgeable about: conflict-sensitive design, Triple nexus considerations, disaster risk reduction practices in climate change-affected regions, and Gender-Based Analysis Plus.

2. Review and establish standard performance indicators for ongoing and future education programming (including in FCAS) that all partners must report on to facilitate calculation and reporting of total programming results.

Corporate recommendations:

3. Coordinate updating the Authorized Programming Process (APP)* to include guidance from relevant internal policy teams on launching programming in FCAS contexts. This process should focus on simplicity and speed, providing tools and support that reflect the needs of users, including implementing partners.

4. In preparation for the launch of new initiatives, review and propose options to ensure robust accountability mechanisms for performance measurement are integrated to support results reporting at the initiative level throughout its lifecycle.

5. Support projects in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS) to remain relevant by streamlining project approval processes and building flexibility in funding agreements to respond to unexpected crises.

GAC's process for developing, designing, approving and implementing international assistance initiatives.

Background

Conflict	A situation of acute or protracted insecurity driven by a group's use of deadly force. These groups could include state forces, organized non-state groups or other irregular entities with a political purpose or motivation.
Fragility	A systemic condition or situation characterized by an extremely low level of institutional and governance capacity that significantly impedes the state's ability to function effectively, maintain peace and foster economic and social development.

Source: World Bank Classification of Fragility and Conflict Situations

Overview: Education for women and girls living in conflict and fragility

Under Canada's presidency at the 2018 G7 Summit in Charlevoix, G7 leaders committed to prioritizing women and girls' education in fragile and conflict-affected contexts and mobilized historic investments of $4.4 billion. The Charlevoix Declaration on quality education for girls, adolescent girls and women in developing countries emphasized the importance of access to quality education in the promotion of peace and security and as a driver of positive health and life outcomes. The Charlevoix Declaration reflected global commitments and efforts towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on access to safe and inclusive quality education and SDG 5 on gender equality. Achieving these goals in conflict-affected and fragile states poses significant challenges that are likely to increase based on expert consensus that global conflict conditions have significantly and steadily deteriorated over the last two decades.

Canadian support to education for women and girls living in conflict and fragility

Global Affairs Canada's Charlevoix Education Initiative committed $404.7 million to achieving targeted objectives of the G7 Charlevoix Declaration between 2018 and 2021. The Initiative advanced Action Area 2 of the 2017 *Feminist International Assistance Policy*, Canada's *National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2017-2022*, and the parallel 2018 G7 Whistler Declaration on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action.

This evaluation examined Global Affairs Canada-funded education programming in fragile and conflict-affected states. Experts emphasize that supporting education in these contexts requires carefully considered approaches, including what is known as "gender-responsive education," as well as thorough understanding of the nuanced, situation-specific causes of conflict and fragility. This is necessary both for achieving project goals and avoiding actions that could worsen the situation.

Canada's approach to funding education programming in fragile and conflict-affected states has therefore been to work with partners that deliver quality, gender-responsive education in situations of crises or instability, such as natural disasters, conflicts and pandemics. Through these partnerships, Canada aims to respond to immediate education needs in order to ensure continued learning and essential skills development in challenging and often life-threatening circumstances.
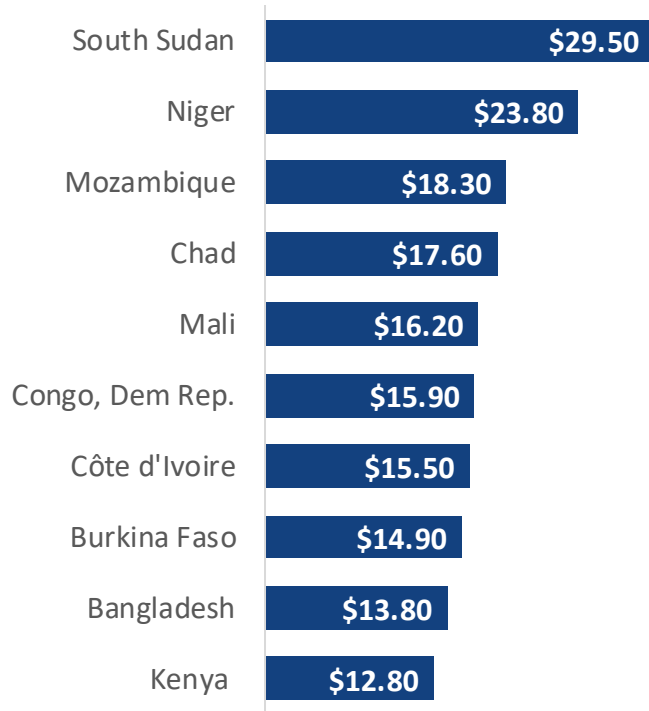
Key objectives of the Charlevoix Education Initiative:

- Address barriers that hinder demand for and access to quality education for girls and women
- Expand and improve the provision of inclusive, gender-responsive, safe, accessible and equitable quality pre-primary, primary and secondary education
- Increase women and girls' access to quality skills development and higher education

Background

Charlevoix Initiative funding by branch

Highest funding recipients out of the 43 Charlevoix Initiative recipient countries (in millions)

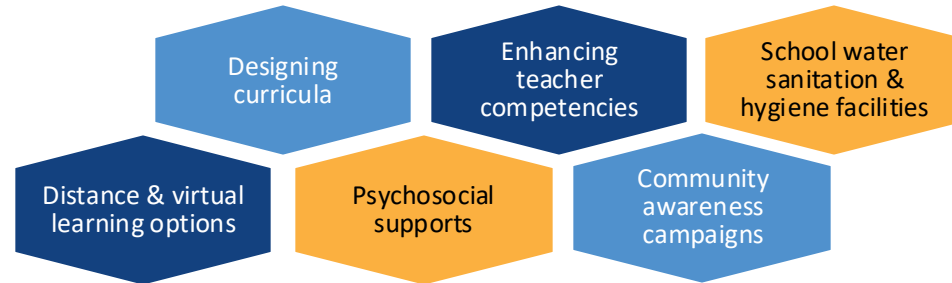| Country	Funding
South Sudan	$29.50
Niger	$23.80
Mozambique	$18.30
Chad	$17.60
Mali	$16.20
Congo, Dem Rep.	$15.90
Côte d'Ivoire	$15.50
Burkina Faso	$14.90
Bangladesh	$13.80
Kenya	$12.80

Source: CFO Stats, 2024.

Canadian funding for women and girls' education in fragile and conflict-affected states

Canada has been committed to funding international assistance education projects for decades, including in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS). Prior to the launch of the Charlevoix Education Initiative, Global Affairs Canada (GAC) was spending approximately $300 million annually on education projects globally, including in FCAS. The Initiative's commitment of $404.7 million represented an infusion of additional funding for education programming specifically in FCAS over 3 years (from 2018-19 to 2020-21). An additional $155.7 million was sourced from other Government of Canada funding sources, including existing GAC funding and top-ups related to addressing the impacts of COVID-19. This allowed for the continuation of certain Charlevoix Education Initiative projects until 2022-2023. Although additional funding commitments were made for continuing education programming in FCAS, including a pledge of $87.5 million over 4 years (from 2023 to 2026) for education in emergencies and protracted crises, projected funding levels for GAC's overall future education programming were anticipated to decline at the time of the evaluation.

Of the initial $404.7 million in funding associated with the Charlevoix Education Initiative, GAC committed $100 million to two existing global funds, including $50 million to Education Cannot Wait, a global group of international organizations and governments that pool their money for programming in protracted crises and conflict, and $50 million to the Global Financing Facility, a World Bank-hosted private philanthropy fund of country-led partnerships. This evaluation did not assess the results of funding to these global funds as those evaluations were to be managed by the organizations' own evaluation teams. The remaining $304.7 million was disbursed through 55 projects across bilateral, multilateral and partnership branches across GAC and coordinated by the Violence Prevention, Education and Youth-at-Risk division. The evaluation assessed the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of these 55 projects.

Areas of focus for funded projects

- Designing curricula
- Enhancing teacher competencies
- School water sanitation & hygiene facilities
- Distance & virtual learning options
- Psychosocial supports
- Community awareness campaigns

Evaluation scope and objectives

Strategic considerations

The evaluation was conducted internally by the Evaluation Division of Global Affairs Canada and supported by local consultants with expertise in education in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS) to support project-level data collection and analysis of case studies. The evaluation team also piloted the integration of a knowledge translation advisor who supported the use of evaluation evidence to generate additional learning products. These products focused on supporting project implementers in the practical application of evaluation findings.

Evaluation objectives

The objectives of this evaluation were to:

- determine the extent to which the mechanisms used in the Charlevoix Education Initiative programming supported a responsive and sustainable approach to education for women and girls in conflict and fragile contexts.
- examine the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of the department's approach to gender-responsive education programming in fragile and conflict-affected states.
- identify lessons and recommendations for improved program management and delivery.

Evaluation scope

The evaluation focused on Canada's commitments and programming implemented and managed by Global Affairs Canada under the Charlevoix Declaration from 2018 to 2023, including Canada's approach to education for women and girls in fragile and conflict-affected states implemented through the Charlevoix Education Initiative. The evaluation included 55 projects across bilateral, multilateral and partnership branches. Departmental investments in education in emergencies and programming in fragile and conflict-affected states outside of the Charlevoix Education Initiative were not included in the scope of this evaluation.

Evaluation approach

The evaluation employed a **mixed-methods approach** incorporating quantitative and qualitative methods to collect primary and secondary data, including key informant interviews, case studies, and document, literature and project reviews. The evaluation team employed non-probability sampling combining purposive sampling (data collected from specific individuals or groups selected with a clear purpose) with quota sampling (data collected from different groups) to evaluate the Initiative effectively. The evaluation included two levels of analysis of the Charlevoix Education Initiative: (1) the policy and management level, and (2) the project level.

The evaluation piloted use of the **social return on investment (SROI)** method to assess the broader social, environmental and economic value created by interventions. This method aims to identify and quantify both monetary and non-monetary impacts of an intervention by considering inputs, outputs, outcomes and changes in stakeholders' well-being (Annex 2).

The evaluation was **utilization-focused**, meaning that the evaluation was designed to be useful to its primary intended users, the decision makers at Global Affairs Canada. The evaluation also included field visits with project participants to ensure that the voices of the affected communities were integrated, that the findings are relevant to their context and that the recommendations are likely to contribute to the continual improvement of ongoing Canadian-funded education programming in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

Evaluation questions

Relevance	**Q1**. To what extent was Canada's approach to women and girls' education in conflict-affected and fragile states aligned with best practices, standards and principles in conflict and fragile contexts?
Effectiveness	**Q2.** To what extent has Global Affairs Canada's approach to women and girls' education in conflict-affected and fragile states generated sustainable positive social outcomes relative to the resources invested?
Efficiency	**Q3.** To what extent have the mechanisms used in education in emergency contexts and conflict-affected and fragile states programming supported a responsive approach and intended results?

Methodology

Document and project review

Reviewed 121 internal Global Affairs Canada documents, data sets from 2021-22 to 2022-23, and annual reports from 2020-21 to 2022-23 for 49 out of 55 projects funded under the Initiative. Note that for 6 projects there were no available data sets or reports. Types of documents reviewed included:

- Project design documentation, management summary reports and partner results reports
- Policy planning and strategy documents
- Briefing notes and memos
- Previous evaluations and reviews
- Administrative data, including human and financial resources
- Select documents from integrated planning and reporting tools

Key informant interviews

Conducted 44 semi-structured individual and small group interviews. Interviewees included the following:

- Former and current Initiative and project staff
- Representatives from relevant branches, missions and programming areas
- Representatives from implementing partner organizations (including civil society and multilateral organizations)
- Representatives from project participants
- Representatives from other G7 donors

Case studies and field visits

As part of the evaluation, 4 case studies were conducted to examine the Initiative's relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. Case studies included programming in Africa, Asia and Central America (Annex 5). Case studies involved the following:

- Field visits with direct observation of project sites
- 34 interviews and 69 focus group discussions with Canada's mission staff and government officials, implementing partners, programming participants and other stakeholders
- Analysis of data collected on project design and social return on investment (SROI)

Literature review and rapid evidence synthesis

Reviewed 57 academic and partner country publications, and other secondary literature, including the following:

- Key evidence syntheses on Charlevoix Initiative main thematic areas to extract best practices and learnings and to triangulate findings
- Open-source data on how other countries undertake education efforts and achieve results in conflict and fragile contexts
- Literature on education in fragile and conflict-affected states
- Literature on women and girls in fragile and conflict-affected states

Social return on investment

The social return on investment (SROI) method was used in case studies to measure the social, economic and environmental effects of Canada's investments in women and girls' education in fragile and conflict-affected states. To collect data for SROI analysis, the method leveraged other approaches, including key informant interviews, focus group discussions and field visits. The SROI method engaged the following:

- Representatives from implementing partner organizations (including civil society and multilateral organizations)
- Project participant and stakeholder representatives

Initiative data analyses

Several analyses of the Initiative and partners' data were conducted, including the following:

- Financial analysis of Charlevoix Initiative disbursements to profile programming investments over the evaluation period
- Review of external data, including, data from the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE)

Evaluation limitations and mitigation measures

Limitations

Complexity and security issues in the programming context
Canadian programming under the Charlevoix Education Initiative was mainly carried out in complex contexts, both in terms of operations and security. Fragility and insecurity in intervention areas raised concerns about collecting data on the ground and engaging essential stakeholders, including partners and project participants.

Access to key respondents
Staff rotation and turnover, both within GAC and among implementing partners, was a significant obstacle to maintaining corporate memory and to collecting relevant information on the progress of the Charlevoix Education Initiative.

Data and document availability
The availability of Initiative documents and data on project selection and Initiative performance measurement, implementation, and governance was limited. Only 49 of the 55 projects had sufficient documentation.

Social return on investment (SROI)
The challenges of applying an SROI approach included (1) incomplete and irrelevant project results data and financial data that was not originally designed to calculate SROI; (2) insufficient budget and time available to spend with project participants on the ground to capture change over time; and (3) scoping and capacity issues that required the evaluation to cover indicators beyond SROI, thereby limiting time devoted to an SROI approach.

Mitigation measures

Using local knowledge
The evaluation team used a localized and secure approach for all stakeholders by working in collaboration with missions to establish contacts with relevant local authorities and actors on the ground. This helped to manage security risks and increased the inclusion of different perspectives. The team developed secure data collection plans for all field visits due to the security situation in South Sudan, Kenya, Honduras and Bangladesh.

Engaging stakeholder networks
The evaluation team relied on Global Affairs Canada staff and implementing partners to obtain a representative contact list of key stakeholders who were involved over the duration of the Initiative. Implementing partners were involved to facilitate access to project participants.

Collecting primary data
The evaluation team worked with available data and collected data from partners, local authorities and stakeholders to understand Canada's contribution to progress in education in conflict-affected and fragile states.

Expertise and learning
The evaluation team took SROI training and hired an SROI expert to learn how to best apply the approach and better understand the types of necessary data. Field visits and local consultants provided a contextual perspective and an understanding of the social benefits experienced by project participants and communities related to SROI. In addition, case studies were used to collect SROI-specific data that would allow for a focus on this approach. Although SROI calculations were not possible because of several challenges, the approach did help to identify social benefits that would have gone unnoticed had it not been applied.

Findings

Relevance

Process that led to the Charlevoix Initiative

Charlevoix Initiative Timeline

November 2017
Start of public consultation G7 presidency

January 2018
Start of Canada's G7 Presidency

June 9, 2018
The G7 members sign the Charlevoix Declaration

September 2018
Policy and programming framework is complete

February 2019
First projects launch

March 2020
Global pandemic declared

March 2021
Commitment end date

F1: The Charlevoix Education Initiative supported projects that were aligned with international consensus that inclusive, equitable and quality education is fundamental to the empowerment and economic equality of girls and women, especially in fragile and conflict-affected states. However, the timelines of the Initiative proved to be insufficient to design an approach tailored to fragile and conflict-affected states.

The Charlevoix Declaration responded to a global consensus that girls and women in the poorest countries face significant barriers to schooling due to social and cultural norms. These challenges are exacerbated in conflict-affected areas, where girls are nearly 2.5 times more likely than boys to be out of school. To draw attention to this growing concern, Canadian civil society organizations leveraged their networks to lobby the federal government to prioritize this issue during its G7 presidency. Over the next six months, GAC then worked in collaboration with civil society to advance related negotiations. After a successful advocacy campaign with international counterparts the issue was prioritized by the G7, securing funding commitments. The Charlevoix Declaration was formally signed and announced on June 9, 2018.
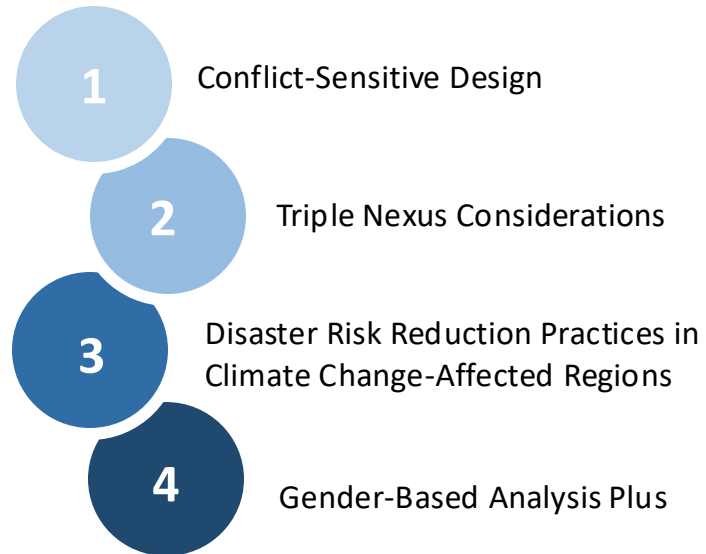
The Charlevoix Education Initiative was Canada's contribution to attaining the declaration's objectives. However, departmental staff had only six months following the announcement to design and launch the external call for proposals process. Considering programming launches typically take multiple years for thoughtful design work, this was an ambitious timeline. To deliver on expectations, experienced staff quickly developed a policy framework, intentionally designed to be high-level to allow for flexible programming responses.

This included the integration of validated policy recommendations from the Canadian International Education Policy Working Group (a group of civil society organizations) based on extensive stakeholder consultation. To then initiate programming, departmental staff selected existing partners to work with, scaled up relevant existing projects, and provided funding to global funds aligned with the Initiative's objectives. This approach allowed the department to quickly begin funding relevant programming. However, despite these significant efforts to respond quickly and responsibly, the tight timelines prevented the department from integrating key components essential for working in fragile and conflict-affected states such as how to best leverage programming insights across development, humanitarian, and peace and security activities (known as "triple nexus" considerations). After successfully setting-up programming, projects were soon faced with responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Projects faced delays and needed to extend their timelines to deliver their expected activates. To support these adaptations, departmental staff identified supplementary funding sources to extend the short implementation period of the Initiative through the use of reference levels, meaning existing GAC funding, as well as COVID-19-related funding sources. As a result of these compounding challenges, the department and partners struggled to disburse funds within the prescribed timelines. Expert interviewees also voiced concerns that the short timelines led to policy incoherence with Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy and international norms, which favour longer-term, predictable funding for education programming in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

Relevance

Design of the Charlevoix Initiative

Four essential practices for education projects in fragile and conflict-affected states

1 Conflict-Sensitive Design

2 Triple Nexus Considerations

3 Disaster Risk Reduction Practices in Climate Change-Affected Regions

4 Gender-Based Analysis Plus

F2: While best practices and accepted principles for implementing education projects in crisis contexts were integrated into the Initiative design, a lack of departmental standards and guidance for partners meant that the department could not ensure their consistent application across projects. As a result, not all projects were responsive to the fragile and conflict-affected context.

The evaluation's literature review identified international best practices and principles for implementing education projects in crisis contexts. For example, a well-established body of evidence demonstrates the necessity of collaborating and coordinating with local education authorities, community groups and other sectors; of involving communities in decision-making; of integrating design elements that allow for the protection and safety of staff and students; and of promoting equity and inclusion for all students. The importance of technological integration and innovation in delivering high-quality education is also an emerging trend. The evaluation's document review found that early Initiative design documents, such as the policy and programming framework and the call for proposals, integrated most of these best practices and principles.

Through document review, project review, case studies and interviews, the evaluation identified 4 practices that merit further discussion in the context of Global Affairs Canada-funded education projects in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. These practices are strong predictors of projects' responsiveness to the complex and evolving needs of these contexts and of overall effectiveness of GAC efforts and funding.

Practice 1: Conflict-sensitive design

Practice 2: Triple nexus considerations

Practice 3: Disaster risk reduction practices in climate change-affected regions

Practice 4: Gender-Based Analysis Plus

The evaluation found that these best practices were not systematically required at the Initiative level. Interviews and country case studies also revealed that the department was not prepared to provide partners with formal guidance or standards for the application of these practices during project implementation, and informal advice was not consistently provided across all projects. When the practices were integrated into project design, it was due to the knowledge and initiative of implementing partners rather than program and funding requirements. As a result, the application of these core practices was dependent on the capacity and knowledge of each partner, and partners demonstrated a varying ability to do so.

Relevance

Design of the Charlevoix Initiative

Benefits of conflict-sensitive design

▷ Minimize unintentional contributions to conflict

▷ Strengthen opportunities for peace and inclusion

▷ Increase achievement of sustainable results

Practice 1: Conflict-Sensitive Design for Education Programming

The Initiative's design did not differentiate between traditional education programming and education programing in a fragile or conflict-affected states (FCAS). To design an intervention that takes into consideration the unique context of FCAS is a best practice known as "conflict-sensitive" design.

International guidelines for designing programming that is conflict-sensitive existed during the Initiative's implementation period, including guiding principles published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD). These guidelines were intended to encourage a conflict analysis so that interventions are designed to avoid unintentionally contributing to conflict or unintentionally putting project participants in harm's way. For example, before implementing an Initiative, an implementer should understand the dynamics of peace and conflict in the targeted region and the interests and incentives of key actors to be able to properly assess the related risks and opportunities and adapt interventions accordingly. These GAC guidelines aligned with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) guiding principles for international engagement in fragile states.

Though the department's standard project application template did not require conflict-sensitive education projects, the Initiative's design was "conflict-sensitive" in that the call for proposals encouraged prospective partners to consider the local context and to propose context-specific education projects. Also, project selection did prioritize partners with experience in FCAS.

All lines of evidence indicated a significant gap in Global Affairs Canada guidance to funded partners on implementing conflict-sensitive education projects. Interviews indicated that GAC project managers often lacked the necessary experience and support to navigate implementation challenges in FCAS. For example, in Niger, attacks by armed groups led to the closure of schools causing delays in project implementation. These were known risks, but the project did not have an appropriate mitigation or adaptation plan.

Similarly, while GAC required partners to consider risks and the sustainability of their project designs in their proposals, GAC's expectations on the quality of these analyses or plans were not clearly defined, and partners were not given consistent guidance during project implementation. Projects that succeeded in integrating conflict-sensitive and sustainability plans was due to the expertise of that partner.

*When it works: Conflict sensitivity planning*

A funded project in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was successfully implemented for out-of-school youth in a conflict area. The project was intentionally designed to address the key barriers to education including school closures, damage to educational facilities, and the fear of parents related to the potential abduction of their children by armed groups. The experienced partner and their engagement with DRC ministries allowed the project to understand the risks and opportunities, and to adapt the project to avoid causing harm while meeting the needs of learners.

Relevance

Design of the Charlevoix Initiative

What is the triple nexus approach?

The "triple nexus" is associated with an operational framework that builds coherence and coordination between development, humanitarian and peacebuilding activities to meet peoples' needs, mitigate risks and move towards sustainable peace. With a rise in global displacement, growing humanitarian needs and an increasing number of protracted global emergencies, education programming in fragile and conflict-affected states is more important than ever. Education programming that includes collective emergency relief and peacebuilding outcomes and addresses both short-term and long-term vulnerabilities can lead to more resilience, conflict prevention and long-term sustainability.
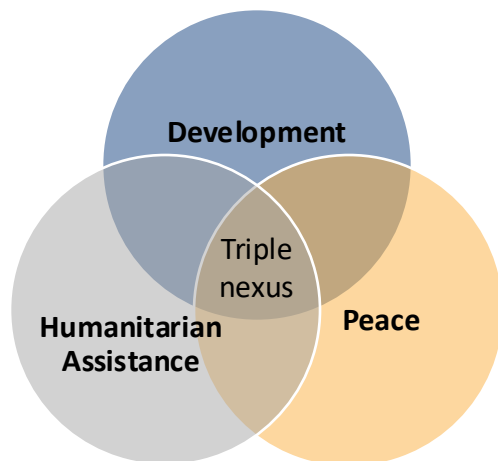
Practice 2: Triple nexus considerations

At the time that the Charlevoix Initiative was designed, Global Affairs Canada did not have a focus on the triple nexus. As a result, the Violence Prevention, Education and Youth-at-Risk division did not require these considerations to be integrated into project proposals, designs or reporting frameworks. As an international assistance effort, the Initiative primarily focused on development goals, not on humanitarian or peace and security goals. However, the importance of a triple nexus approach was evident throughout the delivery of the Initiative.

Although education is often a development initiative and excluded from emergency relief interventions, Charlevoix project designs that integrated cross-sectoral approaches in the context of fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS) were found to be more effective, as shown in case studies, interviews, literature review and document review. Some partners stated that nexus considerations were important because their work, while rooted in development, took place within an emergency context. As a result, they conducted analyses on the intersection of human rights, security and other factors to enhance their understanding of the situation. Projects included a nexus approach to varying degrees, and those that implemented nexus approaches more comprehensively tended to be particularly effective.

The integration of triple nexus factors allows for the achievement of broader, more holistic goals in FCAS through education programming. The lack of systematic integration of these factors in the Charlevoix Initiative reduced the ability to deliver programming coherently and maximize effectiveness in these settings, where chronic or acute crisis can be expected.

When it works: Triple nexus integration

In Honduras, an implementing partner applied a relevant multidimensional approach to education programming in a context of mass migration and urban gang-controlled areas with high rates of violence by integrating development, humanitarian, and peace and security aspects. Some examples include: (1) inter-institutional coordination to address emergency relief and insecurity; (2) using community volunteers as facilitators and training them with teachers on topics related to crisis and security, including psychological first aid, protection mechanisms, prevention of gender-based violence, care routes and reporting; (3) establishment of "friendly and safe spaces" consisting of school and community-level diagnostics to identify factors contributing to insecurity and violence, the development of a response strategy as part of the school operating plan, and teacher training. Schools became safe havens, and the project resulted in increased peace and security and reduced violence. Students, parents and teachers showed improvements in mental health and psycho-emotional awareness, anger management, assertive communication and a sense of community. Additionally, bullying was reduced and safe passage to and from school between rival gang territories was established.

Relevance

Design of the Charlevoix Initiative

Fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS) suffer disproportionately from climate change

- While per capita carbon dioxide emissions in FCAS are a fraction of those in other countries, FCAS are bearing the burden of climate change.
- Since 1980, the median FCAS has faced disruptive extreme weather events in 1 out of every 4 years.
- FCAS face higher temperatures than other countries, which endanger human health and are detrimental to labour supply.
- FCAS are over reliant on climate-dependent sectors like agriculture.
- Close to 10% of internal displacement in FCAS is directly linked to disasters.

Source: "Climate Challenges in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States" - International Monetary Fund

Practice 3: Disaster risk reduction practices in climate change-affected regions

Disasters, including climate-related and other natural disasters, can have devastating effects on people and systems, erasing projects' achievements and slowing overall development. Children are often disproportionately affected by disasters, which can lead to the loss of resources necessary to meet basic needs, such as education. Taking steps to reduce risks can protect against disasters, mitigate their impacts and the build long-term resilience of education systems.

The case studies demonstrated that climate events and disruptions were frequent in all examined projects. Although GAC does not require the inclusion of climate change considerations in every project planning and design process, the evaluation found that climate change challenges were a major disruptor and barrier to education due to impacts on infrastructure and access. Climate events also exacerbated the impacts of fragility and conflict, placing a disproportionate burden on women and girls. Data from the International Monetary Fund shows that fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS) are especially vulnerable to climate change, with many experiencing disruptive extreme weather events in 1 out of every 4 years over the last several decades.

GAC requires funded projects to undertake an environmental screening process, mainly to determine the potential environmental impacts of the project activities. This process includes a description of the project environment, where risks can be described. However, the potential impacts of the environment on the projects themselves were often not considered, and mitigation plans were often not in place to cope with climate events. Better disaster risk reduction practices are needed for programming delivered in FCAS to preserve access to education and increase the sustainability of departmental investments. The 2019 GAC Evaluation of Natural Disaster Reconstruction Assistance in the Philippines similarly highlighted the need for better environmental and climate change analysis across the department.

When it works: Climate change planning

A project delivered in Somalia integrated climate change considerations into implementation planning, risk analyses and project activities. The project design took into consideration the devastating effects of climate change on pastoralist families and used approaches that addressed their needs. The potential impacts of drought were understood and the potential need to respond to those impacts was articulated. During implementation, drought resulted in localized famine, migration of families and communities, risk of disease, school closures and decreased enrolment. In response, the project supported affected schools by supplying clean water to mitigate effects of the drought. The project also engaged with other stakeholders on the emergency response to the drought, coordinating to provide support to the affected communities. In the development of infrastructure, the project also aimed to improve resilience by taking into consideration the high temperature, strong winds and floods.

Relevance

Design of the Charlevoix Initiative

Percentage of Charlevoix Initiative projects assigned each gender equality code, and total funding associated with those projects

GE0/None There are no GE outcome	**0%** **$0**
GE1/Partially Integrated There is at least one immediate GE outcome	**4%** **$10 Million**
GE2/Fully Integrated There is at least one intermediate GE outcome	**38%** **$231.8 Million**
GE3/Targeted Designed specifically to address gender inequalities; all outcomes are GE outcomes	**58%** **$162.9 Million**

Global Affairs Canada uses a gender equality coding framework to classify projects from GE-0 to GE-03. The above box provides descriptions of each code, as well as the percent and dollar value of Charlevoix Initiative projects that were assigned each code.

Practice 4: Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus)

Gender equality was a key feature of Charlevoix Education Initiative programming. In line with the department's Feminist International Assistance Policy and in recognition of the disproportionate impacts of fragility and conflict on women and girls, the Initiative's programming framework made clear that gender equality considerations were to be integrated across all programming. Gender analyses were included in project designs as a departmental requirement. These analyses were used to thoroughly understand and address the challenges faced by women and girls, guiding project design and implementation. Through these analyses partners articulated the links between conflict, fragility and gender equality, as well as the exacerbated impacts of conflict and fragility on women and girls.

However, gender equality programming principles were not applied and understood evenly across the implementing branches. The International Development Partnerships and Operations Branch emphasized in its call for proposals the importance of addressing gender and intersectionality in projects and provided checklists for disability inclusion and a human rights-based approach. The branch also provided clarification on other elements, such as the inclusion of men and boys in programming. The geographic branches did not have the same opportunity to provide guidance to partners and advance, as a call for proposals mechanism was not used and projects were instead unsolicited or department-initiated proposals.

Interviews revealed inconsistent understanding of how to apply a gender equality lens, especially in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Some project leads felt that a focus on GE-03 projects (gender-focused initiatives) was to be prioritized despite these projects not aligning with the most pressing needs for programing in a fragility context. The 2021 Evaluation of Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in the Middle East had similar findings on difficulties in communication, perceptions and clarity around the assignment of GE codes and the approvals of non-GE-03 projects. While the Gender Equality Toolkit became available to staff in 2018, both evaluations found a lack of awareness about gender equality tools and how to access them.

When it works: Gender-Based Analysis Plus

Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) helps build understanding of the differing roles of women, men, boys and girls; their access to resources; the impacts of culture and traditions; and the ways they may be affected by policies and initiatives. Recognizing these factors can support the design of programming that addresses disparities and promotes equality.

A project delivered in Pakistan provided an analysis of the specific factors affecting women and girls in the area targeted by the project. This analysis detailed the barriers facing girls in accessing education, including cultural beliefs and practices and political and conflict dynamics. It also provided information on the impacts of these barriers, including very low enrolment rates among girls, and the planned actions to address these obstacles and achieve gender equality aims.

Effectiveness

The Initiative's intended results

Figure 1. Learners enrolled in formal or non-formal education at all levels, 2020-21 to 2022-23 total.
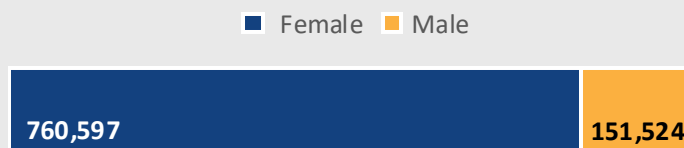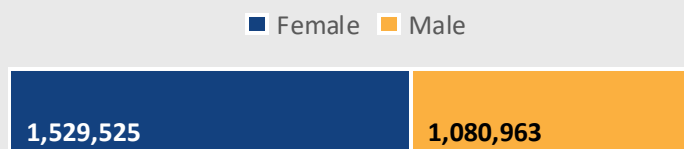

Female ■ Male

760,597 | 151,524

Figure 2. People benefitting directly and indirectly from reduced barriers to education, 2020-21 to 2022-23 total.

Female ■ Male

1,529,525 | 1,080,963

F3: The Initiative led to increased access to education by addressing the main barriers faced by women and girls.

The Initiative's projects achieved a number of positive outcomes for women and girls, particularly given the challenging environments within which they were implemented, and the compounding challenges and disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The evaluation's project review revealed that 43 out of 49 (88%) projects implemented under the Charlevoix Initiative allowed over 912,000 learners (who were predominantly female) to access formal or informal education options (see Figure 1).*

This access was made possible by projects working to address barriers to education including (1) social and cultural barriers, such as early and forced marriage and preferences for sending boys to school; (2) financial barriers, such as the inability to pay for school fees or necessary school supplies; (3) physical and infrastructure barriers, such as a lack of classrooms and inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene facilities; and (4) security barriers, such as sexual and gender-based violence and the dangers of travelling long distances for education. Projects working to address barriers ultimately reached a wider community audience of an estimated 1.53 million women and girls (Figure 2).

Top barriers	Targeted interventions
Social and cultural	Community sensitization on women's rights and education, early and forced marriage and pregnancy, gender discrimination and stereotypes
Financial	Cash grants, scholarships, income-generating activities
Infrastructure and physical	Provision of transportation, construction/rehabilitation of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, construction of accessible infrastructure (ramps, elevators)
Security	Construction/fortification of boundary walls, establishment of violence reporting systems, establishment of resource rooms/safe spaces and safe gender-responsive learning spaces

* Numbers are most likely significantly underreported because not all projects reported on all indicators, even though work may have been completed under additional indicators and lines of effort. Other data reliability issues such as inconsistencies with year-over-year reporting were also identified.

Effectiveness

The Initiative's intended results

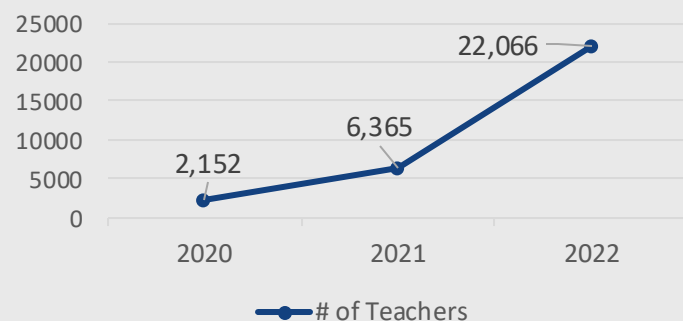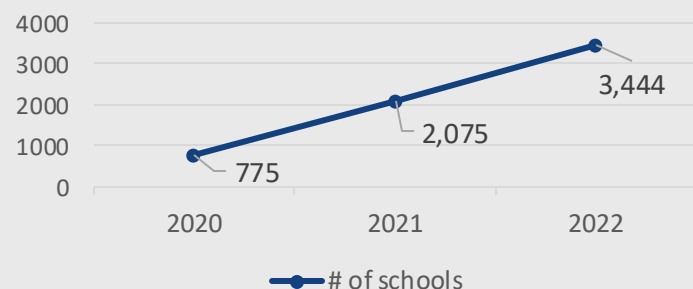**Figure 3. Cumulative number of teachers trained, by year.**

Figure 4. Cumulative number of schools that implemented welcoming spaces for girls, by year.

F4: The Initiative led to improvements in the quality of education.

The project review showed that 24% of projects reported improvements in learners' academic performance and skills, including their literacy, numeracy and life skills. In addition, 71% of projects reviewed reported an improvement in the quality of education provided, including through the teaching methods used by teachers, the creation of learning environments, and provision of learning content proven to achieve better learning outcomes.*

To achieve these results, implementing partners focused on increasing education quality by training teachers (see Figure 3, which shows that approximately 22,000 teachers were trained), developing curriculum, using mobile technology, introducing gender-sensitive and culturally adapted teaching and learning materials, and providing safe and inclusive learning spaces for girls and women.

In addition to the evaluation's project review, the case studies and interviews confirmed that Initiative projects successfully improved the quality of education in the targeted FCAS regions. For example, the Kenya case study showed that teachers were given personalized training on the national curriculum and gender-responsive pedagogy, in addition to learning practical skills (such as lesson planning and classroom management) that helped them provide better education to their students. Initiative projects strengthened teacher capacity, enabled alternative teaching methods (including the use of technology and local materials) and allowed for the provision of inclusive, equitable and gender-sensitive education and psychosocial support.

A key objective of the evaluation was to determine the sustainability of the results achieved. Anecdotal evidence from case study visits indicated that projects that included a high degree of engagement with existing state educational institutions were expected to have more lasting effects with regards to reduced barriers to education and increased quality of education beyond project completion. For example, in one project in South Sudan, in districts where state ministries were highly engaged, teachers trained through the project were permanently hired by the ministry. In other districts where the state ministries were less engaged, the sustainability of results was unlikely considering that teachers engaged in the project were facing unemployment following the project end.

Note on methodology: Due to the difficulty of directly measuring the quality of education, the department designed proxy indicators at the output level to assess contributions to quality education. For example, one proxy indicator looked at the number of schools that created welcoming spaces for girls (Figure 4). Proxy indicators also measured teachers trained and/or equipped with gender-responsive teaching and learning practices to improve quality basic and alternative education and address sociocultural and gender norms. These indicators align with elements of internationally used frameworks for measuring quality.

Effectiveness

Social outcomes

Social return on investment (SROI)

SROI is a methodology that relies on engagement with project stakeholders and participants to understand the outcomes that were experienced through the project, including social, environmental and economic outcomes, as well as the quantitative value participants placed on these outcomes. This methodology was applied on a limited scale to specific projects within the evaluation case studies. As a result of this line of inquiry, additional social benefits and unexpected negative consequences experienced by project participants were identified.

In piloting this methodology, the evaluation team designed questions that placed project participants at the centre of its inquiry, providing insight into what participants defined as valuable outcomes of education programming from their own local and cultural perspectives, experiences and values.

Although the evaluation was not able to calculate an overall monetary return on investment, it was able to identify thematic social benefits such as health, safety and psychosocial interrelations.

"The value is infinite; [education] gave me hope to have a future and stay alive."

"I was able to build myself a house. I am proud to say I am independent."

Project participant testimonials

F5: Charlevoix Initiative investments in education programming in FCAS resulted in positive social outcomes beyond expected project outcomes.

The evaluation piloted the use of the social return on investment (SROI) methodology to uncover potential outcomes – both positive and negative – that extend beyond expected project outcomes. This took into consideration the Initiative's underlying assumption that education programming investments should have a high return.

The evaluation's case studies SROI methodology revealed that programming led to positive social outcomes, such as improved personal development, health, safety, social and family dynamics, economic empowerment, and conflict resolution. However, some projects also resulted in negative social outcomes, including decreased dowries, lower perceived value of women due to delayed marriage and childbirth, strained relations between men and women, and lost household income.

In the **Kenya case study**, the SROI methodology revealed that in addition to removing barriers to education and increasing access to quality education, which were intended project outcomes, project participants also reported additional social impacts, including feeling more independent, higher self-esteem and expressing hope for their future. The case study revealed that investment in certain education projects created pathways from training to employment. For example, participants in digital skills training gained found work online, including outside of the country, and earned significant income. Participants also became role models for their community and increased the social return of the project by acting as mentors to others.

In the **Bangladesh case study**, projects trained women and girls in vocational and technical skills, such as sewing, food production and computer skills. Graduates gained employment, contributing to increased wages and financial independence which in turn increased confidence, self-dependence.

Project reviews and interviews also demonstrated additional positive health outcomes resulting from hygiene and self-care practices and reduced early and forced marriage and transactional sex. Gender norms also shifted in some communities, as evidenced by greater input by women and girls in household decision-making and changes to the division of domestic labour. The case studies showed the persisting nature of the mindset and behavioural changes brought about by the projects endured beyond project timelines.

20

Effectiveness

Innovative approaches to education

Schools in Honduras have created safe spaces for students to address barriers to education related to chronic violence in the country.

Above: A mural dedicated to peace, human rights and equality in a school courtyard.

Below: A young person shows a menstrual pad made as part of a water sanitation and hygiene (WASH) activity that also taught equality concepts to address gender-based violence.

Photo credit: Evaluation team

F6: Creative and innovative approaches to education applied by partners were a success factor in enabling participants to learn in disruptive and sometimes traumatizing environments.

Traditional education models are often not appropriate or optimal for providing education in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS). In these contexts, populations are often more mobile or have experienced displacement. As a result, they may have faced interruptions in or an inability to access education. Many have also experienced significant trauma. There may also be threats to safety, access challenges, infrastructure and supply shortages, and familial obligations that make it difficult to deliver traditional education programming. Creative, innovative and alternative education methods were identified as powerful and effective approaches to education in FCAS. These included distance digital learning, technology in the classroom, psychosocial support, emotional learning and alternative learning models like catch-up clubs, accelerated learning and play-based learning. Some partners integrated innovative approaches across their programming to address systemic barriers to education caused by chronic and acute crises, as was observed across interviews, project review, document review, literature review and case studies.

The Honduras and Bangladesh case studies demonstrated that classroom technology, such as tablets and solar-powered screens, was used to address infrastructural, linguistic and systemic barriers to education. When accessible, these tools created a stimulating, participatory and immersive environment for students to learn more easily and engage with the curriculum through images and videos.

The provision of psycho-emotional support was identified as being a fundamental building block that addressed barriers to education and increased accessibility, retention and the quality of learning in schools, as demonstrated in the Honduras and Kenya case studies. When systematically applied, this type of support contributed to a range of positive outcomes, including increased levels of security (provision of safe spaces and decreased aggressive/violent behaviour), peace building skills (self-awareness, assertive communication, conflict resolution and suicide prevention) and empowerment (feelings of hope and self-confidence). The psycho-emotional support also included training in these concepts and skills for teachers, parents and community volunteers.

In contexts where conflict and fragility can lead to increased dropout rates, displacement and migration, the evaluation found that partners were able to bring students back into the education system through a number of practices, including alternative models like catch-up clubs, accelerated learning and play-based learning. Some of these models included the provision of childcare facilities to increase attendance. The Honduras case study demonstrated how a platform called "learning passports" could create opportunities for migrant or dropout students to access learning modules outside of the traditional education system. Both the Honduras and South Sudan case studies showed how community-based schools for hard-to-reach populations offered successful learning models that were not part of the mainstream school system.

21

Effectiveness

Innovations and COVID-19

Figure 5. Percentage of projects that received extensions (cost or no-cost) vs no extension.

- ☐ % of projects that received extensions (cost or no-cost)
- ☐ % of projects that did not receive extensions
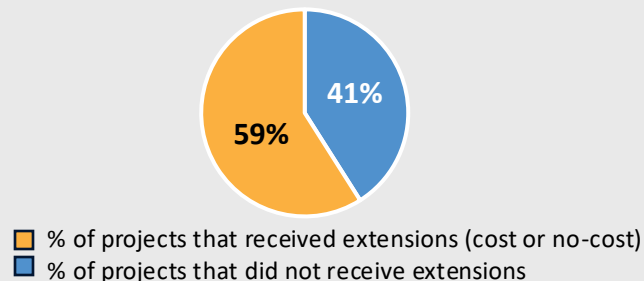
F7: The response to the COVID-19 pandemic led to key takeaways for operating in crisis contexts, including the importance of flexibility in funding and reporting mechanisms and the benefits of innovative and adaptive interventions.

While most Charlevoix Initiative projects followed standard funding and reporting mechanisms that were not adapted to FCAS, the department demonstrated increased flexibility to address pandemic-specific challenges. This experience showcased the benefits of increased flexibility and adaptability for programming in fragile and conflict-affected environments.

Interviews, document review, project review, financial review and case studies showed that Global Affairs Canada was able to adapt to the COVID-19 crisis, resulting in relevant support to partners that allowed them to pivot and adapt to urgent needs on the ground through effective program delivery. In response to the shifting and challenging operating environment during the COVID-19 pandemic, Canada repurposed $12M of the Charlevoix Initiative funds to meet new COVID-19 pandemic needs. For example, a project that received funding for in-person education activities could repurpose those funds to deliver distance learning in response to pandemic-related movement restrictions. The department also eased reporting requirements, particularly with respect to contribution agreements. Canada also allowed for the cancellation of certain project activities and for the granting of no-cost or cost extensions to cope with COVID-19 delays and enable project activities to be carried out. Figure 5 shows that 59% of Charlevoix projects were given either cost or no-cost extensions for pandemic-related challenges.

The department's approach for adapting programming requirements during COVID-19 was found to be beneficial, with potential lessons learned for current and new programming. Global Affairs Canada staff and partners agreed that the approaches applied during the COVID-19 response should be considered as permanent options when designing programming in conflict-affected or fragile contexts. Specifically, they noted that the ability to quickly adjust project activities in response to needs, to change reporting requirements and to provide no-cost extensions for unexpected project delays would give GAC more flexibility and adaptability in both acute and chronic crises.

Evaluation interviews, project review and case studies showed how implementing partners also responded to the barriers presented by the pandemic by pivoting to and embracing suitable education innovations, such as distance digital learning. The COVID-19 pandemic showed how adaptive and innovative approaches were more effective in chronic or acute crisis contexts. After the pandemic, some innovative approaches to education in crisis situations were systematically integrated as partners moved forward with their programming.

Efficiency and effectiveness
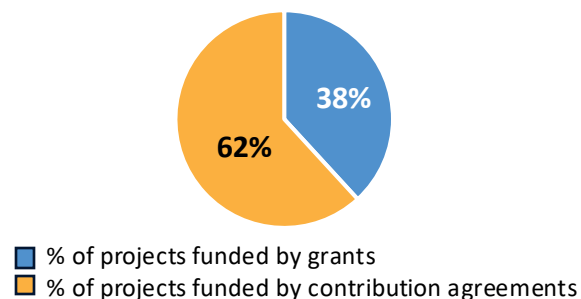
F8: Despite a history of delivering successful programming in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, the department did not apply lessons learned from previous experiences on the need for flexibility in funding mechanisms in complex environments.

Most Charlevoix projects (see Figure 7) were funded through contribution agreements, which are subject to stringent requirements and performance conditions. These requirements ensure accountability and are generally suitable for stable development contexts, but they do not allow for the level of flexibility and timely action needed to respond to the chronic or acute crises or emergencies often experienced in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS).

The evaluation case studies showed that grant agreements under the Charlevoix Initiative in FCAS were seen by interviewees as a more effective mechanism for responding to operational needs in these contexts. Grants are awarded based on eligibility requirements and do not contain further restrictions on spending and performance. This can present risks due to a reduced level of oversight but has the benefit of allowing for adjustments to respond to changing needs.

Previous Global Affairs Canada evaluations have emphasized the importance of flexibility for programming in FCAS. The Evaluation of International Assistance Programming in Colombia noted the effectiveness of Canada's education programming despite challenges resulting from conflict, while also highlighting the need for flexible funding mechanisms and adaptive approaches to meet local needs. The 2021 Evaluation of International Assistance Programming in Ethiopia discussed the department's use of flexible funding mechanisms in some instances to respond to emerging issues during states of emergency and severe droughts and recommended the development of guidance for the use of crisis modifiers or similar mechanisms in relevant projects. Since then, the department has implemented crisis modifiers as an option for improving the flexibility and responsiveness of funding for programming in FCAS.

Figure 6. Breakdown of projects funded by Grants vs Contributions.

38%

62%

■ % of projects funded by grants
■ % of projects funded by contribution agreements

Crisis modifiers

Crisis modifiers are contractual tools built into agreements from the outset to allow development funds to be rapidly shifted towards humanitarian activities if certain conditions are met (for example, conflicts or natural disasters). They have been used as a form of contingency planning to respond to natural disasters and conflicts, enabling adaptive responses to changing conditions without bureaucratic hurdles.

A review of funding practices by like-minded donors, including the United States, the United Kingdom and Norway, demonstrated that flexible funding mechanisms like crisis modifiers are being integrated into international assistance projects in FCAS. The use of crisis modifiers and other tools for conditional funding flexibility provide a useful option with respect to both accountability requirements and the need for responsiveness in the face of crises in fragile and conflict-affected states.

Efficiency and effectiveness

Project monitoring

Bilateral: 50%

- **Sub-Saharan Africa (WGM)**
  23 projects - $143M
- **Europe, Arctic, Middle East & Maghreb (EGM)**
  5 projects - $17,1M
- **Indo-Pacific (OGM)**
  4 projects - $21M
- **Americas (NGM)**
  2 projects - $20,1M

Multilateral: 38%

- **Global Issues and Development (MFM)**
  8 projects - $154,8M

Partnerships: 11%

- **Partnerships for Development Innovation (KFM)**
  12 projects - $43,7M

Security: 1%

- **International Security (IFM)**
  1 project - $5M

F9: A lack of accountability for performance measurement and reporting throughout the Initiative's implementation prevented Global Affairs Canada from understanding and communicating the Charlevoix results story and limited its capacity to make evidence-informed decisions on future programming.

When the Charlevoix Initiative governance structure was initially established, a Director General Committee was set up to provide a guiding function during the launch of the Initiative and oversee the disbursement of the Initiative's funding commitments. Implementation of the Initiative took place across 7 different branches (Figure 8). The Violence Prevention, Education and Youth-at-Risk division (former MGG) was assigned limited centralized responsibilities for the Initiative, one of which was leading the development of a results framework involving a standard list of key performance indicators (KPIs) aligned with other corporate reporting needs, such as reporting on the results of the Feminist International Assistance Policy. However, MGG was not delegated responsibility or accountability for Initiative-level reporting.

To allow for contextually relevant performance measurement at the project level, implementing partners were given the flexibility to select a minimum of two KPIs relevant to their expected project impacts from the standard list of 14 Initiative KPIs (see Annex 4). Partners were not required to use the Initiative indicators verbatim as project-level indicators, nor were they given methodological guidance on the application of all the indicators. These factors resulted in a wide variety of project-level indicators, creating data reliability issues, including inconsistent units of analysis and measurement across projects, gaps in gender disaggregation and inconsistent year-over-year reporting. This made it difficult to roll up project-level data reported by partners to the level of the Charlevoix Initiative level based on the original performance measurement framework. Additionally, the standard project reporting templates did not enable departmental project leads to capture additional positive results outside of the chosen indicators.

With the Initiative concluded, the lack of rolled-up data or Initiative-level reporting meant that Canada was not able to tell the Charlevoix Education Initiative story or communicate to Canadians and decision makers the impacts of the investments made. This also called into question the extent to which Initiative-level decision-making during implementation was evidence-based or contributing to institutional learning. Consistent with the findings of previous corporate evaluations, this evaluation once again highlights an ongoing systemic performance measurement dilemma for Global Affairs Canada. The department faces a recurring challenge in ensuring partners are measuring what is appropriate for their expected results at the project level, while also providing the department with useful data that contributes to initiative- or program-level results reporting. This dual focus is essential for data to contribute to evidence-based decision-making.

Conclusions

Conclusions

The Charlevoix Education Initiative provided technical and vocational education and training programs in various countries. Pictured above is a sewing program delivered in Bangladesh.

Photo credit: Violence Prevention, Education and Youth-at-Risk division

The Initiative led to increased access to education, improved quality of education and contributed to positive social outcomes.

The Charlevoix Education Initiative was a commitment to prioritize women and girls' education in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. The Initiative emphasized the importance of education in the promotion of peace and security and as a driver of health and life outcomes. Projects funded under the Initiative focused on addressing barriers and access to education and improving the quality of education.

Charlevoix projects addressed the main barriers faced by women and girls to improve access to and quality of education and contributed to positive social outcomes. Projects improved personal development and well-being, health and safety, social and family dynamics, economic and personal empowerment, and community cohesion and conflict resolution. Gender norms shifted in some communities, as evidenced by greater input by women and girls in household decision-making and changes to the division of domestic labour.

Creative, innovative and alternative education methods were identified as powerful approaches to education in fragile and conflict-affected states. These included distance digital learning, technology in the classroom, psychosocial support, emotional learning and alternative learning models, such as catch-up club, accelerated learning and play-based learning. The COVID-19 pandemic affirmed the value of adaptive and innovative approaches to meeting project participants' needs in crisis contexts.

The Initiative was not optimally tailored to fragile and conflict-affected states.

While the focus of the Charlevoix Initiative was relevant, aligning with international consensus on the importance of inclusive, equitable and quality education for women and girls in fragile and conflict-affected states, the timelines of the Initiative proved to be insufficient to design an approach tailored to fragile and conflict-affected states. Although the department was able to quickly set up a timely and relevant Initiative, key components of working in fragile and conflict-affected states were not integrated.

The Initiative could have achieved greater effectiveness and efficiency if formal standards and guidance were provided to partners and project leads on essential practices, like conflict-sensitive design, triple nexus considerations, disaster risk reduction practices for climate change-affected regions, and gender and intersectional analysis. At the time that the Charlevoix Initiative was designed, Global Affairs Canada did not have a focus on climate change, conflict sensitivity or triple nexus considerations in development programming, despite their relevance to the fragile and conflict-affected setting. These elements had significant impacts across Charlevoix projects. The Initiative depended on the varied knowledge and initiative of implementing partners to navigate these fundamental issues, and project leads often lacked the experience, guidance and support to navigate implementation challenges.

Conclusions

The Initiative did not apply previous lessons learned on the need for flexibility in funding mechanisms in complex environments and did not use data from partners for learning or reporting.

While contribution agreements were widely used as a funding mechanism for Charlevoix projects, they were often not sufficiently flexible or adaptable for the constantly and quickly evolving conflict and crisis situations faced by implementing partners. More flexible funding and reporting mechanisms make it easier for partners and projects to adapt to acute or chronic crises, as demonstrated by previous Global Affairs Canada projects and models adopted internationally by like-minded donor countries. This was further evidenced during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the department allowed Charlevoix Initiative projects to repurpose funds and allocated cost and no-cost extensions to many projects.

Lastly, a lack of accountability for performance measurement and reporting throughout the Initiative's implementation prevented Global Affairs Canada from understanding and communicating the Charlevoix results story and hindered the ability to make evidence-informed decisions on future programming. Data was unreliable in many instances and not rolled up in a way that allowed for meaningful results reporting, and templates did not allow for relevant information to be captured. The issues encountered are consistent with the challenges identified in previous evaluations and indicative of systemic performance measurement issues across the department.

The Charlevoix Education Initiative funded efforts that made a meaningful and measurable difference in the lives of its project participants, but the evaluation found that certain design, funding and performance measurement factors limited Canada's ability to maximize and capture its impact. Addressing these issues would allow the department to enhance the effectiveness of future education programming in fragile and conflict-affected states and help stakeholders and decision makers learn from the experiences of delivering programming in these contexts.

Recommendations

Recommendations for ongoing education programming in FCAS

Since the Charlevoix Initiative's projects have concluded, the aim of the following recommendations is to apply the findings and lessons learned to other ongoing education projects in fragile and conflict-affected states.

1	Ensure GAC project leads and implementing partners working on education programming in FCAS are knowledgeable about:

- Conflict-sensitive design
- Triple nexus considerations
- Disaster risk reduction practices in climate change-affected regions
- Gender-Based Analysis Plus

2	Review and establish standard performance indicators for ongoing and future education programming (including in FCAS) that all partners must report on to facilitate calculation and reporting of total programming results.

Supported by findings 2, 7, 8, 9

Primary Responsibility Centre: Social and Economic Development Bureau (YED)

Corporate recommendations

The Charlevoix Initiative was the result of a G7 declaration that required GAC to quickly develop and implement a responsive global program across departmental business lines. Considering there are extensive lessons to be learned from this experience, as well as from previous responsive initiative launches, it is recommended that these collective lessons be applied to develop a proactive plan for ensuring factors for success are systematically integrated into future programming launches.

3   Coordinate updating the Authorized Programming Process (APP)* to include guidance from relevant internal policy teams on launching programming in FCAS contexts that integrates:

- Conflict-sensitive design
- Triple nexus considerations
- Disaster risk reduction practices in climate change-affected regions

This process should focus on simplicity and speed, providing tools and support that reflect the needs of users, including implementing partners.

4   In preparation for the launch of new initiatives, review and propose options to ensure robust accountability mechanisms for performance measurement are integrated to support results reporting at the initiative level throughout its lifecycle.

Supported by findings 1, 2, 7, 8, 9

Intended for: International Assistance Operations Bureau (YOD), in collaboration with International Assistance Partnerships and Strategic Coordination (YPD) and Pan-geographic Operations (GFD)

GAC's process for developing, designing, approving and implementing international assistance initiatives

Corporate recommendations

| 5 | Support projects in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS) to remain relevant by streamlining project approval processes and building flexibility in funding agreements to respond to unexpected crises. |

Supported by finding 8

Intended for: Grants and Contributions Center of Expertise (SGD), in collaboration with Grants & Contributions Transformation Bureau (SXD), International Assistance Operations Bureau (YOD) and Pan-geographic Operations Bureau (GFD)

Annexes

Annex 1: Program Logic Model (Developed by the Violence Prevention, Education and Youth-at-Risk Division)

Ultimate Outcome 1000: Empowering Girls, Adolescent Girls, and Women through Inclusive, Equitable, Gender-Responsive Quality Education, including TVET.

1000 Improved equal learning outcomes and employability among women, adolescent girls and girls, including those with disabilities, in crisis, conflict and fragility situations and humanitarian settings where GAC engages.

Intermediate Outcomes

Intermediate Outcome 1100: Reducing Barriers Preventing Access for Girls and Women. Increased equitable access to safe, secure, quality, inclusive education and learning by girls, adolescent girls, and women, including those with disabilities, in crisis- and conflict-affected and fragile situations and humanitarian settings.

Intermediate Outcome 1200: Investing in Coordinated, Innovative, Inclusive, Quality Gender-Responsive Education Systems. Improved equitable and coordinated provision of innovative, safe, inclusive, quality, gender-responsive, and evidence-based formal and non-formal education, from early childhood to the end of secondary for girls, adolescent girls and women, including those with disabilities, in crisis- and conflict-affected and fragile situations and humanitarian settings.

Intermediate Outcome 1300: Investing in TVET/Skills for Employment. Increased equitable provision of innovative, gender-responsive, demand-driven, quality technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and higher education to adolescent girls and women, including those with disabilities, in crisis- and conflict-affected and fragile situations and humanitarian settings

Immediate Outcomes

1110: Increased knowledge and skills of stakeholders (government, non-government and community) to promote girls' and women's access to inclusive, quality education in crisis- and conflict-affected and fragile situations and humanitarian settings.

1120: Increased capacity of local and national governments and non-state actors to reduce social, cultural, physical, and economic barriers to host and source country girls, adolescent girls and women participating in education.

1130: Increased capacity of girls, adolescent girls and women in crisis- and conflict-affected and fragile situations and humanitarian settings to claim their right to education and make their voices heard in decision-making processes that affect them.

1210: Enhanced capacity of education stakeholders (education ministries, UN agencies, humanitarian partners, civil society organizations) to integrate refugees and migrants into education systems or ensure the coordinated provision of quality formal and non-formal learning opportunities to the end of secondary school or its non-formal equivalent for girls, adolescent girls and women in crisis- and conflict-affected and fragile situations and humanitarian settings.

1220: Enhanced capacity of education stakeholders (education ministries, UN agencies, humanitarian partners, civil society organizations) to provide quality gender-sensitive and innovative teacher training, quality teaching and learning materials, and safe, inclusive learning spaces in crisis- and conflict-affected and fragile situations and humanitarian settings, particularly for women and girl IDPs and refugees.

1230: Improved capacity of education ministries, UN agencies, and NGOs to collect data and information, monitor, analyze, publish and report on the barriers and progress in girls' and women's education participation, completion and learning in crisis- and conflict-affected and fragile situations and humanitarian settings.

1310: Increased job-related knowledge and skills, including financial, environmental and digital literacy among girls, adolescent girls and women, including those with disabilities, in crisis- and conflict-affected and fragile situations and humanitarian settings.

1320: Enhanced capacity of training institutions and public sector authorities, in collaboration with the private sector, to design and deliver gender- sensitive, labor market- and data-driven TVET and entrepreneurship programs, including in non-traditional fields (e.g., STEM, green economy), for women and youth, including those with disabilities, in crisis- and conflict-affected and fragile situations

1330: Increased knowledge and skills of providers about ways to address social norms and reduce barriers that prevent girls and women from accessing TVET and post-secondary education in conflict-affected and fragile state, particularly for women with disabilities.
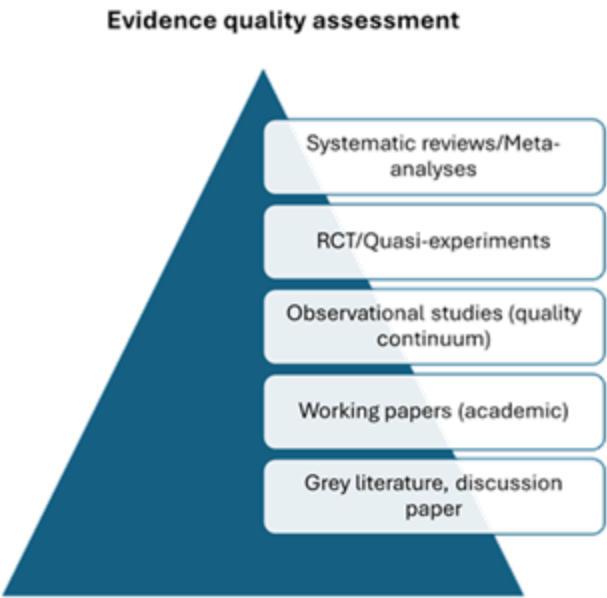
Annex 2: Social return on investment

Social return on investment (SROI) is a systematic method of incorporating social, environmental and economic values into decision-making processes. By helping reveal the economic value of social and environmental outcomes, it provides a holistic perspective on whether a development project is beneficial and cost-effective.

Focus	SROI focuses on assessing the broader social, environmental and economic value created by an intervention. It aims to capture both financial and non-financial outcomes.
Measurement	SROI uses a holistic approach that involves identifying and quantifying both the monetary and non-monetary impacts of an intervention. It considers inputs, outputs, outcomes and the changes in stakeholders' well-being.
Stakeholder involvement	SROI places a strong emphasis on involving stakeholders (including project participants and other relevant parties) in the evaluation process to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the impacts.
Methods	SROI uses a mix of quantitative and qualitative data to assess impacts. It often involves assigning monetary values to non-financial outcomes, allowing for a more comprehensive evaluation. The method identifies what goes in (inputs for each outcome) and what comes out (results, whether intended or unintended), develops indicators to quantify articulated benefits and costs, and calculates the SROI ratio based on a comparison of the investments (inputs) and the financial, social and environmental returns (results).

Annex 3: Rapid evidence synthesis

Rapid evidence synthesis is a systematic method that summarizes research evidence drawn from systematic reviews of literature, impact evaluation syntheses, or single research studies and impact evaluations, depending on the research goals. Rapidly and systematically identifying, selecting and synthesizing evidence can inform a research question and policy-making. The rapid nature of this process makes it accessible to non-academic environments like clinics and the public service.

Evidence quality assessment

- Systematic reviews/Meta-analyses
- RCT/Quasi-experiments
- Observational studies (quality continuum)
- Working papers (academic)
- Grey literature, discussion paper

Focus	Rapid evidence synthesis (RES) focuses on using rigorous research methods to quickly inform a research question and gain a better understanding of a given topic. It employs fewer resources, has a narrower scope and is less time-intensive than a systematic literature review, while still maintaining many aspects of a systematic review (for example, by limiting bias and accounting for transparent reporting results).
Quality assessment	Assessing the quality of evidence is crucial for ensuring reliability of findings, identifying research gaps and informing decision-making. Like a systematic literature review, the RES process requires a systematic quality assessment process (for example, AMSTAR). Also, many databases include built-in quality assessments (for example, 3ie, Social Systems Evidence, etc.). For RES, the quality assessment process may be adapted to fit the condensed timeline.
Methods	RES maintains many of the same methodological processes of systematic literature review, with some key differences. Since RES is conducted within a shorter timeframe, some steps may be adapted (for example, quality assessment and/or data extraction). Compared to a systematic review, RES has a more limited scope, generally applies narrower eligibility criteria and collects evidence through more targeted searches using fewer databases.

Annex 4: Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and complementary performance indicators (CPIs)

KPI	
CG7EDU1 (FIAP 1)	# of teachers trained (f/m) according to national standards and/or approved teacher training programs
CG7EDU2 (FIAP 2)	# of schools that have implemented changes to create welcoming spaces that respond to the specific needs of girls
CG7EDU3 (FIAP 3)	# of people trained (f/m) in demand-driven, technical and vocational education and training
CG7EDU4 (FIAP 4)	# of learners enrolled (f/m) in formal or non-formal education at the pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, upper secondary, and post-secondary education levels
CG7EDU5	# of schools (pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and non-formal learning spaces) with access to adapted infrastructure, specially trained teachers and materials for students with disabilities
CG7EDU6	# of girls, adolescent girls, and women benefitting (a) directly and (b) indirectly from reduced barriers to education
CG7EDU7	# of learners (f/m) who received gender-responsive learning materials
CG7EDU8	# of initiatives that advocate for increased access to safe quality education for girls and women
CG7EDU9	# of women and girls technically and vocationally educated and trained
CPI	
CG7CPI1	# of local community members, parents, and/or local leaders (f/m) that have been sensitized towards supporting gender equality and girls' right to education
CG7CPI2	# of educators (f/m) (school and community) trained and/or equipped with gender-responsive teaching and learning practices to improve quality basic and alternative education and address sociocultural and gender norms
CG7CPI3	# of learners (f/m) achieving at least a minimum age-appropriate proficiency in reading/literacy
CG7CPI4	# of learners (f/m) achieving at least a minimum age-appropriate proficiency in mathematics/numeracy
CG7CPI5	# of learners (f/m) receiving basic literacy, numeracy, and/or life skills development or training in an inclusive formal or non-formal (including community-based education) learning environment

Annex 5: Best practices and lessons learned

Category	Lesson learned
Adaptability/flexibility	• Adaptability is important for project implementation in emergency contexts, and flexibility in administrative and financial processes is necessary when working in conflict and fragile contexts.
Monitoring/reporting	• Monitoring and reporting data (including both quantitative and qualitative data, results frameworks and relevant indicators) are necessary for improving responsiveness of projects, achieving results and telling the story of those results.
Timelines	• Development projects in fragile and conflict-affected states require longer-term timelines. • A rushed launch can result in a lack of readiness to action large funding announcements.
Triple nexus	• Engaging all nexus areas (development, humanitarian, and peace and security) in project conception, design and programming in fragile and conflict-affected contexts is key to more effective and sustainable programming.
Multidimensional and innovative approaches fit for context	• Multidimensional and innovative approaches address multiple elements of education systems and interrelated challenges based on needs in fragile and conflict-affected contexts and can increase effectiveness and sustainability.
Localization/engagement	• Local and community engagement, participatory approaches and localization help build ownership and support, target project participant needs and increase sustainability.
Provision of guidance and standards	• Provision of guidance and standards on application of education best practices in fragile and conflict-affected states, on gender equality and on climate change and triple nexus considerations.
Effective interventions for education in fragile and conflict-affected states	Effective interventions include: • Psychosocial and emotional supports in programming • Capacity building of school staff, families, and communities, including teacher training on gender-responsive pedagogy • Providing financial and educational resources (cash transfers, food vouchers, school kits) linked to attendance • Sensitization and training activities to address harmful gender norms and barriers, including engaging men and boys • Distance learning to enhance access to education • Use of alternative learning models, including flexible learning and community-based education, which can address access and safety issues • Mentorship to both school-age and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) participants to provide positive support, guidance, peer-to-peer engagement and examples of success • Childcare at training facilities to increase attendance of young mothers • Integration of business models to contribute to sustainability of schools, empowerment and employment of youth, and the local economy

Annex 6: Case studies

Bangladesh

Bangladesh is the top recipient of Canadian Charlevoix funds in South Asia. Programming is concentrated in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, a region marked by **protracted conflict** and home to 13 indigenous tribes

- 2 disbursed projects in OGM
- 2 implementing partners
- $12M in disbursements

Kenya

Represented an opportunity to understand how the education system can be adapted to serve host communities and accommodate refugees. Turkana County and the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Northeast Kenya are categorized as a **fragile context**.

- 3 disbursed projects between MFM, KFM and WGM
- 3 implementing partners
- $13M in disbursements

Honduras

Represented an opportunity to learn from a model that appears to have demonstrated resilience and sustainability. Honduras is categorized as a **chronic fragile context**.

- 1 disbursed project by NGM
- 1 implementing partner
- $6.23M in disbursements

South Sudan

Represents the largest share of Canadian Charlevoix disbursements. South Sudan is categorized as an **acute conflict context**. Programming focuses on financial assistance to ensure access to education and address various educational barriers.

- 4 disbursed projects in WGM
- 4 implementing partners
- $25.7M in disbursements

Annex 6.1: Bangladesh

The Bangladesh case study demonstrated the importance of community engagement and the integration of security, peacebuilding and conflict resolution approaches when programming in conflict-affected and fragile contexts.

Distinguishing features

- The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) have a complex socio-political landscape with tensions between military forces, ethnic minority groups and Bengalis.

- Environmental challenges like deforestation, land degradation and inadequate infrastructure strain natural resources, livelihoods and ethnic relations.

- Boys' education is often prioritized over girls', leading to lower enrolment rates and higher dropout rates among girls. Early marriage, household responsibilities, lack of hygiene infrastructure and gender-based violence further hinder girls' ability to remain in school.

- Many students primarily speak Indigenous languages, yet the curriculum is delivered in Bengali, which hinders academic achievement. Historical marginalization and discrimination against ethnic populations have led to disparities in educational attainment between minority groups and Bengalis.

- The presence of military forces further complicates access to education, creating an atmosphere of fear and insecurity that may deter students from attending school and inhibit teachers from effectively carrying out their duties.

The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) region lagged behind the rest of Bangladesh on several development indicators, including education. The 2 Charlevoix projects in this region addressed several physical, structural, linguistic and socio-cultural barriers girls faced in accessing education, as well as aspects of education quality. The projects documented increases in attendance, enhanced learning outcomes and improved menstrual hygiene. Students feel safer in school and understand the opportunities in and beyond school.

Both projects designed interventions to address identified barriers and root causes of student dropout and underperformance. Some of the impactful features of the projects included Bangla language teaching, which contributed to educational outcomes and intercultural understanding and inclusion; addressing taboos around menstruation through community awareness and sensitization sessions; creating safe spaces; and using technology to address barriers and better engage students. While the sustainability of results that require continued funding is uncertain, students, parents and teachers planned to continue to integrate and apply what they learned through the projects and pass their knowledge on to others.

Climatic, structural and infrastructural barriers remain. The projects were effective but faced challenges, including short Initiative timelines, COVID-19-related disruptions, climatic events and financial constraints. The Initiative's focus on gender transformative projects was also not well aligned with the contextual reality and needs in CHT and challenged the success of the projects. Implementing partners were encouraged to design projects aiming at GE03 outcomes and often felt compelled to target GE03 to secure funding, regardless of the actual starting point of gender equality.

The projects blended aspects of a security approach with traditional development approaches. Humanitarian, peacebuilding and conflict resolution approaches were not apparent, although the Bangla language training did serve the dual purpose of contributing to educational development outcomes and fostering intercultural understanding and inclusion. The protracted conflict and fragility of the CHT calls for a programming model that blends development with security, peacebuilding and conflict resolution. While the 2 projects did not address the drivers of the conflict – namely, disputes over ethnic minority group land rights, identity, autonomy and political representation – they worked to promote inclusivity and social cohesion. These efforts can help build trust among different communities and reduce the tensions fuelling this conflict.

Annex 6.2: Honduras

The Honduras case study demonstrated the benefits of holistic, multidimensional education programming and coordination among partners to realize outcomes in fragile and conflict-affected contests.

Distinguishing features

- Honduras is one of the most violent countries in the world and has the second-highest homicide rate in Latin American and the Caribbean.

- Gang violence and human rights violations caused the internal displacement of about 191,000 people between 2004 and 2018.

- Honduras has the highest rate of femicide in Latin America. It is estimated that 23.9% of girls and 14% of boys aged 13 to 17 have left school due to acts of physical violence. Among adolescent girls, 21.2% were absent from school because of an act of sexual violence.

- Human development outcomes are among the lowest in Latin America and the Caribbean. The illiteracy rate is 12% and the average person has 7.6 years of schooling.

- Poverty levels are trending upward, from 67.1% in 2018 to 73.6% in 2021, with extreme poverty increasing from 42.9% to 53.7%.

- Indigenous and Afro-Honduran children face additional learning constrains due to language challenges.

- Climate change is having a devastating impact on Honduras, including 2 recent deadly hurricanes (Eta and Iota) that affected more than 4 million people and impacted education due to abandonment, absenteeism, infrastructure damage, water scarcity and contamination.

The Charlevoix project examined in Honduras demonstrated a holistic approach with impressive results in a short period of time. Contextual analysis was well integrated, and the flexible and alternative education models and integration of violence and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) prevention were deemed highly relevant and adapted to the local education contexts.

The interventions contributed to lowering the high rates of adolescents out of school, reducing expulsion due to violence and SGBV, and addressing poor quality of learning. They also provided models that could better connect education programs with job opportunities. Strong networks between multiple stakeholders (partner institutions, civil society and ministries) were strategically established and encouraged. This multidimensional approach resulted in life-changing opportunities and social outcomes for project participants, which in turn contributed to peace-building, increased retention in schools, reduced gender-based violence and positive longer-term impacts on the refugee crisis, mass exodus and migration flows.

Some of the unique aspects of the project included alternative and flexible education modalities for rural areas, which integrated practical and vocational elements that aligned with job aspirations and community needs; a heavy focus on coordination and collaboration with partner institutions, civil society and ministries, which facilitated the implementation of flexible education models; and protective elements like help lines, psychosocial support, safe spaces and training for teachers and volunteers on related topics.

A development, humanitarian and peace/security nexus was integrated into the design of the project which resulted in building resilience. The project strengthened capacities to mitigate and deal with crisis situations through the empowerment of children, adolescents and adults. This nexus contributed to building safe, protective and caring physical and social environments for communities. The provision of "friendly and safe spaces" was designed to promote a culture of peace, coexistence and citizenship, all while creating resilient spaces for children and adolescents.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a major challenge that slowed delivery of the project. It had a range of negative impacts, including increased poverty and stress, the loss of schools as protective spaces during lockdowns, and increased SGBV and migration. However, the pandemic also resulted in innovative approaches that were more flexible and effective in situations of crisis and fragility. These approaches were then integrated into design and programming going forward.

Annex 6.3: South Sudan

The South Sudan case study demonstrated the value of engagement with stakeholders and holistic interventions that address systemic barriers to education, as well as the need for rigorous context analysis and contingency planning.

Distinguishing features

- South Sudan is one of the poorest and most fragile and conflict-affected countries in the world, ranking 192nd out of 193 countries on the Human Development Index in 2022 and third on the Fragile States Index.

- Since its independence in 2011, it has struggled to form a viable governing system and faced corruption, political conflict and violence.

- Women and girls experience sexual and gender-based violence, including rape, abductions and early and forced marriages. Girls' education is hampered by poverty, child marriage and cultural and religious views.

- There are approximately 2 million internally displaced persons. Food insecurity has been increasing, with 76% of the population needing food assistance. Armed conflict and intercommunal violence are the main causes of this insecurity. Natural disasters like severe droughts and floods further compound these challenges.

- Education levels are extremely low, with one of the world's worst literacy rates at 35% (male 40% and female 29%). Currently, 2.8 million children are out of school (70% of the eligible population). Some of these children live in pastoral communities, moving with their cattle.

The 4 Charlevoix projects in South Sudan accomplished important outcomes for the targeted participants, including reaching gender parity to primary school enrolment and improving the enrolment ratio for secondary school, changing attitudes towards gender norms and girls' education, giving out-of-school children access to education, and providing education and materials for menstrual health.

Engagement with stakeholders facilitated project success and led to the widespread implementation of certain best practices. The projects were most successful when local ministries were involved early in the process and community buy-in was created through consultation and engagement. Greater sustainability was also seen where these elements were present. A focus on addressing barriers to education was an additional positive element that was particularly appropriate given the current state of education in South Sudan, allowing for more holistic interventions that addressed the needs of project participants. Activities included raising awareness and providing supplies and infrastructure for menstrual health and hygiene; offering cash transfers, scholarships and capitation grants for schools; promoting peace and violence prevention; shifting attitudes towards girls' education; and addressing security concerns by supporting community-based education options. Mentorship, life skills training and psychosocial support were integrated into multiple projects and seen as facilitating project outcomes. Accelerated learning programs were delivered to increase the number of qualified teachers. Training provided to teachers on classroom management and lesson planning was also viewed as impactful.

More comprehensive and coherent planning and due diligence is needed in this context. Projects faced many obstacles, including widespread poverty, cultural norms, extreme weather, conflict and challenges related to engagement with local government. The COVID-19 pandemic was also a major challenge, leading to delays in start-up activities and baseline research, school closures, restrictions on gatherings, greater project costs, and increased school dropout rates. The projects also faced issues related to a lack of qualified teachers, major inflation and a depreciating currency, and the short timelines imposed on Charlevoix projects. While some of these challenges were by nature more unpredictable, many (such as climate impacts and conflict) were expected elements of the operating context and called for greater forethought and planning to mitigate their negative impacts.

Annex 6.4: Kenya

Distinguishing features

- Kenya has one of the largest refugee populations in Africa. Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement, where the case study project was implemented, are refugee settlements located in northwestern Kenya.

- Kakuma was initially designed to accommodate around 20,000 refugees. Kalobeyei was established nearby much later to provide a more sustainable and integrated approach to refugee assistance. They have a combined population of over 270,000.

- The camp and settlement face ongoing challenges, including funding shortages, environmental concerns, security threats and the protracted nature of many refugee situations. The average refugee in Kakuma spends 17 years at the camp, and many are unable to support themselves with income-generating activities.

- Refugee children often face difficulties accessing quality education due to overcrowding, limited resources, a lack of trained teachers, language barriers and poverty. Many have also experienced trauma that can affect their ability to learn.

- The host community of Turkana County is one of the poorest counties in Kenya. Approximately 92% of the population lives in poverty.

- In 2014, it was decided that support and assistance to refugees should not be provided in isolation from development plans for the host population.

The Kenya case study demonstrated the benefits of psychosocial interventions and mentoring, as well as the impacts of layered, holistic approaches.

The activities of the Charlevoix project examined in Kenya had significant impacts on the participants involved. The project focused on empowerment and took a multidimensional approach, layering interventions to address a range of barriers and provide more holistic benefits.

Outreach was conducted with parents, teachers and community leaders, including men and boys, to address gender roles, foster a supportive environment for girls' education and mitigate the risk of sexual and gender-based violence. Parents were trained on basic pedagogy, gender-responsive and inclusive pedagogy, and prevention of gender-based violence. For girls in school, cash transfers provided for basic needs, while life skills, peer support and counselling supported their mental well-being and provided them with the tools to face the barriers and challenges they encounter. For young women, the project provided training on relevant technical skills and financial literacy and business skills, in addition to counselling for women and their spouses to address gender norms and other barriers that might prevent their participation in training or employment. A heavy emphasis was placed on mentoring, to increase their chances of success in transitioning from training to employment.

The project took a particularly participative approach. Baseline surveys and consultation activities were conducted to design activities around identified needs, rather than imposing assumed ones – for example, visiting schools to identify gaps in teachers' understanding of the competency-based curriculum in order to tailor their training. Similarly, multimedia content was developed and tested with community members to make sure it resonated and was constantly adjusted based on changing statistics about the refugee populations coming into the camp. Follow-up consultations were conducted with various groups throughout the project and several project activities were tweaked based on feedback and observation.

The project's significant focus on psychosocial support and mentoring was another impactful element. This was evident from the many social impacts reported by project participants. Through mentoring, participants were provided with positive examples of success and peer-to-peer engagement, which gave them a sense of hope and a source of support. Project participants expressed that they had a more positive mindset, greater confidence, increased discipline, and greater independence as a result of the project and often referenced the psychosocial support and mentoring they received.